

Inventory Tool

Self-Assessment Rubric

This rubric serves as a starting point for internal campus conversations and for use as an inventory of democracy-related activities. Campuses are encouraged to review this rubric, determine what quantitative terms such as “few,” “modest,” “robust,” or “abundant” mean, and adjust as needed. A few additional caveats are warranted in introducing this tool.

First, modifications can and should account for each campus’ respective context, particularly if the institution has more or less expectations in any particular area than is indicated in the sample rubric. There will undoubtedly be differences in opinion about where a campus might be positioned within this rubric. The primary value of the rubric may be in catalyzing discourse that allows campus community members to provide disparate or complementary perspectives about what it means to be “developing,” “proficient,” or “exemplary” in various domains.

Second, certain institutions may place differential value on any of these dimensions. Some campuses may place greater emphasis on teaching, others on research, and still others on campus culture. It may be useful to explicate which dimensions warrant more or less emphasis in making adaptations to this self-assessment.

Finally, campuses may want to recalibrate the language or consider adding a category of “absent” or “not applicable” to certain categories. This tool should be considered a starting point for developing something that is contextually useful and is not intended as a means of comparing efforts across campuses. The development of this sample rubric was informed by several existing rubrics that may be useful for campus leaders to review as they consider modifications.

- [AAC&U’s Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric](#) (focused primarily on student learning outcomes)
- Massachusetts Board of Higher Education [Preparing Citizens Report on Civic Learning and Engagement](#) (pp. 19–24)
- Institute for Democracy and Higher Education – [Democracy Re/Designed Self Assessment Tool](#)
- University of Minnesota [Assessment Rubric for Institutionalizing Community Engagement in Higher Education](#)

Civic Learning

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Coursework	<p>Some courses identified as being related to advancing or understanding democratic values, skills, institutions and processes</p> <p>Related courses appear within one disciplinary area</p> <p>Courses are stand-alone, separate from major, minor, certificate, or general education program requirements</p>	<p>A modest number of courses related to advancing or understanding democratic values, skills, institutions and processes</p> <p>A modest number of courses connect interrelated social and economic conditions with democratic values, skills, institutions, and processes</p> <p>Related courses taught across a moderate range of disciplines</p> <p>Integration with some major/minor requirements</p>	<p>Abundant courses related to democratic values, institutions, and practices</p> <p>A large number of courses intentionally connect interrelated social and economic conditions with democratic values, skills, institutions, and processes</p> <p>Related courses taught across a wide range of disciplines, with broad and diverse representation of ideas and ideals</p> <p>Full integration in most major/minor requirements and/or general education requirements</p>
Convenings, symposia, e.g. conferences or speaker series	<p>Sporadic convenings focused on advancing or understanding democratic values, skills, institutions and processes</p>	<p>A regular offering of convenings advancing or understanding democratic values, skills, institutions and processes</p> <p>Convenings organized at the program or department level.</p> <p>Convening generally target smaller, internal audiences</p>	<p>Regular and ongoing convenings related to democratic values, institutions, and practices</p> <p>Convenings include efforts organized at the program and departmental level, as well as larger, collaborative initiatives that engage partners across and beyond the institution</p>

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Skills development, <i>e.g. constructive dialogue or civic leadership development</i>	<p>Few democratic skills articulated among educational outcomes within courses and co-curricular offerings</p> <p>Broadly articulated liberal education goals (e.g., critical thinking, communication, problem solving, analytical skills), but with little intentional connection to democratic or civic life</p>	<p>Democratic skills may be articulated as outcomes but are poorly defined in courses and co-curricular offerings</p> <p>Modest attention paid to developing democratic skills and intentionally linking those skills to effective participation in democratic life (e.g., civil discourse and dialogue across difference, democratic decision-making, fostering inclusion)</p>	<p>Well-defined democratic skills are articulated as outcomes in courses and co-curricular offerings</p> <p>Students are provided numerous opportunities to develop and practice democratic skills in ways that are pervasively, intentionally, and visibly integrated into the educational experience (e.g., orientation programs, first-year experience initiatives, residential programs)</p>
Co-curricular, <i>e.g. student government and student groups; fellowships, internships, programs</i>	<p>Sporadic student organizing focused on student civic engagement</p> <p>Sporadic faculty/staff support (both advising and financial) for co-curricular activities</p> <p>Student government participation is irregular</p> <p>Very few community and civic engagement opportunities offered among internships and fellowships</p>	<p>Modest, regular engagement in student organizations supporting civic engagement activities</p> <p>A small number of faculty/staff (“usual suspects”) support co-curricular activities; modest or sporadic financial support</p> <p>Modest participation in student government activities</p> <p>Modest number of community and civic engagement internship/fellowship opportunities, but most focused on direct service as opposed to policy and governance</p>	<p>Active and regular engagement in diverse student organizations focused on civic engagement and participation</p> <p>Faculty/staff from across the institution support co-curricular activities; financial support is both sufficient and sustained</p> <p>Robust participation in student government, including highly visible and competitive elections and campaigning</p> <p>Robust number of community and civic engagement internship/fellowship opportunities, including strong representation oriented toward policy and governance and/or explicitly connected to democratic values, skills, institutions, and processes</p>

