



Campus Compact

Strategic Plan 2025–2030



A photograph showing two women in a meeting. The woman on the right, wearing a yellow shirt and glasses, is holding and pointing to a document. The woman on the left, wearing a grey top, is looking at the document. They are seated at a table with water glasses and a bowl. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Our mission & vision

VISION

Campus Compact envisions a world in which all of higher education commits to advancing an equitable, accessible, and just democracy—where colleges and universities serve as responsive and transformative agents of change, with students, faculty, staff, and administrators joining as true partners with communities in contributing to our collective flourishing.

MISSION

Campus Compact supports, engages, and challenges higher education to realize its public purpose.

Mobilizing students, staff, faculty, and administrators, Campus Compact empowers colleges and universities to advance their academic and civic missions by partnering with communities to address complex social issues and further equity, justice, and prosperity for all. As a leader and connector in higher education, Campus Compact offers professional development and convenings, advances research and best practices, nurtures connections and networks, builds capacity for people, campuses, and communities, and advocates for resources that enable this collective work.



Our values

EQUITY

We prioritize full participation and diversity of thought, experience, and background. We center equity in our actions, processes, and practices to uplift diverse voices and perspectives.

GROWTH MINDSET

We consistently push ourselves and each other to do and be better. We are motivated by growth—embracing new ideas, prioritizing continuous learning, and meeting challenges head-on.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We recognize that long-term change requires individual and shared ownership of personal and organization actions. We own our mistakes, give each other grace, collaborate openly, and hold ourselves to high standards of integrity.

RESPONSIVENESS

We ensure our offerings, resources, and approaches are flexible, grounded in feedback, and responsive to the challenges of our time.

TRANSPARENCY

We are direct and authentic within our team, with our members, and our partners. We know that building trust starts with consistent, honest, and transparent communication.

Our history & context

Civic and community engagement has advanced greatly since Campus Compact's founding nearly 40 years ago in 1985. What was emerging in the mid-80s has evolved into a well-established field, with many colleges and universities equipped with robust infrastructures and missions to support civic education, community-based teaching and learning, engaged scholarship and research, anchor strategies, and deep campus-community partnerships. At the same time, Campus Compact has evolved from a state-based affiliate model into a nationwide organization that serves and connects higher education institutions of all types across the US as a field leader and movement builder. Despite the progress we've made, there are still critical challenges that our sector must address.



The value of higher education—both for students and for society at large—is a topic of heated debate. A [2024 Gallup poll](#) revealed that Americans' confidence in higher education had fallen to 36%. Wealth gaps continue to widen among the richest and poorest Americans, with even deeper divides between racial groups and those with and without a college education. Challenges facing students have changed dramatically, with the compounding crises of increasing poverty, global and local conflict, social injustice, racism, climate change, and the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacting student well-being and faith in democracy. The polarization that characterizes our politics and discourse has led to deeper divides across campus and community spaces. Higher education has seen an increase in political attacks and intrusion that limit academic freedom, learning, and our collective capacity to serve all students and create the equitable and thriving communities we seek. And we are still reckoning with higher education's legacy—including the ripple effects of harm caused by our histories of displacement and physical expansion, exclusion, and perpetuation of inequities.

As has been proven throughout our 40-year history, colleges and universities that embrace their public purpose—leveraging institutional power and resources holistically to contribute to change that benefits our communities and students, promotes equity and justice, and strengthens our democracy—are well-equipped to address these challenges.

Community-engaged faculty, staff, administrators, and students strive every day to further community well-being and build public trust. Colleges and universities—cognizant of their power and influence—demonstrate the value campuses can add when they invest in their public mission by serving as anchor institutions in communities that commit to economic inclusion and mutually-beneficial partnerships.

Similarly, civic and community engagement progresses student development and professionalization, instilling in them the civic skills they need to become active and effective in their careers and their communities. And, as students voice concerns about their future and purpose, civic and community engagement connects them to immediate opportunities to make a real difference and inspires them to take action on the issues they are most passionate about.

The practical, hands-on experiences of civic and community engagement can combat polarization by advancing conflict transformation and bridge-building work on campuses and in communities, helping to heal divides and provide venues for community outreach that further reinforce a positive narrative about higher education.

Community-engaged research and scholarship uncovers action-oriented solutions to address our most pressing social issues by engaging the public directly as key stakeholders and contributors of knowledge, grounding research in the practical realities and specific challenges communities face.





For higher education to reach its full potential, we must eliminate the roadblocks that keep us from being most effective in solving our biggest challenges. All colleges and universities must fully commit to their public mission, countering prevailing narratives by boldly demonstrating higher education as a force for public good.

