

# CLDP



CIVIC LEARNING  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
PATHWAY



Envisioning a Framework  
for the Engaged Citizen



## CONNECTICUT CAMPUS COMPACT MISSION:

Connecticut Campus Compact advances the public purpose of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to implement all forms of public engagement, providing civic pathways to academic and career success, and nurturing a culture of engaged citizenship on campus and within communities.

### STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MISSION:

Our goal is to make significant progress toward a comprehensive, exemplary framework for civic learning and participation, spanning the educational spectrum from elementary to graduate school, and across institution type, in an effort to develop students who are civically engaged in their communities. We hope to promote recognition of a developmental, interdisciplinary model for civic learning and participation that will facilitate student academic and career success, and commitment to community through progressively enriching civic learning experiences. Our model will seek to integrate education and engagement to ultimately connect citizenship with success.

### STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Daryll Fay, Fairfield University, Class of 2013

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# FOREWORD

*“Civic knowledge and responsibility need to be expressed throughout one’s life for a vibrant democracy to flourish. They must be developed across a broad array of arenas, both within school and its identified communities... (s)tudents will perceive opportunities instead of obstacles when the pathway of civic learning is made clear.”*

– Excerpt from Civic Learning Developmental Pathway: Envisioning a Framework for the Engaged Citizen

As educators, we share a responsibility to engage students in learning for life. The decisions we make about how we create communities of learning greatly impact how students develop as informed and engaged citizens. This report by the Student Advisory Council of Connecticut Campus Compact finds that civic engagement plays a key role in fostering the very skills, knowledge and values that enable students to be successful. Council members Charlotte Freeland, Rachel Lederman, and Daryll Fay point to research on civic learning outcomes at all phases of development.

#### At the K-12 level:

- Well-constructed curricula that integrates civic learning across disciplines enhances civic participation later in educational and professional experiences
- Being civically-oriented contributes to students’ motivation to do well in school, ultimately increasing their likelihood of graduation

#### While in an undergraduate institution:

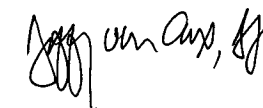
- Students who are civically engaged are much more likely to become democratic citizens with clear ideas of how they will positively contribute to their community
- Skills developed through civic engagement such as leadership, critical thinking, problem recognition, and global awareness are the very skills being sought at an increasing rate by employers

#### Beyond their college education:

- The civically engaged adult has strong connections to his/her community, a deeper understanding of local culture and politics, and a perceived responsibility for community well-being
- Community economic growth is predicted by the degree to which its population is engaged

The student council provides a call to action – by working together, we can envision civic learning experiences that offer our students a clear direction. Together, we have an opportunity to learn from one another and build this pathway to engagement.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey von Arx, S.J.  
President, Fairfield University  
Chair, Connecticut Campus Compact

## INTRODUCTION

Connecticut's state motto is "the Land of Steady Habits". The purpose of this document is to challenge the "habits" of civic engagement and the method through which active and engaged citizenship is nurtured throughout our educational system. According to Thomas Ehrlich, civic engagement is defined as:

*Working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference, and promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.*

Considerable evidence has supported the view that civic engagement plays a key role in academic, career, and personal success (Engagement and Cress). In fact, the skills, knowledge, and values fostered through such engagement facilitate students' progress and transition through education and beyond. Through research and a review of the literature, the Student Advisory Council of Connecticut Campus Compact outlines a Civic Learning Developmental Pathway (CLDP) that addresses how civic engagement and the characteristics developed facilitate students' successful progress and transition through education and beyond. We envision a comprehensive, exemplary framework for civic learning and participation, spanning the educational spectrum from elementary to graduate school, and across institution type, in an effort to develop students who are actively engaged in their communities.





## PART I

### EXPERIENCES, EDUCATION, AND ATTITUDES THAT SHAPE STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

There has been a frightening shift away from teaching civics in the high school classroom. Only half of US states make it a requirement for graduation (Engagement 6). Yet K-12 education is the cornerstone for both functioning democracies and college readiness. Research on civic learning echoes findings of those in higher education. For example, it was found that a well-constructed curricula that integrates civic learning across disciplines enhances civic participation later in students' educational and professional careers (Engagement 28). Additionally, being "civically-oriented" contributes to their motivation to do well in school, ultimately increasing the likelihood of graduation (Torbey-Purta and Wilkenfeld 23).

*The Campaign for Civic Missions of Schools* argues that there should be three C's driving reform in K-12 education: college, career, and citizenship. Currently, however, due to pressures from the business, government and public sectors, great emphasis is placed on college and careers, with many curricula omitting components of "citizenship" (O'Connor and Hamilton 5).

Yet this shift in behavior does not align with the abundance of evidence and longitudinal studies that support that civic engagement contributes to academic and career success (Levine 12-19).

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*...(A) well-constructed curricula that integrates civic learning across disciplines enhances civic participation later in their educational and professional careers.*

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The six practices in table 1.1 have been proven effective in promoting civic learning at the primary and secondary school levels and contributing to student success in and out of the classroom (Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools 6-7).



Table 1.1

SIX PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING CIVIC LEARNING AT THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVELS

Practices	
Student Participation in School Governance	Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Subjects.
Simulations of Democratic Processes	Introduction to the Subject Matter of Democracy
Extracurricular Activities	Service Learning

Source: Campaign for Civic Mission of Schools. *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*. Silver Spring, MD: Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2011. 6-7. Print.

