



LORAS  
COLLEGE™

# **Civic Action Plan**

## **Civic Action Planning Committee**

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## Loras College Civic Action Plan

### **Vision/Mission:**

Loras College has an institutional commitment to serve and partner with community in ways that respect the dignity of all and affirm life and our planet. Service is driven by our nature as a Roman Catholic institution and by core components of our mission: to facilitate the development of students who are “ethical decision-makers” and “responsible contributors” in diverse professional, social and religious roles. The College serves through the Archdiocese of Dubuque, as a diocesan college and seminary; through students serving with civic and artistic programming, sporting events, camps, facilities use, and resources allocated to partnerships that are mutually respectful and in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus.

Loras strives to deepen a spirit of social commitment and civic engagement among students, by providing high impact, experiential learning opportunities inside and outside of the classroom to dramatically expand the dimensions of a Loras education. Academic and co-curricular programs strive to support students in their quest to become active learners, reflective thinkers, ethical decision makers and responsible contributors, such as community-based learning, internships and study abroad experiences challenging students to come to know more about themselves, their gifts and how they will make meaning in this world and contribute to it in responsible ways.

### **Timely Efforts**

Both the City of Dubuque and Loras College have developed strategic plans within the last year. Loras College, Vision 2020 and City of Dubuque, 2032 Dubuque, lay out a vision for the future of the college and city. At the city level, Dubuque 2032 envisions a sustainable and resilient city that is both inclusive and equitable. Across eight focus areas (robust local economy, vibrant community, livable neighborhoods and housing, financially responsible, sustainable environment, diverse arts, connected community, and partnership for a better Dubuque), the city government looks to deliver excellent services for a brighter future.

Loras College, Vision 2020, is inspired by the Catholic intellectual tradition and rooted in the transformative power of learning to enrich the lives and serve humanity. The plan is centered around three themes, institutional vitality, transformative experiences, and a culture of excellence. The Campus Compact Civic Action plan arrives at a perfect moment at Loras and in Dubuque where we reaffirm our shared commitment to the public purposes of higher education and plan to realize those purposes more fully.

### **Approach**

Loras College is committed to investing in staff and resources to support a culture of civic purpose, focused on contributing to the world in responsible ways. In the fall of 2006, a full-

time service learning coordinator was hired. Since then civic engagement at Loras has gained significant momentum. Loras students consistently report in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) they engage in higher rates of service, in both academic and co-curricular settings, than students at comparable Carnegie Class and peer institutions. In 2012-13, during challenging financial times for the sector of higher education, Loras College designated the time of full time staff people to coordinate Interfaith Community Service and AmeriCorps and VISTA programs in partnership with Iowa Campus Compact. The College also required all first year students to read and reflect upon Eboo Patel's book, *Acts of Faith* and hosted him on campus. These investments paid off. Loras received the Honor Roll Presidential Award in 2014, in the area of Interfaith Community Service, the highest federal recognition of service learning an institution can receive. Loras has leveraged attention gained, via media coverage and professional respect among various professional and academic organizations, since receiving this prestigious award to expand and strengthen interfaith programs and affirm the important role higher education and national service can play in building capacity for transformational campus-community partnerships.

The College has vibrant co-curricular civic engagement programs, including strong participation in service by athletic teams, Campus Ministry/Peace & Justice, involving some partnerships that have been sustained for more than 30 years. It has a nationally recognized Dance Marathon program and a number of co-curricular service opportunities.

Academic service learning/community-based learning programs were supported and fostered at Loras through a faculty advisory board, who established an institutional definition and set of criteria for community-based learning courses in 2011. The College has a successful Honors Program, which intentionally integrates community-based learning, intercultural competency and research, requiring students to focus on one community-based project over three years. Faculty development efforts have involved engagement in Iowa Campus Compact opportunities and other conferences as well as one-on-one access to a Service Learning Coordinator who has strived to educate about mutually equitable and beneficial partnerships, recommended to begin prior to the process of course design, if possible. The need for increased faculty development opportunities and an examination of current policies governing how civic engagement/engaged research, teaching and learning are weighted in rank and tenure decisions have been identified and prioritized by faculty on the Civic Action Planning Committee. This faculty-led movement has been coupled with a desire to create a faculty fellows program, focused on faculty leadership of civic engagement in the curriculum and which was proposed and had been implemented by faculty champions of engaged learning and research with the support of Service Learning programs and the Center for Experiential Learning at the College.

