

Geneseo Civic Action Plan 2017

Vision and Mission

In the spring of 2016, SUNY Geneseo developed and adopted a new strategic plan, which included a revised mission statement for the College. The newly revised mission statement reinforced the College's commitment espoused in the previous mission statement to "work together to advance knowledge and inspire students to be socially responsible." In addition, spring 2016 saw the President of SUNY Geneseo, Denise Battles, add her name to the college and university presidents endorsing the Campus Compact Thirtieth Anniversary Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors, further cementing the College's civic and community commitments.

Furthermore, the strategic planning process declared "civic responsibility" and "sustainability" to be foundational institutional values, with the aims of "promoting ethical local and global citizenship," and "advancing just principles of ecological, social, and economic stewardship."

Without question, the College's mission, values, and strategic plan represent a commitment to civic responsibility. This Civic Action Plan builds on the work of the Strategic Planning Group, the President's Commission on Diversity and Community, the Applied Learning Task Force, the Project for the Common Good, and other groups and individuals at Geneseo who have put the development of civic responsibility at the forefront of their work.

To even more effectively fulfill its mission, and promote and act on its values pertaining to civic action, the College could aspire to greater levels of shared understanding of the nature of its civic mission, and greater levels of collaboration and coordination among those engaged in pursuing these ends. This plan is in keeping with those aims, as well as with those of the strategic plan and other College planning documents.

It is also in keeping with the College's legacy as a leader in the founding of the New York Campus Compact, the nation's largest state network. Campus Compact is a national coalition of nearly 1,100 colleges and universities, organized in state and regional networks, aimed at advancing the civic and democratic purposes of higher education. Campus Compact has identified five core principles for creating an impactful civic action plan, and these core commitments have been taken into account when framing the Geneseo plan. These five core principles are:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. We embrace our responsibilities as place based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.

4. 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.
5. 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.

Approach

As evidenced in the College's appearance on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll every year since its inception; as well as the recognition the College has received from the Carnegie Foundation with its Community Engagement Classification; and its selection by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) for its Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement initiative, Geneseo has been a leader in student civic engagement, and has a rich history in serving communities both far and wide to support both student learning and the common good. Yet inherent in the newly articulated institutional strategic plan, as well as this civic action plan, is the idea that we as an institution could be a more effective agent of promoting civic responsibility and community based learning across the College.

For example, there is often a lack of awareness how different institutional agents are approaching the development of civic agency in their daily work. This is sometimes manifested in a lack of coherence and coordination in advancing the College's civic agenda. While at present, there are numerous College stakeholders involved in this effort, by better working together they could bring about greater institutional capacity to promote civic engagement that leads to student learning.

The following are stakeholders that might make up the campus team responsible for finalizing and implementing the College's strategic civic action plan:

Joe Cope, Director for Center for Inquiry, Discovery and Development
Rob DiCarlo, Associate Director of Career Development for Internship Opportunities
Samantha Hebel, Coordinator of Student Leadership, Volunteerism, and Service
Ken Kallio, Interim Associate Provost
Jim Kernan, Associate Professor of Geography
Karryann Kohlbeck, Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellow
Savi Iyer, Assistant Provost for Curriculum and Assessment
Tom Matthews, Associate Dean of Leadership and Service
Dave Parfitt, Director of Teaching and Learning Center and Community Well-Being
Sarah Jane Phillips, Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellow
Meg Reitz, Assistant Director of Student Life for Educational Initiatives
Paul Schacht, Interim Provost
President, Inter-Greek Council

To be even more effective, such a team should likely include stakeholders from the local community, such as Jo Beth Rath of Goodwill Industries.

When Geneseo launched its participation in NASPA's Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement initiative as a "Lead Institution," one of the aims of its lead project was to define what we at Geneseo meant by the term "socially responsible citizens" found in the College mission statement at that time, and to identify the skills needed by socially responsible citizens that are important to, in the words of the former College mission statement, "the pursuit of an enriched life and success in the world."

