Civic Engagement and the Arts and Sciences at Ohio State:

Report and Recommendations

Prepared by the Ad-Hoc Committee on Civic Engagement, Steven Conn, Chair, Spring, 2011

**Education for Citizenship in the 21st Century**

Civic engagement has been central to the mission of Ohio State University since its founding in 1870. It lies at the heart of the land grant mission and is embodied in the University’s motto: Education for Citizenship.

Civic engagement takes many forms, but is characterized by active involvement with issues, problems and constituencies outside the university in ways that foster the intellectual life of the university. In 2005 the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) issued this definition of civic engagement:

> Engagement is the partnership of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.¹

As Albert Carnesale, the chancellor of UCLA, explained, “The essence of a research university is not solely its three-part mission of education, research, and service but also the fact that each faculty member and students is expected to be engaged in all three in an integrated way.

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* That aspect of teaching that enables learning beyond the campus walls
* That aspect of research that makes what we discover useful beyond the academic community
* That aspect of service that directly benefits the public [http://outreach.osu.edu/](http://outreach.osu.edu/)
Community engagement is an ideal mechanism for fulfilling that distinctive and essential mission. It is through practices of civic engagement that the skills and values cultivated throughout the Arts and Sciences curriculum nourish the life of communities at large.

The Arts and Sciences form the heart of this and of all universities and thus civic engagement, because of the ways in which it contributes to the mission of OSU, should be a central aspect of the Arts and Sciences at OSU as well.

While the work of civic engagement takes place around the university, there is a special role for it in the College of Arts and Sciences. Faculty, staff and students in the Arts and Sciences ask foundational questions, bring a historical depth and cultural breadth to civic problems, and demand that critical analysis inform both theory and practice. In these ways, our varied intellectual perspectives nurture, and are nurtured by, involvement in civic engagement.

This vital element of the Arts and Sciences mission, however, has been too often assumed and pursued tacitly rather than being made explicit. Promoting and advancing the civic dimension of the Arts and Sciences can serve a number of related purposes:

- It is the way the Arts and Sciences can fulfill our public obligation and contribute to the land grant mission – it demonstrates how and why the Arts and Sciences “matter”;

- It serves as way to engage in “applied” arts and sciences, helping students and their teachers link our work to the wider world;

- It provides opportunities for interdisciplinary work, which facilitates our integration into a public realm that rarely recognizes the disciplinary boundaries we have on campus;

- It takes students out of their comfort zones, forcing them to stretch in ways different but no less challenging than what goes on in the classroom;

In its 1998 report *Visions of Change in Higher Education*, the Kellogg Foundation concluded that colleges and universities need to “revitalize their public service mission.”
• It shows students how dilemmas facing all of us are manifested in specific places, thus enabling them to make connections between the local, the national and the international;

• It offers an important opportunity for reflection, self-evaluation, and intellectual inquiry in the process of education

• It can help develop “social entrepreneurship” in students.

• It enables student to engage in “knowledge making” outside the classroom in collaboration with non-academics

In all these ways and more, civic engagement in the Arts and Sciences can be the most effective way we can provide education for citizenship.

A Sampling of ASC Engagement Activities

In fact, Arts & Sciences faculty, staff, and students are already engaged in a wide range of engagement initiatives. Some of these are course-based; others are programmatically integrated into the mission of the unit; still others are designed and orchestrated by ASC-affiliated student organizations; others involve faculty or staff who lend their professional expertise in a volunteer capacity in Central Ohio communities and beyond.

Civic engagement may take place through service learning, through community teaching, and through events on and off campus addressed to a wider public. Finally, the projects and events themselves take place everywhere from the Columbus and regional campuses to international venues.

Seven specific projects serve to exemplify these many manifestations of civic engagement:
• Geography 580 is a course that involves service-learning through “Mapping the Near Eastside” (http://geography.osu.edu/maps2serve/).

• Comparative Studies at the Newark Campus, meanwhile, has sponsored a service-learning experience in Nicaragua (http://quepasa.osu.edu/issues/WI11/article02.html).

• “Wonders of Our World” (http://wow.osu.edu/) is a collaborative STEM education program between OSU scientists and elementary school teachers.

• Like many centers at OSU, the Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing (CSTW) was chartered with a mission that weaves outreach through all of its programming—including, for example, the “Writers Talk” program (http://cstw.osu.edu/digitalmedia/writerstalk) that shares information about the writing process with thousands of Ohioans through weekly broadcasts via TV, radio, and Internet.

