

California State University San Marcos

Civic Action Plan

Published: May 31, 2017



BACKGROUND

In March of 2016, President Haynes signed the [Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors](#). Campus Compact is a national coalition of more than 1,000 colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education. Signing the statement signifies California State University San Marcos' (CSUSM) recommitment to the values of civic engagement and to activities in service of the public good. Signing the statement committed CSUSM to write and publish a Campus Civic Action Plan to outline how the university will achieve its civic engagement goals. Because of the work the Division of Community Engagement does in facilitating relationships with community partners, President Haynes asked the division to lead the effort in drafting the Civic Action Plan.

CSUSM MISSION STATEMENT

CSUSM has a well-established commitment to community engagement. As a Carnegie classified "community engaged" university, CSUSM students work closely with a faculty whose commitment to sustained excellence in teaching, research, and community partnership enhances student learning. As a public university, CSUSM grounds its mission in the public trust, alignment with regional needs, and sustained enrichment of the intellectual, civic, economic, and cultural life of our region and state.

CSUSM VALUES

CSUSM is an academic community dedicated to the values of:

- Intellectual Engagement: learning, teaching, discovery, and application of knowledge
- Community: shared commitments to service, teamwork, and partnership
- Integrity: respect, honesty, trust, fairness, academic freedom and responsibility
- Innovation: creativity, openness to change, flexibility, responsiveness, and future focus
- Inclusiveness: individual and cultural diversity, and multiple perspectives

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Division of Community Engagement was formally established in January 2011, under the leadership of a newly appointed Vice President for Community Engagement, and parallels the organizational structure of the other four university divisions. The creation and launch of this division gave community engagement "infrastructure" in the form of a systemic "fit" within the institution and organizational physical space/offices, staffing, permanent budget line funding, and a voice in the President's Executive Council. In addition to the Vice President for Community Engagement, senior level staffing includes two Associate Vice Presidents for Community Engagement, and a number of directors and community liaisons, as indicated on [the divisional organization chart](#). It is important to note that the infrastructure for Community Engagement on campus was built primarily by centralizing Community Engagement-related functions under a common umbrella division that originally reported elsewhere on campus, so that those functions could work more synergistically. Along with this centralization came the realignment of staff and financial resources related to these functions. As such, this new division was launched almost entirely with existing University staff and financial resources. The

Division's infrastructure is funded as part of the University's permanent state budget allocation. Five of the Division's staff members are faculty whose time is "bought out" to support key engagement initiatives.

In addition to the institutional commitment to community engagement provided by the President and her executive team, the University's Academic Senate stepped forward in 2012/13 FY with the offer to form a [Community Engagement Faculty Advisory Committee](#) (CEFAC). CEFAC's mission is "to identify ways in which CSUSM can work collaboratively to build strong university-community partnerships anchored in the rigor of scholarship, and designed to help build community capacity as well as contribute to classroom pedagogy and future scholarship and creative activity."

The Division of Community Engagement is committed to building connections between the University and community to create powerful, mutually beneficial partnerships that serve the public good. We accomplish this through curricular and co-curricular activities and outreach with our community partners.

In 2014, the Division of Community Engagement launched the Civic Learning Initiative to address a need for intentional efforts aimed at increasing CSUSM's civic engagement. Today, the Civic Learning Initiative is home to programs like the [Town Hall Meeting](#), a partnership between Community Engagement and academic departments and courses. The Town Hall Meeting provides an opportunity for students who are studying a social issue in a particular course to have robust conversations with experts working daily in the community to address that issue. Students consult with community experts who help them to relate the global ramifications of a particular topic to local concerns and potential actions. The program is designed to provide students the opportunity to engage in civic discourse and begin to develop the tools needed for lifelong democratic participation. Another Civic Learning program, [Democracy in Action](#), is a partnership with a municipal government to address community needs by embedding projects in academic courses. Faculty and students conduct research, gathering qualitative and quantitative data to benefit city projects that pose challenges and/or are backlogged. In the process, students learn about city government, attend city council meetings, and ideally consider the prospects of working in local government. The [American Democracy Project](#), another program of the Civic Learning Initiative, provides forums for students, faculty and staff to practice good citizenship and encourage spaces to openly dialogue about the health of our American democracy through a series of drop-in discussions and signature events. The Civic Learning Initiative facilitates programming in which students can see theory come alive in practice, while simultaneously helping reveal their own potential agency and influence within their community.

