



University of Bridgeport Civic Action Plan

Approved May 2018

Executive Summary

There presently exists a large and diverse number of civic and community engagement efforts and programming at University of Bridgeport. These efforts all reflect the five core principles of Campus Compact Civic Action Plan to more effectively develop mutually beneficial partnerships, educate an active and engaged citizenry, challenge social and economic inequalities, and orient University of Bridgeport as an anchor institution in our community. However, through collaborative research and dialogue, the Civic Action Plan Committee was able to identify several areas where we can become stronger; where we can improve and better communicate our existing efforts; and where we can expand and deepen the public and democratic purposes of the university. The Civic Action Plan Committee also noted the direct correlation between active civic participation and increased retention and graduation rates, particularly among students who are involved in academic service learning. All research on academic service learning shows a direct correlation between academic service learning and significant increase in both retention and graduation. As such, the committee was able to identify the following possible ways to improve and expand our civic and community engagement efforts:

Priority Area #1: Building Partnerships for Change

- Interfaith Partnerships
- Co-teaching opportunities for community partners
- K-12 partnerships

Priority Area #2: Preparing Students for Citizenship

- Increased voter education and participation
- NRZ representation

Priority Area #3: Responsibility of Place

- NRZ representation
- Location based institution, in that UB will be seen as a premier community resource for residents of the City of Bridgeport and specifically for South End residents.
- Specific Scholarship program for graduates of Bridgeport Public Schools

Priority Area #4: Institutional Capacity

- Creation of Office of Civic Engagement & Service Learning
- Social Justice minor
- Social Justice Training Institute
- Mini grants for service learning course development
- Service Learning designation in course catalog
- Service hours on co-curricular record, explore possibility of listing academic service learning hours on academic transcript.
- Service honor cords
- Carnegie Classification in Community Engagement

Priority Area #5: Public Purposes

- Matching Segal Education Award
- Specific Scholarship program for graduates of Bridgeport Public Schools

After identifying these priority areas, the Committee was then able to establish specific outcomes and goals for each area. In our Civic Action Plan, we discuss these priority areas and goals. We provide a rationale for each priority area and offer specific

recommendations and outcomes for each. Importantly, the Committee believes that each of these recommendations and outcomes is somewhat provisional. In other words, the Committee believes the implementation of the Civic Action Plan needs to be a catalyst for having inclusive democratic dialogue and deliberation about UB's role and responsibility in urban civic engagement. Such deliberation and inclusivity carries over into five-year timeline of implementation as well. We have delineated a broad timeline for our recommendations with the understanding that some of the recommendations will be achieved quickly and others will require ongoing efforts. The timeline, like the plan itself, is intended to be a guide for implementation and not a fixed schedule.

Vision/Mission

University of Bridgeport President Neil Albert Salonen signed the Campus Compact Thirtieth Anniversary Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors in November 2015. Campus Compact represents a commitment to reinvigorate the public and democratic purposes of higher education in relation to teaching, service, research, and institutional decision making. As a core component of this statement, President Salonen committed to creating a campus Civic Action Plan, the purpose of which would be to deepen civic and community engagement and enhance the public purposes of University of Bridgeport.

The Civic Action Plan committee was formed in order to develop a Civic Action Plan for University of Bridgeport in alignment with our campus mission and strategic plan. The purpose of the Civic Action Plan is to forward UB's role as an urban-engaged campus in the city of Bridgeport and expand our civic and community engagement efforts in ways that advance citizenship and positive social change. Reflecting these commitments, the Civic Action Plan committee held a series of meetings and conducted research in fall 2016 in order to establish an institutional baseline of existing civic and community engagement efforts at University of Bridgeport and make recommendations for developing the Civic Action Plan, a roadmap for future civic and community engagement efforts. The Civic Action Plan is a five-year plan and should be seen as a living document that will grow and develop with implementation.

Approach

Institutional Baseline

Many classes at the University of Bridgeport engage with different community members whether through required practicums, internships, clinics, and community service. Although these classes provide a great benefit to the Bridgeport community with special regards to the South End community, most classes do not practice academic service learning as defined by Campus Compact. Academic Service Learning is intentionally linked to and enhanced by meaningful and appropriate service that meets real needs in collaboration with community organizations and integrated with guided critical reflection on the disciplinary/professional, civic/social dimensions of learning.