Community impact has been deliberately prioritized in service learning programs. Emphasis has been placed upon building relationships beyond utilitarian outcomes by Service Learning staff and embraced by faculty champions. A partnership built with the City of Dubuque Human Rights Office has also provided a solid foundation for expanding efforts through Civic Action

Planning. Collaborative efforts in the future will strive to challenge the sector of higher education in Dubuque to work in concert to strategically leverage strengths, assets and resources in support of the City of Dubuque's Comprehensive Plan, Imagine Dubuque.

This comprehensive plan is a key tool used to develop policy, inform city budget and community initiatives and is grounded in the community's economic prosperity, environmental integrity and social and cultural vibrancy and is intended to serve as a guide for Dubuque's physical, social and economic development. This Venn diagram has been used by the city to illustrate the plan's foci.



Working in concert to strategically leverage strengths, assets and resources in support of the City of Dubuque's comprehensive plan will require institutions of higher education to be willing to map out their strengths and their weaknesses. Understanding how and when efforts may be most effective will be important and collaborating in strategic ways with other institutions of higher education to coordinate efforts, while devising methods to set and measure shared outcomes will be essential to success.

First, outlining and addressing each of the Loras constituencies involved in these future efforts will aid in organizing how we may provide an overarching framework for enacting the change we seek through our Civic Action Plan, on our campus and beyond. This may include the following:

## Faculty and Staff

Significantly integrating community-based learning into their academic majors and co-curricular programs, which include on-going opportunities to link their scholarship to student learning informed by community-based learning, research and civic engagement.

## Students

Engaged in meaningful community-based learning from curricular and co-curricular perspectives. "Projects" striving to be long-standing and fit into a larger narrative that links to a collaborative vision between the city, students and their Loras education.

## College

Every faculty and staff person on campus is aware and informed about how the college, fellow colleges and universities and city work together to address quality of life issues in Dubuque and beyond. Our reputation as a civically engaged campus is a strong recruiting tool for faculty, staff and students.

## Community

The college strives to collaborate with governmental, non-profit organizations and other institutions of higher education. All contribute to improving the quality of life for individuals living in Dubuque and beyond, guided by the city's comprehensive plan, Imagine Dubuque. Our reputation as a civically engaged community is a strong recruiting tool for future residents, as evidenced by outcomes measured by all, in support of the goals of Imagine Dubuque.

### Loras College Civic Action Plan Outcomes and Dates for Implementation

*This section will be utilized by the institution, in an ongoing manner as a guide for planning, organization and coordination of future efforts.*

Outcomes	Type of Change And Constituencies responsible for outcome	Commitment(s) from Campus Compact 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Statement	Measure(s)	Waypoint measures and dates set for completion	Indicator(s)
<p><b>Faculty and staff are aware and informed about how the college currently does/and could in the future support the city's efforts to address quality of life issues in Dubuque through the city's comprehensive plan, Imagine Dubuque.</b></p>	<p>Cultural Change</p> <p>Responsibility of: Faculty Staff Students Community Partners</p>	<p>#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.</p> <p>#3 We embrace our responsibilities as a Catholic, diocesan, place-based institution, contributing to the health and strength of our communities – economically, socially, environmentally, educationally and politically.</p>	<p>Purposeful planning, articulation and review of how:</p> <p>Specific items in the Loras College strategic plan and efforts underway to enact it that will lend support and reinforce measures that tie to Imagine Dubuque.</p> <p>Annual goals in various departments and programs tie to this, via Waypoints.</p>	<p>Civic Action Team will host informational sessions and create and support social media push intended to educate the Loras community and higher education sector about the city of Dubuque's Comprehensive Plan, <u>Imagine Dubuque</u> (January-June, 2018)</p> <p>Create a document, in partnership with one or more city of Dubuque departments and non-profit organizations, for Loras College that serves as a guide by providing a framework for establishing, mapping, expanding, measuring and sustaining strategic partnerships tied to the goals of <u>Imagine Dubuque</u>. (August 2018)</p> <p>Add city departments and non-profit organization partners. (Ongoing from September 2019)</p> <p>Share out framework document with Loras and then higher education institutions in the Tri-state region. (September 2018 – June 2019)</p> <p>Share framework with city and work together with at least one city department in Dubuque to</p>	<p>Our community will be positively affected and impacted by collective and strategic efforts.</p> <p>Deliberate, organized and ongoing methods will be established to collect and share out stories of Loras students and alumni in partnership with many contributing to Dubuque in responsible ways.</p>