Integration of these practices is not only possible, but can be done in ways that challenge or encourage the student to think from increasing broad perspectives and from ever greater sources of information and context. Building students’ civic acumen can and should be treated developmentally as any other subject matter. A difference posited here is that civic learning necessarily must cross the curriculum and reach out into the community for maximum effectiveness and transfer (see later sections).

The Connecticut Civic Health Index calls attention to the importance of creating a strong “civic infrastructure”, insisting on a need for “hands-on civic education for all children, in every school district, taught in ways that show how civics connects to daily life” (Ramos and Thomas 19). Specifically, the Connecticut Civic Health Advisory Group outlined K-12 practices that will strengthen Connecticut’s civic health. The descriptions from the report are found in table 1.2 (Ramos and Thomas 22).

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Table 1.2

PRACTICES IN K-12 EDUCATION THAT PROMOTE CIVIC HEALTH

Practice	Description
<b>Involve Parents</b>	Provide leadership training and civics education for parents and guardians. Reach out to those who may not feel empowered to get engaged and expand programs that work.
<b>Provide More Resources to Teachers</b>	Support all teachers to be trained in teaching civics, particularly experiential materials that are relevant to everyday life.
<b>Bring Civics into the Core</b>	Treat civics like an essential life and career skill. Weave it into the curriculum and make it accessible to all children, particularly those attending inner city schools.
<b>Partner with NPOs</b>	Work with nonprofit organizations that conduct programs to increase students’ awareness of and engagement in civic life.

Engaging youth in their communities requires partnership and support from adults, but this cannot happen when adolescents and adults operate in separate community spheres. This can result in a reduced expectation of accountability and responsibility on the part of the adolescent. This lack of clear expectations can then “impede the creation of broader and multiple pathways for civic engagement, and the involvement of youth as partners in building civil society” (Camino and Zeldin 213). In order to avoid this reinforcement of civic ‘dis’engagement, new policies and practices must be created strategically with a clear sequence of experiential opportunities that collectively lead to students’ successful negotiation of their civic pathways.

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The following descriptions were adapted from Camino and Zeldin and detail opportunities for youth community involvement and civic engagement:

**Table 1.3**  
**OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Practice	Description
<b>Public Policy Consultation on Youth Issues</b>	Young people advise public leaders and governance bodies to provide a youth perspective, particularly for those policies focused on youth issues
<b>Community Coalitions for Youth Development</b>	Provides an effective forum for citizen representation and voice and the benefits of participatory democracy
<b>Youth Infusion in Organizational Decision Making</b>	Organizations can foster supportive relationships between youth and adults to maximize youth potential
<b>Youth Organizing</b>	Foster “effective youth development and concrete social change” through youth-organizing programs and initiatives.
<b>School-Based Service Learning</b>	An instructional method that seeks to maximize individual learning while concurrently addressing community needs, thus serving as a vehicle for positive youth development, education for citizen action and a catalyst for social change

*Source: Camino, Linda, and Shepherd Zeldin. From Periphery to Center: Pathways for Youth Civic Engagement in the Day-To-Day Life of Communities. Applied Developmental Science, 6 (4), 2002; table 216-218.*

A growing body of literature and evidence suggests that these approaches to civic education yield positive, lasting outcomes in youth that translate into adulthood (McIntosh and Munoz 7). Indeed, deliberative classroom discussions are positively associated with political knowledge, an increased interest in politics, and feelings of political efficacy (6-10). By providing teachers with adequate resources and training, involving family in their student’s education, and providing multiple outlets for participating in such democratic discussions the classroom can serve as a valuable environment for cultivating political discussion and involvement.

A study conducted by CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) found that activities thought to promote students’ general democratic character that is, learning how to actively listen to diverse viewpoints, resulted in gains in conversation and increased confidence whilst communicating about political issues and current events, with teachers, friends, and classmates. This study also found that when teachers discussed concrete ways, other than voting, for students to have a voice in political affairs, there were positive gains in students’ self-reported political efficacy. Furthermore, they revealed that discussion of international issues (i.e., America’s role in the world) over the course of the semester made students more likely to express concerns about their economic future (e.g., jobs, ability to support a family) (McIntosh and Munoz 10).

Another way that students in grades K-12 can be supported through their civic development is by participating in tutoring, mentoring, and other programs, with current college students. Positive, older role models can assist in student preparation for college. Research has shown these programs yield favorable benefits, such as increased retention and engagement, for both the youth they serve and the college students who serve as mentors (Gallini and Moely 12).

One initiative funded by Learn and Serve America Higher Education, ASSETS (Accent on Student Success: Engaged Together for Service), developed an intergenerational approach to community engagement through service-learning projects. This three-year initiative (2006–2009) brought together baby boomers, K-12 students, and community college students in an effort to promote academic and civic engagement opportunities for disadvantaged youth through service-learning projects focused on homeland security and emergency preparedness. Survey data from more than 1,500 college students indicate overwhelming success, with nine out of ten students reporting improved attitudes toward academic learning and increased likelihood of becoming involved in future community service work.

Perhaps most significantly, nearly 90% of American Indian, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino students said that they are more likely to complete a college degree after participating in service-learning courses. Approximately 974,000 school-age youth participated in Learn and Serve America–funded service-learning activities in the 2008–2009 academic year (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, and Gray; Cress 10).