In 2013, a committee on Civic Engagement and Democratic Learning composed of faculty, students, and staff, and co-chaired by Robert Bonfiglio, Vice President for Student and Campus Life, and David Gordon, Associate Provost, arrived at the following definition of "socially responsible citizens:"

individuals who recognize they are part of, and have an on-going commitment to, a larger community, and take ethical action to contribute to the well-being of others, broadly conceived, sharing responsibility for the current and future public good

In addition, the committee identified the following types of skills needed by socially responsible citizens that they deemed important to "the pursuit of an enriched life and success in the world."

Intellectual skills in a civic context, including

- *analytical and critical thinking skills*
- *decision making skills*
- *reflective thinking skills*
- *ability to apply one's disciplinary knowledge to participation in public life*

Communication skills in a civic context, including

- *verbal and non-verbal communication skills*
- *written communication skills*
- *listening skills*
- *interpersonal communication skills*
- *ability to articulate complex concepts successfully*
- *ability to express criticism in a civil manner*

Collaboration skills in a civic context, including

- *conflict resolution and problem solving skills*
- *organizational skills*
- *political skills*
- *community building skills*
- *empathy*
- *multicultural competence*

The application of these skills requires the motivation to act in a civic context, including

- *the willingness to take public action*
- *the willingness to take reasonable risks*
- *the willingness to motivate others*

- *the willingness to advocate for social action on behalf of others*

Lastly, the group expanded on the College’s core values at the time in the context of socially responsible citizenship:

- *excellence rooted in the application of talents and skills to achieve a superior accomplishment*
- *innovation fueled by intellectual curiosity and a vision of a better future*
- *community informed by civility*
- *diversity flowing from the highest regard for human dignity*
- *integrity that encompasses the ethical considerations of one’s actions*
- *service to society based on responsibility to others*

In developing the College’s 2017 civic action plan we revisited these concepts, and updated them to conform to the revisions to the College’s mission statement and values, as well as the emerging Geneseo Learning Outcomes for Baccalaureate Education (GLOBE). In addition, the College strategic plan has specified eight individual objectives that, taken together, contribute to the conception of a civic action plan for SUNY Geneseo.

They are:

Outcomes

OUTCOME #1 (Focus Area 1 Learning)

Increase the number and accessibility of applied learning opportunities, including internships (Objective 1)

TYPE OF CHANGE – Sustainable Capacity Development/Policy and Systems

COMMITMENTS

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.

MEASURES OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

- increased number of applied learning opportunities offered each year
- increased number of students engaged in applied learning opportunities
- increased number of faculty who identify as proficient in incorporating applied learning as a pedagogy
- administrative responsibility for applied learning initiatives is more clearly defined

INDICATORS

- During the 2015-2016 academic year, the College offered 36 community-based learning courses (source: 2016 Campus Compact Annual Membership Survey). In the next five years, the number of Geneseo students engaged in curricular community engagement and civic action will increase.
- During 2015-2016 it was estimated that 355 Geneseo students were engaged in curricular community engagement (source: 2016 Campus Compact Annual Membership Survey). In the next five years, our goal is to have 25% of all undergraduate students engaged in curricular community engagement.
- During the 2015-2016 academic year, 20 faculty taught community-based learning courses (source: 2016 Campus Compact Annual Membership Survey). In the next five years, the number of Geneseo faculty offering community-based learning courses will increase.

Note: The College 2016-2021 Diversity Plan calls for the establishment of a baseline of the number of service-learning and engaged-learning opportunities in which students participate, and the number of faculty and staff involved in service-learning and engaged-learning opportunities, and the use of these numbers to examine growth patterns. Therefore, a focus on service-learning has already been identified as a priority by the College.

- The implementation of the Geneseo Learning Outcomes for Baccalaureate Education (GLOBE) will facilitate the increased involvement of students in courses with service-learning components (source: SUNY Geneseo Commitment to Applied Learning).
- The development of a system to “tag” courses through Banner will enable the College to better track and record service learning experiences components (source: SUNY Geneseo Commitment to Applied Learning).
- The development of a supplemental transcript will result in a strengthened understanding across the College of its commitment to applied learning activities such as service-learning (source: SUNY Geneseo Commitment to Applied Learning).