Whether some kind of community engagement or internship is a requirement to graduate, such as the case with the Human Services program, or teaching hours are required, such as the Masters of Education program, most community engagement opportunities which professors have set up in other areas of study, have not been set up as an intentionally, mutually beneficial relationship with the community nor do the classes offer reflection on the community impact of their service. Using the Human Services model and other service learning best practices, many classes and programs can easily make the transition from a class with a community engagement piece, to a service learning class that addresses real community needs met by students. The Graphic Design firm downtown, run as senior seminar class in an effort to provide an experience that gives students real world experience consulting with clients, is a perfect

example of a class that, with the addition of a reflection piece and community assessment introduction, would fit the category of service learning.

Community Baseline

With 144,229 residents (U.S. Census, 2010), Bridgeport is the largest city in Connecticut. It also is one of the poorest cities. A vast disparity exists between urban, lower-income Bridgeport and its suburban, wealthier neighbors. Bridgeport's per capita income average of \$19,504 is less than half (43.9%) of neighboring Trumbull (\$44,384) and slightly more than one-third (35.4%) of the average per capita income of neighboring Fairfield (\$55,000) (American Community Survey 2013). Bridgeport's average per capita income also falls short of both the Connecticut average of \$36,468 and the national average of \$27,041 (American Community Survey 2013). In addition, Bridgeport has a high rate of unemployment. In August 2014, the unemployment rate in Bridgeport was 10.5%, compared to 6.9% statewide, 5.6% in Fairfield, and 5.4% in Trumbull (Connecticut Labor Market Information, 2014). Bridgeport residents who are employed often earn only a minimum wage, which is not a living wage in this geographic area.

Subsequently, poverty is significant in Bridgeport. Approximately 18% of families live on incomes below the poverty level, compared to 6.2% statewide and 9.9% nationwide (American Community Survey, 2013). Almost 26% of children under 18 years in Bridgeport live in families whose income is below the federal poverty level, compared with 11.7% statewide (American Community Survey 2013). More than 95% of the students enrolled in the Bridgeport School District are eligible for free/reduced price meals (Connecticut State Department of Education 2010).

Bridgeport's population is also medically underserved. According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA, 2009), the City of Bridgeport has three federally designated Medically Underserved Areas. In 2007, the Connecticut Department of Public Health reported three Medically Underserved Populations in Bridgeport. A recent health survey conducted by the Bridgeport Community Allied to Reach Health Equity (Bridgeport CARES, 2013) reported that the top 10 health concerns of survey respondents were obesity (45.4%), aging problems (52.6%), drug and alcohol abuse (15.6%), depression (33.6%), heart disease (54.3%), smoking (18.5%), diabetes (29.7%), violence (4.5%), asthma (28.1%), infectious diseases (14.4% and STIs (1.6%) The top 10 risk factors affecting people's health in Bridgeport were identified as drug abuse, alcohol abuse, dropping out of school, being overweight, unsafe sex, tobacco use, racism, lack of exercise, poor eating habits, and betting or gambling (Bridgeport CARES, 2013). Obesity rates in Bridgeport are the highest in the state (Bridgeport CARES, 2013). Bridgeport has considerably more people in the morbidly obese category (32.6%) than Connecticut (25%) or the United States (29%) as a whole (Bridgeport CARES 20113).

Educational attainment and achievement rates in Bridgeport are low. Approximately 24% of Bridgeport's population 25 years and over do not have a high school diploma, and only 17% have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. (American Community

Survey, 2016). In the graduation class of 2015, there was a four-year graduation rate of 63.6% compared to a state graduation rate of 87.2%. In 2015, only 11.9% of Bridgeport 11th and 12th grade students met benchmark on at least one college readiness exam compared to 40.7% of students statewide. Bridgeport students score very poorly on standardized test such as the SAT, the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). In 2013, only 21.4% of 8th graders in the Bridgeport School System met the state goal in science, only 26.1% met the math goal, 29.6% met the writing goal and 37.9 % met the reading goal. Statewide, 42.7% of 8th graders met the state goals in science, 34.7% met the goal in math, 43.9% met the goal in writing and 43.7% met the goal in reading.