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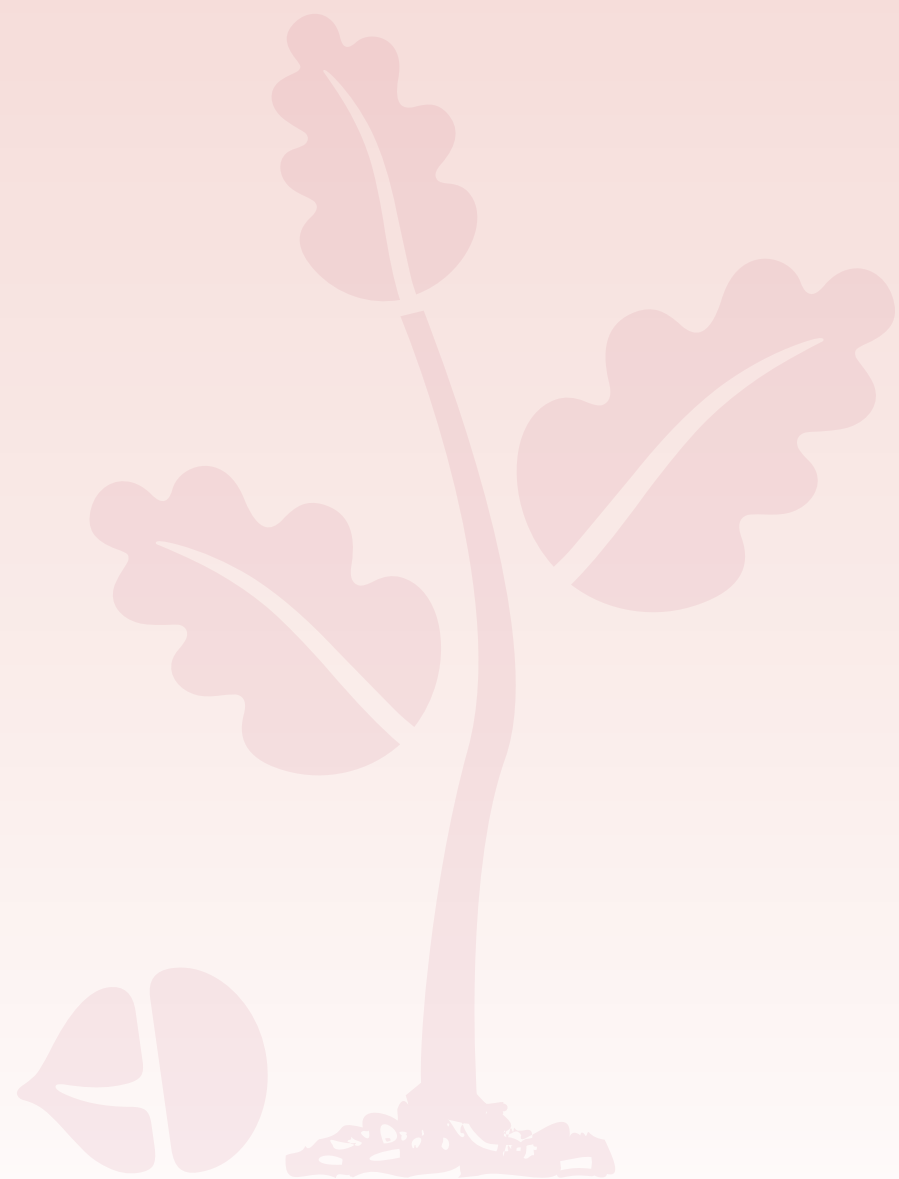
Furthermore, according to one study, 70% of surveyed students who dropped out of high school reported that they did not see the real-world applications of their schoolwork (Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison 19). Therefore, the benefits of integrating classroom education to the larger community and society are innumerable and well supported by research, providing a strong call to action for education providers.

One pioneering resource in this study of civic engagement is *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*, which “includes a national call to action designed to make civic and democratic learning an expected outcome for every college student, and an integrated part of education from pre-school to professional schools” (AACU). This document makes valuable recommendations on how to strengthen students’ civic learning and democratic engagement, not only benefitting the individual, but further serving as an investment in the nation’s social, intellectual, and civic capital. Indeed, “education plays a fundamental role in building civic vitality”, as civically-oriented students have demonstrated a greater overall capacity to, “spur local and global economic vitality, social and political well-being, and collective action to address public problems” (Engagement 2). Thus it is imperative to provide the resources and opportunities for intellectual and civic development to best equip our future community leaders and active members.

There is a great need to capitalize on students’ yearning, inclination and commitment for meaningful community service experiences and opportunities to contribute to systemic social and political change. For the reasons detailed thus far, educators, policy-makers, and government should feel confident that the risks far outweigh the costs in relation to a strategic and developmental approach to student civic acumen.

### CALL TO ACTION

We must fix our attention on individual civic transformation and the development of a sense of civic and personal efficacy. This requires a more developmental, holistic look at the distinct life experiences shaping students’ civic engagement. It is evident that quality community engagement requires leadership, planning, support, and evaluation. Such assets will facilitate the civic learning developmental pathways of K-12 students as they progress through the education system and onto college as productive, engaged citizens.



