

University of Southern Maine Campus Compact Civic Action Plan: Executive Summary

USM is using our application for the Carnegie Foundation Elective Community Engagement Classification as the basis for our action plan timeline and outcomes. This means we must have all plan components solidified by 2018 in order to complete the application (due in 2019). Time frames for rolling out the steps of our action plan will vary. The current time frame for curriculum modification is that a new engaged learning requirement will be implemented by fall 2018. We expect that a Community Based Learning course designation for service learning, internships, community research and other courses will be ready in the coming months so that students will be able to search for courses with a CBL designation.

The timelines for other significant institutional changes will vary by item. For example, any changes in promotion and tenure policies will vary by program, school, college, etc. Any changes the institution might consider in purchasing policies or practices are ultimately under the authority of the University of Maine System, and time frames for any changes in those areas will depend on system-level approvals beyond the university.

Our reporting requirements for the Carnegie classification align nicely with those that are necessary for a successful Action Plan, and we plan to use these for both processes. We have data collection and reporting mechanisms well established in our Assessment, Institutional Research, and Community Engagement and Career Development offices. Our Director of Educational Partnerships will be responsible for aligning these various data and reporting resources.

Outcomes

To create sustained capacity to support effective community engagement on the part of faculty, staff, and students, and create strong, working partnerships, we are piloting a variety of efforts:

- Consolidation of communication structures and processes so that faculty and staff committees are not retracing steps already taken, and over-burdening the community with inquiry
- Creating feedback loops for all outreach and engagement so that we collect and use information about how we are addressing needs and building partnerships
- Providing all students with curricular and co-curricular opportunities to prepare for internships, service learning, and community-based research experiences
- Providing incentives for the inclusion of existing community-engaged work as well as the elected incorporation of this pedagogical approach across disciplines
- Incorporating student perspectives into more committees and councils to round out the voices in any conversation to ensure the inclusion of student perspective (full-time, part-time, traditional, non-traditional)
- Providing public forums where faculty practitioners share results of community-engaged research, scholarship and creative activity.