Planning Team

Chair: Jennifer Turner, Civic Engagement Coordinator
Virginia Orman, AmeriCorps VISTA Community Outreach Coordinator
Kelli Meyer, Director of Campus Activities and Civic Engagement
Craig Lennon, Assistant Dean of Students
Steve Hess, Associate Professor of Political Science
Emily Larned, Chair & Associate Professor of Graphic Design
Jamie Greiff, Associate Director of Compliance, Student Financial Services
Blessing Alomaja, Student
Bianca Diaz, Student
Rosario Terron, Center for Family Justice

Campus Compact Civic Action Plan Core Principles

Campus Compact is a national coalition of nearly 1,100 colleges and universities aimed at advancing the civic and democratic purposes of higher education. The network has developed over the last thirty years, and currently has a national office as well as state offices throughout the country. Campus Compact provides guidelines and resources for developing substantive campus civic and community engagement programs with a stated mission to “build a world in which all students are prepared for lives of engaged citizenship, all campuses are engaged in strong partnerships advancing community goals, and all of higher education is recognized as an essential building block of a just, equitable, and sustainable future.” Campus Compact has identified five core principles for fulfilling this mission and for creating an impactful Civic Action Plan. These five core principles are:

Priority Area #1: Building Partnerships for Change. 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.

Priority Area #2: Preparing Students for Citizenship. 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.

Priority Area #3: Responsibility of Place. We embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.

Priority Area #4: Institutional Capacity. 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.

Priority Area #5: Public Purposes. 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.

Outcomes and Priority Areas

There presently exists a large and diverse number of civic and community engagement efforts and programming at UB. These efforts all reflect the five core principles of Campus Compact Civic Action Plan to more effectively develop mutually beneficial partnerships, educate an active and engaged citizenry, challenge social and economic inequalities, and orient University of Bridgeport as an anchor institution in our community. However, through collaborative research and dialogue, the Civic Action Plan Committee was able to identify several areas where we can become stronger; where we can improve and better communicate our existing efforts; and where we can expand and deepen the public and democratic purposes of the college. The Civic Action Plan Committee also noted the direct correlation between active civic participation and increased retention and graduation rates, particularly among students who are involved in academic service learning. All research on academic service learning shows a direct correlation between academic service learning and significant increase in both retention and graduation. As such, the committee was able to identify the following possible ways to improve and expand our civic and community engagement efforts:

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Outcomes

Priority Area #1: Building Partnerships for Change

Developing and strengthening community partnerships is essential to the University of Bridgeport being a community engaged institution. As such, the following timeline will guide Priority Area #1:

Year 1:

- Develop a list of all current academic and co-curricular community partnerships
- Identify opportunities for community partnerships through Center for Religious and Spiritual Life programming. There will be monthly symposiums with local religious leaders focusing on a current issues/events and programming for the major holidays.

Year 1-2:

- Identify co-teaching opportunities for community partners in dialogue with academic deans. Classes with a co-teaching component will be clearly identified in the course catalog.

Year 1-2:

- Identify all current K-12 partnerships
- Identify ways to strengthen and expand these partnerships
- Determine engagement level of participating students utilizing assessment instruments approved by the Provost or his designee

Year 3-5:

- Creation of ongoing sustainable mentor/tutoring program for K-12 Bridgeport students that is a campus wide service learning initiative.

Outcome	Parties Responsible	Measure(s)	Indicator(s)
By the end of Year 1, provide a list of all current academic community partnerships	Institutional Research, Office of Campus Activities and Civic Engagement	Faculty and staff will report all current community partnerships.	All community partners identified in central database.
By the end of Year 2, all courses that are co-taught by a community partner will be identified.	Deans, Registrar's Office, University Publications	Deans will indicate courses being co-taught with a community partner.	Courses identified in course catalog.
In years 1 and 2, all current K-12 partnerships will be identified. The level of engagement of participating students will be determined. Pre and post surveys will be done of the teachers or the UB mentor to measure any increase in their academic readiness	Provost or designee will approve survey instrument.	Faculty and staff will report all current K-12 partnerships.	All K-12 partners identified in central database. Measurable surveys of UB students participating in these partnerships. Measureable pre and post surveys will be done of the teachers or the UB mentor to measure any increase in their academic readiness

Priority Area #2: Preparing Student for Citizenship

In order to prepare our UB students for citizenship, voter education and participation will be supported by the following:

Year 1-5:

- Voter registration drives will be held annually to increase voter registration by a minimum of 10% per year.

