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This chapter describes the ways in which civic learning and democratic engagement are incorporated into community colleges' missions and strategic plans, professional development, curricula, and extracurricular programming.

An Inventory of Civic Programs and Practices

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In 2012, roughly 60 community colleges across the United States—all members of The Democracy Commitment (TDC), a national initiative providing a platform for the development and expansion of civic engagement in community colleges—were asked to fill out a web-based inventory of the ways in which their college engages in civic programs, practices, and curricula. Survey questions focused in particular on each institution's intentionality or sense of purpose toward civic engagement, their level of academic and extracurricular focus on civic engagement, how civic engagement is assessed, and new program development. This chapter provides a top-line analysis of these civic inventories and is thus an illustration of the myriad ways in which TDC colleges are working to develop the civic capacities of their students. It should be noted, however, that the institutions referenced in this chapter do not represent all community colleges, and indeed their commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement is likely much stronger and more institutionalized than at schools that are not (yet) TDC signatories, possibly because many of the colleges surveyed are leveraging TDC to spur local civic efforts and initiatives. Nonetheless, this inventory provides us with a sense of the civic possibilities inherent in community colleges.

Institutional Intentionality Toward Civic Engagement

The first section of the civic inventory focused on institutional intentionality toward civic engagement; more specifically, whether and how community colleges incorporate civic learning or engagement in their missions, strategic plans, infrastructure, initiatives and programs, professional

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development, and so forth. Of all the institutions that filled out a civic inventory, the vast majority reported that civic engagement is either explicitly or implicitly mentioned in its mission statement, values, and/or strategic plan. For example, included in Valencia College's (Florida) mission, values, and strategic goals is "a commitment to institutional community involvement, community development, community service, civic leadership, civic engagement, and, of course, civic education." Allegany College of Maryland incorporates civic engagement into its philosophy statement: "We believe in democracy as a way of life, and in both the freedoms and responsibilities inherent in a democracy. We believe in preparation for active participation in a democracy." Other institutions, such as Broome Community College (New York) and Henry Ford Community College (Michigan) reinforce their commitment to civic work through their strategic plans. Wherever these statements appear, their incorporation into written values and strategic plans demonstrate that most of the responding colleges have made civic engagement a publicly stated priority.

Furthermore, most respondents reported that their institution has a campuswide civic engagement program or initiative focused on civic leadership and/or democracy building. For example, almost half of the colleges participate in regional or national civic organizations such as Campus Compact, a national coalition of schools committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education; Public Achievement, a youth civic organizing model that helps students become agents of democratic change; or model United Nations programs, which provide students with a forum for addressing global concerns in a real-world context. In addition to these, most of the responding colleges reported offering locally grown programs geared toward civic engagement; these will be discussed later in this chapter.

Despite public commitments to civic learning and democratic engagement, less than half of the community colleges responding to the survey had an established center or office to guide these activities, and staffing and levels of support for these centers varied widely. The Center for Service-Learning at Mesa Community College (Arizona) and the Institute for Civic Engagement and Democracy at Miami Dade College (Florida), for example, both employ eight or more full-time staffers plus multiple student workers, America Reads Tutors, AmeriCorps VISTAs, and/or faculty liaisons and have annual budgets in the range of $350,000 to $500,000. Far more colleges with dedicated civic engagement centers employ one or two full- or part-time staff and use work-study students or grant-funded community organizers to fill in the gaps. At these centers, budgets are much lower, from $5,000 to $25,000 per year.

At community colleges that do not have dedicated civic engagement infrastructure, some carry out civic work through related centers (such as the Center for Student Involvement at Johnson County Community College in Kansas and the Office of Student Life and Leadership Development at

Lane Community College in Oregon). As well, several more have delegated civic work to faculty members or campuswide committees (Chapter Ten of this volume describes the success Allegany College of Maryland has had with this approach).

Another way to assess institutional intentionality toward civic engagement is to examine whether a college's faculty tenure or advancement program includes a civic engagement requirement or incentive, and if the college offers civically minded professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. Although only a handful of the responding colleges stated that their faculty tenure or advancement policies incorporate a civic requirement or incentive (Henry Ford, for example, requires all full-time faculty to contribute 20 hours of service per year within the institution's primary feeder communities), several others noted that such activities were considered informal expectations. And two-thirds reported existing professional development opportunities specifically focused on topics related to civic engagement, such as service learning and sustainability workshops; a "Building Citizen Professionals" conference (at Lone Star College-Kingwood, Texas); and paying for faculty and staff to attend annual TDC meetings.