OUTCOME #2 (Focus Area 1 Learning)

Develop a faculty responsibility and evaluation model that encourages, supports, and recognizes teaching outside of the classroom, especially in connection with applied/integrative learning, undergraduate research, and other high impact practices (Objective 2)

TYPE OF CHANGE – Sustainable Capacity Development/Policy and Systems

COMMITMENTS

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MEASURES OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

- creation and implementation of a revised faculty responsibility and evaluation model that represents the desired outcome as it pertains to promoting civic action and social responsibility

INDICATORS

- The development of a revised faculty responsibility and evaluation model will result in a strengthened understanding across the College of its commitment to applied learning activities such as service learning that promote civic action and social responsibility.
- The implementation of a revised faculty responsibility and evaluation model will facilitate an increase in the number of courses with service-learning and other civic action components taught by Geneseo faculty.

OUTCOME #3 (Focus Area 1 Learning)

Encourage, support, and recognize staff contributions in co-curricular programming, especially in applied learning (Objective 2)

TYPE OF CHANGE – Cultural/Sustainable Capacity Development

COMMITMENTS

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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**.

MEASURES OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

- completion of an analysis of College staff awards and recognition programs based on their relevance to staff contributions to promoting civic action and social responsibility
- revamping of existing awards or the creation of new staff awards and recognition programs that represent the desired outcome as it pertains to civic action and social responsibility

INDICATORS

- The completion of an analysis of College staff awards and recognition programs based on their relevance to staff contributions to promoting civic action and social responsibility will result in a strengthened understanding across the College of its commitment to applied learning activities that promote civic action and social responsibility.
- The revision of existing awards or the creation of new staff awards and recognition programs that represent the desired outcome as it pertains to civic action and social responsibility will incentivize the staff across campus to more consistently promote civic action and social responsibility in their daily work with students.

OUTCOME #4 (Focus Area 1 Learning)

Build a system for documenting applied and integrative learning achievement, both curricular and co-curricular (Objective 3)

TYPE OF CHANGE – Sustainable Capacity Development/Policy and Systems

COMMITMENTS

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MEASURES OF SUBTANTIVE CHANGE

- creation and implementation of a system for documenting applied and integrative learning achievement that pertains to promoting civic action and social responsibility

Note: The College 2016 - 2021 Diversity Plan already calls for the creation of a campus-wide coding scheme for identifying courses, research based directed study, internships, service-learning and other engaged-learning opportunities (4.4, 4.5).

INDICATORS

- The development of a system for documenting applied and integrative learning experiences that pertain to promoting civic action and social responsibility will result in a strengthened understanding among Geneseo students of the College's intention to promote civic action and social responsibility.
- The development of a system for documenting applied and integrative learning experiences that pertain to promoting civic action and social responsibility will result in a strengthened understanding among Geneseo faculty and staff of the College's expectation that they promote civic action and social responsibility.

OUTCOME #5 (Focus Area 3: Advancing the Public Good)

Promote opportunities for student/faculty research, service, and economic development (Objective 1)

TYPE OF CHANGE – Culture/Sustainable Capacity Development

COMMITMENTS

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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**.

MEASURES OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

- increased availability of opportunities for civic action and social responsibility that are manifested in student/faculty research, service-learning, and other forms of active teaching and learning
- increased awareness of these opportunities across campus
- increased faculty and staff involvement in the annual College volunteer fair

INDICATORS

- the development of a system, process, or area of administrative responsibility for coordinating and promoting across campus and external to the campus opportunities for demonstrating the College's commitment to civic action and social responsibility

Note: The College 2016- 2021 Diversity Plan calls for enhanced opportunities for faculty to interact across departments and divisions by promoting faculty and staff involvement in the annual College

volunteer fair (4.4, 4.5). It also calls for the creation of a clearinghouse for service-learning and engaged-learning opportunities as a mechanism for integrating the development of additional opportunities and communicating service-learning opportunities to students and the wider community (4.4, 4.5).

