



CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE

CHAMPLAIN ENGAGE

Champlain College's
Civic Action Plan



Spring 2017

CHAMPLAIN ENGAGE

Champlain College's Civic Action Plan

This plan was created in response to Champlain College being a signatory of the 30th Anniversary Campus Compact Action Statement.

Civic Action Plan Mission and Vision

Champlain College has a history of supporting our local community, from creating academic programs to meet needs in the community to hosting large scale events such as the Champlain College Summit of 2011: "Building Partnerships for a Thriving Workforce" to event sponsorship and direct service by students, faculty, staff and administrators. Champlain has also gone through a tremendous growth period in the past decade, and our small campus where everyone knew everyone and everything that was happening, is no longer the case.

In creating this plan, we brought together people from across the institution and in our community to assess the breadth of our current practices across campus. **Through this process we found that a) there are a vast array of current community engagement practices at Champlain b) there is opportunity to raise awareness of existing efforts, and c) we want to make sure we are aligning our current and future efforts with community needs and the College's strategic plan.**

Definitions

Civic Engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes." (Excerpted from *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, Preface, page vi.) In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community. (AAC&U)

Service-Learning is a teaching method which that combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic engagement. Service learning programs involve students in organized projects with community partners. Projects address specific partner needs while developing student academic skills and sense of civic responsibility. (Source: Adapted from Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges; Adopted by Champlain College Faculty Senate, Spring 2004; Proposed updated definition, Spring 2017)

Community Service is the engagement of students [or faculty/staff] in activities that primarily focus on the service being provided as well as the benefits the service activities have on the recipients (e.g., providing food to the homeless during the holidays). The students [or faculty/staff] receive some benefits by learning more about how their service makes a difference in the lives of the service recipients. (Furco, 1996)

Volunteerism is the engagement of students [or faculty/staff] in activities where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the primary intended beneficiary is clearly the service recipient. (Furco, 1996)

Champlain College Values, Mission, and Vision

Italicized words relate to civic engagement

College Values

The central values of Champlain College are: Distinctive Excellence, Sustainability, Innovation, Human Touch, *Global Engagement*, Diversity and Inclusion. These serve as the foundation of the strategic vision upon which the Strategic Plan is constructed.

College Mission

Champlain College endeavors to be a leader in educating today's students to become skilled practitioners, effective professionals and *engaged global citizens*. Champlain's agile and entrepreneurial approach to higher education uniquely blends technology leadership, market savvy, innovation and fiscal responsibility with a commitment to liberal learning, *community involvement* and "the human touch." This distinctive approach permeates the delivery of relevant, rigorous student-centered programs in business, arts, applied technology and *public service*.

Strategic Vision

By 2020, Champlain College will be the finest small, professionally and globally focused college in the United States.

College Competencies

- *Critical & Creative Thinking*
- *Ethical Reasoning*
- *Global Appreciation*
- Oral Communication
- Quantitative Literacy
- Written Communication
- Technology and Information Literacy

Champlain College 2020 Strategic Plan

Goal II: Enrich Student Life

Initiative II.3. Champlain will offer appropriate programs and services that enhance life skills of traditional undergraduates.

- *Develop a multi-layered engagement and outreach approach to community service that will provide targeted approaches to students wherever they lie on the engagement spectrum.*
- *Attain 60% participation of upper-class students in community service by creating and identifying opportunities for community service among upper-class students.*
- *Instill the concept of service throughout four years as an important part of a Champlain education.*

Approach to Plan Development

Our goal with the creation of this plan was to gather the breadth of depth of current practice across campus, and to bring together people from across the institution to see what we're doing and why. We utilized the five commitments from the 30th Anniversary Action Statement as our overall framework for discussion.

Commitments from the 30th Anniversary Action Statement

To advance the public purposes of higher education, we affirm the following statements, which characterize our current commitments and name the ideals toward which we will work with renewed dedication, focus, and vigor.

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.

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.

We embrace our responsibilities as place based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.

We harness the capacity of our institutions—through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice—to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.

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.

Planning Team

Dr. Laurel Bongiorno, Dean, Education & Human Studies Division and Interim Dean,
Stiller School of Business

Dr. Christina Erickson, Director for Service & Sustainability Learning

Sandy Yusen, Director, Communications and External Relations

Amanda Christensen '17, Psychology, Division of Education & Human Studies

Tony Perriello, J.D., Associate Professor and Assistant Dean for Adjunct Support,
Division of Education & Human Studies

Strategy for creating our Civic Action Plan

Civic Engagement Spyglass Session

February 9, 2017

Over 50+ faculty, staff, students and community partners in attendance

Champlain College Faculty/Staff Survey

February 2017

Collected over 135 responses from faculty (full time - 24% and adjunct - 25%) and staff & administrators - 51%

Student Drop-In Session & Survey

March 7, 2017

Gathered input from over 40 students, either in person or electronically





General themes in data analysis from these events/sources:

