

St. Cloud State University

Civic Action and Public Engagement Plan¹

Fall 2017

Building an Engaged University

St. Cloud State University has a long-standing commitment to working with on- and off-campus constituents to address issues impacting our campus, community, and world. Our new strategic plan, “Building the 21st Century Engaged University” reflects our commitment to engaging students, engaging campus, and engaging communities as key to student success, program competitiveness, and our future sustainability. It is a recognition that our future success depends upon our ability to engage with our communities in meaningful ways, building an environment of synergistic successes and achievements for community and university.

Becoming an engaged university requires us to value reciprocal relationships that support the learning outcomes we expect for our students, while effectively responding to our constituents and the local, regional and global communities we serve.

Engaging with our communities provides rich learning laboratories for students, faculty and staff. These laboratories enhance student progress and development through experiential and applied learning, and create opportunities for scholarship and creative activities. The knowledge and understanding gained through these reciprocal relationships expands our ability to seek and apply innovative strategies to solve problems, to apply existing and new knowledge in service to and in collaboration with various communities.

As our commitment to become “the 21st Century Engaged University” becomes more visible, there will be a deeper understanding and familiarity with St. Cloud State University, a rich appreciation for the contributions and value of the university to the region and community, and enhanced pride and ownership in the educational enterprise, outreach, partnerships and service embedded in the institution. Successful implementation also will mean that St. Cloud State University has played a critical role in the ongoing health and vitality of our region and has become essential to its success.

¹ Throughout this document, the terms Civic Action and Public Engagement are used interchangeably to refer to work that includes, but is not limited to, service learning, community engagement, civic engagement, community-based learning, and community-based research.

Alignment of SCSU Strategic Plan with the Five Commitments of Campus Compact

SCSU's Civic Action and Public Engagement Plan flows out of St. Cloud State University's Strategic Plan that identifies "Engaged Communities" as one of our three Strategic Priorities (see Appendix 1 for an overview of the Strategic Plan). Engaging with our local and global communities requires a commitment to positive, reciprocal relationships that place our partners at the center of our academic, social, and cultural efforts, positioning St. Cloud State University as an essential resource to continue their ongoing success.

We believe engaged communities involve building sustained, rich partnerships that are relevant and responsive to community needs. By extending our learning environment through a global network of strategic partners and institutions, we provide our students with international learning experiences and bring the world into the classrooms at St. Cloud State University. Students benefit most from community engagement when they have access to active and applied learning experiences critical to their education—developing their own paths toward becoming engaged, active citizens throughout their lives. For St. Cloud State University, engaged communities must be:

- *Place-related:* St. Cloud State University is embedded within the community and region in which it is located. Exercising "stewardship of place" does not mean limiting our worldview, but rather it means pursuing our mission in a manner that has meaning to our neighbors and communities, locally, nationally and globally.
- *Interactive:* St. Cloud State University will function both as a teacher and learner, recognizing in the spirit of the work that there is much to be learned and much to be gained in partnership. Depending on needs, expertise and interest, campus or community members can initiate and lead projects. The collaborations will be built and sustained through mutual trust and respect, and intentional communication and responsiveness.
- *Mutually Beneficial:* St. Cloud State University and its community will be responsive and accessible in working together to achieve mutual benefit for the community and university. We will engage in partnerships that are appropriate to our mission and academic strengths as well as the strengths of the community.
- *Integrated and Sustainable:* St. Cloud State University will infuse sustainable engagement throughout the campus and community by integrating engagement in student learning, scholarship and teaching, culture of practice and policies, professional development of faculty and staff, and pride and recognition of this work. (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2002)

St. Cloud State University's Strategic Plan identifies one of its three institutional outcomes as "Deepening Reciprocal Partnerships"—internally, externally, locally, and globally—creating learning experiences and a programmatic portfolio that is relevant and responsive to the needs of our students and communities. Our responsibility in the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the regions we serve is what defines us as an institution and will make us integral to the future success of the state of Minnesota and its residents.

A central component of St. Cloud State University's Strategic Plan is the ongoing implementation of Our Husky Compact. Our Husky Compact embodies the essential and cross-cutting attributes of a St. Cloud State University education that we value as a community. It is a commitment we make to our students and students make to their education that will set them apart and prepare them to be global citizens of the 21st century (see Appendix 2 for a full description of Our Husky Compact).