## PART II:

### ADMISSION TO MISSION: TOOLS TO BUILDING A PATHWAY OF ENGAGEMENT ON CAMPUS

The admissions process and mission statement of a college is an integral element to building a culture of engagement on campus. Ernest Leroy Boyer, an American educator, vocalized and began dialogues stressing the importance of community service throughout his tenures serving as President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Chancellor of the State University of New York, and the United States Commissioner of Education. During his career, Boyer was widely known and respected for his eloquent and significant views on education in America. His belief was that education should actively engage with the broader community.

While he was commissioner of education he attended a meeting with representatives of the Employees' Union and was faced with the question "Why are we here?" (Glassick 18) Boyer responded that he viewed colleges and universities themselves as citizens responsible to their broader community and that educators were an invaluable commodity. In a speech given in the 1990's, Boyer quoted Oscar Handlin, an American historian, stating, "Our troubled universe can no longer afford pursuits confined to an ivory tower... Scholarship has to prove its worth not on its own terms but by service to the nation and the world" (18). Boyer was a pioneer calling on academia to reclaim its place at the community table.

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*...Scholarship has to prove its worth not on its own terms but by service to the nation and the world.*

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Boyer's call for higher education to be more intentionally connected to the community harkens to the forward thinking of President Lincoln who, more than a century earlier, signed into effect the Morrill Land Grant Act (1862), which expanded the accessibility of education. According to Alperovitz and Howard, this was "one of the federal government's important contributions to



democratic life” (141). While the “original mission [of the grant] was relatively straightforward... at the heart of Senator Morrill’s (and Lincoln’s) purpose was a grander idea” which was “of an institution that could be a training ground for democratic life and civic practice” (141).The act and subsequent legislation led to the “country’s first non-elite colleges” (141) which gave each state 30,000 acres of land for every senator and representative it had in Congress in the effort to support colleges specializing in agriculture and the mechanical arts. President Lincoln and Morrill believed “citizens are not only born but ‘made’” and that “land grant institutions, by offering access to non-elites, would serve to deepen political democracy and strengthen civic life in the nation” (Alperovitz and Howard 142).

The move to strengthen the connection between higher education and the community continues. The Crucible Moment report “calls on the higher education community - its constituents and stakeholders - to embrace civic learning as an undisputed educational priority for all of higher education” (Engagement 3). The Crucible Moment report serves as a framework that higher education can utilize in renewing “this nation’s social, intellectual, and civic capital” (2). The timing of A Crucible Moment, coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Land Grant Act, further conveys the concepts of colleges and universities being deeply connected to their communities.

## ADMISSION TO THE INSTITUTION

The process and criteria for admitting students contribute greatly to the culture of an institution by determining the characteristics of the student population. The facilitation of a civically engaged campus can be aided significantly by highlighting existing civic acumen in the student application process, and has been shown to reliably predict student success.

As outlined in A Promising Connection, “Research indicates that high-quality curricular and co-curricular civic engagement is positively correlated with student success in K-12 schools, community colleges, and public and private four-year colleges and universities” (Cress, et al. 6). How a student’s commitment to civic engagement is assessed in the admissions process is largely reflective of the institution’s interest and intentions.

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Table 2.1 was created by analyzing the data presented in the admissions section of a student support site called CollegeData. (COLLEGEdata). Within the section under the heading ‘Selection of Students’ are different admissions criteria and the level of importance given to each, ranging from very important to not considered.

**Table 2.1:**  
**LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE ASSOCIATED WITH ADMISSIONS CRITERIA AMONG CTCC MEMBER FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS**

	Very Important	Important	Considered	Not Considered
GPA	9	4	1	0
Recommendations	2	10	3	0
Essay	2	9	4	0
Extracurricular Activities	2	5	8	0
Volunteer Work	1	3	10	1

As indicated in the table, grade point average is considered very important by a high proportion of institutions. The level of importance associated with students’ recommendations and essays reflect both the esteem to which they are held and their ability to write a strong statement of purpose. With respect to both extracurricular activities and volunteer work, perhaps, in light of the significant body of research reviewed thus far, there is an opportunity to reconsider their level of importance at institutions that either consider or do not consider these criteria. As presented in the next section, this possibility of reconsideration might be further stressed should the institution’s mission align itself with the expression of civic engagement.

## SUPPORTING STUDENT DEVELOPMENT BY BUILDING A MISSION-DRIVEN CAMPUS CULTURE

There has been a long tradition of higher education in America seeking higher moral and civic goals dating back to the seminaries in colonial America and colonial colleges which maintained “a balance among the teaching, research and service functions” (Bringle, Games and Malloy 1).

The civically engaged campus depends heavily on the actions of its leadership. “Campuses should measure their civic engagement

... by the willingness of their presidents, faculty, and other spokespeople to speak out on issues of public concern and articulate ideas that contribute to the common good of American society and the international community” (Hollander viii). As outlined in Campus Compact’s “A Promising Connection” (Cress, et al. 4):

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*Campuses should measure their civic engagement ... by the willingness of their presidents, faculty, and other spokespeople to speak out on issues of public concern and articulate ideas that contribute to the common good of American society and the international community.*

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*Campuses have used a variety of terms to describe their civic engagement activities and the ways these activities link to learning. Some of the most widely used are service learning, community engagement, community-based research, civic education, community experiences, community-based learning, democratic practice, and philanthropy education, not to mention a variety of co-curricular offerings for students. Regardless of the term used, if part of the purpose of the activity is to educate or enhance students’ understanding of civic life, the work generally can be referred to as civic engagement.*

