



As a Catholic, Jesuit university, community engagement is central to the mission of Rockhurst University. A strategic approach to community engagement and civic responsibility is needed to fulfill the vision to make God's good world better through learning, leadership, service and the pursuit of justice.

Civic Action Plan

Civic Action Planning Committee

In its mission and values statement, Rockhurst University proudly states that it is a learning community, centered on excellence in undergraduate liberal education and graduate education. It is Catholic and Jesuit, involved in the life and growth of the city and the region, and committed to the service of the contemporary world. Central to the mission of Rockhurst University is our involvement in the city, region and world around us. In keeping with our mission of engagement and service, the Reverend Thomas B. Curran, S.J., Rockhurst University President, has reiterated one key message to all of these groups on many occasions: we are called to “make God’s good world better.” This expectation and goal for students, faculty, staff, and alumni has been our call to civic action.

MISSION/ VISION OF CIVIC ACTION PLAN

As a Catholic, Jesuit university, Rockhurst University is involved in the life and growth of the city and the region and committed to the service of the contemporary world. The university infrastructure provides support for and is a resource to students, faculty, and community members. The university maintains a decentralized approach to community engagement to reinforce the notion that community involvement is not relegated to one office but is the mission of the entire university. There are specific offices whose primary functions include community engagement efforts: the Center for Service Learning and the Office of Community Relations and Outreach. These offices work collaboratively to support the community engagement efforts of the university. An examination of the current activities that address the five Action Statements prove that community engagement is a hallmark of the Rockhurst experience for students, faculty, and community members. Additionally, the examination revealed deficiencies in our community engagement efforts. For example, multiple groups indicated a lack of knowledge of community engagement efforts or a systematic way of communicating community engagement efforts to the campus and greater Kansas City community. The creation of the Civic Action Plan gives the university an opportunity to reflect and discern how to proceed in our efforts of community engagement with a spirit of *Magis*. Through this process, the committee determined the following mission and vision for the Civic Action Plan.

Mission: Increase impact and reciprocity of community engagement and increase visibility and participation on campus, in our neighborhood, and in the greater Kansas City community.

Vision: Build capacity among faculty and staff to increase and foster engagement with campus community (faculty, student, and staff), neighborhood, and greater KC community.

APPROACH TO CREATING A CAMPUS PLAN

The Jesuit value of *Magis* guided the team in creating the Civic Action Plan. *Magis* is not the accumulation of more but the commitment to excellence. In the creation of the Civic Action Plan, we strive to find more purposeful and effective ways to carry out our work. To aid in this, a committee of individuals representing various areas within the university were brought together to lead the efforts. To gather information from all areas of the university, several focus groups were held to provide input to current community engagement efforts and provide ideas and guidance for future efforts. The committee led these focus groups with students, faculty, staff, community partners, and the RU neighborhood committee (residents, administrators, and neighboring institutions). Then the committee was charged with the analysis and prioritization of the gathered information.

Members of the committee:

- Elizabeth Barnett, PhD, Assistant Professor of English
- Alicia Douglas, Director, Community Relations & Outreach
- Sydney Drysdale, Student
- Ben Franco, Student Senator
- Annalisa Gramlich, Director of Assessment, Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- Bill Kriege, Assistant Director, Campus Ministry
- Ellen Spake, Ph.D., Assistant to the President, Mission & Ministry
- Julia Vargas, Ed.D., Director, Center for Service Learning

The following timeline was used in creating the plan.

Action Step	Person(s) Involved	Date
Develop benchmarks for each of the 5 commitments.	Alicia Douglas and Julia Vargas	July 31, 2016
Form a committee to create the plan: 1) synthesize information; 2) analyze information; 3) prioritize information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative from Student Development • Administrator engaged in community • Faculty member engaged in community • Representative from the Community Engagement Committee of Student Senate 	August 30, 2016
Hold focus groups to present benchmarks and imagine future endeavors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • RU Neighborhood Committee • Community Partners • Faculty/ Staff 	October/ November 2016
Analyze/ Prioritize information from focus group sessions	Committee	January- May 2017
Civic Action Plan Draft for approval	Fr. Curran	August 2017

The committee agreed to this timeline to take advantage of the university’s next strategic planning process which began in the spring of 2017. Our goal is to have the Civic Action Plan outcomes and action steps incorporated into the larger university strategic plan for added strength and support.

OUTCOMES

Data were collected by conducting focus groups and speaking with key leaders involved in community based work. The committee analyzed and prioritized the emerging themes from our community. This information was utilized to create vision and mission statements as well as outcomes to support those goals. The three outcomes are wide reaching and address the organization of community activities on campus (Outcome 1) as well as increasing and fostering staff and faculty community engagement (Outcome 2) and campus (faculty, student, staff) and

community relationships (Outcome 3). All three outcomes and their related actions are outlined below.