Taken together, these details about community colleges' incorporation of civic engagement into mission statements and strategic plans, campuswide programs and initiatives, infrastructure, faculty requirements, and professional development suggest that—at these TDC colleges, at least—there is a high degree of intentionality around civic engagement. These institutions are committed, publicly and in writing, to the sense that students can and should be engaged in their communities and in the democratic process and that the college has a responsibility to help them in this endeavor.

Academic Focus on Civic Engagement

Part Two of the civic inventory focused on how and where civic engagement is incorporated into the academic functions of community colleges. Nearly half of the institutions completing the survey have a specific designation for civic engagement and/or service learning courses in the college catalog (the other institutions may have civically focused courses, but they do not have a special designation), and some also offer a certificate or degree in civic engagement or related programs. For example, Cuyahoga Community College ("Tri-C," Ohio) offers a certificate in conflict resolution and peace studies; the capstone course for this sequence incorporates a service learning component. Similarly, Delta College (Michigan) offers both a certificate and an associate of arts degree in global peace studies; Monroe Community College (New York) offers a degree in diversity and community studies; and Mesa offers a global citizenship certificate. Although Henry Ford does not have a collegewide graduation requirement, in 2011–12 it instituted a

civic engagement requirement for all athletic teams. In 2013, Kingsborough Community College (New York) instituted a collegewide civic graduation requirement; its implementation process is described in Chapter Six of this volume.

Courses or programs focused on developing civic leadership are similarly well represented at these community colleges. Leadership opportunities for students include (among others) specific leadership courses or leadership development programs, certificates in leadership and social change (De Anza College, California), student governance opportunities, race- or ethnicity-driven leadership seminars, and civic leadership internships (Valencia College). Many of the responding institutions also offer formal service learning courses or programs; most assist their students in gaining internships in local businesses, community organizations, or public agencies or offices; and half incorporate civic engagement activities or requirements into their honors program (several more strongly recommend that honors students engage in the community in some meaningful way). Only a few of the colleges respondents reported offering programs or courses in community organizing or development.

In the most recent edition of *The American Community College,* Cohen, Brawer, and Kisker (2014) proposed the concept of integrative education—essentially a call for redefining the principles of general education to suit 21st century realities—and argued that that the bases for such a transformation already exist in the form of critical thinking, civic and democratic engagement, and sustainable development programs. Thinking along much the same lines, the civic inventory asked whether colleges also offer programs or courses in sustainability. The vast majority of the responding colleges offered at least one such course. Some, like Delta College, have approximately 30 courses with this designation, and others offer entire programs dedicated to sustainability. Examples include sustainability education and awareness programs for both faculty and students, a campuswide recycling program, and an annual alternative energy summit at Henry Ford; an alternative energy certificate program at Gulf Coast State College (Florida); certificate and associate degree programs in sustainability and ecological literacy and sustainable food systems at Mesa; and a Center for Sustainability at Moraine Valley College (Illinois). As well, Tri-C has a stated goal to "infuse sustainability literacy throughout the curriculum." Clearly, a dedication to sustainability exists side by side with these colleges' commitments to civic engagement.

Despite fairly consistent levels of intentionality toward civic engagement, there is substantial diversity in approaches to incorporating it into the academic or curricular functions of the college. Some institutions offer courses or programs in nearly all of the categories mentioned; others have chosen to focus on one or two areas, such as sustainability or service learning. There is no evidence that one model is more effective than another in engaging students in their communities or in our democracy; indeed the

patterns of civic integration into academic programs likely result from a combination of varying institutional missions, available resources, and the backgrounds and passions of the faculty and administrators leading the civic initiatives.

Extracurricular Approaches to Civic Engagement

Just as there are a variety of approaches to incorporating civic engagement into community college academic functions, there are numerous ways of infusing civic work into the extracurriculum. However, one area of uniformity among the colleges is their involvement of student groups in civic efforts. Indeed, all of the colleges that filled out the civic inventory sponsor student clubs or organizations that undertake civic activities or events. And most of them reported that their student government engages in civic activities—at many institutions, this is a primary function of the organization. Estrella Mountain Community College (Arizona) strongly encourages student clubs to engage in civic participation, perhaps by volunteering at local hospitals, food banks, and other organizations or by sponsoring clothing, food, and hygiene drives for needy families. At Delta College, civic engagement is a requirement for all student clubs. Similarly, at roughly half of the responding colleges, campus newspapers engage specifically in civic activities or advocacy.