- We do a lot related to civic engagement, but there isn't a lot of awareness of this across the institution.
- We also still have a lot of work to do within our own campus community, especially as it relates to diversity and inclusion; access and success (for both students and employees of color); and compensation equity for adjunct faculty.
- We need to work on our culture of service - not to just have it as a requirement, but inspire students and employees to want to serve.
- We aim to make service relevant to student interests and career goals.
- We have relatively easy access to our political system in Burlington, Chittenden County, and Vermont and should make the most of this.
- Top issues that students, faculty, and staff noted interest in: 1) diversity & inclusion; 2) education 3) sustainability; 4) housing/homelessness; 5) economic development; 6) opiate epidemic.

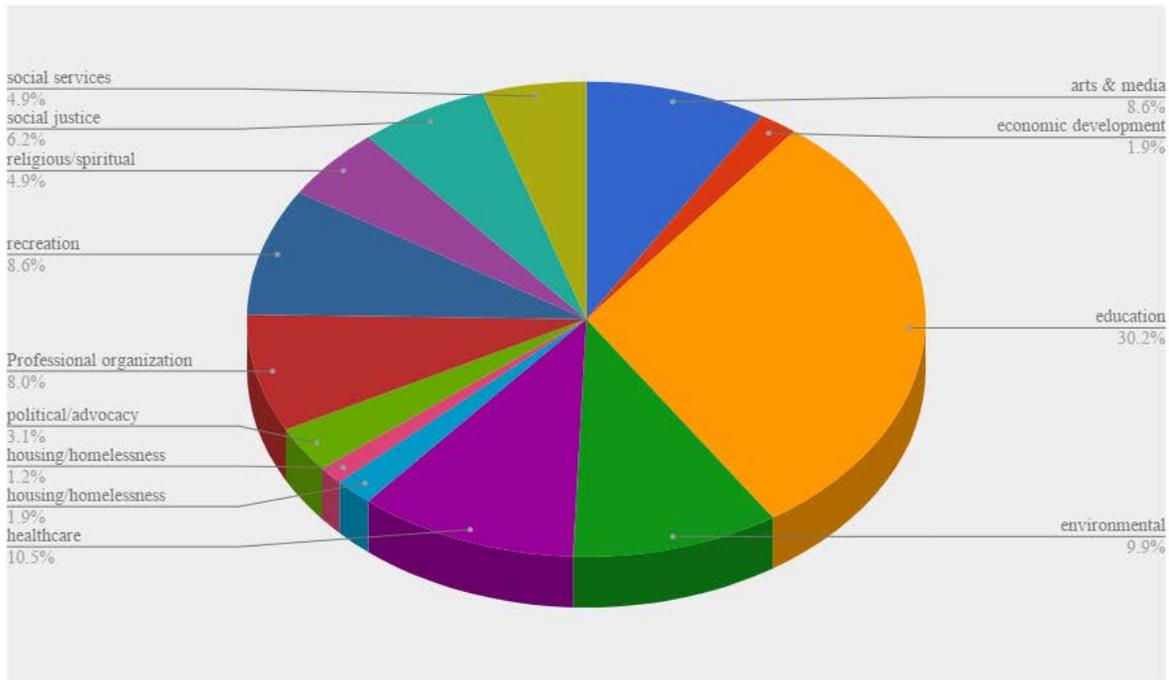
Notable quotes:

- "I love this idea and think that Champlain College should be a leader in VT in ways that it is not currently; I also think that work-load balance is huge and needs to be a consideration, as does our commitment to both scholarly research and community-based scholarly research. To teach high quality courses with strong feedback to students in a 4:4 model, makes other commitments challenging..."
- "I am impressed with the level of civic engagement and awareness of the Champlain College Community. It has inspired me to be involved and conscientious in my daily life."
- "From my experience on the Dublin campus being in contact with third year students, very few students arrive with an intrinsic willingness or desire to take up

volunteering opportunities within the community outside of a course placement or internship. It seems the culture of volunteering and community engagement is not present or a priority for most students. However, in the past two semesters, I have witnessed a marked increase in students' awareness and interest in attending political rallies, discussions, and debating global issues. The college's fostering of students' interests in the more macro politics may lead to more participation community based initiatives and advocacy with the correct guidance."

