



UConn's Promise

**Co-creating a Climate of Well-being
through Civic Action**



Civic engagement is 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. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

(Ehrlich, American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2000)

Vision:

UConn works with, and on behalf of, the public-at-large to promote responsibility and benefit in achieving a just, satisfying and sustainable community.

We will realize this vision by working toward:

- enriching the economic, social and cultural capital of our state's residents;
- reducing disparities of opportunity and life experiences across communities;
- promoting civil discourse that respects various cultural, social, technological and philosophical perspectives;
- encouraging critical thinking, civic awareness, oral, written and visual literacy;
- fostering occasions to experience visual and performing arts; and
- building sustainable partnerships and strategies for shared decision-making.

Our promise affirms the statements of the 30th anniversary action statement of Campus Compact, which characterizes our current commitment and ideals toward which we will work with renewed dedication, focus, and vigor. Through this commitment our ideals align with the Campus Compact statements:

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.

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.

Historical Roots of UConn’s Civic Action:

The establishment of UConn as our State’s land grant institution in 1881 was predicated on an expectation that collective prosperity and well-being would be assured through the practical education of our citizenry. The evidence-based, experiential learning pedagogy of Cooperative Extension demonstrated the public good of higher education. That spirit of connecting learners across the spectrum in collaborative problem-solving is at the heart of creating a Civic Action Plan. As our state’s flagship public University, a land, sea, and space grant institution, we take this opportunity to renew our promise to the citizens that UConn will continue to foster a culture of intellectual and practical engagement, promoting the health and well-being of citizens across the state and on our campuses.

UConn is dedicated to excellence, demonstrated through national and international recognition of our research, teaching, service, and outreach. Our spirit of academic inquiry and expression allows us to create and disseminate knowledge, embraces diversity and cultivates leadership, integrity, and engaged citizenry of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Our focus on teaching and learning enables every student to grow intellectually and interpersonally, to become a contributing member of the state, national, and world communities.

Meeting the Promise:

UConn supports the development of engaged citizens through coordination, advocacy and capacity building for engagement activities. Civic engagement, service learning, engaged scholarship, university assisted community schools, strategic partnerships, and communities as partners and collaborators are examples of engaged work at UConn.

UConn provides resources for faculty, professional staff and students to integrate engaged scholarship into their academic, research and service programs, and maximize the University’s

impact on the communities with whom it engages by facilitating interdisciplinary connections and forming long-term community partnerships.

UConn's history in civic engagement is extensive and diverse. Below, we document examples of our ongoing engagement with communities across the state. We present our civic actions as being *relevant* to our partners, *reciprocal* in effort and *responsible* to our global community. Excerpts illustrate these principles.

Relevant:

UConn and Greater Hartford Harm Reduction Coalition Fight Opioids Together

Objective: To utilize and leverage the resources of the University as it relates to reducing opioid addiction across the state.

Approach: Link the Greater Hartford Harm Reduction Coalition with departments and schools across the University through Service Learning courses, research, and other activities to leverage resources to address opioid abuse throughout the state of Connecticut.

Community Partners: Greater Hartford Harm Reduction Coalition, Hartford Police Department, Connecticut State Troopers, City of Torrington, City of Hartford

Intended Outcomes: The organic chemistry classes taught at the Hartford Campus will participate in education and advocacy work in collaboration with the Greater Hartford Harm Reduction Coalition (GHHRC).

The School of Pharmacy is creating an opioid reduction curriculum for the city of Torrington which can be utilized in other locations. The School also is planning to engage students in the education and support of opioid usage across the state of CT and plan to make this epidemic central to the curriculum within the School.

Faculty members from the School of Nursing and the Department of Human Development and Family Studies are conducting opioid research which can lead to increased funding for initiatives surrounding the epidemic.

The Department of Kinesiology Physical Therapy Program will offer those working with GHHRC physical therapy treatment for pain through their Boundless Clinic. Finding new solutions to deal with pain can prevent opioid use and ultimately addiction.

Professional Development: Archaeology Field School for Educators

Objective: The Archaeology Field School for Educators is designed to give educators who teach history or social science in a classroom or museum setting a deeper appreciation of the importance of archaeology as a tool for learning about Connecticut's fascinating past.