Underpinning Our Husky Compact is the belief that we develop these attributes over time and across and beyond the curriculum. Intellectual and personal growth occurs as we are exposed to both broad and specialized knowledge and have the opportunity to apply what they have learned outside of the classroom— through research, service and community-based learning, internships, learning communities, collaborative experiences — in the communities in which they live and work.

When students graduate with an SCSU education, they will:

- **Think Creatively and Critically**
- **Seek and Apply Knowledge**
- **Communicate Effectively**
- **Integrate Existing and Evolving Technologies**
- **Engage as a Member of a Diverse and Multicultural World**
- **Act with Personal Integrity and Civic Responsibility**

Our strategic focus on Deepening Reciprocal Partnerships, along with Our Husky Compact, closely aligns with Campus Compact's Five Elements in the following ways:

- ***Building Partnerships for Change:*** Creating mutually respectful partnerships
SCSU alignment: "Deepening Reciprocal Partnerships—internal, external, local, and global—creates learning experiences and a programmatic portfolio that is relevant and responsive to the needs of our students and communities.
- ***Preparing Students for Citizenship:*** Developing engaged sense of citizenship in our students
SCSU alignment: Our Husky Compact—specifically the dimensions "Engage as a member of a Diverse and Multicultural World," and "Act with Personal Integrity and Civic responsibility."
- ***Stewardship of Place:*** Our responsibility for the health and strength of the greater community
SCSU alignment: As a public university, we have responsibility to be Stewards of Place, a phrase the American Association of State Colleges & Universities (AASCU) uses to describe the unique role state college and universities play in the lives of their communities and regions.
- ***Harnessing Institutional Capacity for Change:*** Addressing social and economic inequality in the region
SCSU alignment: Our responsibility in the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the regions we serve is what defines us as an institution and will make us integral to the future success of the state of Minnesota and its residents.
- ***Centrality of Our Public Purpose:*** Establishing expectations for our campus community
SCSU alignment: Our responsibility in the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the regions we serve is what defines us as an institution and will make us integral to the future success of the state of Minnesota and its residents.

As Our Husky Compact articulates the organizing framework for student learning, St. Cloud State University looks to the Greater St. Cloud Community Pillars as a potential organizing framework for our external engagement. The Greater St. Cloud Community Pillars Initiative is a region-wide effort to build capacity and collaboration around nine areas of importance to the region. These are: arts and entertainment, community engagement, economy, education, green, housing, infrastructure, safety, and wellness. St. Cloud State University is a founding organizational member of the Greater St. Cloud Pillars Initiative and is working to build connections and capacity in support of the achievement of these community outcomes by aligning our community engagement efforts with the priorities in our community (see www.greaterstcloud.com/community-pillars for more information).

Implementation Strategies

Objective 1: Prepare Students for Life, Work & Citizenship

SCSU Strategic Plan Alignment: This objective provides opportunities to bring Our Husky Compact to life on our campus, with engagement being central to the personal and professional development of our students.

- Embed civic action and public engagement experiences and learning opportunities across the curriculum and in every program as expressed through alignment with Our Husky Compact.
- Promote the importance of community engagement to our students as an integral part of their personal and professional development.
- Provide support to faculty and staff to develop community engagement opportunities for students through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.
- Develop and implement assessment methods to better understand student learning and the development and improvement of curricular and co-curricular experiences.
- Communicate our commitment to public engagement as part of an SCSU education (via Our Husky Compact) through our recruitment materials, Huskies First Four and Reimagining the First Year efforts.

Objective 2: Build Partnerships for Change

SCSU Strategic Plan Alignment: "Deepening Reciprocal Partnerships" creates learning experiences and a programmatic portfolio that is relevant and responsive to the needs of our students and communities. What is our commitment as an anchor institution to addressing the social and economic needs of our community? How do we make this explicit in all aspects of the university through curriculum, research, and service?

- Develop a clear entry portal for the external community for community engagement at St. Cloud State University for fostering effective external partnerships.
- Develop a capacity to continuously assess the quality of our external partnerships.
- Actively participate in community and regional planning activities and initiatives.
- Annually recognize and celebrate community and university accomplishments and partnerships.

