



## **The Stritch Civic Action Plan**

**October 6, 2017**

**Overview:** The Cardinal Stritch University campus community is proud to join fellow Wisconsin Campus Compact (WiCC) member institutions and others throughout the United States in articulating and implementing a civic action plan. By joining this national movement committed to building a more engaged and responsive citizenry, we are confident our efforts will contribute to a more just and responsive society.

This document is divided into three main sections. Section I includes Cardinal Stritch University's Civic Action Statement, along with contextual information about Campus Compact's Civic Action focal areas and the foundational connections with Stritch's vision, mission, and Catholic, Franciscan Values. The first section also includes a brief review of our Civic Action Planning process. Section II highlights the University's "present state" of civic engagement actions, including how we are working to integrate civic action into curricular and co-curricular activities, as well as into current University strategic planning and academic identity initiatives. Section III provides the framework for our civic action work that forwards an integrated approach to engaged teaching, scholarship, partnerships, and institutional action. In this final section, we seek not only to state our pragmatic commitments and aspirational intentions for our University's integrated civic life, but also to put forth a more pointed articulation of how we envision Stritch graduates will embody servant leadership and civic action throughout their lifetimes.

There is one final note of introduction that must be made abundantly clear: Cardinal Stritch University is invested in the successful realization of this Civic Action Plan not only because of a commitment to the Campus Compact mission "to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility," but also due to its clear alignment to our own institution's mission and values. We are deeply committed to this plan because creating a caring community gets at the very heart of who we are and what we value as a Franciscan institution founded by the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. We don't merely want to be engaged local and global citizens, we must be.

**Section I: Civic Action Statement, Context & Foundation:** The Civic Action Statement is firmly rooted in Cardinal Stritch University's mission, Franciscan values, and vision. The University's mission highlights the institution's central purpose of transforming "lives and communities through servant leadership, learning, and service" and is "guided by the Catholic, Franciscan values of creating a caring community, making peace, showing compassion, and reverencing creation as we embrace and cultivate the diversity of all of God's creation." The Stritch vision states that the University will be a catalyst for individuals to "approve the better things" as they discover their purpose in life. These words are clear expressions of how civic action and engagement comprises the very fabric of who we are as an institution of higher learning and how our path forward must necessarily be directed towards proactively contributing toward a more socially just and civil society.

Civic Action Statement: *At Cardinal Stritch University, we are committed to acting in ways that align with our Franciscan values of creating a caring community, making peace, reverencing creation, and showing compassion. We will continue to speak out about the civic issues of the day, and we will be civically engaged locally and globally because we are called to do so spiritually, philosophically, and pragmatically. Our commitment will be evident in our campus dialogues and strategic thinking, curricular and co-curricular development, community partner relationships, and in our fervent desire to instill the power of servant leadership into every Stritch graduate.*

At Stritch, we have long articulated that the education we deliver rests on the foundational pillars of leadership, learning, and service. Our success will be measured by our graduates' abilities to use their talents, knowledge and experiences developed at the University to become servant leaders in their chosen personal and professional paths. Toward this end, the ultimate measure of the University's civic action plan is that the world will recognize that:

***In every Stritch graduate, you will discover a servant leader.***

Servant leaders are defined by those who seek to serve first. They have a desire to serve, and then they naturally evolve into leaders because of their commitment to serve. Servant leaders enrich the lives of individuals and the organizations where they work, and they ultimately create a more just and caring world. Servant leaders are engaged local and global citizens, and are most at home where social justice, compassion, and human dignity are valued and nurtured. Servant leaders are civically active individuals who cultivate leadership, learning, and service throughout their lifetimes, and they are people who always feel completely at home at Cardinal Stritch University and the world.

While the Stritch mission, vision, and values provide a clear and powerful foundation and framework for this Action Plan, Campus Compact provides valuable context and guidance for how to further refine civic engagement related principles and practices. More specifically, the 2016 Campus Compact 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Action Statement, signed by university and college leaders across the country, highlights the commitments which all member campuses, including Cardinal Stritch University, will strive to rededicate themselves to in the years ahead.

**Commitment from the Campus Compact  
30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Action Statement**

**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** 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.

Retrieved from: <http://compact.org/actionstatement/>

**Stritch Planning Process:** The National Campus Compact statement helped guide the Stritch Civic Action planning process throughout its inception in April 2016. The campus process was initiated by Dr. James P. Loftus who had the unique role of serving as both the Cardinal Stritch University President and the Wisconsin Campus Compact Board Chair. President Loftus, who was among the WiCC university and college presidents and chancellors to first sign the civic action commitment, charged a group of faculty and staff to bring the commitment to life at Stritch. Towards this end, the planning group went to work on the following key planning components in order to build a strategic, sustainable, and impactful Civic Action Plan.

