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Planning for Civic Learning
 Civic Learning Work Group Report
 Collaboration Summer Institute 2001
 Harry Boyte (chair); Pat Crain; Drew Digby; Julie Grossman; Laurel Hirt; Paula O'Loughlin

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Melissa Ganshert, an undergraduate student in the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) with the Career and Community Learning Center, also joined us Thursday afternoon.

VISION:

We envision a "Lotus Coffman Civic Learning Program" at the U of M, a system-wide set of coordinated civic learning activities that will offer all students opportunities to develop the civic competencies, critical thinking, and capacities for responsible public leadership that are needed to sustain a vital democratic way of life in the 21st century. Such a program should be a distinctive feature of civic engagement at the University of Minnesota. It needs to be attentive to educational, symbolic, financial, prestige and other interests of key stakeholders; adaptable to different units; and attractive to donors and other funders.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Our work group was assembled by Ed Fogelman, Chair of the Civic Engagement Task Force, in consultation with Craig Swan, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, and Harry Boyte, chair of the Task Force's Institutional Connections Committee. Its purpose was to further develop the civic learning plan of the Civic Engagement Task Force, one of the main priorities of the Task Force deliberations.

The Task Force was appointed by the Provost, Robert Bruininks, on October 5, 2000. It was charged with developing a set of practical recommendations for reviving the sense of public purpose and renewing an institutional commitment to a contemporary land-grant mission. This charge took on a particular urgency in 2001. The controversy over the University budget made plain, in President Yudof's words to the Regents on May 11, the "slow withering of public support" for even such a formative public institution as the state's great land grant and public research university.

The Provost's charge letter emphasized the University's role in education of students as citizens. To develop the meaning of this role, the Task Force built on *The Presidents' Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education*, signed by President Yudof along with more than 400 other leading educators, which called for colleges and universities to become "agents and architects of a flourishing democracy." The Task Force translated this call into an understanding of civic engagement as "an integral part of professional work that motivates and pervades all University activities," not as a discrete set of activities.

The charge letter requested proposals for activity "that takes maximum advantage of the University as a research and teaching institution"; and also "practical suggestions for strengthening involvement of undergraduate and graduate students in civic engagement." The Task Force articulated civic learning as one of the public purposes of the U of M, defined as developing

...among all our students the civic competence and critical thinking that

empower them as effective citizens in their localities, states, nations and in a global environment; and to develop among people from varied backgrounds the capacity for responsible leadership in private, associational, and public organizations and institutions.

Task Force meetings with external stakeholders further reinforced the importance of civic education. It was voiced as a priority by state legislators, foundation officials, students, community and nonprofit leaders, and others. This priority was also emphasized by the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, which unanimously recommended the continuation of the Task Force for another year.

CHARGE:

The Civic Learning Work Group used the Collaboration Summer Institute, 2001, to develop broad features of a plan for civic learning, building on the initial work of the Task Force on Civic Engagement. The Vice Provost's proposal for the Collaboration Institute charged our Work Group with developing the concept for "a multi-faceted, flexible program of civic learning experiences encompassing varied formats and subject matter" and also laying initial plans for an intra- and inter-institutional network on civic learning.

GOALS:

In order to accomplish these purposes, the Work Group developed four goals for a multi-faceted program of civic learning:

1. Create opportunities for civic learning for all students
2. Generate multiple entry points to infuse civic learning across the University
3. Organize a multidisciplinary network and culture of civic learning
4. Build a framework to leverage, formalize, and expand civic learning community partnerships

REVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Work Group reviewed more than fifteen interdisciplinary and institutional programs at other institutions. These ranged from liberal arts institutions such as the College of St. Catherine, Providence College, and Earlham College to research institutions such as Brown, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Utah, Florida State University, Rutgers University, and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. We also undertook a sustained, if far from exhaustive, examination of efforts at the University of Minnesota including interdisciplinary programs (e.g. the MacArthur Program and Duluth's Environmental Studies Program), Centers (e.g. the Career and Community Learning Center, the Center for Small Towns, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies, and the Center for Democracy and Citizenship), Institutes (the Institute for Social, Economic, and Ecological Sustainability, and the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agricultural) and community-based civic learning initiatives such as Public Achievement and the Jane Addams School for Democracy. Our review of University of Minnesota programs is preliminary. One of the recommendations for the implementation phase is to conduct a more in-depth examination of successful civic learning efforts at the University.

Based on this review, we defined "success" in terms of expanding opportunities for student community-based and civic learning; evidence of faculty engagement and incorporation into professional work roles, as well as evidence of culture change; diversity and range of units involved; sustained institutional commitment. Features of good practice include

Public purposes

Programs all deal with significant issues of public concern.