Objective 3: Harness our Capacity to Serve the Public Good

SCSU Strategic Plan Alignment: As a public university, we have responsibility to be Stewards of Place, a phrase the American Association of State Colleges & Universities (AASCU) uses to describe the unique

role state college and universities play in the lives of their communities and regions. Our responsibility in the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the regions we serve is what defines us as an institution and will make us integral to the future success of the state of Minnesota and its residents.

- Promote all forms of engaged scholarship through hiring, tenure and promotion practices. Align faculty and staff roles, positional responsibilities, recognition and rewards accordingly.
- Cultivate an environment that supports the work of faculty and staff that supports the economic and social well-being of our region and the quality of life of its residents, especially as it relates to the Greater St. Cloud Community Pillars (<http://www.greaterstcloud.com/community-pillars>)
 - Community Engagement
 - Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
 - Housing
 - Infrastructure
 - Economy
 - Safety
 - Education
 - Wellness
 - Green
- Create a methodology to measure and communicate our on-going impact in our community. (See Outcomes and Measures in next section).

Objective 4: Create Infrastructure to Drive Community Engagement

SCSU Strategic Plan Alignment: We must create the capacity within the institution to be effectively and consistently engaged with community, increasing the capability of our organizational culture and continuously improving our systems and policies in order to facilitate faculty, staff, and student involvement in civic action and public engagement.

- Promote the importance of community engagement to St. Cloud State University faculty and staff as part of expanding understanding and commitment to our Strategic Plan – “Building a 21st Century Engaged University.”
- Create communication pathways to ensure user-friendly, efficient, equal access to campus and community-based shared resources and initiatives.
- Develop and maintain electronic inventory for on- and off-campus partnerships, facilities, resources and projects.
- Create a university clearinghouse for civic action and public engagement efforts as a resource for development of partnerships and to measure impact.
- Develop a Community Advisory Council to the SCSU President.
- Identify an organizational structure that has responsibility for facilitating the overall university community engagement work.

Appendix 1

Building a 21st Century Engaged University St. Cloud State University's Strategic Plan 2017-2022



Strategic Plan Overview

St. Cloud State University has a rich history of serving the people of Minnesota. The University began in 1869 as the Third State Normal School, created for the sole purpose of educating primary school teachers to teach in Minnesota's schools. St. Cloud State University has since evolved its degrees and structures to remain responsive to the needs of Minnesota and its residents. As we approach our 150th anniversary in 2019, we reflect on how far we have come and contemplate the work we have yet to do.

Our Guiding Philosophy: Mission, Vision, and Our Husky Compact

In 2013, approximately four years ago and after our academic reorganization, the Minnesota State board reaffirmed St. Cloud State University's nearly 150-year-old core mission. Our new mission is fundamentally grounded in our tradition of providing post-secondary education opportunities to improve the economic, social and cultural vitality of Minnesota and its people. Our recommitment to upholding our historic mission challenged us to create a forward-looking educational environment that prepares our students with the knowledge and skills for life in the 21st century, which requires both professional preparation and a strong liberal arts education.

We believe we have met this challenge with Our Husky Compact—the essential and cross-cutting attributes of a St. Cloud State University education. More than a set of learning outcomes, Our Husky Compact is a commitment that we make to our students and our students make to their education. Underpinning Our Husky Compact is the belief that our students learn over time and across and beyond the curriculum. Intellectual and personal growth occur when students are exposed to broad and specialized knowledge and invited to apply it—through research, service and community-based learning, internships, learning communities, collaborative experiences—to where they live and work.

In a global environment of complexity, diversity and change, the dimensions of Our Husky Compact provide our students a pathway to lifelong growth and development. Our Husky Compact unifies all members of the St. Cloud State University community in our commitment to deliver on our promise to students. To that end, we will collectively reconsider the world around us, discover and apply new solutions to challenges and opportunities we encounter in our professional and personal lives through risk-taking, innovation, and imagination.

St. Cloud State University's Strategic Action Plan is designed to articulate what it means to be a 21st Century Engaged University and outline the strategic framework by which we will implement our plan. For St. Cloud State University, engagement rests on the following three strategic goals.