Outcome 1: Prepare for eventual centralization of community events, work, and opportunities.

Action: Form a work group to document, manage all opportunities and increase visibility

Action: Document and centralize all current avenues, resources, opportunities for faculty, student, and staff to engage with their campus, neighborhood, and greater Kansas City community.

Action: Communicate these opportunities effectively to the campus community.

Outcome 2: Increase and foster staff and faculty community engagement—build capacity among staff and faculty around community engagement

Action: Promote staff's use of mission leave

Action: Document and advertise possible community partners for faculty and staff to contact

Action: Form exploratory group to engage with Rank and Tenure committee for possible development of community engagement rubric.

Outcome 3: Increase and foster campus (faculty, student, staff) and community relationships.

Action: Develop orientation to the neighborhood for faculty, students, staff

Action: Create intentional partnerships to embrace the reciprocity of campus and community assets.

Action: Commit to issues of the common good for the community (ex. Farmer's market on campus, sustainability efforts, education access, etc.)

TIMELINE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

<u>GOAL:</u> Prepare for eventual centralization of community events, work, and opportunities.						
Action Strategies	Task By	Begin/End Date	Resources Needed	Potential Challenges	Desired Outcome	Outcome Measure (s)
<i>Form a work group to document, manage all opportunities and increase visibility</i>	Father Curran and Director, Center for Service Learning	Fall 2017/ Spring 2018	Supervisor support for committee work. Training/ education on community engagement best practices.	Over-commitment of potential committee members.	Cross-sectional group dedicated to community engagement efforts of faculty and staff.	Creation of work group dedicated to community engagement efforts of campus
<i>Document and centralize all current avenues, resources, opportunities for faculty, student, and staff to engage with their campus, neighborhood, and greater Kansas City community.</i>	Community Engagement Work Group	Fall 2018/ Summer 2019	Database creation to manage and track community engagement of faculty & staff.	Collection of data from across campus.	Mechanism to collect, record, and publish community engagement activities.	Creation of database resource for faculty, student, and staff.
<i>Communicate these opportunities effectively to the campus community.</i>	Community Engagement Work Group and PRM	Fall 2019/ on-going	Marketing plan for roll-out of database On-going support for updates and maintenance of database	Over-commitment of staff to maintain	Communication plan to increase awareness of community engagement activities.	Increased number of faculty and staff reporting awareness of community engagement activities.

GOAL: Increase and foster staff and faculty community engagement—build capacity among staff and faculty around community engagement

Action Strategies	Task By	Begin/End Date	Resources Needed	Potential Challenges	Desired Outcome	Outcome Measure (s)
<i>Promote staff's use of mission leave</i>	Mission and Ministry Office and Human Resources	Fall 2017	Supervisor training and understanding of policy	Supervisor approving time off for staff	Staff awareness and utilization of mission leave	Increased number of staff reporting and using mission leave.
<i>Document and advertise possible community partners for faculty and staff to contact</i>	Community Engagement Work Group and PRM	Fall 2019/ on-going	Marketing plan for roll-out of database On-going support for updates and maintenance of database	Format in effective way that it will be utilized	Communication plan to increase awareness of community engagement activities.	Increased number of faculty and staff reporting awareness of community engagement activities.
<i>Form exploratory group to engage with Rank and Tenure committee for possible development of community engagement rubric.</i>	Community Engagement Work Group and Faculty Senate	Spring 2020	Best practices and models of community engagement rubric	Development of rubric may be seen as too prescriptive	Consideration or elevation of community engagement as scholarly activity	Formation of group to determine the possibilities of community engagement within promotion and tenure discussion

GOAL: Increase and foster campus (faculty, student, staff) and community relationships.

Action Strategies	Task By	Begin/End Date	Resources Needed	Potential Challenges	Desired Outcome	Outcome Measure (s)
<i>Develop orientation to the neighborhood for faculty, students, staff</i>	Mission and Ministry Office, Human Resources, Office of Community Relations and Outreach, Student Development	Fall 2018	Time and opportunity for orientation	Who delivers the orientation?	Increase sense of community with neighborhood	Increase number of faculty, students, and staff engaged in neighborhood programs.
<i>Create strategic partnerships to embrace the reciprocity of campus and community assets.</i>	Community Engagement Work Group	Spring 2018	Strategic partnership definition Time and opportunity to build relationships	Over-commitment of faculty & staff time. Limited resources for financial contribution	Rockhurst seen as asset to the neighborhood and greater Kansas City community.	Increased number of campus/ community partnerships
<i>Commit to issues of the common good for the community (ex. Farmer's market on campus, sustainability efforts, education access, etc.)</i>	Community Engagement Work Group	Spring 2020	Awareness of the issues facing community	Limited financial resources	Rockhurst takes an active role in addressing community needs.	Increased number of campus/ community partnership programs.