Although there is some consistency among survey respondents in terms of the ways in which extracurricular civic work is carried out (student government, clubs, and so forth), the *type* of civic activities in which students (and faculty, and staff) engage varies greatly. Many colleges hold candidate or election-issue forums; for example, Moraine Valley coordinated a "Meet State Senate Candidates" forum for the campus and wider community, Allegany College of Maryland did something similar for congressional candidates, and Johnson County's debate team hosted a mock presidential debate.

Other institutions hold forums on issues important to the student body or the wider community. For example, Glendale Community College (Arizona) presented a forum to address rising tuition costs and unemployment; Lane has a recurring visiting scholars forum on Islam; and the Community College of Allegheny County (Pennsylvania) offers a lecture series focused on regional topics, such as labor–management relations, energy, and transportation. Similarly, each year at Santa Fe College (Florida), professors in the social and behavioral sciences provide a series of talks about constitutional issues leading up to Constitution Day, and a separate annual event invites veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan to discuss their experiences in the wars. As well, Allegany College of Maryland has launched a series of campuswide events titled "Engaged Democracy: Ordinary People Making an Extraordinary Difference."

In addition to forums, the civic inventories contained numerous other examples of extracurricular programs, awards, and activities leading to greater civic and democratic engagement. These include democracy walls (at Tri-C and other community colleges, these are mobile displays placed in various locations around campus intended to generate discussion and solicit responses to issues important to students and the community); National Day of Action activities (San Diego Community College District, California); workshops for high school students on community change and youth empowerment (De Anza); Constitution Week trivia games (Broome); Public Achievement (Delta, Lone Star-Kingwood); Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service programs (Henry Ford); and deliberative dialogues, a form of discussion aimed at understanding others' perspectives and collaboratively finding the best course of action. (Chapter Twelve of this volume details dialogue facilitation training and outcomes among students at Skyline College in California.)

In addition to these civic efforts, the majority of responding colleges also engage in activities directly related to political and democratic processes. For example, nearly all colleges undertake voter education and/or registration activities; these drives are frequently organized or run by student government or other student groups in collaboration with faculty and administrators. Indeed, at some colleges, faculty offer extra credit to students who actively encourage or register family, friends, or community members to vote. Elsewhere, such as at Miami Dade and Moraine Valley, students are urged to sign up as poll workers, election judges, or voting equipment managers. During each year in which there is a presidential campaign, political student groups at Henry Ford coordinate teach-ins as a means of educating students about each candidate and the primary issues at stake in the election.

Miami Dade and other community colleges have also begun to work with TurboVote, which provides an easy, online way for students, faculty, and staff to register, request an absentee ballot, and/or receive email or text reminders on the days leading up to an election. Other colleges, such as Paradise Valley (Arizona), collaborate with Rock the Vote to host events promoting political participation on campus. Other common partnerships include the League of Women Voters, local county clerks' offices, and the Fair Elections Legal Network.

Clearly, the extracurriculum is an effective tool for developing civic capacity, and community colleges appear to be using it extensively in order to reach students whose chosen academic focus may not incorporate such skills or experiences. Furthermore, infusing a focus on civic engagement into the extracurriculum may be less political and potentially less expensive than incorporating it into the curriculum itself. Indeed, as Chapter Ten of this volume argues, it may allow community colleges to visibly and perhaps more easily make good on their public commitments to civic learning and democratic engagement.

Assessment of Civic Engagement

One area of uniformity in the colleges' civic inventories was the lack of a comprehensive approach to assessing civic engagement. Almost all of the institutions participate in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), but the CCSSE contains only one or two questions touching on civic skills or experiences. The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory—which one college reported using—similarly contains only one or two civic references. Community colleges are not the only institutions that lack a standardized instrument to assess civic engagement; the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the Association of American Colleges and Universities recently collected instruments being used by colleges and universities to assess civic learning. The inventory they put together (Reason & Hemer, 2014) reinforces the dearth of instrumentation in this area.