• Members of the Club Hispano, a student organization in Spanish & Portuguese, work hundreds of hours every quarter with Hispanic teenagers on the West Side (http://sppo.osu.edu/newsOutreach/clubs/ClubHispano/default.cfm)

• Faculty in the biological sciences offer talks at Metro Parks in their areas of expertise.

• Located downtown, the Urban Arts Space (http://uas.osu.edu/) brings together OSU faculty, community artists, students, and the public for “conversation, art-making, and experimentation.”

The range of ASC community partners is enormous. Many such projects go largely unrecognized and unrewarded; some, in fact, exist at the margins of departments and programs, known only to the participants themselves or to a very small subsection of an academic unit, in spite of their impact on learning or contribution to the public good.

Learning from Other Institutions

There are a number of other institutions which provide sources of ideas, practices and inspiration that the College might consider as civic engagement “benchmarks.”
The PACE program in the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana University. This model of civic engagement is focused on undergraduate teaching, on providing undergraduates curricular-based opportunities to engage in outreach and engagement work.

“PACE is an interdisciplinary 25-credit undergraduate certificate program. Its curriculum combines academic study with hands-on learning to give students an education in democratic citizenship.

In PACE students can learn to: seek out various perspectives, engage in dialogue, analyze the effectiveness of policies, take principled stands on vital public issues, understand the relationship between theory and practice, develop informed critiques of political and civic institutions, practice collective decision-making, work with those who hold opposing views, and devise effective solutions to public problems.”

The Cline Center for Democracy at the University of Illinois is a model for such a College-sponsored center. The Cline Center engages in research, student activities and sponsors symposia and conferences.

“The Center is committed to furthering scientific research concerning the operation of democratic processes and the relationship between democracy and societal welfare. The Center supports the research of individual faculty whose interests overlap with its mission, but it also operates an institutionalized, global program of research. The Center provides opportunities for students through its public symposia, the Cline Center Research Practicum, and through employment opportunities. It also works closely with Civic Leadership Fellows (CLF's) who
are part of the campus's Civic Leadership Program. CLF's play active roles within the Center's public symposia and many work as research assistants during their graduate studies.”

The Cline Center organizes public symposia that address broad public issues. These symposia involve students, alumni, friends of the university and are open to the public; they are a key part of the Center's public engagement mission. It also organizes research conferences to address important research problems or to disseminate the results of its research initiatives. The attendees at these conferences are normally research scholars, government officials, and representatives of non-governmental organizations.

- The Great Cities Initiative (GCI) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) is another example of a program based at a metropolitan institution whose mission is one of civic engagement. By creating, disseminating and applying interdisciplinary knowledge in Community Development, Metropolitan Sustainability, Workforce Development, and Professional Education, the Institute works to improve the quality of life in metropolitan Chicago and other national and international urban areas. The UIC Neighborhood Initiative provides a university-community partnership with neighborhoods adjacent to the UIC campus.

In 2005 Campus Compact, the national coalition of colleges and universities dedicated to promoting civic engagement in higher education, and Tufts University, convened a group of senior administrators from leading research universities across the country to address ways that civic engagement could more effectively be integrated into the pedagogical and scholarly missions of institutions of higher learning.

The publication resulting from this meeting, *New Times Demand New Scholarship: Research Universities and Civic Engagement*, provided a framework detailing the importance of civic engagement in higher education and various models for how to implement it. The report focused on the need to incorporate service learning, community partnerships, and public outreach into higher education, but paid special attention to the role of “engaged scholarship,” that is
scholarship that addresses public problems and is of benefit to the wider community, in the mission of research universities.²

It behooves us all to situate our engagement more visibly and seamlessly within the action plan of the College of Arts and Sciences. In order to promote and nurture civic engagement among faculty, staff, graduate students and undergraduates, the committee offers the following set of recommendations, some of which can be taken quickly, others of which can be implemented over several years.

Recommendations

I. Civic Engagement and Professional Advancement: Promotion and Tenure Recommendations

If the Arts & Sciences College wants to foster civic engagement among its staff and faculty, then they must have incentives for doing this work and they should expect that this work will “count” as part of their tenuring and promotion.

This means expanding our reward system and evaluative criteria, which primarily value scholarly work in the discipline and, to some lesser extent, our work with students. This is by no means endemic to our own university but something that is found at most peer institutions.

