

Polly D. Boruff-Jones

# Civic engagement

## Available resources

Civic engagement is increasingly acknowledged as an important component of higher education; research has shown that service learning and civic engagement yield academic benefits and enhance student engagement overall. Civic engagement activities may be student-focused and take the form of experiential learning, service learning, internships, or community service projects; or the focus may be on faculty-community collaboration for scholarly research and partnerships in leadership, economic, or social service development. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive and generally both aspects of civic engagement will be incorporated into an institution's goals. Many colleges and universities now allocate resources to integrate civic engagement and citizenship into curricular and extracurricular activities and to support and enhance community engagement among students and faculty.

This article brings together Internet sites related to the broad topic of civic engagement with an emphasis on civic engagement and higher education.

### Definitions of civic engagement

- **IUPUI Task Force on Civic Engagement.** There is no simple definition of *civic engagement*. At Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), the "IUPUI Task Force on Civic Engagement defines civic engagement as active collaboration that builds on the resources, skills, expertise, and knowledge of the campus and community to improve the quality of life in communities in a manner that is consistent with the campus

mission." *Access:* <http://schoe.coe.uga.edu/benchmarking/iupui.pdf>.

The following links provide more particularly good definitions of civic engagement:

- **Barnard College Civic Engagement Program.** *Access:* <http://www.barnard.edu/nyccep/what.html>.
- **CampusCares—Solutions for Stronger Communities.** *Access:* <http://www.campuscares.org/serve/definitions3.html>.
- **Campus Compact.** *Access:* <http://www.compact.org/about/detail.php?id=42>.
- **University of Southern Maine, Civic Engagement Coordinating Committee.** *Access:* [http://www.usm.maine.edu/cft/service/ce\\_sl\\_key\\_definitions.htm](http://www.usm.maine.edu/cft/service/ce_sl_key_definitions.htm).

### Civic engagement projects and resource centers

- **The American Democracy Project (ADP).** ADP is a national initiative for undergraduates enrolled in American Association of State Colleges and Universities schools with a goal to produce graduates committed to community action and engagement. The ADP project grew out of a concern for



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decreasing rates of participation in civic life. Access: <http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/default.htm>.

- **CampusCares—Solutions for Stronger Communities.** Dozens of higher education associations partnered to create CampusCares, a resource center that serves to identify and encourage civic involvement on U.S. college campuses. Click “Ways We Serve” for excellent definitions of *civic engagement*, *community service*, and *service learning*; find ideas for starting and promoting community initiatives; and check out the searchable “Census of Service” for details on the activities of the participating colleges and universities. Access: <http://www.campuscares.org/about/>.

- **Campus Compact.** A coalition of college and university presidents representing public and private, two- and four-year institutions, Campus Compact promotes campus-based civic engagement. Member institutions advance community service and support service learning initiatives to prepare students for civic responsibilities. Access: <http://www.compact.org/about/index.php>.

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Dialog, EBSCOhost, Ovid,  
& SilverPlatter

[ageline@aarp.org](mailto:ageline@aarp.org)

- **Canada 25—Civic Engagement 2005/06 National Policy Project.** A national forum created to address the question: “How can we make Canada the most civically engaged society in the world?” Resources include a framework that breaks the broad issue of civic engagement into eight topics of engagement for discussion at regional roundtables: community volunteerism; political; religious and cultural; online/virtual; philanthropic; play and expression; international; and social activism. Access: <http://www.canada25.com/~engagement/index.shtml>.

- **Community College National Center for Community Engagement.** This site provides resources to support and advance civic engagement initiatives in community colleges, including sample syllabi; announcements of upcoming events and conferences; and links to related programs, projects, and organizations. Access: <http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/other/engagement/>.

- **Engaging Communities and Campuses.** This is an organization of the Council of Independent Colleges that assists the establishment of partnerships between private colleges and universities and their communities, with an emphasis on experiential learning to address community needs. Access: <http://www.cic.org/caphe/grants/engaging.asp>.

- **National Alliance for Civic Education (NACE).** NACE is an alliance of individuals and organizations with a mission to “help citizens across the country better understand the significance of effective civic education for a well-functioning democracy” by providing community support for civic education initiatives and encouraging programs of civic education in schools. Access: <http://www.cived.net/>.

### **Campus and research centers**

- **AAC&U's Center for Liberal Education and Civic Engagement.** A partnership between the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and Campus Compact, the center's objectives include promoting service learning, applying research to

community needs, creating opportunities for dialogue to share best practices, and establishing standards for assessment of the impact of civic engagement activities. *Access:* [www.aacu-edu.org/civic%5fengagement](http://www.aacu-edu.org/civic%5fengagement).