Community of student learners

All successful programs foster a vital sense of community among students. Community is built through different elements — a strong intellectual dimension (brown-bags, pro-seminars, faculty commitment and mentoring support to students); a communications network (e.g. newsletters, list-serves); extrinsic rewards (e.g. notation on transcript, medals, financial support). This learning community also encompasses a wide variety of academic units and the utilization of different forms of civic learning (e.g. service-learning, problem-based learning, participatory action research). Some programs include participation of both graduate and undergraduate students.

Faculty engagement

Strong faculty participation is based on careful attention to faculty members' professional work interests. Ingredients include ways for faculty participation to enhance scholarly recognition and prestige, to advance research interests, and to generate new scholarly pursuits. It also entails ways to improve teaching; ways to generate collaborations amongst scholars; and modest financial

incentives.

Administration commitment

Administration participation is based on a combination of philosophical commitments, attentiveness to external and internal political dynamics (e.g. reinvigorated sense of public purpose within the institution; enhanced public support) and alertness to new resource opportunities (e.g. new sources of financial support at the University of Wisconsin's Mortridge Center, the University of Michigan's Ginsburg Center, Stanford's Haas Center, Tufts University Citizenship College). Participation takes several important forms, including financial support (e.g. grants to departments to incorporate service learning into a range of disciplines); strong symbolic and rhetorical support (e.g. presence at key events; public statements and incorporation of programs into core institutional message); and sustained personal involvement (e.g. the Presidential Seminar at Brown).

Community partnerships

Successful programs promote partnerships with communities, including recognition of diverse interests, reciprocity, multiple roles of community partners in education of students, sustained collaboration over time, and multidimensionality. They also sometimes include sharing of resources.

Staff involvement

Staff are often co-creators of learning experiences and they sustain public purposes. Good programs recognize multiple contributions of staff to student learning in both curricular and co-curricular activities. They respect the parts staff may play in logistical, relationship, and community building elements of programs, the partnership functions of staff in deepening and enriching learning communities, and the roles of staff in sustaining institutional memory and sense of mission. Staff are very often agents in creating and sustaining relationships with community partners.

Curricular innovation

Curricular innovation includes both interdisciplinary coursework in civic learning and courses which allow for deepened civic understanding within disciplines. Curricular innovations express distinctive cultures and interests of institutions and places. Civic learning experiences are integrated into coursework for an extended period of time, and evidence of capstones or other culminating curricular programs are apparent. Additionally, we identified the need to provide graduate students with training in innovative civic pedagogies in order to cultivate the next generation of faculty.

The Work Group identified the development of civic learning modules as an important element in system-wide civic learning. Faculty development grants, as well as disciplinary, departmental and College level working groups, can be resources for the development of such unit-specific modules.

Ownership by faculty and students

A key feature seems to be a vital role by a core group of faculty and/or students in the initiation and sustenance of programs that also help to sustain the sense of community and public purpose. Architects of the MacArthur program, for instance, exhibit great pride in students' successes and progress; the Bennion Center Service Learning Scholars Program at Utah was organized by students, creating a strong sense of ownership.

A Name

A name creates a sense of identity for participants.

To develop and secure adequate resources for a plan which incorporates such efforts will require a careful process across the University of Minnesota, which involves many stakeholders and has official authorization.

IMPLEMENTATION

Given the large-scale and institution-wide nature of this plan, a first priority is for this planning process to be institutionalized through its incorporation in the University governance structure. We propose that SCEP (Senate Committee on Educational Policy), in consultation with other appropriate University bodies, establish a civic learning subcommittee with sufficient resources and staffing to develop this plan.

We propose that the Subcommittee include:

- Leadership from SCEP and the Faculty Senate, including participation from the coordinate campuses
- Ex-officio membership by
 - appropriate administrators
 - members of the Civic Learning Work Group
 - students
 - staff
 - community representatives