A recent study by Ellison and Eatman (2008) reviewed a growing body of literature to determine how best to handle civic engagement and “public scholarship” for promotion and tenure evaluations. They also conducted structured interviews of 19 seasoned and distinguished university scholars, professors, deans, and presidents from around the nation. Their findings

² New Times Demand New Scholarship: Research Universities and Civic Engagement: A Leadership Agenda, 2005 Conference on Research Universities and Civic Engagement (Medford, Mass.: Tufts University, 2006). The universities represented at the 2005 Conference on Research Universities and Civic Engagement included: Duke University; Stanford University; Trinity College; Tufts University; University of California-Berkeley; University of California-Los Angeles; University of Massachusetts- Amherst; University of Michigan; University of Minnesota; University of Pennsylvania; University of Southern California; University of Utah; University of Wisconsin-Madison; and Vanderbilt University.
corroborate our own conversations with faculty and administrators here at OSU; despite a strong commitment to our university’s public mission, engaged scholarship continues to be perceived as an undervalued component of tenure and promotion evaluations in the arts and sciences (Stanton, 2008), and generally faculty see public engagement as unorthodox and professionally risky.

Recent changes in the Promotion and Tenure Policy have given more attention to faculty’s role as engaged citizen and public scholar (See new Pattern of Administration, Promotion and Tenure Policy of 02/11/2011). This gives the university generally, and the Arts and Sciences in particular, an opportunity to take a leadership role among Big 10 and land grant institutions in making civic engagement integral to the tenure and promotion process.

To move beyond a rhetorical commitment to civic engagement, we recommend several steps to ensure that faculty who choose to do this kind of work will be recognized and evaluated fairly for it:

- Each department should define what it means by civic engagement and public scholarship in its own POA. This might include an expansion of what is valued to include the local and regional as well as the national and international.

- The Art and Sciences College should make it clear that civic engagement and public scholarship constitutes part of the continuum of research, teaching and service by which faculty are evaluated.

- The College should establish a set of common principles and standards that apply to documenting and presenting civic engagement and public scholarship in faculty members’ dossiers.

- Public scholarship is not in any sense less intellectually rigorous than traditional scholarship, and the quality of some forms of public scholarship can be assessed by exactly the same measures as more traditional research. Some, however, will require different metrics and evaluative standards. The College and departments should also
work toward establishing such standards so that faculty who engage in such work can be assured of being judged fairly. This may include broadening the concept of the “peer reviewer” when dossiers are sent to external reviewers.

- Public scholarship and civic engagement forces those who participate in it to recognize that the world outside the academy is not divided by the disciplinary boundaries that group us on campus. It provides some of the most exciting opportunities for crossing those intellectual boundaries. Some departments already value collaborative and interdisciplinary work; others do not. Promotion and tenure guidelines that recognize civic engagement will need to recognize that this work might well take place with colleagues in other departments, other colleges, and even off-campus.

A word about mid-career faculty.

The Provost has identified the promotion of associate professors to full professor as an area of particular concern at OSU, and he has called on colleges and departments to consider “multiple paths” to promotion.

Civic engagement and public scholarship ought to be part of those multiple paths. Some mid-career faculty who have spent the early part of their professional lives doing more traditional research and teaching might find the switch to more publicly engaged work to be particularly invigorating. Some, we suspect, do not know how to start.

Therefore we recommend that department chairs and the College work with mid-career faculty who might be interested in civic engagement to foster that work, to help them get it off the ground, and to reward that work as part of the promotion process.

To help the College and departments move toward the inclusion of civic engagement and public scholarship in their P&T processes, we recommend that the Dean appoint an ad hoc committee charged with drafting new guidelines to address the recommendations above. This committee
would work with 1) department chairs; 2) College officials; 3) OAA; and would also survey “best practices” around the country.

Making the rules more expansive and inclusive is one way to change the culture of the Arts & Sciences College so that public scholarship and civic engagement are central to the research, teaching and service that go on in it.

In fact, we need to stop treating these three categories as separate and disconnected activities. Indeed, civic engagement and public scholarship may prove the best avenues through which to demonstrate that all three activities forge critical and synergistic ties between them. Eventually all three activities can become part of an integrated whole, an engaged scholarship characterized by different forms of making knowledge “about, for, and with” diverse publics and communities (Ellison & Eatman, 2008).