- "Find what students are passionate about each year and create those opportunities or better yet, allow them to create those opportunities themselves. I think this is happening but we can always improve our systems. The challenge will be to get certain groups of students to care about issues that they don't think pertain to them but actually do. What can a game major do to change the world? How do we get them out into the community and caring?"
- "We should pursue initiatives that truly have an impact on the communities and individuals we are attempting to serve and learn about. This means students should be asked to devote enough time to actually affect change in their own lives by their involvement with others."
- "I believe many people have a "feeling" that Champlain is doing lots of good work in this area, but being able to quantify it and tell this story more effectively (and accurately) is essential."
- "Champlain College is involved a lot with our communities and speak sincerely about ideas and actions for moving forward. However, last summer I received an email from Nyjah Strange, a former student that truly shocked me (<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/being-black-on-predominantly-white-campus>). Her article proved to me that our actions, internal to our own community, were ineffective. So as we look external to our communities, I hope our efforts continue to focus on our own internal community."
- "I would like to see community engagement and an ethic of engagement/service tied to academic classes more. This might mean designing an app to address a community issue, or drawing up new signage for a non-profit. There are ways that each division could engage in greater service. It would be exciting to see the whole college commit each year to a new cause and track our collective progress over time."
- "We need an active outlet that is going to run workshops & encourage volunteering at all times. The classroom is not a place for such broad life skills. These things should be done voluntarily & not as a mandatory assignment. Making volunteer opportunities mandatory discourages students & puts them in a negative mindset."
- "Champlain should take some more time to focus in on cultural competencies or racial groups on campus. Champlain should also focus on empowering student activist groups."

Champlain Employees Professional or Personnel Service by Organization Type



Institutional Baseline: Our Assets at Champlain & In Our Community

Current Champlain College Practices

Institutional Identity & Culture

- College Mission
- Annual Distinguished Citizen Award - presented at Convocation each fall
- Honorary Degree Recipients - presented at Commencement each spring
- Institutional memberships
 - Association of American Colleges & Universities
 - Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
 - Vermont Higher Education Council - VHEC

Institutional Commitment

- Women's & Gender Center
- Women's Empowerment Initiative
- Office of Diversity & Inclusion
- Center for Service & Sustainability
- Center for Financial Literacy

- Emergent Media Center
- Leahy Center for Digital Investigation
- Inclusion of community engagement in Strategic Plan
- Staff are asked to include community engagement and service examples in their annual performance evaluation
- Full time faculty are expected to contribute the equivalent of three (3) service Faculty Load Credits per semester, which may include off-campus service
- Reaching Out On Technology and Science (ROOTS) - (formerly known as KITS) program, hosted by IT&S Division
- Recruitment pipeline programs including Charter High School for Architecture & Design (CHAD)
- Sources of data: Spyglass Session notes, student & employee survey results, Champlain College website

Curricular Engagement

- Student internships at non-profit organizations
- Service-learning projects in classes
- Education & Human Studies Signature Courses
- Vermont Income Tax Assistance program
- Emergent Media Center
- Senator Leahy Center for Digital Investigation
- **Outreach & Partnerships**
- Professional Services offered: Event Center, Digital Investigation, Digital Media
- Champlain administrators, faculty, and staff serving on Boards for community organizations
- Host Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly meetings
- Annual United Way Campaign
- Community Event sponsorship & promotion, including: South End Art Hop, Harvest Run for Sustainability, Open Streets, Spring Move Out Project, Dragonheart Vermont
- LEAD Engaged Citizen service options
- Faculty/Staff Engagement Day - Service Day (annual event in May)
- Youth Mentoring (Education classes; co-curricular - via VISTA program, 2014-2016, student club DREAM ; staff volunteering)
- International Service Trips
- Voter registration outreach
- Transportation to rallies and events (eg: Women's March & Unity Rally, Montpelier, 2017; People's Climate March, 2017)
- Tabling outreach for various causes
- Student Government Association
- Campus Apiary offers tours for school groups
- Past examples:
 - Tent City - homeless awareness event, sparked by Hurricane Katrina (2005-2014)
 - Slam for Sudan (2009-2010)

Institutional Benchmarks related to Civic Engagement

1. National Survey of Student Engagement - Champlain College's 2015 result summary for civic engagement related questions
2. AASHE's Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) - Public Engagement Segment - Champlain College's 2016 results
3. Modern Think Great Colleges to Work For - Community Engagement related questions - Champlain College's 2014 & 2016 results

Current collective impact efforts that exist in our community/Vermont

The Vermont Collective Impact brings together the work of United Way of Northwest Vermont, UVM Medical Center, Vermont Community Foundation, and Chittenden County RPC.



Several Champlain staff people are weekly reading mentors in the Everybody Wins! Vermont program.

Outcomes & Implementation

Goal #1: To maintain our strong commitment to community engagement as part of Champlain College's culture, with annual data collection in categories of service by the Center for Service and Sustainability, through 2020.

Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the

mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and 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 (source: [Carnegie](#)).

Goal #2: Champlain College's Strategic Communications Department will determine the appropriateness of a civic engagement-focused institutional communication piece during the 2018-2019 academic year and may include such a piece as part of the institutional communication plan.

Goal #3: The strategic planning process that will begin in Spring 2018 and create the successor to Champlain 2020, will be informed by the framework for civic engagement and guided by the data reflecting institutional commitment.



Amanda Christensen '17 presenting her senior capstone project. Photo by Stephen Mease