- the development of a process to measure student awareness of opportunities to engage in civic action
- Opportunities for students to engage in civic action that lead to the development of social responsibility will be recognized both internally and externally to the College as a distinctive element of the Geneseo experience.
- The College will continue to receive recognition from the federal government for its civic action initiatives by being named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll annually.

OUTCOME #6 (Focus Area 3: Advancing the Public Good)

Increase student volunteerism in the local community, as well as in state, national and international contexts (Objective 1)

TYPE OF CHANGE – Sustainable Capacity Development

COMMITMENTS

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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**.

MEASURES OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

- the number of Geneseo student participants in one or more volunteer or service experience
- the number of hours Geneseo students participated in volunteer or community service
- the number of volunteer or service hours contributed by Geneseo fraternity and sorority members
- the number of volunteer or service hours contributed by Geneseo intercollegiate student-athletes

INDICATORS

- A more formal process for identifying community partners and engaging community partners that may be interested in initiating community based volunteer service opportunities for students will be established.
- Opportunities for students to engage more frequently as volunteers in the local community, as well as in state, national and international contexts in ways that lead to the development of social responsibility will be recognized both internally and externally to the College as a distinctive element of the Geneseo experience.
- continued recognition of the College by the federal government by being named as a member of the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll annually

OUTCOME #7 (Focus Area 3: Advancing the Public Good)

Develop relationships with the Humphrey Nature Center in Letchworth State Park to enhance its public programs and to provide opportunities for our students (Objective 3)

TYPE OF CHANGE – Sustainable Capacity Development

COMMITMENTS

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

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**.

MEASURES OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

- the number of Geneseo students engaged in various Humphrey Nature Center initiatives
- the number of Geneseo student organizations engaged in various Humphrey Nature Center initiatives
- the establishment of park student internships
- transportation service to the state park is readily available

INDICATORS

- the establishment of a dedicated annual operating budget for Humphrey Nature Center initiatives
- the establishment of a web page and promotional materials for the partnership, and a commitment to promoting the partnership in the media and to prospective students
- the continuance of the optional Geneseo-Letchworth Pre-Semester program as a collaborative effort with the Geography Department designed to help incoming students transition to life and learning at Geneseo while learning about nearby Letchworth State Park

OUTCOME #8 (Focus Area 3: Advancing the Public Good)

Increase student internships and service-learning opportunities in the local community, as well as in state, national, and international contexts (Objective 3)

TYPE OF CHANGE – Sustainable Capacity Development

COMMITMENTS

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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.

MEASURES OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE – See outcome #1

INDICATORS – See outcome #1

Conclusion

If this plan were to be fully enacted, it is anticipated that:

- across the institution there will be a shared, operationalized recognition of the centrality of civic action in a Geneseo education;
- this recognition will be informed by the systematic, comprehensive collection and reporting of data related to student, faculty and staff involvement in educationally intentional civic activities;
- this recognition will be evidenced by a common vocabulary for this work, and greater coordination of institutional structures that promote this aim.

The enactment of this plan, however, would not mark the end of a journey for the College. Ultimately, the ability of the College to achieve its aims related to civic learning will be contingent on its capacity to demonstrate, in its mission, leadership and advocacy; its general education program; its majors; its student and campus life program; its community-based experiences; and its reward structures, the Four Dimensions of a Civic-Minded Institution described in *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*, the report of the Association of American Colleges and Universities National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012). These four dimensions are: civic ethos; civic literacy; civic inquiry; and civic action.

By demonstrating these four dimensions across the Geneseo experience, the College will, to quote William M. Sullivan, better “enable students to make sense of the world and their place in it, to prepare them to use knowledge and skills as means toward responsible engagement with the life of their times (source: “The Twin Elements of Learning: Knowledge and Judgment,” *Liberal Education*, Summer 2010, 12).”

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