

Community Engagement Assessment and Civic Action Plan



Background

Civic Action Planning was initiated through a [pledge](#) that university presidents across the nation signed to evaluate and assess community engagement on their campuses. All 21 Iowa Campus Compact member presidents, including President Moore signed the commitment to Civic Action planning. Buena Vista University (BVU) started the process in the fall of 2016 as a collaboration with Iowa Campus Compact using the Self-Assessment rubric that was designed based on the Carnegie Classification in Community Engagement.

Committee members included individuals in multiple areas of campus with a variety of levels of engagement in the community of Storm Lake and our sites across the state of Iowa. When selecting individuals to serve the co-chairs were intentional about including individuals who have served the institution for several years and a handful of years to provide variety of experiences and perspectives. Co-chairs were: Dr. Ashley Farmer-Hanson, Assistant Dean for Student Life and Director of Civic Engagement and Dale Scully, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students. Committee Members included: Dr. Jim Salvucci, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Emmanuel Amon AmeriCorps VISTA, Jean Bral, Director of Operations, OSG, Lori Berglund, Director of Career and Personal Development, Zoey Breese, Senior Admissions Counselor, Dr. Annamaria Elsdén, Dean of the School of Communications and Arts, Dr. Julie Finnern, Dean of the School of Education and Exercise Science, Cristena Heschke, Student MOVE President and Civic Engagement Student Coordinator, Amy Jones, Director of Alumni Engagement and Laura Todd, Marketing Coordinator. To ensure we had community voice incorporated into the process a focus group meeting was held off campus at a local

coffee shop to provide common ground and a place where many of them already conduct business meetings. Representatives from multiple agencies and organizations provided feedback for the assessment and planning process. Organizations represented were: Lulac, Goodwill Industries, Compass Point, BVRMC, BVRMC Fitness Center, Iowa Lutheran Services, Storm Lake Community Schools, The Bridge of Storm Lake and Habitat for Humanity.

Process

The Community Engagement Assessment and Civic Action planning were conducted in seven one hour meetings, individual work outside of meetings and attending a day long Iowa Campus Compact institute with nine other schools undergoing the same process. The meetings and process were conducted in three phases of individually assessing BVU using the Self-Assessment rubric, norming as a group and finally action planning. Action planning was slowly integrated into every phase strategically through the method of Actions for Retrospect. In phase one every committee member completed the Self-Assessment rubric individually. At our next meeting the rankings were discussed, specifically those that overlapped and were outliers. Following dialogue about the rubric everyone was challenged to take the first steps for the Actions for Retrospect and identify puzzles, risks, appreciations and wishes for all 16 rubric areas and specifically what items would enhance the institution to advance to a higher rating on the rubric for that specific area. Phase two was taking the rankings and as a group discussing and norming. As we started the process we realized that the group would need to make a ranking for Storm Lake and one for OSG as they are still both BVU, but have different student

bodies and faculty and staff structures. Phase three was dedicated to taking the normed data and developing an action plan to move the institution up in the rubric and to enhance our community engagement efforts. We revisited the Actions for Retrospective and the puzzles, risks, appreciations, wishes and rankings and identified action steps to take for the future.

Action, Outcomes and Goals

Below is a summary of proposed outcomes. A full report can be found in the Office of Civic Engagement.

Committee:

- Formalize a committee to lead Civic Action Plan
- Identify additional resources to support efforts

Training:

- Additional training for faculty, staff, students and community members in the area of Community Engagement.
- Additional funding resources to support training.

Positions:

- More human resources to support institutional Community Engagement efforts
- Additional encouragement and support from upper administration for campus community to be engaged in Community Engagement.

Community Voice:

- Presidents Council members involved in local issues or it more widely known that they are involved.
- Host more round table conversations with the Storm Lake community and communities where OSG is.
- Provide additional trainings and educational sessions at OSG and Storm Lake

Marketing:

- Highlight more of the efforts taking place
- Share data and stories more

Foundation & Mission:

- Intentionally integrate and collect data
- Involve more areas in Community Engagement
- Design more opportunities to collaborate around Community Engagement

Academics:

- Community Engagement imbedded in to courses more
- Design a better method to track Community Engagement
- Identify learning outcomes centered around Community Engagement
- Support more research around Community Engagement
- Provide Faculty development in Community Engagement

Co-Curricular

- Partner with Residence Life, Student Senate and clubs to integrate more