II. Bridging the Curricular and the “Extra” Curricular

There are a variety of ways in which the intellectual work that goes on in Arts & Sciences classrooms can enrich – and be enriched by – experiences outside and beyond the university. It should be a goal of the Arts & Sciences College to foster opportunities that link the intellectual resources of our faculty with work that goes on in public.

OSU as an Urban University

OSU is one of only two Big 10 institutions located in a major city (the University of Minnesota is the other). In the past, the university has tended to see our urban locale as an obstacle to recruiting students rather than as an exciting opportunity to teach students. Civic engagement and public scholarship in the Arts & Sciences can take advantage of the myriad challenges and possibilities of urban life, and in this way help position the university as the premier urban land-grant in the nation.
Many of the courses taught under the rubric of service-learning, and many of the service projects in which undergraduates are engaged, take place locally – in Columbus neighborhoods. Yet, our situation as an urban university has not been formalized in the curriculum.

We recommend that the Arts & Sciences develop an urban studies major, comprised of courses and faculty across the college (and ideally from other colleges as well). Such a major would provide opportunities for undergraduates to engage critically with urban issues; it would provide opportunities for graduate student research and teaching in urban affairs; and it would provide faculty with the opportunity for inter-disciplinary interaction.

**Service-Learning:**

In recent years, the university has done a great deal to promote service-learning courses. In brief, service-learning courses are those which include some component of off-campus work as part of their course requirements. Service-learning can be a powerful way for students to connect “theory” with “practice,” to see the connections between the classroom and the wider world. They can also help students figure out what they want to do with their lives once they leave campus.

Faculty and staff in the Arts & Sciences already offer a number of service-learning courses, though they tend to be the province of individuals, rather than shared more widely by faculty and staff in those departments. However, service-learning courses will also now count as part of the new General Education requirement. This will mean an increased demand for such courses, and an opportunity for the Arts & Sciences to offer more of them.

There are already resources available for faculty and staff to develop service-learning courses through the Service-Learning Initiative. We recommend, however, that the Arts & Science College provide resources and technical support to our faculty and staff who want to pursue such courses. In addition to providing help finding community-based projects and establishing community-based partnerships, such support should include thinking about how the particular strengths of our disciplines can best be brought to bear on public work.
Not Just for Credit

The Committee is adamant that civic engagement includes more than service-learning courses, and that numbers of our students want to participate in this work precisely outside the framework of the formal curriculum. To bring the Arts & Sciences into the realm of extra and co-curricular activities we recommend establishing on-going partnerships with a number of other offices and organizations elsewhere on campus. These might include:

- **Student Life.** The Ohio Union and Student Activities, along with the hundreds of student organizations that exist under that umbrella, are actively engaged in the off-campus community. There should be more of an effort to understand what kinds of activities ASC students are participating in and to see if there can be more connections between their extracurricular activities and their academic work. This could create better use of students’ time and create opportunities to apply their academic work to general involvement…working towards “why it matters.”

- **The Office of Undergraduate Research.** This relatively new office provides numerous opportunities to match undergraduates with faculty members and teaching staff whose research may include civic engagement components. The ASC needs to determine the number of ASC majors who are participating in research activities that may involve civic engagement.

- **The Office of Outreach and Engagement, specifically, OSU CARES and OSU Extension, OSU Leadership Center.** Many programs are impacting local communities around the state of Ohio. These are ways to take the land grant mission seriously, moving to regional concerns in addition to urban Columbus projects.

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3 Some specific partnerships could be created with BuckIServ Program-Alternative Spring Break Trip; Major Campus Events-i.e. Community Commitment, MLK Day of Service; Leadership programming-i.e. Buckeye Leadership Fellows, Center for Service and Leadership
• First Year Experience. What are the ways the Arts & Sciences can work with this office so that civic engagement is something students are aware of from the moment they walk on campus? Can Arts & Sciences faculty help design a civic engagement component to orientation and/or to pre-freshman programs?

• Honors and Scholars Program. These students are encouraged to be involved in their communities. Can ASC complement this call-to-action by supporting their involvement in the classroom? I.e. encouraging more ASC students to apply for national awards and scholarships (Truman, Goldwater, etc.) where civic engagement involvement is important to the application.

• Campus Partners. What are the opportunities for ASC students to be more involved in OSU efforts in neighborhood revitalization? I.e. Weinland Park Collaborative.

• International Education/Global Gateways/Study Abroad. Can ASC work with students going abroad to ensure civic engagement is a component of the experience?