Engaged Students: Engaged student learning requires taking an active approach to delivering our educational programs and services that continually encourages our students to practice what they learn, integrating new knowledge and skills across a range of experiences. Our Husky Compact provides the framework upon which these learning experiences come to life. We will support our faculty in increasingly integrating high impact practices into learning experiences that directly engage students in active and applied learning environments. Engaged student learning also fosters the delivery of educational programs and support services that empower our students to grow and achieve their potential, positioning them for life-long success.

Engaged Campus: Creating an engaged campus requires creating an environment that is organizationally and financially healthy, supporting the success and wellbeing of all members of our campus community. It is a commitment to become an innovative learning organization in which we learn from and support each other. Together we strive to redefine learning, relevance, engagement, inclusion, and collaboration that addresses the challenges of higher education in the 21st century and supports the diverse array of students we have the privilege to serve. As a community, we will regularly celebrate the best of what we do and hold each other accountable for the success of all our students.

Engaged Communities: Engaging with our local and global communities requires a commitment to positive, reciprocal relationships that place our partners at the center of our academic, social, and cultural efforts, positioning St. Cloud State University as an essential resource to continue their ongoing success. Engaged communities involve building sustained, rich partnerships that are relevant and responsive to community needs. By extending our learning environment through a global network of strategic partners and institutions, we provide our students with international learning experiences and bring the world into the classrooms at St. Cloud State University. Students benefit most from community engagement when they have access to active and applied learning experiences critical to their education—developing their own paths toward becoming engaged, active citizens throughout their lives.

These efforts create a unique opportunity for St. Cloud State University to define itself as a 21st Century Engaged University—a claim few institutions in our region can make. It is becoming increasingly clear that the complex challenges facing our state, country, and world cannot be addressed by the traditional state university model. To successfully educate and graduate tomorrow's diverse and non-traditional student populations, we are creating an innovative educational environment that is responsive to their needs and expectations. With Our Husky Compact, we will help students discover and achieve their goals, preparing them for the professional, social, and cultural environments they will contribute to and someday lead.

St. Cloud State University is positioned to do its part in restoring public confidence in Minnesota's higher education institutions. Our Strategic Action Plan answers the call to become an entity more than it is today—more responsive to changes in the world, more oriented toward student success, more accountable to community partners, and more engaged in the success of our state and its

people. Continuing our work together, we have crafted a new iteration of our original mission that was created nearly 150 years ago—to become Minnesota’s 21st Century Engaged University.

Outcomes

Delivering on our mission means that we must continually strive to improve our performance on three outcomes.

Advancing Student Success is the single most important outcome we can achieve as an institution of higher education. It is central to our mission and is the expectation of our students, our stakeholders, and our public funders. Student success is a complex and holistic goal which is not measured simply by retention and graduation. And while academic achievement leading to a career that meets their personal goals and aspirations is critical, we equally must be concerned with how students develop emotionally, ethically, and civically. We are dedicated to creating an environment conducive to learning and living for all students, particularly those who have historically been underserved by higher education: low income, first generation, and students of color, empowering them to achieve their full potential.

Building a Sustainable University focuses our attention on operating a holistically healthy, financially stable, and environmentally responsible organization. Organizational sustainability requires financial health and extends to the culture and environment in which our students learn and our employees serve. We must create an environment of civility, mutual respect, and collegiality that supports the success of our students as well as each other. Finally, organizational sustainability requires us to live into our commitment to operate our institution in an environmentally responsible manner and to act as stewards of our campus along the Mississippi River for the generations of students we have yet to serve.

Deepening Reciprocal Partnerships—internal, external, local, and global—creates learning experiences and a programmatic portfolio that is relevant and responsive to the needs of our students and communities. As a public university, we have responsibility to be Stewards of Place, a phrase the American Association of State Colleges & Universities (AASCU) uses to describe the unique role state college and universities play in the lives of their communities and regions. Our responsibility in the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the regions we serve is what defines us as an institution and will make us vital agents and architects of a diverse democracy, committed to educating students for responsible citizenship in ways that both deepen their education and improve the quality of community life for the state of Minnesota and its residents.