At its core, civic engagement is a simple idea - acts of civic engagement better our communities and ourselves. Campuses can choose either to actively help or hinder the exploration of civic life. The campus is a perfect site for “debate on the critical issues of the day (and) colleges and universities have the intellectual and professional resources to be actively engaged in addressing community issues” (Hollander V). Bringle, Games, and Malloy provide the following principles that may be used in establishing an engaged campus:

- The engaged campus will develop an understanding for how community engagement is consistent with its mission
- The engaged campus will reflect its commitment to community engagement in strategic planning, allocating resources, administrative decisions, campus life, faculty roles and rewards, and evaluations
- The engaged campus will develop infrastructure that supports the complex nature of community engagement
- The engaged campus will promote a culture of service

The mission statement is the primary mechanism for communicating an institution’s core belief and value to potential students, donors or community partners. A passage in *A Promising Connection* states that, “connecting the institutional mission and educational goals of colleges and universities with those of community organizations through thoughtfully designed civic engagement experiences improves student learning outcomes and strengthens the educational, economic and social assets of colleges and communities alike” (Cress, et al. 1). In this way, creating a culture of the engaged campus is vital to accomplishing the mission of higher education.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) provides accreditation services for public and private institutions in the six state region for pre-K through university. NEASC standards require that “consistent with its mission, the institution endeavors to enhance the communities it serves” and “the mission of the institution defines its distinctive character, [and] addresses the needs of society” (Bringle, Games and Malloy 8). Mission statements are not meant to be “a nominal element with little function” (8) but rather the guiding principle of an institution.

As of April 2012, there are twenty-eight member colleges and universities in Connecticut Campus Compact (CTCC), twelve of which are community colleges and the remaining sixteen are four-year public and private institutions. An analysis of the twenty-eight mission statements was performed to get a deeper understanding of their alignment with civic engagement. Tables 2.2a and 2.2b provide a comparison of two and four-year institutions’ use of terminology that reflects civic engagement.

Table 2.2a

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TERMINOLOGY FOUND IN CONNECTICUT COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENTS**

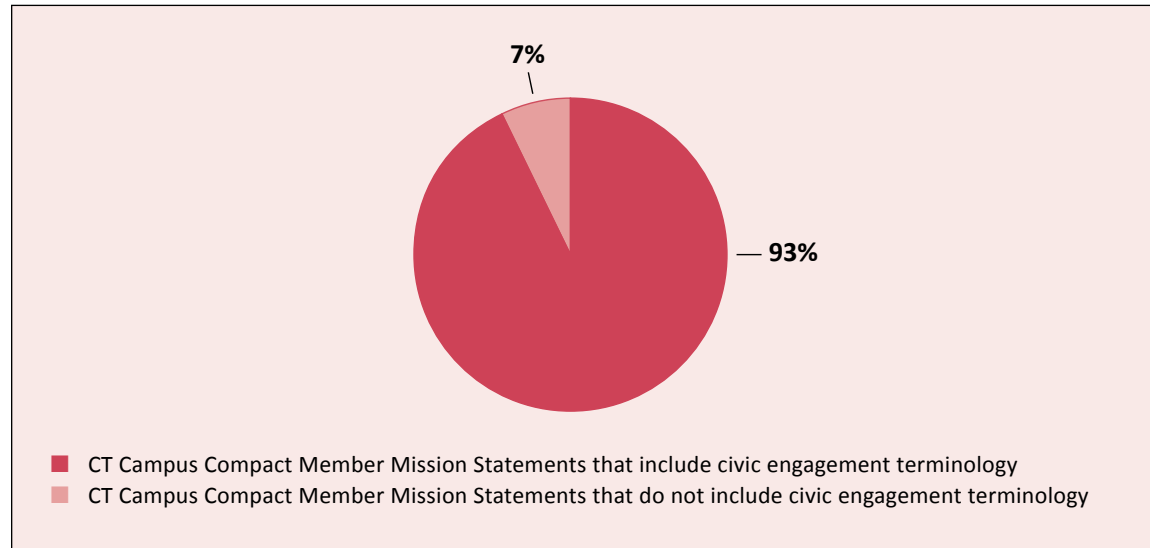
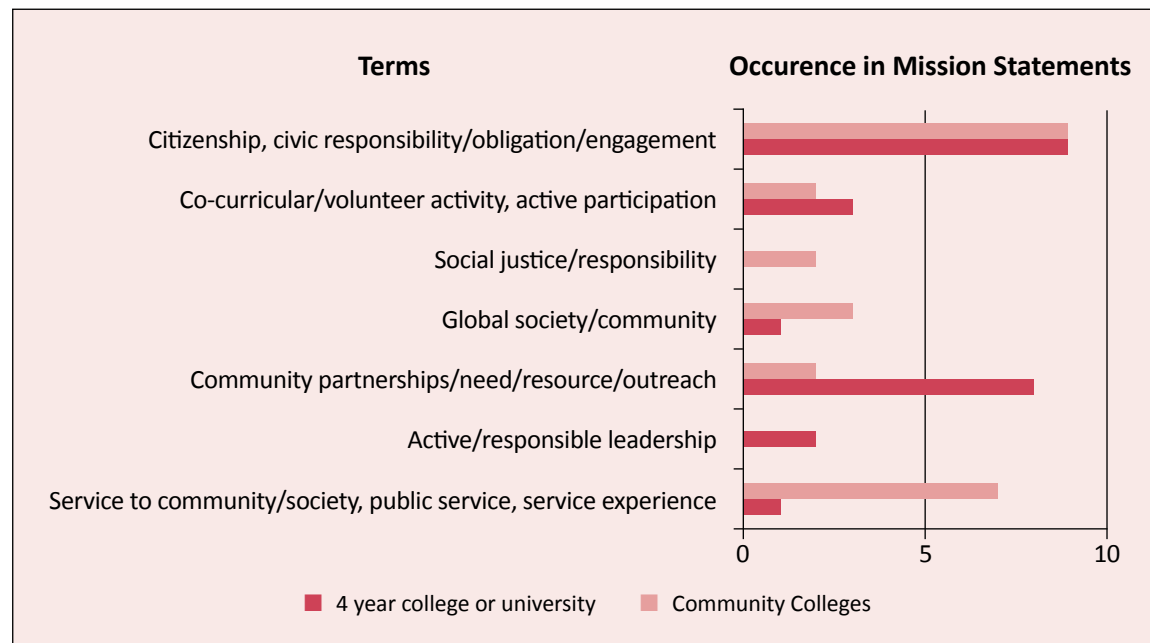


