Why Civic Engagement May Be *the* Most Essential Skill for the 21st Century & How We Can Own It

Ashley Finley, Ph.D.
Assoc. VP and Dean of the Dominican Experience, Dominican University of CA
Senior Fellow, AAC&U & National Evaluator, Bringing Theory to Practice

SCHEV Civic Engagement Education and Assessment Meeting
William and Mary School of Education
June 9, 2017
How should students be different by the time they leave from when they entered?
What is your institution’s civic mission?
“Some preparation seems necessary to qualify the body of a nation for self-government.”

...philosophy of learning that empowers & prepares individuals to deal with complexity & diversity in an expanding global world.

= Broad knowledge + in-depth study...to help students develop a sense of social responsibility, strong & transferable intellectual and practical skills & a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge.
“The social role of education in a democratic society is at once to ensure equal liberty and equal opportunity to differing individuals and groups, and to enable the citizens to understand, appraise, and redirect courses, men, and events as these tend to strengthen or to weaken their liberties.”

What real-world questions are being asked on your campus? Within your discipline?
“A college education in Virginia – regardless of major – ideally should emphasize…”

- Broad Learning
- Intellectual & Practical Skills
  - Critical Thinking
  - Written Communication
  - Quantitative Reasoning
- Personal & Social Responsibility
  - Civic Engagement
- Integrative & Adaptive Learning

AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes

**Knowledge**
- Content areas

**Intellectual & Practical Skills**
- Inquiry & Analysis
- Critical & Creative Thinking
- Written & Oral Comm.
- Reading
- Quantitative Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Teamwork & Prob-solving

**Personal & Social Responsibility**
- Civic Engagement
- Intercultural Knowledge
- Ethical Reasoning
- Lifelong Learning

**Integrative & Applied Learning**
Why our civic missions are good things...

(Gratuitous puppy photo)
Student Success

Intrapersonal Development
- Personal efficacy, identity, spiritual growth and moral development
- Cultural awareness, tolerance, self-esteem
- Increased sense of flourishing (BTtoP)

Learning Outcomes
- Connections w/ faculty (part. students of color & underrepresented students)
- Critical thinking & problem-solving
- Application of knowledge

Retention and Graduation
Career Development
Satisfaction with College
Connections w/ faculty (part. students of color & underrepresented students)
Critical thinking & problem-solving
Application of knowledge
Personal efficacy, identity, spiritual growth and moral development
Cultural awareness, tolerance, self-esteem
Increased sense of flourishing (BTtoP)
THE EDUCATION DEBATE: COLLEGE SHOULD...

...provide a broad, well-rounded education that enables discovery of interests and abilities to help students realize their full potential in life

...provide students with specific career knowledge and skills to help them realize their full potential in the workforce

“I’m thinking that if I realize my full potential, and discover that here, and have a broad range of appreciating who people are and cultures outside my own, then I will be okay. [The] second will come from the first.”

Student, California

“I worry that if I go through this great diverse education, but I can’t go out and find a decent paying wage at the end of it, then, while I may be a better person for it, I’m still basically [out of luck].”

Student, Oregon
Skills Related to Civic Engagement Are Valued by Employers…

“Think about needs and opportunities outside the workforce. [Working with] community organizations gives you perspective.” (Paul Sara, CEO, Clear Channel Outdoor)

“Learn to work with different people.” (Vanessa Bernardo, Kohl’s Corporation)

“We need people who are curious about the world…learning doesn’t end.” (Julie Anding, Harley Davidson)

“Work in a team and be flexible…I can teach skills, but I can’t teach character.” (Kent Peterson, HUS Engineering)
### "How much emphasis should colleges & universities place on…" (N=300 Employers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>More emphasis</th>
<th>The same emphasis</th>
<th>Less emphasis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical decision-making</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork/collaboration in diverse groups</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation/creativity</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locate, organize, evaluate Information</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to real-world</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written &amp; Oral Communication</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze/solve complex problems</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking &amp; reasoning</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *It Takes More Than a Major* (AAC&U and Hart Research Assoc. 2013)
“How important is it that employees have the following skills?”

- Know. of global cultures, histories, values, religions & soc. Systems: 16% Very important, 39% Fairly important
- Interest in giving back to communities in which company is located: 26% Very important, 45% Fairly important
- Demonstrated capacity for prof dev. & cont. new learning: 61% Very important, 33% Fairly important
- Comfortable working w/ people from diverse cultural backgrounds: 63% Very important, 33% Fairly important
- Ethical judgment & integrity: 76% Very important, 20% Fairly important

What does it take to own our civic missions?

Four Considerations for Any Campus Model
1. What is civic engagement?

“…working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities & developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values & motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community through both political & non-political processes” (AAC&U Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric)

What does civic engagement mean on your campus?
Through exemplary teaching, scholarship, and outreach, [our university] transforms lives and communities by empowering individuals to maximize their potential, creating life-long learners equipped to be engaged leaders and productive global citizens.

- Community Responsiveness

We affirm our commitment to meeting the education and workforce training needs of our community and to building strong innovative partnerships that support the economic vitality of the region.

Located in one of the most important political, economic and intellectual hubs in the world, we accept our responsibility to serve others: to help our students succeed, enrich the life of our community, and contribute to solving some of the most complex global problems of our time.
2. Every high-impact practice can be civic. Every practice need not only be about civic outcomes.
3. Demonstrating Civic Engagement

Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results.”

- Critical reflection
- Civic action plan
- Public service announcement
- Website construction
- Blogs/wikis
- Research on civic issues
- Policy paper
- Video diary

(John Dewey)
Matching Complex Skills with Appropriate Assessment

- Demonstrated competence
- Across multiple dimensions
- Over time

photo: Mary Berry
VALUE Rubrics (www.aacu.org/value)

Knowledge of Human Cultures & the Physical & Natural Worlds
- Content Areas → No Rubrics

Intellectual & Practical Skills
- Inquiry & Analysis
- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Written Communication
- Oral Communication
- Reading
- Quantitative Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving

Personal & Social Responsibility
- Civic Engagement
- Intercultural Knowledge & Competence
- Ethical Reasoning
- Foundations & Skills for Lifelong Learning
- Global Learning
- Integrative & Applied Learning
- Integrative & Applied Learning

- Effective Collaboration
- Consistent Communication
- Resource Maximization
Recommendations for Moving Forward Together

1. Invite discussion to clarify the institutional mission – define what civic engagement means.

2. Draw connections between civically engaged activities to outcomes that represent your civic mission...across silos.

3. As part of your assessment, create/modify rubrics to measure students’ demonstrated civic engagement.

4. Create pilots and look for opportunities to infuse civic engagement into existing curricular (including GE) and co-curricular programs and resources.
Questions?

Comments?
Resources

Me: ashley.finley@dominican.edu

Bringing Theory to Practice: www.bttop.org

Natl. Study of Learning, Voting, & Engagement (NSLVE), Tufts University

VALUE Rubrics: www.aacu.org/value/index.cfm

Massachusetts Civic Knowledge, Civic Values Rubrics

Civic-Minded Graduate (IUPUI): csl.iupui.edu/doc/cmg/cmg-narrative-rubric.pdf

Campus Compact

Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory (Iowa State University)