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE PLAN

CSUSM relies on a strong spirit of collaboration across divisions combined with its unique infrastructure to create an environment that supports the development and success of civically engaged efforts—on campus and in the community. Through the administrative support of the Civic Learning Initiative in the Division of Community Engagement, along with the collegiality of other units around campus, CSUSM will ensure fertile ground supporting faculty, students, and staff to develop and facilitate civic engagement that will flourish.

Part of the strategic approach with this plan also includes leveraging the lessons learned from existing models and practices of the Office of Service Learning and the Office of Internships. At CSUSM, both Offices have dedicated resources within the Division of Community Engagement. For example, each has a Faculty Director and full-time staff. Additionally, these programs have infrastructure including a centralized database (S4), which serves as a repository for community partners and assists in the process of "matching" students with

their placement site. While this plan has an intentional focus on building the sustainability of civic learning efforts, much can be learned from other efforts like service learning and internships.

Naturally, our approach was guided by Campus Compact's 30th Anniversary Action Statement, which included the following five Civic Action Statements:

1. We empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus- nearby and around the world.
2. We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.
3. We embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities- economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.
4. We harness the capacity of institutions- through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice- to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.
5. We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.

ADVISORY TASK FORCE

In an effort to include a variety of perspectives and lenses, the campus seated a cross-divisional Advisory Task Force that provided input and guidance both for the process used to draft this plan as well as suggestions – cautions and contributions – about the content in the plan.

Membership of the Task Force includes:

- Academic Senate Representation (1)
- Faculty Representation (3)
- Academic Affairs Administrator (1)
- Student Government Representation (1)
- Student Affairs Representation (1)
- Diversity and Inclusion Office Representation (1)
- Office of Communications Representation (1)
- Legislative Affairs Representation (1)
- Finance and Administrative Services Representation (1)
- Community Engagement Representation (1)

The Task Force was "staffed" by the Civic Learning Team, including the Community Engagement data analyst, to ensure all perspectives and contributions were captured and considered.

PROCESS AND TIMELINE

After attending the Civic Action Planning Institute offered by Campus Compact at the University of San Diego in October 2016, the Civic Learning Team integrated the best practices presented at the conference by strategizing about ways in which we could gather data from across the campus to inform the Civic Action Plan, while ultimately ensuring stakeholder participation in the final version of the plan. Our first step was to create a schedule of activities, participants, and timeline toward drafting the plan:

| Activity | Participants | Completion Date |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Charge Advisory Task Force | Campus Wide Representatives | January 2017 |
| Focus Groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deans • Staff • Administrators • Community Partners/Alumni | January 2017 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty • Students | Mid - February 2017 |
| Present Focus Group Themes | Advisory Task Force | End of March 2017 |
| Draft Plan | Civic Learning Team | Mid - April 2017 |
| Share Plan with Leadership | Executive Council Advisory Task Force Academic Senate ASI | Mid - April 2017 |
| Share Plan with Campus | Campus Community via Website Feedback | End of April 2017 |
| Revise Plan | Civic Learning Team | May 2017 |
| Share Final Plan | Executive Council Advisory Task Force | Mid - June 2017 |
| Submit Final Plan | Civic Learning Team | June 30, 2017 |

FOCUS GROUPS

In approaching both the informing and the drafting of the Civic Action Plan, we sought input from campus and community partners. To that end, we conducted focus groups with administrators, deans, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners. In all, 50 people participated in our focus group discussions.

Each focus group was asked to reflect on the five Civic Action Statements and then asked to respond to the following questions: What are we already doing? And, how can we broaden and deepen our commitment? Data gathered from the focus groups were examined for themes using the qualitative data software program

Atlas.ti. Five themes emerged from the focus groups. These themes helped us to frame our Civic Action Plan by reinforcing areas in which we are already civically engaged, as well as by identifying areas in which we can prioritize efforts to become more engaged. The five themes are:

Intention

CSUSM has been intentional in its focus on becoming a distinctive public university known for academic excellence, service to the community and the public good. Focus groups suggested that many existing programs meet the goals of the civic action plan. The intention of these programs is about giving students the opportunity to engage with communities.

Inspiration

CSUSM works to inspire students to be civically engaged. "We work to inspire students here. The hope is that students will take that inspiration and become motivated to be more engaged in doing this kind of work."

Incentive

The extent to which CSUSM encourages and incentivizes faculty, staff, and students to increase civic learning opportunities in the university experience. "Faculty want to offer these kinds of opportunities . . . perhaps offering workshops to faculty, how to design civic minded courses."