To achieve these outcomes we must be what we teach. We must be outward-looking, partnership-oriented, and deeply engaged with our students and our communities. We must cultivate mutual respect and understanding, build reciprocal relationships within and beyond campus walls, and adapt proactively to the radically shifting and evolving landscapes in our shared worlds.

We must become a 21st Century Engaged University.

Appendix 2

Our Husky Compact

Recommended by Strategic Planning Committee on Jan. 15, 2015

Our Husky Compact embodies the essential and cross-cutting attributes of a St. Cloud State University education that we value as a community. It is a commitment we make to our students and students make to their education that will set them apart and prepare them to be global citizens of the 21st century.

Underpinning Our Husky Compact is the belief that we develop these attributes over time and across and beyond the curriculum. Intellectual and personal growth occurs as we are exposed to both broad and specialized knowledge and have the opportunity to apply what they have learned outside of the classroom—through research, service and community-based learning, internships, learning communities, collaborative experiences — in the communities in which they live and work. We recognize that we all exist in an environment of complexity, diversity and change. Lifelong growth and development along the dimensions of Our Husky Compact will prepare all members of the SCSU community to reconsider the world around them and discover and apply new solutions to challenges and opportunities they encounter in their professional and personal lives through risk-taking, innovation and imagination.

When students graduate with an SCSU education, they will:

- **Think Creatively and Critically**
- **Seek and Apply Knowledge**
- **Communicate Effectively**
- **Integrate Existing and Evolving Technologies**
- **Engage as a Member of a Diverse and Multicultural World**
- **Act with Personal Integrity and Civic Responsibility**

Think Creatively and Critically

- Demonstrate intellectual inquiry and curiosity characterized by innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.
- Reason analytically
- Find, evaluate, and communicate substantive information
- Engage multiple perspectives
- Synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in new combinations to achieve imaginative solutions
- Appreciate the intrinsic value of creative pursuits

Seek and Apply Knowledge

- Develop broad knowledge and understanding of the human experience and physical and natural worlds
- Pursue expertise in a discipline
- Integrate and apply knowledge and experience across disciplines in both broad and specialized settings
- Seek new knowledge through varied pathways of discovery
- Identify gaps in knowledge and seek out new information

Communicate Effectively

- Use multiple channels and modes to effectively communicate information and ideas
- Assess diverse contexts and understand how we shape and are shaped by them
- Communicate across systems and cultures and to adapt to diverse contexts and audiences
- Recognize the ethical implications of our communication

Integrate Existing and Evolving Technologies

- Critically evaluate technology and its impact on society
- Effectively use and integrate general and discipline-appropriate technologies
- Gain the confidence and skills to embrace and use technology now and in the future
- Recognize the ethical implications of technology

Engage as a Member of a Diverse and Multicultural World

- Understand the diverse influences on one's personal identity
- Develop intercultural competency, understanding and an appreciation for commonalities and differences
- Recognize and value diverse perspectives and the interdependence among communities, locally and globally
- Critically analyze multiple worldviews, systems and power structures to understand their implications for people's lives and our sustainable future
- Integrate diverse perspectives to address significant local and global problems collaboratively and equitably

Act with Personal Integrity and Civic Responsibility

- Cultivate self-awareness and personal and civic identity
- Nurture communities that enhance the well-being of self, others, and the environment
- Work to make a difference in the civic life of our communities
- Exercise informed and responsible action to address ethical, societal and environmental challenges
- Develop as a leader and collaborator
- Empower self and others through service, leadership, and participation in change
- Continue to learn, grow and strive for healthy balance in an ever-changing world

Appendix 3

Existing Activities and Infrastructure

St. Cloud State University received the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement in 2011, indicating that community engagement is deeply aligned with the mission and vision of the University. The existing infrastructure to support this work is currently housed within the Department of Campus Involvement with the Faculty Liaison for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement responsible for assisting faculty in the development and implementation of service learning courses as well as other civic engagement activities.

The Civic Engagement & Community-Based Learning Advisory Committee is a University committee charged by the President which makes recommendations and reports their progress to the President and Provost. One of the key events that showcases the collaborative work of faculty, staff, students and the community is the bi-annual Community Engagement Celebration. Taking place at the end of each Fall and Spring academic semester, this event documents the growing importance and understanding of community engagement and highlights a wide range of community engagement forms, such as field experiences, service learning, internships, volunteering and other community initiatives.