1. Civic Action Statement: A Stritch Civic Action Statement will be created that clearly and succinctly articulates the University's commitment to advancing civic and community engagement principles and practices. The Stritch statement will be rooted in Franciscan values and the University's mission and vision statements.
2. Civic Action Plan: The plan itself will be created by an interdisciplinary team of faculty and staff who will seek the input of community partners, colleagues, campus leaders, and Campus Compact professionals

3. Integration: The Civic Action Plan will be integrated into existing work with the Academic Identity, The Stritch Experience, and the emerging University strategic plan.
4. Institutionalization: Operationalizing the plan will take place in part through deepening the relationship with identified “signature” partners (i.e., community partners with whom Stritch has shared goals and values, mutually beneficial outcomes, and multifaceted connections). Further, support and encouragement will be given to incorporating civic engagement program outcomes that are a part of all degree programs in the University and to attaching similar civic engagement program outcomes to all appropriate co-curricular programs at Stritch. Additional connections to University policy and procedural changes will also be explored.
5. Measuring Progress: Metrics and indicators will be identified to monitor and assess the impact of the plan. Exploration of existing University indicators in this realm need to be reviewed to determine what practices exist and where gaps exist. Ultimately, measuring civic engagement and community impact progress must be integrated with and meaningfully inform other evaluation and accreditation related efforts.

As a means of pursuing the components above, the planning group took various steps to construct the Action Plan, including communications and consultations with WiCC Executive Director Dr. Gavin Luter, and Stritch Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Jeff Senese. The group as a whole also visited with leaders of three key Stritch partners: UMOS, Inc., The Milwaukee Jewish Museum, and the Holocaust Education Resource Center (HERC). Members of the group also shared concepts of the Civic Engagement Plan at various other campus venues, including at University Strategic Planning Committee meetings and at various Academic Identity Action Team discussions.

## **Section II: Present State and Alignment with Curricular, Co-Curricular, and Strategic Initiatives:**

There is a great deal of civic action focused work already taking place in Stritch’s curricular, co-curricular, and strategic efforts, and this section seeks to briefly summarize the landscape in this regard. Understanding our “present state” enables us to thoughtfully evolve into our desired future state. Current civic engagement efforts include:

### Curricular Initiatives:

- Revision of the Liberal Arts Core: An extensive, wide-reaching curriculum development initiative was completed in 2013 that included “local and global community engagement” as one of the core learning outcomes. The implementation of the core intentionally created a coherent, sequenced educational continuum of experiences for all undergraduate students to engage in developmentally appropriate community-engaged learning opportunities. The continuum of experiences moves students from

“exposure, to capacity building, to responsibility phases” throughout their college career (Howe, Coleman, Hamshaw, & Westdijk, 2014).

- Freshmen and Transfer Seminars: As a component of the revised Liberal Arts Core, all students participate in Stritch Seminar courses that include at least one *exposure* level service-learning element.
- Advanced Core Certificates: Also through the revised liberal arts core, as part of the advanced core certificates, all students complete at least one *capacity-building* level experiential education project.
- Internships, Practica, Student Teaching: As a final step in the community engaged learning continuum, undergraduates in all disciplines have the opportunity (and are often required) to participate in internships, practica, or student teaching experiences. These experiences ultimately enable students to take *responsibility* in the community and lead them to make significant contributions to the larger society and the greater good.
- Community Service: The integration of community service is found throughout undergraduate and graduate curricula. This notably includes team community service projects in all introductory undergraduate and graduate evening business courses, and a full year dedicated to service in the Doctorate in Leadership for the Advancement of Learning and Service.
- Special Initiatives: Throughout the University degree programs, there are often special initiatives that further deepen the curricular connections to civic engagement. In the 2016-17 years, examples of these initiatives included the artsHUBMilwaukee program, a partnership with Arts@Large and Milwaukee Public Schools to support Stritch education students as they become confident and competent teaching in and through the arts. Another example was the Healthy Kids Collaborative, an initiative integrating nursing student clinical experiences into Milwaukee Public Schools and Milwaukee Health Department nursing services.

#### Co-Curricular Initiatives:

- Franciscan Servant Scholars: This four year scholarship program engages students in intentional exploration of social justice reasoning, Catholic social teaching, organized monthly service projects and on-going community-based internships as students prepare for a life committed to social justice.
- Athletics Champions of Character: Through their participation in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, the Stritch athletic teams complete hundreds of hours of community service each athletic season.
- Mission Integration and University Ministry Programs: For over 25 years, University Ministry has partnered with the St. Bens meal program to organize faculty, staff, and student volunteers on a monthly basis. University Ministry also organizes alternative break experiences for students to engage in cultural and service experiences, and most recently initiated an annual University Service Day that is part of the Academic Identity process and partners with multiple community organizations to support hundreds of volunteers hailing from all areas of the campus community.