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Evaluation and Assessment, <i>e.g., civic learning is part of the continuous improvement of an institution</i>	There are sporadic efforts underway to account for the number and quality of civic learning activities taking place	An initiative to account for the number and quality of civic learning activities taking place throughout the college or university has been proposed	Civic learning is part of institutional quality improvement in the accreditation processes. An ongoing, systematic effort is in place to account for the number and quality of these activities

Civic & democratic engagement

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Civic participation, <i>e.g. voter education, get out the vote efforts, participation in community/public forums</i>	Sporadic voter registration and voter education occur only at national election intervals Students may participate in forums with little preparation	Sporadic efforts to engage in voter registration and voter education, with little or moderate support from institutional leaders. Moderate participation with small, occasional events Opportunities exist for students to learn about listening and speaking in community/public forums	Comprehensive, consistent, and pervasive voter registration and voter education efforts exist across national, state, and local elections and in between. Students receive regular training in how to listen, speak, collaborate and to engage in a broad range of civic events, and faculty, staff, and administrators regularly serve as role models in this capacity

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Community partnership, convening, coalition building	Few or no community partnerships exist that support civic engagement	Some decentralized efforts to develop community partnerships focusing on civic engagement, modest structural support	Strong, ongoing partnerships and participation in coalitions aimed at deep engagement in the civic life of the local community. A centralized support structure works collaboratively with efforts embedded within departments and programs to deeply engage and coordinate local civic engagement efforts
Volunteerism, community service, public service	Volunteer activities are infrequent, lack visibility, and are not well supported	Modest engagement in volunteer activities and periodic/sporadic endorsement from institutional leaders Basic infrastructure to support and encourage ethical and effective engagement in community and public service opportunities	Robust engagement in volunteer, community service, and public service opportunities Strong and visible structural and cultural support volunteer engagement by students, faculty, and staff Structural support includes attention to best practices regarding ethical and effective service (e.g., preparation, reciprocity, reflection, etc.)
Advocacy and organizing	Limited or no advocacy efforts related to civic life among students, faculty, or staff Little or no discussion or guidance related to institutional complexities related to advocacy and organizing in a postsecondary context	Periodic advocacy and/or organizing efforts related to civic life among students, faculty, or staff with minimal structural support Some discussion of institutional complexities related to advocacy and organizing efforts in a postsecondary context, but little or unclear guidance from leadership	Active and robust advocacy and organizing efforts among students, faculty, and staff Active and ongoing discussions and clear guidance from leaders regarding how to navigate the complexities of advocacy and organizing from within a postsecondary context

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Public Policy	Very little engagement by students, faculty, and staff in local, state, or federal policy-making efforts	Sporadic engagement from a small number of students, faculty, and staff in local, state, or federal policy-making efforts	Structural support for sustained engagement in a broad array of policy-making efforts at one or more levels (local, state, and federal)
Evaluation and Assessment, <i>e.g., civic and democratic engagement is part of the continuous improvement of an institution</i>	There are sporadic efforts underway to account for the number and quality of civic and democratic engagement activities taking place	An initiative to account for the number and quality of civic and democratic engagement activities taking place throughout the college or university has been proposed Efforts to assess amount of participation in civic life among the campus community at local, state, and national levels	Civic and democratic engagement is part of institutional quality improvement in the accreditation processes. An ongoing, systematic effort is in place to account for the number and quality of these activities. Robust efforts to assess both amount and quality of participation in civic life among the campus community at local, state, and national levels

Research

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Institutional research centers, institutes, departments, labs	Minimal focus on democracy-related research among research centers, institutes, or labs	Some research initiatives dedicated to democracy-related research, mostly situated within individual traditional disciplines	Well established centers and labs with sustained funding and interdisciplinary approaches to democracy-related research
Research projects and grants	Limited or no research projects addressing democratic themes	Intermittent projects with partial integration of democratic themes	Comprehensive and ongoing projects explicitly addressing democratic themes
Scholarship/ Publications	Limited scholarly output related to democracy	Moderate production of democracy-related scholarship and publications	High-quality, influential scholarship with broad dissemination on democratic themes
People: scholars, fellows, dedicated research positions	Few or no dedicated scholars, fellows, or research positions focused on democracy-related research	Some scholars and fellows focusing on democracy-related research, primarily, if not exclusively located within departments such as political science	Robust and interdisciplinary network of scholars focused on democracy-related research