Indeed, homegrown surveys created by institutional researchers and/or student evaluations of courses or extracurricular events are much more common ways of assessing civic engagement, if it is assessed at all (a few respondents indicated that they did not evaluate civic efforts in any way). In addition, some colleges directly or indirectly assess civic engagement as part of their accreditation process, although this depends on the accrediting body. For example, institutions reporting to the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission use the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) to evaluate civic learning, and schools reporting to the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools examine civic engagement as part of their institution's general education goal. However, several other accrediting bodies do not incorporate a specific focus on civic learning or democratic engagement, which means that for colleges in these regions, all assessment of civic programs or practices must be done at the local level. Regardless, it is clear that most community colleges could benefit from a common approach to assessing the outcomes of their civic efforts; Chapter Eleven of this volume details a new survey—currently in a pilot stage—that would do just that.

New Program Development and Goals for the Future

The last section of the civic inventory asked colleges about new civic programs or initiatives they planned to undertake, as well as their institution's goals surrounding civic learning and democratic engagement in the coming years. Many of the colleges listed programs they hoped to incorporate, including deliberative dialogues at Broome, a civic-focused Alternative Spring Break at Lone Star-Kingwood, and expanded opportunities for service learning at the Community College of Allegheny County.

Although none of the responding colleges used the term, institutionalizing a commitment to civic engagement was a common theme throughout

their plans for the future. For example, Henry Ford planned to incorporate a Center for Civic Engagement, and Glendale was instituting a TDC working committee to "increase collaboration and communication with various units already emphasizing civic engagement." Allegany College of Maryland was hoping to unify their civic activities, making civic learning and democratic engagement an integral part of their institutional culture. Similarly, Delta College was working to incorporate civic engagement into its strategic plan and to create a civic engagement "umbrella" to coordinate all of the "activities surrounding civic engagement, service learning, and honors." Miami Dade noted that they planned to institute additional faculty workshops geared toward civic learning and democratic engagement "to help them make this part of how they teach." Gulf Coast State was incorporating civic and democratic engagement into its collegewide learning outcomes, and both Moraine Valley and Valencia colleges planned to develop courses and certificates in civic and democratic engagement. Santa Fe and Delta colleges both intended to engage in greater documentation and assessment of their civic efforts. By the time this chapter is published, many of these plans for the future will have already been accomplished and, ideally, civic learning and democratic engagement will have become further ingrained in the infrastructure and culture of each of these colleges.

What Can We Take Away from This Analysis?

Civic engagement tends to be defined and described broadly; even among TDC colleges, there is no consensus, and definitions range from the narrow (voting, being aware of the political process, service learning) to those encompassing broader themes of social justice, civic responsibility, and participation in a democratic society. Perhaps as a result, community colleges act on their civic intentions in a multitude of ways; some focus on curricular integration, whereas others use the extracurriculum as the primary tool for civic learning and democratic engagement. As such, although the civic inventories examined in this chapter do not move us any closer to a single definition, they do provide some insight into what civic engagement "looks like" at various community colleges across the nation.

The reasons behind these varied approaches to civic work are unclear; at some colleges, it may have to do with a lack of finances or infrastructure. At others, it may be because a single faculty or staff member has taken it upon himself or herself to civically engage students in the realm in which he or she has the most influence. Other patterns of civic programming may result from faculty resistance to curricular infusion or may simply be a reflection of a particular college's history and institutional priorities.

Although the community colleges highlighted in this analysis offer a diverse array of curricular and cocurricular civic programs, the one constant seems to be a public, written commitment to civic engagement. This intentionality is critical, as research suggests that it is a precursor to the

institutionalization of civic programming. Yet for institutionalization to occur, these colleges—as well as other institutions around the country with similar commitments to civic learning and democratic engagement—will also need to recruit a wide swath of faculty and administrators to the cause; secure continuous, hard-money support for civic programs and initiatives; and further integrate civic ideas and practices into existing coursework and curricular programs (Kisker & Ronan, 2012). Based on the responding colleges' stated goals for the future and plans for expanding civic infrastructure and programming, it seems that many of the institutions included in this analysis are well on their way. This—along with the apparent high level of intentionality and the variety of approaches to developing students' civic capacities—is encouraging and, ideally, is an indication that civic learning and democratic engagement can truly become part of the mission and culture at our nation's community colleges.

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