Table 2.2b



The terms reflected in table 2.2a were drawn from the mission statements themselves and the patterns found within. As this information reflects, the terminology varies from institution to institution but relates meaningfully to accepted aspects of civic engagement: service to community/society/public service/service experience, active/responsible leadership, community partnerships/need/resource/outreach, global society/community, social justice/responsibility, co-curricular/volunteer activity/active participation and citizenship/civic responsibility/obligation/engagement. As can be seen, active/responsible leadership and social justice/responsibility are found in one institutional demographic. A greater proportion of four-year institutions used terms related to citizenship and service to community in their mission statements, while the community colleges' proportionate use of terms related to community partnerships was far greater. Irrespective of differences, there is an overwhelming alignment of mission and civic engagement broadly defined. Therefore, based on the analysis of these mission statements, creating a culture of a civically engaged campus across the state should make great strides in accomplishing the mission of Connecticut higher education.

To recall the words of Boyer, "human beings have many things in common but one of them is surely service to others. Let the educational process be built on that premise" (Glassick 20). Boyer's words here echo the importance of civic engagement on campuses and stress the fact that it is the duty of higher education to provide the means by which students may become not only better human beings but better citizens as well. Civic engagement can be a simple idea stemming from the admissions process of an institution which in turn supports the overall mission of said institution, thus creating a student body, faculty, staff and administration with a passion for enhancing the culture of engagement on their campus.



## PART III:

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ITS PREPARATION OF STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

#### A NEW GENERATION OF GRADUATES AND PROFESSIONALS

A 2010 survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute found that almost 80% of students listed “being well off financially” as important to them, while only 40% indicated that “developing a meaningful philosophy of life” was important; in 1960 these figures were almost exactly reversed (Battistoni and Longo 4). However, after forty years of decline, educators have noticed a rise in the number of students “who are interested in public affairs and contributing to the civic life of their communities” (4) with 85.3% of incoming freshmen noting that they had taken part in some sort of service before college, and 80% of college seniors indicating that they had performed service over the past four years (Longo 8).

Employers now expect colleges and universities to mold their students into “civic practitioners who are able to see their public work contributing to democratic renewal” (Battistoni and Longo 6). Hart Research Associates found that a majority of employers believe colleges should place greater emphasis on the learning outcomes: “civic knowledge, civic participation, and community engagement” (Hart 2). Beyond being simply employees, graduates are expected to be engaged citizens who see themselves as able to “serve effectively as agents of social and political change” through their vocation (Baker, Spiezio, and Boland 105). This responsibility must be faced head on by colleges and universities. The goal of this final section is to promote a vision of the Academy defined by complete and consistent permeability of its boundaries to its communities, identified by collaborative dialogue built strategically on bridges of reciprocity, and resulting in a veritable flood of passionate, skilled, global community graduates ready to be both actively engaged and fill existing and still undiscovered niches of society.



The college experience is, for most, the bridge to adulthood and the skilled workforce. This is a transformative experience in both the public and private sphere of an individual's life, when he or she must try to make informed decisions regarding the future. Because of this, Cedar Crest College professors argued in their recent publication *Student Engagement: Transference of Attitudes and Skills to the Workplace, Profession, and Community*, "that an individual's beliefs, perceptions, and actions are deeply affected by the institutional environments within which that individual lives, works, and learns" (Baker, Spiezio, and Boland 103). An institutional environment such as the one described allows for students to see themselves as citizens with passions and responsibilities, and it is because of this that the authors emphasize "the value of off-campus placements, coupled with class-based opportunities for reflection and discussion, as a tool for nurturing a sense of engaged citizenship among students" (103). With higher education having such an opportunity to impact on a student's development as a skilled citizen, it is no wonder that the professional sector demands that schools take students beyond the classroom and into the real world.