<p><b>Engagement in strategic partnerships with other non-profit and governmental organizations and with other institutions of higher education to carry out this goal.</b></p>	<p>Cultural Change</p> <p>Responsibility of: Faculty Staff Students Community Partners</p>		<p>Number of faculty teaching classes that partner with city on Imagine Dubuque affiliated initiatives.</p> <p>Number of student organizations affiliated with city initiatives.</p> <p>Number of campus programs affiliated with city initiatives.</p> <p>Number of students and alumni engaged in city boards, commissions, as employees</p> <p>Impact of partnerships over time could be measured through a collective impact model for both city of Dubuque and higher education sector. Number of partnerships or partners engaged built in support of higher education's support of Imagine Dubuque.</p>	<p>begin to pilot the utilization of both city and college/university measurement systems to assess progress, via various tracked efforts, towards affecting Imagine Dubuque goals. (September 2019)</p>	<p>Our reputation as a civically engaged campus is a strong recruiting tool for faculty, staff and students.</p>
<p><b>Identify, address and designate within the curriculum and co-curricular</b></p>	<p>System/ Sustainable Capacity Development</p> <p>Responsibility of:</p>	<p>#2 We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to</p>	<p>Collect academic divisional and co-curricular programmatic data on current use of high impact practices and</p>	<p>Work with Curriculum Committee to catalogue the use of high impact practices in courses across the curriculum and co-curriculum to establish baseline</p>	<p>Strengthen, scale out and replicate curricula and programs using high impact practices which retain students and prepare them to engage civically.</p>



<p><b>programs, developmental dimension/ growth needed for students to engage civically</b></p>	<p>Faculty Staff Students Community Partners</p>	<p>deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.</p> <p>#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.</p>	<p>cross reference with matriculation data and destination outcomes data.</p> <p>Survey alumni of current civic engagement</p>	<p>measurement beyond CBL courses. (Sept 2017 – Sept 2018)</p> <p>Map out places where partnerships in support of Imagine Dubuque could support increased use of high impact practices. (Ongoing)</p> <p>Assess student outcomes related to course outcomes, College mission, and interest in civic engagement. (Ongoing)</p> <p>Assess long-term learning outcomes of alumni civic engagement experiences with respect to course outcome, mission, personal and professional growth, and civic engagement. (Sept 2018 – Ongoing)</p> <p>Apply Carnegie Classification for Civic Engagement, Spring 2019</p>	<p>Our reputation as a civically engaged campus is a strong recruiting tool for faculty, staff and students.</p>
<p><b>Faculty/Staff Focused Outcome</b></p> <p><b>Develop a systemic way to encourage staff and faculty to attend professional development in areas of Civic Engagement by motivating individuals to</b></p>	<p>Culture/Policy</p> <p>Responsibility of: Faculty and Staff</p>	<p>#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.</p>	<p>Increase number of institutionally supported opportunities for faculty and staff to attend workshops focused on engagement.</p> <p>Survey of division chairs and department/program heads to understand how professional development opportunities are</p>	<p>Ecoliteracy and High Impact Practices, 9/7/17</p> <p>Engaged Faculty Institute, TBD</p> <p>Consult and review internal assessment data from Loras College Academic Affairs to inform and determine faculty development needs , Summer 2018</p>	<p>Increased number of community-engaged courses offered</p> <p>Increased number of community-based research projects underway</p> <p>Increased number of co-curricular programs incorporating CE.</p>

<p>participate in a way clearly and concisely linked to tenure and recognition/rewards/incentives.</p>			<p>promoted and what motivates faculty on incorporate concepts into courses and/or programs.</p> <p>Add tracking within faculty annual review, three-year and tenure portfolios for civically engaged activity that is counted/assessed outside of “service” to the college by adding language in the faculty handbook for how civic engagement contributes to the Loras intellectual community and is a valued indicator of educational success</p>		
<p><b>Faculty Focused Outcome</b></p> <p><b>Engaged scholarship is rewarded in a systemic manner across the academic divisions to inform rank and tenure decisions.</b></p>	<p>System/Policy</p> <p>Responsibility of: Faculty</p>	<p>#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.</p>	<p>Collect divisional data about Legacy Symposium presentations, professional development opportunities offered by and attended by faculty, rank and tenure awards which include percentages in each division engaged in community-based learning, teaching and/or research.</p>	<p>Establishing faculty-led course designation, system. Fall 2017</p> <p>Present to Rank and Tenure committee about professional development and course development to include engaged scholarship. Discuss feasibility of a more systematic way to incorporate into Rank and Tenure decisions. Date TBD</p> <p>Create awards that recognize engaged scholarship in teaching and/or research, Date TBD</p>	<p>Increased number of community-engaged courses offered</p> <p>Increased number of community-based research projects underway</p>