Campus culture

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
<p>Alignment and articulation of civic and democratic purposes, e.g. reflection of institutional history and context; mission, vision, and strategy; communication</p>	<p>There is no direct mention of civic and democratic purposes in the institution's mission and vision.</p> <p>Strategic plans do not purpose not adequately address the institution's civic mission and vision</p> <p>Little communication exists that emphasizes the institution's broader civic and democratic purposes</p>	<p>Institution's mission and vision mentions civic and/or democratic purposes</p> <p>Some strategic plans throughout the institution address the importance of civic and democratic purposes</p> <p>There is some communication throughout the broader institution that emphasizes the institution's civic and democratic purposes</p>	<p>Institution mission clearly articulates civic and democratic purposes</p> <p>Strategic plans throughout the institution clearly focus on promoting its civic and democratic purposes</p> <p>Institution has reflected on its historical role in addressing issues pertaining to its civic and democratic purposes</p> <p>Communication vehicles effectively emphasize the institution's civic and democratic purposes</p>

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
<p>Operationalization and integration of civic and democratic purposes, e.g. policies for academic freedom and free speech; opportunities for shared governance, etc.</p>	<p>Few, if any, opportunities exist for the campus community to participate in shared governance</p> <p>There is not clear understanding of the campus' freedom of speech policy</p> <p>Definitions of the campus policies on civic purpose are hard to find on the institution's website</p> <p>Campus members do not feel like their voice matters in campus issues</p> <p>The community is not adequately integrated into broader campus efforts</p>	<p>Some opportunities exist for the campus community to participate in shared governance activities</p> <p>A policy exists regarding freedom of speech, but has not been updated/is not well-understood</p> <p>The campus community sometimes feels that they are effectively able to articulate their voice to affect the institution</p> <p>There are sporadic efforts to integrate the broader community into campus efforts</p>	<p>Many opportunities exist for the campus community to participate and influence the broader campus community through shared governance</p> <p>A clear policy on freedom of speech is well-understood across campus</p> <p>The campus community feel that their voice matters in addressing issues at the institutional level</p> <p>Efforts exist to integrate and involve the broader community (around the campus) into campus activities</p>

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
<p>Resource allocation, e.g. administrative roles, fellowships, research grants, awards and recognition, course releases, etc.</p>	<p>There is little or no recurring budget allocation made for staffing, infrastructure, and activities that explicitly focus on the institution's civic purpose.</p> <p>Resources and staffing for civic learning and engagement are inconsistent, unsustained, and tied to short-term external funding sources (e.g., grants)</p> <p>Few efforts ensure that civic purpose efforts are institutionalized within the broader institution's structure</p>	<p>Less than adequate resources for staffing, infrastructure, and activities that focus on the institution's civic purpose are included in the college or university operating budget.</p> <p>While there is enthusiasm for pursuing external support, there is an overreliance on short-term, grant funding for activities that support the institution's civic purpose</p> <p>There have been some efforts to institutionalize and create a sustained civic infrastructure, although nothing is final</p>	<p>Adequate and sustained resources for staffing, infrastructure, and activities are included in the college or university operating budget for establishing, enhancing, and deepening civic learning and engagement (including centers, fellowships, research, etc).</p> <p>The campus has institutionalized and created a sustained civic infrastructure</p> <p>With core activities supported by general (and recurring) operating funds, units are encouraged and supported to pursue external funding to test innovations that deepen the institution's ability to fulfill its civic purpose and advance the field</p>

	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Official policies, e.g., policies related to the institution's civic and democratic purposes	<p>Policy documents do not address issues related to education and scholarly work that advances the institution's civic and democratic purposes (e.g., no specific policy guidance is provided related to community-engaged teaching, research and creative activity, and/or service)</p> <p>Faculty and staff roles in fulfilling the institution's civic and democratic purposes are not addressed in tenure and promotion policies, or in hiring and advancement policies</p>	<p>Policy documents minimally address issues related to education and scholarly work that advances the institution's civic and democratic purposes (e.g., basic policies exist that deal mostly with liability and risk management concerns regarding community-engaged teaching, research and creative activity, and/or service.</p> <p>Faculty and staff roles in fulfilling the institution's civic and democratic purposes are acknowledged but considered optional in tenure and promotion policies, or in hiring and advancement policies.</p>	<p>Policy documents appropriately address issues related to education and scholarly work that advances the institution's civic and democratic purposes (e.g., policies exist that both address liability and risk management concerns as well as advance capacity to engage in ethical and effective community-engaged teaching, research and creative activity, and/or service.)</p> <p>Faculty and staff roles in fulfilling the institution's civic and democratic purposes are acknowledged and explicitly rewarded in tenure and promotion policies, or in hiring and advancement policies.</p>
Assessment of civic and democratic outcomes, e.g. learning outcomes, tracking changes in civic attitudes and behaviors through regular campus climate surveys; campus voting rates	<p>There have been little to no efforts to measure the institution's civic purpose</p> <p>There are little to no efforts to communicate the results of assessments of civic purpose to the broader community</p>	<p>The institution has begun efforts to measure its civic impact (some campus wide surveys and/or indicators on voting rates have been started over time)</p> <p>There are some efforts to communicate these assessments efforts to the broader community</p>	<p>The institution participates in efforts to measure its civic impact (including, but not limited to, regular campus climate surveys, measuring campus voting rates over time, and assessing community satisfaction with ability to have their voice matter);</p> <p>Civic culture assessment efforts are effectively communicated to the broader community</p>

