

# Civic Action Plan

## St. Charles Community College

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The Civic Action Plan taskforce (2020-2021)

### I. Vision/Mission

The Civic Action Plan [CAP] aims to support the expansion of on and off-campus community engagement opportunities for faculty, students, and staff, melding these efforts seamlessly with the College's Mission, Vision, and Values. While Saint Charles Community College already retains a reputation as a central force in the community, the CAP will encourage a cultural shift in which civic and community engagement are incentivized and more intentionally infused into curricular and co-curricular programming, as well as diversity and inclusion initiatives, professional development, and college service opportunities. By implementing the CAP, Saint Charles Community College will uphold its commitments to academic excellence, equity, individual empowerment, and community partnerships.

### II. Approach

*How did the Civic Action Plan come to be, and what is its purpose?*

#### Context: Campus Compact's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Action Statement

Saint Charles Community College (SCC) is an active member of Missouri Campus Compact, the state branch of the national Campus Compact organization. Founded in 1986, Campus Compact membership comprises college and university presidents and chancellors from across the country who are dedicated to advancing civic and community engagement efforts on their campuses.

In recognition of Campus Compact's 30<sup>th</sup> year, members drafted and signed a "30th Anniversary Action Statement," renewing their commitment to the pursuit of civic engagement at their institutions as well as on the local, state, and national levels. The statement details five key commitments to which each signatory agrees to support:

**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.

**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.

**We embrace** our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.

**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.

**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.

Since its publication, over 450 college and university leaders have signed in support of the Action Statement and its attendant commitments, and in doing so each signatory pledged on behalf of their institution to draft and implement a Civic Action Plan unique to their campus. The CAP is designed to denote how the institution will invoke the practice of civic and community engagement to uphold each of the five commitments.

SCC leadership signed in support of the Action Statement in 2016, and over the following years key stakeholders began the process of crafting the Action Plan.

#### Context: SCC's Service-Learning & Civic Engagement Program

- While SCC already works to meet and advance community needs through public programming, curriculum, and degree and technical programs, the incentivizing of conscious civic engagement in curricular and co-curricular programming is relatively new to the College.
  - SCC piloted the Service-Learning Program in 2014, helmed by a faculty lead and two staff members, with an emphasis on helping faculty develop service-learning courses.
  - After Board approval, it became a permanent, funded program in 2015.
  - Since then, the program worked to expand its scope to include both curricular and co-curricular programming.
  - As of 2019, the program is now known as the Service-Learning & Civic Engagement Program and is overseen by faculty program chair with release hours.
  
- The CAP builds on the work of the Service-Learning & Civic Engagement Program:
  - expanding the scope to include and support college-wide initiatives rooted in various committees, departments, and programs.
  - The wide net that this Plan casts will result in expanded opportunities for students, faculty, and staff who are committed to supporting service-learning class offerings, as well as civic engagement curricular and co-curricular programming at SCC.

#### The Planning Process: SCC's Civic Action Plan taskforce

- While initial plans for crafting the CAP began in 2018, the Civic Action Plan taskforce first came together in the spring of 2020.
  - Two factors contributed to the official start of the process:
    - The taskforce chairs completed the necessary professional development to begin crafting the CAP.

- In 2018 the Higher Learning Commission released updated guidelines for accreditation that emphasized intentional service-learning curriculum and community engagement as a part of campus culture and curricular/co-curricular programming.
- In March 2018, SCC's then-Vice-President for Academic Affairs charged the taskforce chairs with creating a Civic Action Plan taskforce.
  - The chairs invited representatives from across campus and the community with the hope of bringing together a diverse array of voices and experiences to the planning process.
  - Composed of over 25 faculty, staff, administrators, students, alumni, and community partner representatives, the CAP Taskforce worked diligently over the next 12 months to brainstorm and formulate the basis for the College's Plan.
- The COVID-19 pandemic complicated the process of predicting when on-campus events and "business as usual" would resume. Thus, the taskforce decided to take a deliberate approach to crafting the CAP, opting for a slower planning timeline as opposed to quickly producing a document. This allowed the taskforce, as they moved through the process, to respond to the challenges posed by both the pandemic and its resultant remote work environment.
  - The remote nature of this collaboration and the open-endedness of the pandemic timeline unexpectedly provided an opportunity for the taskforce to envision how a return to campus could infuse civic and community engagement into everyday work, special events and campus-wide initiatives.

Key Approach: Increase Service-Learning Course Offerings and Co-Curricular Opportunities

- Faculty across disciplines offer an average of over fifteen service-learning class sections each semester.
  - Each service-learning class includes a transcript designation—a permanent record of a student's participation in this work.
- At the time the CAP was written, the Service-Learning & Civic Engagement Program offered various co-curricular activities:
  - Day of Service
  - Week of Service
  - Participation in Campus Compact's Semester of Service Program.
- The outcomes of the Civic Action Plan will enable greater visibility of and thus participation in service-learning and civic engagement curricular and co-curricular courses and experiences, leading to a wider array of offerings.

Key Approach: Incentivize Civic and Community Engagement for Faculty and Staff

- Already, faculty and staff participate in college and community service to various extents as defined by the expectations of their roles at the College.
  - However, the expected parameters of engagement and the incentives to participate in these activities are not always clearly delineated.

- Outcomes in the CAP aim to create the conditions in which employee participation in community engagement yields numerous and concrete personal and professional benefits and, most importantly, becomes permanently embedded in the culture of SCC.

