

## **SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA CIVIC ACTION PLAN**

### **Vision**

Building upon the College's mission and strategic goals—such as raising the academic profile, distinction and student success—this Civic Action Plan (CAP) envisions a long-term future where Saint Mary's College (SMC) has built sustainable, meaningful relationships with several communities in support of justice, inclusion and sustainability.

By 2023, SMC will be known nationally as an engaged campus characterized by integrated academic programming in support of community engagement and community-based research. In addition, collaboration between SMC and its four anchor partners (in Alameda, Concord, Moraga, and Oakland) will support sustainable civic action and stronger, healthier communities.

### **Approach**

Grounded in our Catholic, Lasallian and liberal arts traditions, Saint Mary's College has a historical commitment to building just, inclusive and sustainable communities. Early evidence of this commitment—and its growing depth—includes:

- the Lasallian Service Internship (30+ years, formerly known as the Christian Service Internship),
- the Justice, Community and Leadership major (30+ years, formerly known as Liberal & Civic Studies),
- the Catholic Institute for Lasallian Social Action (CILSA) as an infrastructure and thought leader about community engagement (since 1999),
- the inclusion of Community Engagement and the Common Good in the undergraduate curriculum; and,
- significant community-based research in the graduate and professional programs.

The approach for this CAP is to grow sustainable partnerships in four geographic locations—Alameda, Concord, Moraga, and Oakland—that provide mutual benefits to those communities and the College. While most universities focus on themselves as anchor institutions within geographic areas, community partners are the anchors for our efforts in each location. This reflects the practical reality of our location as well as an acknowledgement of our interest in partnership and collaboration rather than charity-focused activities. SMC's anchor community partners are:

- strong non-profit organizations or schools,
- with whom the College has a history of successful collaboration,
- who are well-respected within their local educational, public, and service networks; and,

- who are willing to serve as a convener of College and community partners toward identifying common goals and plans for action.

The College's approach to this action plan is focused on the intersection of community-based and community-identified goals with the skills and expertise of faculty, students, and staff. Our work is grounded in long-term deep and consistent participation and recognizes that process is as important as product. The process requires that Saint Mary's College and its anchor partners share expertise and resources, develop strong communication, and create a path forward through conflict and toward shared goals.

## **Outcomes**

The outcomes of this CAP are three-fold: for communities, for the institution, and for student learning.

### *Community Outcomes*

Each anchor partner within a geographic area will develop focused outcomes and measurements for assessing success. Early conversations with anchor partners and in community listening sessions suggest that these outcomes will coalesce around similar themes: economic opportunity, educational attainment, sustainability, and leadership capacity building. The College will engage key stakeholders each academic term to modify specific project plans to better achieve community goals.

### *Institutional Outcomes*

Some outcomes of our collaboration with anchor partners are institutional in nature. If we are successful in fulfilling this action plan, the College will, for example:

- develop physical space and staff capacity to support advanced work in the four communities;
- make choices that benefit businesses in these communities;
- develop incentives that drive faculty innovation in support of those communities; and,
- grow faculty capacity to effectively integrate community engagement in their teaching and research.

### *Learning Outcomes*

Student engagement in the civic action plan is aligned with several institutional learning outcomes. SMC requires students to participate in civic and community engagement in substantial and meaningful ways.

For students studying for the completion of the bachelor's degree, learning associated with civic engagement is found primarily in the area of the Core Curriculum called 'Engaging the World,' which calls on students to examine and reflect on what it means to be a citizen in a local community and part of the global community."

Common Good. Students will:

- Reflect and write substantively on ways in which human beings find fulfillment in community; or
- Articulate, in prose or through another communicative medium, a critical account of just social order; or
- Demonstrate a capacity for coherent, principled analysis of concrete social problems.

Community Engagement. Students will:

- Apply academic methods and/or theories in a way that promotes collaboration and mutual benefit in a community setting; and
- Demonstrate critical reflection throughout their experience; and
- Express their understanding of the interconnections between their experience and their responsibilities as members of social or professional communities.

For students studying for the completion of the master's degree, learning associated with civic action is found primarily in the Common Good and Applied Learning outcomes. These learning outcomes require students to be active learners, problem solvers, and both critical and creative thinkers. Achieving these outcomes, students are prepared for a range of professional and civic responsibilities.

*Common Good.* The student

- investigates and analyzes common problems that impact the wellbeing of his or her community; and
- identifies the consequences of economic, social and environmental injustice and how such injustice is rooted in values and social practices.