Support

There is a need for campus support of existing programs and individuals doing this kind of work. "Yes, we must support students, faculty, and administrators and tell each other this is okay and the right thing to do. Especially now because we face so many pressing issues."

Integration

What systems could be implemented so that CSUSM best integrates the values outlined in the civic action plan into the university experience. "We need to create a mindset with students, that what you are doing is empowering your fellow students. Knowledge is power, they need to understand education is more than a job, more than a piece of paper; we empower you to make a real difference. Purposely talking about how they relate to community."

GUIDING DOCUMENTS

The approach to writing the plan honors other thoughtfully created campus guiding documents including:

- [University Mission and Vision](#)
- [Community Engagement Mission and Vision](#)
- [Carnegie Classification Framework](#)
- [Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan](#)
- [Integrated Co-Curricular Model](#)
- [Western Association of Schools and Colleges \(WASC\) Senior College and University Commission](#)
- [Undergraduate Learning Outcomes](#)

Not only is this plan mindful of the foundations, goals, and objectives in the guiding documents, but also the implementation of this plan will consider intersections with the activities outlined in these documents and leverage collaboration to maximize coordination and minimize duplication.

CIVIC ACTION PLAN VISION

As a result of the planning process, focus groups, guiding documents, and institutional baseline, along with support from the Task Force this vision statement for the Civic Action Plan was developed:

CSUSM creates a culture that exemplifies a healthy democracy by teaching and practicing the skills for civic dialogue, engagement and leadership. CSUSM graduates students who dedicate a lifetime of service to local, regional, and global communities.

GOALS

In considering the aspirations of the vision, combined with data from the stakeholder focus groups, existing data, documents and infrastructure, this plan offers the following goals that aim to enhance the environment and culture on campus to be most supportive of civic engagement activities (connection to focus group themes are identified in parenthesis):

- 1. Grow and enhance programming to prepare students for an engaged civic life, locally and globally (support/intention)**
Some existing programs include: Democracy in Action, Global Commitment Initiative, Town Hall Meeting, Tukwut Leadership Circle, American Democracy Project, César Chávez Day of Service, and others. This goal ensures the campus will leverage promising practices learned from successful programs to support faculty and others interested in growing and enhancing civic engagement programs.
- 2. Provide faculty development opportunities to identify and incorporate best practices for civic engagement in teaching (support/inspiration/incentive)**
This effort could involve faculty learning communities, workshops in partnership with the Faculty Center, or incentives to encourage faculty to adopt best practices for incorporating civic engagement in their teaching.
- 3. Create a mechanism to learn about civic engagement activities occurring across campus (integration/support)**
With the intent to share lessons learned and be aware of potential duplication of efforts, some mechanism will be created to increase awareness of civic engagement efforts from around campus.
- 4. Create infrastructure to support scalability (support)**
Building on existing organizational support through the Civic Learning Initiative in Community Engagement, this goal ensures the necessary staff support and continued Faculty Director position to achieve long-term sustainability.
- 5. Create a Civic Action Steering Committee (intention/integration)**
The Civic Action Steering Committee will be comprised of all stakeholders: faculty, staff, students and community partners. The Steering Committee will specifically focus on providing advice and guidance regarding the implementation of this plan.

- 6. Amplify civic engagement through a marketing and communication plan (integration/inspiration)**
This goal will result in telling the story of civic engagement efforts by highlighting specific projects in a strategic and coordinated manner.

- 7. Raise profile of CSUSM's efforts of civic engagement (inspiration/incentive)**
By monitoring opportunities for local and national awards as well as grants, the campus will assist with the nomination of projects and programs for these awards and grants, resulting in additional recognition and awareness for both the programs and the campus.

OUTCOMES

| Goal | Outcome | Measure(s) | Indicators | Campus Compact Commitment |
|--|--|--|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Grow and enhance programming to prepare students for an engaged civic life, locally and globally | Students will discover civic learning opportunities and practice being an engaged citizen throughout their time at CSUSM | Number of students attending civic engagement activities (online registration sign-ups) Student responses regarding how much they perceive CSUSM emphasizes attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues (NSSE survey) | Increase number of students attending civic engagement activities Increase degree to which students perceive that CSUSM emphasizes attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues | <u>2</u> |
| 2. Provide faculty development opportunities to identify and incorporate best practices for civic engagement in teaching | Over time, an increasing number of faculty members will be able to describe how they can adopt best practices for incorporating civic learning in their teaching | Assessment of responses to workshop surveys (paper surveys taken at the end of the workshop) | Increase in number of faculty members who are able to give examples of how they can apply best practices of civic learning in their teaching | <u>4</u> |
| 3. Create a mechanism to learn about civic engagement activities occurring across campus | Faculty, staff, and students will use the mechanism to increase awareness of civic engagement activities across campus | Number of registrants in civic engagement events Reports of civic engagement activities through the centralized mechanism | Increased participation in civic engagement activities The number of staff and faculty reporting civic engagement activities through the central mechanism increases | <u>1</u> |
| 4. Create infrastructure to support scalability | Civic learning will be recognized as a sustained initiative on campus | Official designation of a Civic Learning office | An Office of Civic Learning will be designated | <u>4</u> |