- * To combat gaps in infrastructure and funding that civic and community engagement initiatives need—with community colleges, rural universities, and minority-serving institutions often being the most impacted—we must take seriously the importance of this work and the need to invest in it.
- * We must be bolder about securing new funding and scaffolding resources, both internally and externally, for the greatest impact. We have to tell the story of our impact in more profound and accessible ways.
- * We must invest in the professionalization and capacity building of people who work every day to facilitate community partnerships, engage in community-engaged research and scholarship, and empower student civic learning and community leadership. This includes a specific focus on evolving internal policies and procedures like promotion and tenure to ensure this work is valued and rewarded.
- * We must prioritize evidence-based research that articulates the direct correlation between civic and community engagement and student success—proving its ability to contribute to college access, completion, career preparation, civic skills, and lifelong health and happiness.
- * We must center students—not just to provide input or feedback, but to partner with faculty, staff, administrators, and community members as true partners and decision-makers who can drive the future of civic and community engagement and make real differences in our world.
- * Finally, we must leverage the public-facing nature of this work to build bridges beyond higher education, creating coalitions with business, government, and the non-profit sectors to create lasting and measurable impact.

By empowering colleges and universities to holistically engrain their public mission in their teaching, research, scholarship, programming, and operations, we have a chance to finally and permanently demonstrate that post-secondary education is not a private commodity, but a public good—for students, communities, and our democracy at large.

Goals & strategies

Grounded in our vision, values, and current context, these goals and related strategies will guide Campus Compact's work as we pursue our mission from 2025 to 2030.



* Center student voice & leadership

Champion student civic participation and leadership that fosters a sense of agency, deepens their commitment to social responsibility, and contributes to academic and career success.

- Amplify, uplift, and resource student voice and leadership in Campus Compact, on their campuses, and throughout the field.
- Expand direct student programming and provide support systems that promote a healthy balance across academic responsibilities, civic and community engagement, and personal life.
- Grow strategic and tactical partnerships with national service and other career-focused programming to support students in embedding engagement in their lives beyond college.
- Determine key metrics for student engagement and impact for national service programming.

* Professional development for community-engaged faculty & staff

Build the professional capacity of faculty, staff, and administrators connected to the work of community and civic engagement at the individual, institutional, and field levels.

- Provide context-responsive and tailored resources and training for professional development.
- Collaborate with community-engaged scholars and practitioners to support their capacity to conduct and produce research and advance community-engaged methodologies.
- Intentionally expand the reach of our programming to engage practitioners who have yet to see themselves as a part of the work of civic and community engagement.
- Value and validate professionals in the field by offering spaces for care and connection while also supporting pathways for professional growth.

* Member engagement

Strengthen pathways and resources for civically and community-engaged institutions and leaders to engage with Campus Compact and each other—with particular attention to community colleges, rural universities, and minority-serving institutions.

- Expand Campus Compact membership and explore new individual, international, and affiliate membership models that round out a robust and diverse coalition of individuals and organizations advancing civic and community engagement.
- Facilitate coalition- and network-building opportunities to foster collaboration, collective impact, and shared vision among member institutions.
- Center member voice and leadership to ensure Campus Compact's offerings are responsive to the needs of the field.
- Expand external funding streams to support campus engagement and capacity to advance civic and community engagement.

* Narrative change & advocacy

Boldly communicate the impact and value of civic and community engagement to increase public trust and investment in higher education.

- Convene and support storytellers from across our coalition and networks to share place-based, impact-driven stories of civic and community engagement.
- Invest in narrative change campaigns that reinforce the value of civic and community engagement.
- Promote evidence-based research that demonstrates the importance of civic and community engagement for student success, including college access and completion, career preparation, civic skills, and lifelong health and happiness.
- Foster partnership with and collaboration among key organizations to combat legislation and other government actions that threaten civic and community engagement in higher education.
- Advance a federal advocacy agenda to develop new streams of resources for higher education civic and community engagement.



* Knowledge creation

Advance evidence-based research and other scholarly works on new and innovative practices to inform the evolution of the field of civic and community engagement.

- Develop a research agenda that is responsive to the needs of the field.
- Monitor and assess critical advances in and priorities of the field.
- Disseminate and publish books, resource hubs, toolkits, and reports to advance the practices and understanding of civic and community engagement.
- Make research accessible to broad audiences within and outside of higher education through theory-to-practice and research translation.

* Investing in ourselves

Achieve operational excellence that emphasizes culture, capacity, and systems so that our people and partners can thrive.

- Invest in staff that builds our operational, fundraising, and member engagement capacities.
- Build an organizational culture that advances collaboration, performance, and belonging.
- Formalize policies, procedures, and processes to align with our remote, growing workplace.
- Enhance financial systems to responsibly steward our resources and manage risk.
- Streamline and better utilize all tech platforms to improve program efficiency, organizational evaluation and assessment, and planning.
- Deepen board engagement and opportunities for impact.

* Building institutional capacity

Enhance the responsiveness and capacity of higher education to tackle complex challenges.

- Advance systems-change planning and strategies to foster campus-wide commitment and buy-in to civic learning and engagement, community engaged scholarship, and institutional partnerships
- Engage Presidents and senior leaders to deepen the integration of their public mission in organizational decision-making, policies, and resource allocation.
- Develop collaborative relationships and initiatives to extend the cumulative impact of all the assets of the sector—from national service to engaged scholarship.
- Promote AmeriCorps programs as tools for institutions to build the capacity for civic learning, community engagement, and student success.





Campus Compact



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