- Residence and Community Advisor Programs: All students living in the residence halls have the opportunity to participate in at least one service project organized each semester by their Residence and Community Advisors.
- Student Activities and Multicultural Programs: Student clubs, organizations, and organically formed groups of students engage in service and advocacy work as part of their missions. Through the support of professional staff, students are able to become involved in community advocacy initiatives and sponsor university-wide conversations. One Voice is an example of a new group of students which formed in 2017 to promote diversity and address concerns for those experiencing marginalization, oppression, fear, and violence being experienced by undocumented citizens, immigrants, religiously diverse individuals, and people of color.
- Speakers Series: The Kendall Lecture Series, Mission-Driven Leaders Speaker Series and the Br. Booker Ashe Speaker Series are all ongoing efforts to bring civic leaders into the forefront and stimulate campus community dialogues about pertinent societal issues of the day.

### Strategic Initiatives

- Academic Identity: This holistic Academic Affairs initiative was led by the Stritch Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and involved scores of faculty and staff in advancing actions that include engaged learning and community partnerships among other civically focused efforts.
- Outreach Programs: The University is host to several high profile initiatives and programs that are focused on serving community civic needs including the Saint Clare Center for Catholic Life, Southeastern Wisconsin Educator Project, African American Leadership Program, Neighborhood Leadership Institute, and Urban Literacy Centers.
- Special High Profile Programs: When opportunities arise, the University commits itself to high profile programs that serve the community and accentuate Stritch's role as a civically engaged institution. An example of such a project in 2016-17 was Cardinal Stritch University's Project Pitch-It, a television program committed to supporting entrepreneurs, community economic development, and job growth. Another recent example was Stritch's involvement in the multi-million dollar Transform Milwaukee initiative in which ten Stritch business student interns served various nonprofit organizations working together towards a more vibrant and economically sustainable City of Milwaukee.

### **Section III: Plans and Future State**

As is evident in Section II, there is already a substantive array of civic action related programs and activities that occur within the Stritch campus community. In considering how to further institutionalize, grow, document and measure the impacts of these efforts in an integrated and strategic manner, the following steps will be taken:

**1) To deepen how civic action will be further institutionalized at Stritch, we plan to:**

- a. Incorporate the University's commitment to civic action planning and implementation in the 2020 Stritch Strategic Plan.  
*Lead: Gesner; Timeline: September 2017*
- b. Highlight and engage in dialogue with University stakeholders about the meaning and implications of the new Civic Action Statement.  
*Lead: Gesner; Timeline: September 2017*
- c. Recommend and work towards incorporating the Civic Action Statement and aspects of the plan into the student, faculty, and employee handbooks.  
*Leads: Lybeck-Smoak, Foust Vinson, Mueller; Timeline: May 2018*

**2) To strategically grow Civic Action programs and activities, we plan to:**

- a. Implement "The Stritch Experience" which is focused on building the level of exposure, capacity, and civic responsibility students gain as part and parcel of earning a Stritch academic degree.  
*Lead: Lybeck-Smoak; phased implementation, Timeline: Initiate in August 2017*
- b. Clarify the definition, purpose, and approach Stritch has with "Signature Partners" and discuss how an integrated aspect of these partnerships are aligned with Civic Action priorities. *Leads: Gesner and Lansing; Initiate: May 2017*
- c. Determine and implement ways to celebrate and support the community engagement efforts of University faculty, staff, and students.  
*Lead: Lybeck-Smoak; Timeline: January 2018*
- d. Look for new and innovative ways to forward Stritch's civic action commitment. In year one of the plan implementation, this will include a Community Partners event that engages faculty with community leaders in new ways.  
*Lead: Lybeck-Smoak; Timeline: January 2018*
- e. Provide input and consultation to the faculty rank and tenure process regarding how civic action and community engaged learning can be effectively integrated into the faculty promotion and assessment process.  
*Leads: Gesner and Mueller; Timeline: May 2018*
- f. Continue to speak out about our Civic Action commitment in the form of public discourse, written communication, and engagement in community-wide social justice issues, as well as through ongoing participation in interfaith dialogues.  
*Lead: Lansing (in concert with the Stritch President); Timeline: January 2018*

**3) To more effectively document and measure existing and future civic action efforts on campus, we plan to:**

- a. Catalogue existing civic engagement actions and share the findings with the campus community for further dialogue and strategic planning. This includes documenting the items in Section II above, and maintaining a database of community partnerships.  
*Lead: Lybeck-Smoak; Timeline: Initiate in August 2017*

- b. Highlight civic action work into University marketing and public relations efforts (e.g., annual report, website, printed collateral materials, Stritch News).  
*Lead: Gesner (in concert with Stritch Marketing and PR Directors); Timeline: Initiate in September 2017*
- c. Explore specific opportunities for resources and philanthropic support for civic engagement programs and activities.  
*Lead: Gesner (in concert with University Advancement VP); Timeline: Initiate in October 2017*
- d. Work with Campus Compact colleagues to discern which civic engagement evaluation measure(s) will most effectively contribute to civic engagement aims at Stritch, in collaboration with the statewide and national Campus Compact movement.  
*Leads: Gesner; Timeline: Initiate in July 2017*

*Respectively submitted by the members of the Cardinal Stritch University Civic Action Planning Team:*

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