Tasks for the Subcommittee include the need to

1. Undertake an effort in association with the FCC to stimulate conversation across the University (faculty, students, staff, community stakeholders) on the meaning and relevance of the land grant mission, civic engagement, and civic learning.
2. Explore opportunities for alliance-building with related efforts (e.g. Center for Teaching and Learning Services, General College, the Academy for Distinguished Teachers, University Libraries, UROP, Honors Programs, the Leadership Minor, the Bush Programs for Early and Mid-career Faculty, PFF, Educational Development Funds, life science research grants, Program for Individualized Learning, the Consortium for Children, Youth, and Family and allies such as the Collaboration for the Advancement of College Teaching and Learning, Minnesota Campus Compact, and HECUA).
3. Inventory existing civic learning opportunities at the University. The inventory process should be seen as identifying potential participants in a civic learning network.
4. Develop strategies to make more visible current civic engagement initiatives and to enhance their potential as excellent civic learning sites.
5. Dedicate a section of the second year civic engagement RFP process to planning for incorporation of civic learning into departments and disciplines. We also would like to see this round of RFP include proposals by nontraditional collaborations, with leadership coming from students, staff, and community stakeholders.
6. Explore the hub concept for a variety of neighborhood based student-learning houses.
7. Work with "Uniting UMC with the Crookston Community through Technology" Living and Learning Program. This program is an important innovator in exploring civic uses of technology tied in student learning. See Appendix Two.
8. Develop a plan for civic learning assessment across the U of M.
9. Encourage each college to appoint a civic learning committee to propose appropriate ways for incorporating civic learning experiences into their curriculum.

List of Possible New Civic Learning Activities

1. Teach public relevance/civic engagement in methods and history courses of disciplines
2. Expand the number of disciplines developing their civic dimensions and contributions
3. Create "connecting links" using graduate students to make connections between disciplines and communities
4. Develop a graduate minor in civic learning, adaptable to different disciplines
5. Create formalized community civic learning partnership process
6. Organize civic learning displays in university libraries, the Northeast Minnesota Historical Center, the West Central Minnesota Historical Center, the Bell Museum and other public spaces
7. Draw on and utilize existing networks like the Academy of Distinguished Teachers
8. Draw upon and expand Public Achievement and other exemplary civic learning efforts
9. Develop a faculty Civic Learning Fellows program
10. Create a participatory action research grants program on civic learning
11. Organize faculty seminars on curricular development (with grants) on civic learning content and pedagogical strategies
12. Create an undergraduate minor in civic learning
13. Integrate civic learning criteria in Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP)
14. Develop an undergraduate and graduate civic TA program
15. Establish undergraduate Civic Learning Scholarships
16. Create a Civic Scholar designation adaptable to specific departments and/or campuses
17. Collaborate with Civic Engagement Development Center being considered by Campus Compact (perhaps in association with the Collaboration)
18. Organize a half day conference on lessons from civic engagement grant awardees
19. Organize a Civic Learning Summit, highly publicized and promoted

Conclusion

The Coffman Civic Learning Program holds potential to serve multiple purposes. It can aid in the reinvigoration of the University's public mission and strengthen ties with diverse publics in Minnesota. It can, in addition, aid significantly in the recruitment and retention of traditionally

underrepresented communities; further culture change and collaboration across the University system by building on a broad range of successful efforts already underway; and help to generate resources for partnerships between the University and communities of use in creating a democratic way of life for the 21st century. Finally, the development of such a program holds potential to place the University on the leading edge of the national and international democracy movement in higher education.

A note on the Work Group:

The Civic Learning Work Group at the Collaboration Summer Institute included representatives of two coordinate campuses (Duluth and Morris), CLA, the Humphrey Institute, and the St. Paul Campus. We also coordinated work with the Institute team from Crookston.

Appendix One:

SELECTED EXAMPLES OF EXISTING CIVIC LEARNING PROGRAMS AND COURSES

The School of Medicine Duluth (SOMD) has a mission to increase the number of family medicine and other primary care physicians who practice in rural Minnesota and American Indian communities. Its program requires a preceptorship, including two years accompanying community physicians on hospital rounds, clinical appointments and nursing home visits. The school has a strong outreach and community-based learning approach to health professional education.

The MacArthur Interdisciplinary Program on Global Change, Sustainability, and Justice has as its central aim the creation of students and faculty who share common interests and commitments concerning the developing world and its peoples. The MacArthur Program has a wide-ranging set of activities to encourage excellence in scholarship and teaching on its themes.

The Families and Democracy Initiative led by Professor William Doherty in Family Social Science involves graduate students in a set of partnerships aimed at civic action by and for families; this effort also aims to create new models of citizenship action by professionals, as well as new approaches to graduate professional training and scholarship in Family Social Science.

The Center for Small Towns in Morris works with the Blandin Foundation to strengthen rural communities. It involves students in a variety of ways, including service learning, internships, action research, strategic planning efforts, community action projects. It provides paid and unpaid opportunities, such as helping community leaders develop a strategic plan for the Morris Area School District, and presentation at the Minnesota Rural Summit 2001, forthcoming.