Key Approach: Build and Strengthen Cross-Departmental Partnerships

- While working towards meeting the commitments and outcomes defined in the CAP, stakeholders will identify the ways in which the goals of the Plan can be met through collaboration between departments and other initiatives at SCC.
- One of the key discussions the CAP taskforce returned to again and again is the need to reduce the number of “silos” across campus.
- The CAP aims to foster relationships across departments by identifying overlapping goals and concerns and then working together to push for mutually beneficial outcomes.

Key Approach: Reinforce and Expand SCC’s Community Partnerships

The CAP planning process involved the input of several community partner representatives, as well as SCC employees who work directly with community partners as part of their duties at the College.

- In doing this, community representatives are invited to the table as collaborators.
  - This egalitarian approach is upheld as the gold standard for campus and community partnerships in civic engagement discourse.

Key Approach: Provide Opportunities for Stakeholders to Advance the Civic Action Plan

To successfully implement the CAP, specific processes must be put into place to review, evaluate, and make any necessary changes as the timeline progresses. Two ways in which this will be achieved is through organized meetings composed of key stakeholders:

- One of the intended outcomes of the CAP is the formation of an executive Civic Engagement Advisory Board, comprising key stakeholders hailing from SCC’s campus and the community.
  - This expansive group, composed of faculty, staff, students, alumni, administrators, and community members will meet several times throughout the year to evaluate the progress of the Plan and make recommended changes or enhancements to it as needed.
- As well, SCC’s Academic Affairs division has formalized a Service-Learning & Civic Engagement Committee to begin meeting in Fall 2021.
  - This committee, comprising a smaller group of faculty, staff, administrators, and students, will be geared towards careful and thoughtful implementation of curricular and co-curricular programming outlined in the CAP.
  - These efforts will enhance civic and community engagement in and out of the classroom, providing opportunities for members of the campus to come together in service of each other and the community.

### **III. Outcomes**

*What does the Civic Action Plan aim to accomplish?*

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Supported CAP Commitment</u>
<b>1-</b> Service-learning classes will have greater visibility, and enrollment will increase.	Prepare Harness
<b>2-</b> Faculty, staff, and students will participate in civic engagement opportunities on and off-campus.	Prepare Embrace Foster
<b>3-</b> SCC will continually assess community and student needs and increase support of them through employee participation in community activities.	Empower Embrace Harness
<b>4-</b> Develop community-centered professional development programming on campus.	Empower Foster
<b>5-</b> SCC will provide incentives to SCC faculty and staff to be more involved with community and civic engagement initiatives.	Empower Foster
<b>6-</b> Promote sustainability on and off-campus.	Empower Embrace
<b>7-</b> Implement community-based participatory research in classes.	Prepare
<b>8-</b> Include diverse community voices in institutional assessment practices.	Empower Embrace Foster
<b>9-</b> Promote deliberative dialogue opportunities between the college and the community.	Prepare Embrace Harness
<b>10-</b> Publicize how our service learning and civic engagement	Harness

initiatives serve and reflect our Mission, Vision, and Values.	
<b>11</b> -Increase civic literacy on campus	All commitments
<b>12</b> -Establish a Civic Engagement Advisory Board, composed of key stakeholders to continually review the progress of these outcomes, as well as add to and revitalize the CAP as outcomes are accomplished	All commitments

**IV. Timeline and Implementation**

- April 1986 – Establishment of Saint Charles Community College [SCC].
- August 2013 – College leadership approves plans for an official Service-Learning Program.
- August 2014 – Service-Learning Program pilot officially begins.
- August 2015 – SCC formalizes the Service-Learning program and offers its first batch of designated classes.
- October 2015 – SCC holds its first Day of Service event.
- January 2016 – SCC leadership signs in support of the Campus Compact 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Action Statement.
- March 2018 – SCC leadership charges the Service-Learning program with moving forward with the Civic Action Plan [CAP].
- January 2019 – Upon recommendation by the program chair and SCC leadership, the Service-Learning Program is officially renamed the Service-Learning & Civic Engagement Program.
- March 2020 – SCC leadership charges the CAP chairs with establishing a CAP task force.
- May 2021 – President’s Council, the official governing board of SCC, officially approves the CAP.
- August 2021 – Implementation of the CAP.
- May 2026 – Proposed completion of the CAP.

## **V. Communication**

*How will key stakeholders plan to communicate the work accomplished through the CAP? (this section will also be finalized with the Advisory Board and college-wide committee)*

- Increasing social media presence through the SLCE Instagram and Facebook, as well as developing other social media handles if helpful.
  - Use social media to highlight small and large accomplishments.
  - Use these handles to highlight goals of the CAP, as well as highlighting SCC service-learning and civic engagement projects, events, and initiatives.
- Continue to highlight service-learning course designation and transcript designation as incentive for enrollment.
- Work with Marketing & Communications department and other sources to publish press releases—sharing the news internally and through external community marketing outlets.
  - Greater St. Charles County Chamber of Commerce has an E-News Letter sent out at least once per month highlighting events and local news, updates, education, etc. in the community.
  - Workforce development sends out updates and learning opportunities as well as jobs.
  - Community Council has a News and Member Announcements, E-News Letter for St. Charles Community that is sent out at least once per month.
- Start an annual celebration for all involved with CAP both on the campus and in the community.
- Create an “every other month” email that goes to Social Service agencies, churches, Civic organizations, SCC staff, Cities & County officials on what CAP has done.
- Build out a presentation that any of the leaders can use to highlight CAP in the community.
- Contact TV, newspapers and radio stations with press releases on CAP achievements.
- Collect interviews on “Why I Serve through CAP” with participants via video and written for use later.
- Acknowledge student, staff, and faculty participation with awards presented at faculty celebration/club banquet, etc.
- Acknowledge extraordinary student contributions with letter from the college president, diversity officer, student activities manager, or appropriate person.