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*We have reached a point in this country where higher education must actively reconsider itself as an apprenticeship for the world of vocation and citizenship.*

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A 2010 study performed by the Hart Research Associates finds that "when it comes to future hiring, employers indicate that their greatest increase in emphasis will be on hiring graduates from four-year colleges" (4). This will lead to greater employee competitiveness. The National Conference on Citizenship finds that students' "participation in civil society can develop skills, confidence, and habits that make individuals employable and strengthen the networks that help them to find jobs," (5) so colleges and universities immersing their students in civic life will not only enrich the college experience, but make students more marketable employees through the skills that they will gain from this participation. As outlined by the National Conference on Citizenship,

*Even at a time when the global economy has been buffeted by strong and dangerous forces, all communities have capital and skills that can be deployed to create or preserve jobs. Investors may be more willing to create jobs locally if they trust other people and the local government, if they feel attached to their community, if they know about opportunities and can disseminate information efficiently, and if they feel that the local workforce is skilled. All these factors correlate with civic engagement. Those correlations...lend plausibility to the thesis that civic health matters for economic resilience (6).*

Similarly, Battistoni and Longo suggest as the thesis of their report "Connecting Workforce Development and Civic Engagement: Higher Education as Public Good and Private Gain" that "workforce development and civic engagement can be complementary visions for the future of higher education" (2). We have reached a point in this country where higher education must actively reconsider itself as an apprenticeship for the world of vocation and citizenship. The previously outlined literature arguing that the skills built through civic engagement transcend college and transfer to the workforce is robust. Students that are civically engaged in college or university are much more likely to become democratic citizens with clear ideas of their future goals, themselves as people, and how they will positively contribute to their community. This strong sense of self and place is gained through the skills enhanced by civic engagement, and it requires higher education as the gatekeeper to one's profession to instill these practices into its very fabric.

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## TRANSFERABLE SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Because graduates with four years or more of post-secondary education are being hired at greater rates than ever before, there are increased expectations regarding the skill sets that these new professionals can bring to the workplace. Hart Research Associates finds that 91% of employers are asking their employees to take on more responsibilities and to use a broader range of skills (5). Battistoni and Longo find that while colleges are of course responsible for providing students with the "hard skills" they need to be considered employable – "high level literacy and numeracy plus the technical skills required of a particular job," (8) they are now also responsible for enabling the acquisition of "soft skills," including but not limited to "effective listening and oral communication, creative thinking and problem solving, the ability to work effectively in diverse teams or groups, and leadership and interpersonal skills" (8). The authors refer to this combination of hard and soft skills as "new basic skills" (8). These skills are described by the authors as transferable, made possible through a process whereby students "generalize, transfer, or form associations so that the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and



personal characteristics that have been learned or developed in one context can be readily used in a different context” (Haskell 9). In this way, skills developed through civic engagement can be utilized across numerous professions and be of benefit throughout one’s career. According to the NCOC, “National service participation has been found to boost basic work skills, including gathering and analyzing information, motivating coworkers, and managing time” (5) and is largely in line with the assertions of Hart, Battistoni, and Longo. Hart and Associates demonstrate that employers believe the emerging workforce must be better prepared to succeed in the global economy than is currently the case. Table 3.1 presents, on the left hand side, workplace skills that students need to develop while at a two-year or four-year institution—skills that the research posits are developed through community based experiences during the undergraduate experience. The asterisk was placed after skills that were listed in more than one research article. The right hand column provides a list of skills developed by students during civic engagement that transfer to the workplace. The alignment of the two lists of skills is quite astonishing.

Students are exposed to the elements mentioned in the right hand column of table 3.1 in almost every form of civic engagement; they work together in teams to recognize a problem in the community and brainstorm ideas for solutions, culminating in one goal to be achieved in the semester’s or year’s work. Students must learn to be held responsible for their actions but also to communicate with team members to make sure they are attending to all elements of the project. Through reflection, students analyze and assess their progress and any challenges they have overcome, their expectations versus the reality, and how they see themselves fitting into their community and its potential for change. It is clear to see how these skills are also valued in the workplace, as noted in the left hand column.

The aforementioned skills have been particularly noted in graduates who pursue careers for the common good, such as nursing, healthcare, psychology, and education. Cedar Crest College’s study specifically focuses on I-O (industrial and organizational) psychologists examining students going into the same field. The three authors write, “As I-O psychologists we purport that what we teach and execute in our profession will make a significant difference in the workplace and community. In order to be successful, we tell new I-O psychologists to immerse themselves in the workplace, get to really know the client, and understand their values and needs before recommending a solution” (Baker, Spiezio, and Boland 102). They also note that it seems particularly difficult for new psychologists to become actively involved with a client when making the transition from graduate school, where most of the work is more technical in nature, to the workplace, where sensitivity to each client’s needs is not something they have had experience with before. They write “these competencies and skills can only be acquired through active engagement and experience” (102). The vision of a skilled workforce of engaged citizens suggests a rapid growth of new career sectors considered “in the common good” as more graduates identify with this objective.