III. Raising the Visibility

While Arts & Sciences faculty, staff and students are already engaged in a wide variety of activities, those activities have not received the attention they deserve. We recommend that the College work in several ways to raise the visibility of civic engagement both on campus and off.

Recognition of civic engagement activity undertaken by students, staff, and faculty can have several purposes and take many forms.

• Besides simply informing colleagues and superiors of one’s work in this sphere (and perhaps stirring them to similar engagement), recognition may matter for job and professional advancement and for salary raises;

• Publicizing is always important personally to the person involved;
• Highlighting civic engagement work reminds Ohio taxpayers, policy makers and politicians of OSU’s historic, pervasive, crucial community presence. For the Arts & Sciences in particular, this kind of publicity tells people why we matter.

There are, thus, various forms by which such engagement should be recognized.

• Students’ engagement activities are usually recognized in their coursework (or extracurricular achievements), but the University also should institute a regular public forum for the display of such work, along the model of the Denman Forum, but one that gives equal attention to community partners.

• Staff and faculty engagement work should be acknowledged regularly in the usual campus outlets—On Campus, OSU Today, department and college publicity and news outlets, college magazines, the Alumni Magazine, and the Office of University Outreach and Engagement website and newsletter.

• OSU Communications should be urged to review its statewide reach to be sure that the civic engagements of OSU staff and faculty are reported everywhere that matters (for instance, during games/events/commencements in Ohio Stadium and the Schottenstein Center, and in such visible OSU sites as its satellite medical clinics and Extension offices around the state). Highlighting engagement in other on-campus venues (the Ohio Union rotating digital announcement signs, the RPAC, etc.) can also make civic engagement efforts and achievements more visible to students, staff, faculty, and the general public.

IV. What We Need to Make it Happen

To achieve the goals outlined above will require committing resources – personnel, time and funds. A clear message from our committee meetings and from the College-wide meeting we
convened in January is that the College needs to provide greater financial, institutional and technical support to faculty and students for civic engagement work.

This should include:

- Designating a member of the College staff to help staff and faculty develop new service-learning courses;
- Designating a member of the College staff to make sure civic engagement work is publicized and recognized;
- Designating a member of the College staff as the liaison with other offices and colleges around the university to facilitate civic engagement work;
- Figuring out ways to streamline (or eliminate) the bureaucratic hurdles that faculty and staff report impede interdisciplinary and group teaching and other projects.

In other words, there should be mechanisms in place that grant faculty and teaching staff time and support to organize and lead such projects.

Budgets are under tremendous pressure at the moment. But we believe that in addition to the educational, intellectual and public benefits that increased civic engagement will bring, investing in it will help the College in its fundraising efforts as well. In short, we are convinced that by doing good, the College can do well, because it will allow the College to tap into foundation funds, corporate philanthropies, state and federal programs, and private donors who are particularly keen to fund public service and public scholarship.

- At a minimum, the College could identify and set aside funds to seed new projects, perhaps on the model of the long-running Seed Grant program for new faculty;

- The Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania was endowed with a $10 million gift from Barbara and Edward Netter.
- The Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University was established with a donation of $40 million from Jonathan M. Tisch.
- Michigan State University’s Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement was established in 1968.
The College should designate a development officer to work specifically on raising money from private donors to fund civic engagement projects;

The College should also designate a staff member to help faculty and staff identify sources of grant money for their projects. A number of foundations, like Kellogg, Mellon and Carnegie, and a growing number of corporate philanthropies, like JP Morgan, have a history of funding such work.

Repeatedly, the committee heard that while there is a great deal of civic engagement work happening within the Arts & Sciences, the whole amounted to less than the sum of the parts. To rectify that, and to make that “whole” even larger, we recommend that over the medium term the College should create an office or a center that:

- Coordinates and facilitates civic engagement projects;
- Serves as an “incubator” for new projects and collaborations;
- Identifies resources;
- Partners faculty, staff, graduate students and undergraduates with community members on specific projects;
- Serves as a clearing house for community-generated projects;
- Identifies research opportunities that would benefit the larger community;
- Coordinates engagement work with communities to avoid duplicating efforts, to avoid residents “filling out the same survey.”
For Further Reading


Ellison, Julie & Timothy Eatman, *Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy at the Engaged University* (Imagining America, 2008).

Gray, Charlene, ed. *Partnerships that Work* (Campus Compact, 2003).


Perry, David. *The University as Urban Developer* (M. E. Sharpe, 2005).