| Goal | Outcome | Measure(s) | Indicators | Campus Compact Commitment |
|--|---|---|--|---------------------------|
| 5. Create a Civic Action Steering Committee | Stakeholders across campus and in the community will be actively involved in continually evaluating the implementation and improvement of initiatives integral to the Civic Action Plan | Number of Civic Action Steering Committee meetings (documentation of meeting attendance) | Number of meetings held will sustain over time | 3 |
| 6. Amplify civic engagement through a marketing and communication plan | Students, faculty, staff and community members will be able to give examples of CSUSM's commitment to civic learning | <p>Number of civic learning news articles published on and off-campus</p> <p>Student responses regarding their perceptions about how CSUSM emphasizes attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues (NSSE survey)</p> <p>Community partner survey</p> | <p>Increase number of CSUSM civic learning news articles</p> <p>Increase degree to which students feel CSUSM emphasizes attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues</p> <p>Increase degree to which community partners are aware of the civic learning initiatives taking place at CSUSM</p> | 5 |
| 7. Raise profile of CSUSM's efforts of civic engagement | The value of the civic learning initiative at CSUSM will be recognized on a local and national level | <p>Number of awards and grants applied for</p> <p>Number of awards and grants awarded</p> | Increase number of awards and grants applied for/awarded | 5 |

IMPLEMENTATION

| Goal | Anticipated Completion Date | Partners/Stakeholders | Action Items | Status |
|---|-----------------------------|--|--|--------|
| Grow and enhance programming to prepare students for an engaged life | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASI Vice President of Student and University Affairs - Community Centers - Community Engagement - Faculty Representation - Office of Diversity, Educational Equity, Inclusion & Ombuds - Resident Advisors - Student Life & Leadership - Community Partners | Stakeholders will convene to identify action items | |
| Provide faculty development opportunities to identify and incorporate best practices for civic learning in teaching | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Engagement - Faculty Center - Office of Diversity, Educational Equity, Inclusion & Ombuds | Stakeholders will convene to identify action items | |
| Create a mechanism to learn about civic engagement activities occurring across campus | Fall 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASI Vice President of Student and University Affairs - Community Engagement - Instructional & Information Technology Services - Library - Office of Communications | Stakeholders will convene to identify action items | |
| Create infrastructure to support scalability | Fall 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Engagement | | |
| Create a Civic Action Steering Committee | Fall 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholders from all goals | | |
| Amplify civic engagement through a Marketing and Communication plan | Fall 2017 and ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Engagement - Office of Communications | Stakeholders will convene to identify action items | |
| Raise profile of CSUSM's efforts of civic engagement | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASI Vice President of Student and University Affairs - Community Engagement - Development Team - Office of Communications | Stakeholders will convene to identify action items | |

COMMUNICATION

Communication efforts regarding the plan are included in the timeline provided earlier. The finalized plan will be posted on the campus website to inform stakeholders of ongoing efforts as well as hold the campus accountable in its commitment. Additionally, the marketing and communications goal will help frame the messages associated with the efforts of this plan.

CONCLUSION

This Civic Action Plan constitutes an explicit recommitment by the university to the sustained enrichment of the civic health of our campus, our region, and our state. By having signed the [Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors](#) and ensuring the drafting of this Civic Action Plan, President Haynes acknowledged CSUSM's participation in a national movement among institutions of higher education that share a dedication to making civic learning and democratic engagement a top priority. The very process by which the Civic Action Plan was drafted—inviting campus-wide and community feedback, establishing a diverse Advisory Task Force, identifying stakeholders, and soliciting action items with regard to implementation of the plan—is indicative of the ways in which the plan exemplifies a strong spirit of collaboration at CSUSM. The resulting plan thus reinforces the university's mission and values, while advancing the development and success of civically engaged efforts on campus and in our communities.