

What is Civic Engagement?

Civic Engagement is a teaching and learning focus on educating students as citizens. Classes or programs include meaningful civic education and activities for social good. Classes and projects have components of reflection and engagement. These focus on one's civic responsibilities, including engagement in local politics, voter participation, social action and service to the community.

A survey of ten participating campuses shows that in the 2012-13 academic year over 20,000 students we enrolled in 637 course sections or projects including civic engagement, taught by over 2,000 individual faculty members. This survey also identified civic engagement subject matter experts on SUNY campuses.

SUNY has been focused on civic engagement as a key component of liberal education over the past four years, starting with a call from campuses to engage with the topic through SUNY and the Vibrant Community, one of the Six Big Ideas put forth in *The Power of SUNY: Strategic Plan 2010 & Beyond*. To measure progress on this initiative, SUNY tracks the number campuses that are awarded the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll and the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement. Buffalo State College, Jefferson Community College, SUNY ESF, SUNY Cortland, SUNY Delhi, SUNY Fredonia, SUNY Geneseo, SUNY Oneonta, SUNY Oswego, Stony Brook University and Cornell University hold the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement.

At the request of the SUNY Distinguished Academy, In May of 2014 the Office of Applied Learning convened at SUNY Broome Community College to discuss Civic Engagement Across the campuses. Also in 2014, civic engagement was included as part the SUNY's Applied Learning Initiative, which seeks to provide ever SUNY student the opportunity to engage in hands-on, real-world learning before graduation. As part of Applied Learning, civic engagement has been defined and formally added to the SUNY Institutional Research Information System (SIRIS), to allow for annual student tracking and participation analysis.

SUNY campuses also included language about their civic engagement work in their Performance Improvement Plans - the documents in which they set forth their SUNY Excels goals in the areas of: access, completion, success, inquiry and engagement. Each campus worked through 2015 to develop comprehensive Performance Improvement Plans that included a narrative about their strategic priorities as well as data commitments on a standard series of metrics.

The **All-In Democracy Challenge** is a campus commitment to develop a civic plan, implement that plan, and share outcomes with other participating institutions. To date, committed campuses include University at Albany, Binghamton University, The College at Brockport, Buffalo State College, SUNY Cortland, SUNY Fredonia, SUNY Geneseo, SUNY Purchase, Stony Brook University and SUNY Buffalo.

The SUNY and the Vibrant Community Initiative contracted Dr. Gerald Benjamin and the CREEO Center at SUNY New Paltz to produce a report on SUNY and Well-Being in each of our communities. Moving forward, the Office of Applied Learning is interested in leveraging this report and other resources to conduct a state-wide community needs assessment. The results of the assessment will help campuses engaged in applied learning activities that meet pressing local community needs.

Campuses also engage in local civic engagement activities including:

- Congressional Representative outreach

- Hosting candidate forums
- Becoming official polling places
- Working through NYPIRG to increase voter registration in local communities
- Students are joining local boards of organizations
- Inviting policy makers to campus to discuss their priorities
- Student clubs
- Hosting naturalization ceremonies for new citizens
- Hosting deliberations on campuses and in communities.

Campus Involvement with State and National Organizations

- **New York Campus Compact** is an association of college and university presidents and their campuses committed to promoting active citizenship as an aim of higher education. The group provides resources for college and university presidents, community service and service learning coordinators, faculty and students. Current member campuses include Alfred State College, Binghamton University, SUNY Buffalo, Buffalo State College, The College at Brockport, SUNY Broome Community College, SUNY Cortland, SUNY Delhi, DCC, SUNY ESF, SUNY Fredonia, SUNY Geneseo, Morrisville State College, SUNY Nassau, Old Westbury, SUNY Oneonta, SUNY Oswego, OCC, SUNY Poly, SUNY Plattsburgh, Purchase College, Stony Brook University, and SUNY Ulster.
- Some campuses are working on Campus Civic Action Plans. The plans emanate from commitments made in the [Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement](#). In signing the 30th Anniversary Action Statement, presidents and chancellors make a public commitment both to its principles and to developing a plan to put those principles into action. Campus leaders who signed the commitment were from the University at Albany, Alfred State College, Buffalo State College, SUNY Broome Community College, SUNY Delhi, SUNY Fredonia and SUNY Geneseo.
- The Association of American Colleges and Universities convened The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement. ***A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*** is a report that was commissioned by the Department of Education and released at a White House convening in January 2012. Following the report, [the National Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Action Network](#) was created.
- Launched in 2005, **Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP)** is a national public advocacy and campus action initiative of the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U). LEAP champions the importance of a twenty-first-century liberal education—for individual students and for a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality. George Kuh's High Impact Practices are included in this framework, as are essential learning outcomes and methods of assessment. LEAP Campus Action Network members include SUNY Buffalo, Stony Brook University, SUNY Purchase, SUNY Geneseo, SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Oswego.
- Founded in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities in 2003, the **Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP)** Project encourages and supports colleges and universities in

reaffirming their core purposes and developing sustainable campus cultures to support the advancement of higher learning and discovery, the well-being of the whole student, and higher education's mission as a public good to deepen and sustain the civic society. To date, BTtoP has funded over 300 unique institutions through over 500 grant awards. To date, [Buffalo State College](#), [SUNY Cortland](#), [SUNY Geneseo](#), and [Purchase College](#) have been awarded grants.

- **American Democracy Project (ADP)** is a network of more than 250 state colleges and universities focused on public higher education's role in preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens for our democracy. ADP was established in 2003 as an initiative of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) in partnership with The New York Times. Participating SUNY Campuses include Alfred State College, The College at Brockport, Buffalo State College, SUNY Cortland, SUNY Fredonia, SUNY New Paltz, SUNY Oneonta, SUNY Oswego, SUNY Plattsburgh, SUNY Potsdam and Purchase College.
- Launched in 2005 and modeled after the American Democracy Project, **The Democracy Commitment (TDC)** is a national initiative dedicated to the cause of democracy in higher education, and to make democratic skills available to all individuals who desire a voice and a seat at the table of local, state, and national discourse and action. To such end TDC provides a platform for the development and expansion of community college programs, projects, and curricula aimed at engaging students in civic learning and democratic engagement. The goal of TDC is that every student of an American community college graduates with an education in citizenship and democracy. SUNY members include SUNY Broome Community College and Monroe Community College.
- All SUNY campuses have participated in **The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)**, offers colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their about student registration and voting rates. Each campus president now receives reports on student voter participation.
- Campuses engaged in the **President's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge**. This is in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service, the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll and the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. To date, participating campuses have included: Alfred State College, The College at Brockport, SUNY Cortland, Erie Community College, SUNY Geneseo, Hudson Valley Community College, Monroe Community College and Stony Brook University.