Additional activities in alignment with the University's focus on engaged communities include²:

Community-Based Learning and Education Abroad

On several SCSU learning abroad programs such as Chile, Germany, South Africa, Laos, Thailand and England, students are involved in service-learning projects or other projects that are focused on outreach and engagement in the community. St. Cloud State faculty and staff work with community partners abroad or faculty at participating institutions to develop a comprehensive and integrated experience that reflects the country.

Community-Based Research with Undergraduate and Graduate Students

The inclusion of undergraduate and graduate students in research is another hallmark of St. Cloud State University. As such, many students are involved in community-based research projects. A few recent examples include: students from the College of Science and Engineering working with faculty and GeoComm in our newest building – the Integrated Science and Engineering Laboratory Facility (ISELF) -- to create 3-D imaging of buildings for first responders in emergency situations; students and faculty in the Department of Biology involved in a long term study with the Department of Military Affairs related to the Integrated Management of Invasive Plant Species on Arden Hills and Camp Ripley Military Training Sites; students awarded funds from the SCSU Student Research Colloquium in the following areas - Biomedical Science students researching how organic pollutants impact the development of Type-1 diabetes, students in Electrical and Computer Engineering researching a concussion detection and notification system for football helmets.

Experiential Learning Classes

According to information submitted to national Campus Compact from St. Cloud State related to the 2015-2016 year, 392 courses were offered with a community-based learning component; which is nearly 5% of all course offerings that year. In addition, 23% of our 2015-2016 graduates took at least one community-based learning course during their academic career. Approximately 221

² The activities listed here are offered as examples and not intended to be exhaustive. A real-time, on-line database of activities that illustrate the University's focus on engaged communities will need to be established.

faculty members taught a community-based learning course in 2015-2016; which is nearly 22% of all faculty who taught that year. Data from the 2015-2016 SCSU Spring Student Survey also indicates that over 60% of our students engage in some form of community-based service on a regular, monthly basis, totaling over 1 million hours per year of service benefit to communities near and far. According to the [Independent Sector](#), the national value of an hour of service equals \$24.41/hr. – making this an economic benefit to the communities served of over \$24 million per year from St. Cloud State students at large. Finally, 11% of our 2015-2016 graduates entered public service careers upon graduation.

Regional Partnerships

St. Cloud State University has developed significant partnerships with many area agencies, industries and anchor institutions including:

- Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation
- Greater St. Cloud Community Pillars
- CentraCare Health
- RED Forum
- Small Business Development Center
- Ignite Center

SCSU Welcome Center

One of the key findings from the community-engagement visioning sessions was that the community did not understand how to access university services or resources or who, within the university, to contact for specific information, projects or programs. To address this need for a physical and virtual space to bring the university and community together, St. Cloud State University created the St. Cloud State University Welcome Center, a front door for the community to the University, which opened in September 2010.

SCSU Community Garden

The idea of a community garden is an outgrowth of Tracy Ore's (professor in the Sociology Department at SCSU) "Politics of Food" course, and her research on sustainable agriculture and community organizing. SCSU has set aside land and dedicated some funds to cover the costs of tools and other start-up needs. Although the garden is connected to the SCSU, the garden is intended to foster and build bridges between the university and larger community and to create a space where people can participate in planting, growing, and harvesting our own food.

Gallery Vault

Gallery Vault is a contemporary art gallery sponsored by the Department of Art at St. Cloud State University and run completely by students. Located in downtown St. Cloud, it is a highly visible storefront exhibition space that offers invaluable experience for art and art history students. Opportunities include solo and group exhibitions, curating, exhibition installation, gallery infrastructure, arts writing, and public relations. Students working with Gallery Vault gain professional experience and also have the opportunity to shape the gallery's activities and exhibition mission. Gallery Vault is one of a handful of galleries in United States that is entirely run by undergraduate art students and has been featured on Minnesota Public Radio and in the St. Cloud Times.

Creative Art Series

The Creative Art Series is enhancing student learning and broadening public perspectives through art, music, film and theater. Each visiting artist in this School of the Arts series offers a master class

workshop for students and presents a public performance. The series also includes events by St. Cloud State students and faculty.