- **Bentley College Service Learning Center.** Service learning is an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum at Bentley College, where 100 percent of freshmen participate in service learning and community service projects through courses in business and liberal arts. *Access:* <http://ecampus.bentley.edu/dept/bslc/>.

- **Center for Communication and Civic Engagement.** Located at the University of Washington, the center's emphasis is on exploring and developing new technologies and media to promote citizen participation in civic affairs. Through the center, faculty and student researchers engage in research, policy analysis, educational programs, and the development of online information resources. *Access:* <http://depts.washington.edu/ccce/>.

- **Center for Democracy and Citizenship, University of Minnesota.** The center's philosophy stresses an activist approach to public work as the medium through which citizenship is developed. The center sponsors civic missions and public works initiatives. *Access:* <http://www.publicwork.org/>.

- **The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE).** Based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy, CIRCLE conducts and funds research related to civic and political engagement of American youth and young adults and serves as a clearinghouse for information resources and scholarship. *Access:* <http://www.civicyouth.org/>.

- **Center for the Study of Values in College Student Development.** Housed in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Florida State University, the center sponsors research and hosts the annual Institute on College Student Values. Click on "Character Clearinghouse" to find resources related to character development. *Access:* <http://www.collegevalues.org/center.cfm>.

- **Citizenship and Service Education (CASE), Rutgers University.** Recognized by President Bill Clinton as a model program of service learning, CASE is a comprehensive program that integrates service throughout the undergraduate curriculum. The CASE mission is focused on preparing students to participate in democratic society as active and effective citizens. *Access:* <http://case.rutgers.edu/case/default.asp>.

## E-journals and blogs

- **Civic Engagement.** Associated with the Canada25 project, this blog provides a forum for feedback from the regional roundtables and open space for discussion of policy issues and civil society. *Access:* <http://canada25montreal.blogspot.com/2005/10/bonjourhello.htm>.

- **CivicTech.** This blog, maintained by Peter Levine, CIRCLE deputy director, includes links to several civic engagement resources. *Access:* <http://meotti.smart-gov.org/>.

- **Journal for Civic Commitment.** Published twice a year by the Community College National Center for Community Engagement, this journal is dedicated to service learning and civic engagement. *Access:* <http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/other/engagement/Journal/index.jsp>.

- **Journal of College & Character.** Published by the Center for the Study of Values in College Student Development, this journal features research on moral and civic education in higher education with a focus on encouraging discussion regarding character development in college. *Access:* <http://www.collegevalues.org/>.

- **Smart Communities.** This blog is maintained by Suzanne Morse, president of the Pew Partnership for Civic Change. Its purpose is to monitor civic change in communities. *Access:* <http://smartcommunities.typepad.com/>.

## Statistics

- **Volunteering Survey in the Current Population.** This site contains data on volunteering in the United States collected

through a supplement to the September 2004 Current Population Survey, a monthly survey of approximately 60,000 households. *Access:* <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.toc.htm>.

- **CampusCares—Research and Statistics.** This site provides links to research, statistics, and outcomes associated with volunteering, community engagement, and service on college campuses. *Access:* <http://www.campuscares.org/resources/research.html>.

- **Campus Compact—Annual Service Statistics: Highlights and Trends in Service, Service Learning, and Civic Engagement.** Provides several years of data gathered from the Campus Compact annual membership survey measuring growth in community service, service learning, and civic



engagement; identifies issues and trends. *Access:* <http://www.compact.org/newscc/highlights.html>.

### Assessment

- **Assessment of Individual Civic Engagement.** This paper discusses issues of selecting outcomes and objectives appropriate to measuring civic engagement and recommends several methods and tools for assessing both individual and institutional engagement, including using surveys that your university may already administer. *Access:* [http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/toolkit0104/Assessment/Campus\\_Assessment\\_Tools.pdf](http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/toolkit0104/Assessment/Campus_Assessment_Tools.pdf).

- **CIRCLE Core Indicators.** Several indicators of quantifiable civic engagement behaviors are provided here. The indicators may be used to compare civic engagement patterns of a group to national patterns. *Access:* [http://www.civicyouth.org/practitioners/Core\\_Indicators\\_Page.htm](http://www.civicyouth.org/practitioners/Core_Indicators_Page.htm). *ZZ*

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