Year 1-5:

- UB will provide transportation to the voting polls for every local and national election.

Year 1:

- The Student Government Association (SGA) will elect or appoint a student representative to attend the South End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone committee meetings. The SGA constitution will be amended to create this as a permanent responsibility for one elected position.

Year 1-5:

- The Student Government Association will create an annual series of voter education forums leading up to Election Day.

Outcome	Parties Responsible	Measure(s)
In every year of the CAP, voter registration drives will be held annually to ensure that every eligible student, faculty and staff member is made aware of the opportunity to register to vote.	SGA, Student Organizations, Residential Life, Campus Activities & Civic Engagement (CACE)	The number of registrations will be measured and programming will be implemented to increase previous registrations by at least 10% annually
Beginning Year 1, UB will provide transportation to the voting polls for every local and national election.	Security, SGA, CACE	Transportation provided to polls. Transportation will be provided for the entire duration of polling hours and will be publicized to the UB community.
UB will be represented on the Neighborhood Revitalization Committee.	SGA, CACE	SGA will amend its constitution to appoint a representative to the NRZ. NRZ meetings will be publicized to all students. A representative will be appointed in Spring 2018 to begin serving in Fall 2018.
Beginning Year 1, Student Government Association will create a series of voter education programs to inform the UB community of local and national issues and to increase voter awareness and participation.	SGA	Programs will be offered to the UB Community, programs will be publicized to the entire community. Voter awareness links will be added to the Purple Knight Weekly.

Priority Area #3: Responsibility of Place

In order to be the best community partner, University of Bridgeport must position itself as a location based anchor institution. The timeline for this is as follows:

Year 1-5:

- See Priority Area #2 for implementation timeline for student representative to South End NRZ committee.

Year 1:

- Explore creation of communication plan for UB programs and services specifically targeting South End residents.

Year 1:

- South End needs assessment and asset mapping to identify ways to best position UB as an anchor institution.

Year 2-3:

- Working off of needs assessment and asset mapping, propose framework for creation of anchor institution strategic plan.

Year 2-3:

- Work with admissions to review existing funded scholarships for the development of need based tuition scholarship for graduates of Bridgeport Public High Schools.

Year 4-5:

- Consider if framework can be continued to implement anchor institution strategic plan.

Outcome	Parties Responsible	Measure(s)
The South End neighborhood will be specifically targeted in a coordinated marketing plan to bring awareness to UB programs and services that are available to the public	Dean of Students approves content in conjunction with Provost.	Marketing plan created by the end of Academic Year 2019
In Year 1, a complete needs assessment and asset map will be created to identify best ways for UB to be positioned as an anchor institution and meet the needs of the local community	University Relations, CACE	Needs assessment completed and asset map created with sufficient data to begin coordination of strategic plan to best meet needs of local South End Community.
Location Based Anchor Institution Strategic Plan will be developed	University Relations, Entire UB Community	Strategic plan created by the end of Academic Year 2020.

By the end of Year 5, the Location Based Anchor Institution Strategic Plan framework will be measured to determine continuation of the implementation of anchor institution strategic plan.	Entire UB Community	Areas developed in strategic plan will be implemented and measured.
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Priority Area #4: Institutional Capacity

The University of Bridgeport mission statement boldly states that UB will promote a commitment to service. As such, Priority Area #4: Institutional Capacity must be central to every aspect of the university. The timeline for this priority area is as follows:

Year 1:

- Designation in the course catalog for all courses with a service learning component.
- Creation of co-curricular transcript that notes all service hours performed. Provost will review before implementation.

Year 1-5:

- Application for Carnegie Classification in Community Engagement.

Year 2-3:

- The feasibility of a cross disciplinary Social Justice minor will be studied.
- Honor cords awarded to all graduating students who perform above a designated number of service hours.

Year 4-5:

- An Office of Civic Engagement & Service Learning may be established. If established, the Office of Civic Engagement & Service Learning will facilitate all university Civic Engagement and Community Service efforts and will serve as a clearinghouse and resource center for all Service Learning needs.
- A sponsor, donor or grant will be identified to enable the Division of Student Affairs to purchase a van to transport students to service events off campus.