Community Empowerment through Learning and Leadership (CELL) is a co-curricular model of campus-community collaboration. CELL's mission is to connect U of M students with ongoing, meaningful, community-driven outreach opportunities. Through community member facilitated sessions designed to prepare students to respectfully enter their community work settings, CELL supports and enhances students' academic and career goals while developing civic leadership and capacity.

Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) connects Minneapolis and St. Paul neighborhood-based organizations with Twin Cities area university resources in order to enhance the capacity of those organizations through relevant applied research and technical assistance.

Public Achievement, sponsored by the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, is an international student civic education and engagement initiative in which teams of youth are coached--often by college students--and do "public work" projects of their choice. Issues include gang violence, teen pregnancy, the environment, and school policies. Over 12,000 young people have participated with Public Achievement in Minnesota, several other states, and in Northern Ireland. More than five hundred University of Minnesota students, from a number of U of M courses often building on James Farr's pioneering Education for Democracy in Political Science, have coached over the last decade.

The Jane Addams School for Democracy is a community-based civic learning and public work partnership of CLA and the Humphrey Institute's Center for Democracy and Citizenship, working with Hmong and Latino new immigrant communities on the West Side of St. Paul, in association with Neighborhood House, the College of St. Catherine, and HECUA. The Jane Addams School includes a Hmong learning circle, a Latino learning circle, Children's learning centers. The Jane Addams School has generated many cultural projects as well, including an annual Freedom Festival, murals, photographic exhibits, song festivals, and art shows. Twenty faculty from many departments and more than 400 U of M students have been involved at Jane Addams over the past four years.

Technology: A Tool for Civic Engagement and Rural Community Development at Crookston is curriculum-building project to create a modularized curriculum, blending civic

engagement, community rural development, and communications and information technologies. The modules will be placed in a variety of modes including workshops, conferences, regular course work, on-line instruction, technical training, and certificate program.

Students as Citizens, Not Merely Residents is a multidisciplinary internship and curricular development program involving journalism, geography, and public history to get students to look at their own and others roles within Duluth's planning process.

Ron Aminzade, Professor of Sociology:

"Service Learning has been an important tool in efforts to get students to appreciate how the abstract concepts and theories they encounter in sociology can help make sense of concrete social practices in day-to-day life. It has enabled students to explore new and more diverse social worlds, appreciate different perspectives on social problems, develop better understandings of racial and class inequalities, and acquire the communication and listening skills that are an essential part of civic education in a democratic society."

Rose Brewer's "Introduction to Afro-American Studies" has a community-based learning component through support of a CLA Curricular Innovations grant and a grant from MN Campus Compact and the MN Higher Education Services Office. A major goal of this course is to introduce students to the traditions of service and citizenship in African American life in local African American Institutions around the Twin Cities area. Students will be combining community work with substantive materials addressing the history, culture, economy and sociology of African decent.

Amy Lee's course, "Community Action Writing," seeks to give students the opportunity to work with youth as tutors on reading and writing and reflect on their experiences through writing assignments. Students in the course also completed a newsletter on University of Minnesota service-learning and community involvement efforts by working with the Career and Community Learning Center to identify and interview faculty, students, alumni, community partner organizations and administrators about their experiences with service-learning.

Kathleen Ganley's course, "Service-Learning in the Chicano/Latino Community," is a way to give students in the Spanish department a way to get involved with the growing local Chicano/Latino community in the Twin Cities area. Students study issues of intercultural communication, racism, white privilege, bilingual education and immigration in the classroom while gaining experience working in a variety of organizations doing work such as tutoring English, translating for immigration lawyers, assisting with children's activities or teaching citizenship courses at local community centers.

Sonja Kuftinec's course, "Community-Based Theater" introduces students to the history, theory and practice of community-based theater. This contemporary grassroots movement begins with the belief that theater must engage its audience community, working with local participants to embody the community's history, interests and concerns. Critical analysis reflects on this practice and its social impact. Teaching in the class models this theory of engagement and reflection. Students intern at local theaters, learning practical tactics of community-based performance, using the classroom to reflect on practice.

Argie Manolis's sections of the course, "Fundamentals of Writing and College Writing," use work with community residents and Alzheimers patients to help stimulate memory and socializing. Students draw on their experiences, use patients' words to write poetry and fiction, and give work back to families.

The Leadership Minor, a collaboration among the College of Education and Human Development, the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, and the Office for Student Development, is an interdisciplinary, multi-dimensional and experiential program. The Leadership Minor combines social change theory with community service. It is a 16 credit program with three core courses and five credits in elective courses.