*Applied Learning.* The student

- integrates knowledge acquired in coursework, practicum, work, community, and/or research activities;
- creates, designs, and implements a project or performance that requires the application of advanced knowledge to a challenge as appropriate to his/her field;
- employs creative thinking to imagine beyond existing frameworks and paradigms, expressing the uniqueness of individual experience; and
- reflects upon and articulates the insights gained from the activities above.

Engagement with the Civic Action may also result in substantial co-curricular learning in the following areas:

*Leadership.* Students will

- learn theories and principles of responsible leadership;
- analyze their own and others' leadership styles and strengths; and
- reflect on their growth and transformation as leaders and on similar growth and transformation in the communities in which they work.

*Purposeful Action.* Students will

- synthesize multiple structural factors and problem-solve to make contributions to community decision-making;

- respond to needs as expressed by community partners and develop strategies of collaboration based on those expressed needs; and
- reflect on the implications of their actions and connect them to broader structural and systemic challenges and opportunities.

Meaningful Personal and Professional Lives. Students will

- learn methods of collaboration that enable them to facilitate community dialogue, develop project plans, enact plans in partnership with communities, and assess the impact of the resulting actions; and
- reflect on the barriers that inhibit progress toward community goals and pathways that address those obstacles.

### **Assessment Plan**

The assessment of the Civic Action Plan will be threefold: 1. Assessment of student learning associated with learning outcomes; 2. Assessment of SMC engagement with civic action and community engagement measured through survey metrics; 3. Assessment of community-based and action research in the four communities by SMC faculty and students. In addition, SMC will work with anchor partners to create assessment plans consistent with local goals and action plans.

### **Implementation**

While the Civic Action Plan envisions long-term relationships and actions toward community development and institutional goals, the initial implementation of the CAP is premised on two-year plans of action.

The implementation of this plan will draw upon and deepen our existing partnership activities in the four Civic Action zones and the following assets of the College:

- Community engagement and the common good in the undergraduate core curriculum
- Graduate and professional programs with deep community orientations
- CILSA - the expertise of staff as well as the backbone structures for community partnership and engagement
- Undergraduate majors, such as Justice, Community & Leadership
- A network of faculty and graduate students currently involved in community-based research

The Civic Action Plan provides direction to the development of new community partnerships and new community engagement courses. Recognizing that faculty make curricular decisions, faculty will be asked to consider partnership activities in the four Civic Action zones before considering other options. Courses are just one kind of activity included as part of this plan. Short-term actions should contribute toward forward movement on medium-term and long-range community goals. The activities can include, but are not limited to:

- community engagement courses;
- research by faculty, undergraduates, and graduate students;
- collaborative program development (such as an after-school program);

- internships;
- hosting of interns and/or VISTA Members; and
- network development of organizations and public agencies in each Civic Action zone.

### **Communication Strategy**

This document, local action plans, and other materials will be presented to various campus and community groups, such as the President’s Cabinet, the Council of Deans, the Academic Senate, the Staff Council, the Alumni Board of Directors, and the Academic Affairs and Student Life committees of the Board of the Trustees. In communities and with our anchor partners, we will share this plan with employees and volunteers of the anchor partners, as well as expanding group of community stakeholders.

### **2018-2019 Action Plan**

Implementation in 2018-2019 will include network meetings/listening sessions in each Civic Action zone that will identify the long-range focus of our collaborations and establish mid-range goals and short-term actions. Individual action plans will be developed for each of the four geographic regions in conjunctions with anchor organizations and other community partners.

The SMC action plan is as follows:

- Organize listening sessions in each of the four geographic areas and find opportunities to collaborate with partners in their communities.
- Organize discussions about the links between faculty work associated with community engagement and the Rank and Tenure process.
- Revise criteria for faculty research grants to incentivize community based research.
- Create faculty award for community engagement.
- Propose additional incentives for faculty and student engagement, including compensation structure.

As of July 2018, the Civic Action Planning committee includes:

- Mike Anderer, President, Cristo Rey De La Salle High School (Oakland)
- Shawny Anderson, Associate Dean, School of Liberal Arts
- Doug Biggs, Executive Director, Alameda Point Collaborative (Alameda)
- Bruce Burns, Moraga School District (Moraga)
- Jane Camarillo, Vice Provost for Student Life
- Carrie Davis, Assistant Director, Mission and Ministry Center
- Larisa Genin, Associate Dean, School of Economics and Business Administration
- Brianna Nielson, Student Leader
- Jennifer Pigza, Director, Catholic Institute for Lasallian Social Action
- Sandra Scherer, Executive Director, Monument Crisis Center (Concord)
- Christopher Sindt, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

- Tamara Spencer, Associate Dean, Kalmanovitz School of Education
- Jenny Staelin, Assistant Director, Corporate and Foundations Relations