In Connecticut, 180,000 people are employed by the non-profit sector, accounting for just over 11% of employees, which is over the national average of 5.9% (“Connecticut Statewide Occupation Employment and Wages”). As Cedar Crest College mentioned in their study of I-O psychologists, careers for the common good, including education, health care, and nursing, “require civic professionals, with civic skills, and a strong sense of place,” (Battistoni and Longo 6). Education and health services account for the largest portion of employees in the state, 26.7%, a percentage

**Table 3.1**  
**WORKFORCE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SKILLS**

Required Workplace Skills Now Expected by Employers	Skills Developed During Civic Engagement That Transfer to the Workplace
Leadership Skills	Leadership
Communication Skills (both Oral and Written)	Communication
Analytical Reasoning Skills*	Analysis and Assessment
Analyze and Solve Complex Problems	Problem Recognition
Team Work Skills*	Consensus Building
Critical Thinking Skills*	Goal Achievement
Understand the Global Context of Situations and Decisions	Global Awareness

\* The asterisk was placed after skills that were listed in more than one research article.  
Source: Judith A. Ouimet and Gary R. Pike. “Rising to the Challenge: Developing a Survey of Workplace Skills, Civic Engagement, and Global Awareness.” (Directions for Institutional Research, 2007) 75. Print. “Raising the Bar: Employers’ Views on College Learning In the Wake of the Economic Downturn.” (Hart Research Associates, 2010) 6. Print. Kerrie Q. Baker, Kim Edward Spiezio, and Kathleen Boland. “Student Engagement: Transference of Attitudes and Skills to the Workplace, Profession, and Community.” (The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist 2004): 104. Print.

that has been steadily rising since 1991 (“Connecticut Statewide Occupation Employment and Wages”). This data seems to indicate “infusing professional development with a sense of ‘civic vocation’ can serve to link personal aspirations with public value” (Battistoni and Longo 6).

These careers are seen as especially vital to the community because they cultivate and maintain the health and education of our citizens; although any career and lifestyle an engaged citizen is passionate about will reflect positively on our country.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: A COMMITMENT TO PLACE

Civic engagement can build a connection to the community that the student carries with him into the work world, fostering a sense of civic and corporate responsibility. Battistoni and Longo state that “Building a commitment and understanding of place, the local economy, the local culture, and local politics is essential for developing civic and corporate responsibility – and this can be learned through community engagement” (9). If the connection to the community and understanding of its problems starts with civic engagement, this can help the individual. When a student is given responsibility for their learning experience and is guided through reflection in the classroom, they also develop their reflective judgment and ethical reasoning skills (Ouimet and Pike 73). Cedar Crest College finds that in being civically engaged, students “develop their moral voice... [and] acquire a sense of personal responsibility for the well-being of their local communities” (Baker, Spiezio, and Boland 103). A responsibility and commitment to one’s community creates a more reflective and proactive citizen that extends to both the professional and personal life.

As mentioned previously, “Civic engagement can encourage people to feel attached to their communities;” but furthermore, “(t)he proportion of people who report being attached to their communities predicts economic growth” (NCOC 5). The National Conference on Citizenship notes that since many people find jobs through friends, family, professional connections, and social networks, being civically engaged can connect a student to people who can aid them in the job seeking process. This “suggests the need for those seeking employment to maintain strong relationships with neighbors and members of their service and civic organizations” (NCOC 5). Everything from attending meetings, volunteering, working

with neighbors, and receiving newsletters can put students into contact with people who can help guide their job search. Not only do students have more connections and options, employers will look more favorably on students because of these connections and see that they are engaged. NCOC writes that “participation in civil society is strongly correlated with trust in other people” as trust is synonymous with characteristics of prolonged, shared experiences (5). Trust between a community and the businesses in it can only help the area to thrive and grow in a mutually beneficial way.

Global awareness is another outcome of civic engagement that carries over to the student’s personal and professional life after graduation. Some effects of becoming more globally aware are “reliance on multiple sources of information (including sources of information from outside the United States) about international issues, participating in international experience and learning a foreign language” (Ouimet and Pike 75). Hart Research Associates’ study indicated that 67% of employers expected employees to enter the workforce with “the ability to understand the global context of situations and decisions” (1). On a daily basis, many of us will be asked to communicate with people outside of our own country and operate within a global economy. Global citizenship leads to more productive and capable employees and citizens who know how to navigate today’s increasingly interconnected world.

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*Hart Research Associates’ study indicated that 67% of employers expected employees to enter the workforce with “the ability to understand the global context of situations and decisions.”*

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By using civic engagement to take learning outside of the classroom and into the community, educators can have a hand in crafting democratic citizens and professionals already equipped with the leadership, teamwork, and critical thinking skills that employers expect new hires to have in this increasingly competitive job market. Furthermore, being connected to the community fosters a sense of responsibility and connection to place, meaning that graduates will see their profession as not only private gain, but as public service. In our globalized world, choice and action taken to improve our own lives must be gauged by their impact on our interconnected world. Through civic engagement, higher education has the opportunity to deliver professionals and citizens to whom we are capable of entrusting the future.

## CONCLUSION

A collaborative effort on the part of the government, policy-makers, educators, communities, parents, and students is necessary to move the student through the Civic Learning Developmental Pathway, starting in elementary school and culminating in the creation of a democratic citizen devoted to both private and public gain. The characteristics developed through civic engagement create better students, professionals, and citizens, and so continued exposure in elementary, middle, and high schools through college will result in both academic success and transfer into the “real world.”

Civic knowledge and responsibility need to be expressed throughout one’s life for a vibrant democracy to flourish. They must be developed across a broad array of arenas, both in school and its identified communities. The development and application of knowledge must be carried out in progressively challenging, interrelated, change-based environments. Students will perceive opportunities instead of obstacles when the pathway of civic learning is made clear. In outlining the Civic Learning Developmental Pathway in this document, the Student Advisory Council of Connecticut Campus Compact has provided a call to action – engagement builds habits of success. A civic learning pathway must be mapped out developmentally and collaboratively. It is time to walk the walk.



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