Outcome	Parties Responsible	Measure(s)
All courses with a service learning component will be identified.	Provost, Registrar	By the start of Academic Year 2019, all courses with a service learning component will have a designation and will be easily identified. Students will be able to specifically search for service learning course when searching on WebAdvisor.

<p>In Year 1, students who perform service learning and co-curricular service hours will be able to add those hours to a co-curricular transcript once approved by the Provost's Office</p>	<p>Students, CACE</p>	<p>Students will be aware at the start of Academic Year 2018 that hours can be recorded via Knightlife and that a co-curricular transcript can be created.</p>
<p>Students who perform over a designated number of service learning and co-curricular service hours will receive a pin or honor cord to wear at graduation</p>	<p>CACE</p>	<p>Students who record their hours via Knightlife and perform in excess of a predetermined number of hours over the course of their UB career, averaged per year, will receive a pin or honor cord in recognition to be worn at graduation. Pins or cords will be presented at the annual Student Leadership Awards Banquet. The recognition will start at the Banquet in April 2020.</p>
<p>Funding will be provided for students, faculty and staff to attend the Social Justice Training Institute</p>	<p>SGA, Academic Departments, Office of the Dean of Students.</p>	<p>Funds will be provided for students, faculty and staff to attend the Social Justice Training Institute. Funding will be conditional based on the participant facilitating an on campus program open to the entire UB community based on knowledge acquired at SJTI. Funding for faculty/staff will be provided through funds allocated towards professional development, while students can allocate for funding through SGA.</p>
<p>UB will review possibility of applying for Carnegie Classification in Community Engagement in 2020.</p>	<p>CACE</p>	<p>Carnegie Classification application will be submitted.</p>

<p>A cross disciplinary Social Justice minor will be studied for creation by the end of Year 5.</p>	<p>CACE, Office of the Provost</p>	<p>Courses that focus on social justice will be identified and coordinated so that a Social Justice minor can be offered.</p>
<p>By the completion of Year 5, the feasibility for creating an Office of Civic Engagement and Service Learning will be explored</p>	<p>Dean of Students</p>	<p>The Dean of Students will examine if a joint academic and student affairs Office of Civic Engagement and Service Learning should be created with a Service Learning Coordinator who will implement all academic service learning efforts and a Civic Engagement Coordinator who will implement all co-curricular service efforts. Both roles will report to a Director of Civic Engagement and Service Learning.</p>
<p>By year 5, a sponsor, donor or grant will be identified for The Division of Student Affairs to purchase a van to be used to transport students to service events off campus</p>	<p>Division of Student Affairs, Sponsored Research, Alumni Affairs, University Relations</p>	<p>A van will be purchased and in use to transport students for off campus service events.</p>

The final area that the Civic Engagement Plan looks to address is Priority Area #5: Public Purposes. This area looks to 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. The timeline for this Priority Area is as follows:

Year 2-3:

- Funds will be allocated in order to create a specific scholarship to match the Segal Education Award. Currently, there are six institutions in Connecticut that match the Segal Education Award, so this would be a specific aid in the recruitment and retention of National Service alumni.

Year 2-3:

- Development of need-based tuition scholarships for graduates of Bridgeport Public High Schools.

Outcome	Parties Responsible	Measure(s)
With approval from Student Financial Services, UB will create a specific scholarship to match the Segal Education Award.	SFS, University Relations	Scholarship created by 2020.
With guidance from Student Financial Services and University Relations, UB will create a needs based scholarship for graduates of Bridgeport Public High Schools who have demonstrated a commitment to service and who commit to further service as a UB student.	SFS, University Relations	Scholarship created by 2020.

Implementation

The above identified areas of the UB Community will work towards implementing all aspects of the Civic Action Plan by the completion of the 2022 academic year. We recognize that the Civic Action Plan is a living document and not all areas will be implemented, while other needs will be identified along the way. A Civic Action Plan Task Force will be created in Year One and will meet monthly to monitor the implementation of the Civic Action Plan. The Task Force will also identify new areas of growth for civic engagement and service learning.

Communication

The University of Bridgeport Civic Action Plan will be communicated to the entire UB community via a specific webpage and the creation of a publication that will be accessible to the entire community. The UB Civic Action Plan will also be publicized to the public through a press release highlighting key initiatives of the plan.