Approach: The Archaeology Field School for Educators program is coordinated by the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History at UConn and led by Dr. Brian Jones. Participants experience an authentic and significant week-long archaeological investigation, working with primary sources at a historic site. The field school covers the basics of field methods, paperwork, data management, and artifact identification. Learning proper archaeological methods also develops the participant's understanding of the ethical aspects of archaeology and the archaeologist's responsibility to preserve the data they retrieve so that it will remain available to future researchers.

Community Partner(s): Capital Region Education Council (CREC), East Lyme High School, East Shore Middle School, Milford; Lauralton Hall, Milford; Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Milford; Manchester Public Schools, Meriden Public Schools, New Milford High School, North Haven Public Schools, Regional District 4: Chester, Deep River, Essex, Regional District 17: Haddam and Killingworth, Somers Public Schools, Torrington Public Schools

Volunteers with the Friends of the Office of State Archaeology (FOSA) assist the State Archaeologist in helping the participants with field methods, paperwork, data management, and artifact identification.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA) has a reciprocal relationship with the Office of State Archaeology, and uses their Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) technology and expertise to help map our potential underground archaeological features as well as demonstrate to the participants how the technology works.

Intended Outcomes: These lessons provided a first step for the teachers toward developing the skills needed to



undertake their own archaeological investigations with students at their respective schools. Additionally, participants also learn about the role of the Connecticut Office of State Archaeology and how it can be an important resource in developing archeological lessons and activities for students.

Initiative on Campus Dialogues

Objective: The Initiative on Campus Dialogues links academic research and teaching in the humanities with the practice of community building and productive conversation across difference. Participants learn different approaches to dialogue and deliberation, and develop skills for organizing dialogic events based on their academic areas of expertise and aimed at improving “real world” problems and challenges. ICD is hosted primarily by the Humanities Institute, as part of the Humility & Conviction in Public Life project, but is supported by a wide range of campus partners.

Approach: ICD meetings focus on training, network-building and sharing of best practices. Meetings are open to students, staff, faculty and community partners. In Academic Year 2017-18, ICD launched its Fellows program, initiated to support a cohort of researcher-practitioner teams seeking to address community challenges throughout the state. ICD also hosts facilitator training sessions (typically once per semester) and partners with the “Encounters” program to bring humanities researchers into dialogue with members of the Hartford community (this in partnership with the Hartford Public Library, The Wadsworth Atheneum, The Amistad Center and the Old State House). The program also runs a campus-centered series of conversations, “Small Talks,” which promotes students’ skills for discussing difficult subjects.



Community Partner(s): ICD collaborates with institutional partners in offering the “Encounters Series,” an ongoing public dialogue project aimed at improving the tenor and tone, and deepening the content base, of public discourse.

Institutional partners:

- Amistad Center
- Hartford Public Library
- Mashantucket Pequot Museum
- Old State House
- Wadsworth Atheneum

ICD partners with dialogue professionals to co-host events, run facilitator training and explore innovations in teaching and pedagogy.

Practitioner partners/collaborators:

- Campus Compact
- Community Capacity Builders
- Everyday Democracy
- Essential Partners
- Kettering Foundation/National Issues Forum
- Narrative 4

ICD is a partner in the Neag School of Education's Professional Develop workshops whereby CT high school teachers are taught the skills of dialogue and work to integrate them into their classrooms.

Secondary education partners:

- E.O. Smith High School
- Manchester Public Schools
- West Hartford Public Schools

Intended Outcomes: The linking of content-area research and teaching aims to put scholarship in the public service. The development of dialogue skills, and the experience of being able to productively converse with people of different viewpoint about divisive issues, are among the most powerful tools of citizenship.

Reciprocal:

People Empowering People (UConn PEP)

Objective: The UConn PEP program provides facilitator training to programs that support targeted adult populations to make changes in their lives and in their communities. The program identifies natural leaders – those that others turn to in times of trouble, draw them into the program, and enhance their skills. These recruited leaders are provided with training that focuses on information and skills to help them understand and communicate with each other, analyze and solve problems, and build and sustain relationships. Participants engage in individual and/or group projects, designed and implemented by them to achieve personal or community goals.

Approach: Parent leadership has long been recognized in the state of Connecticut as a way to improve the health, safety and learning of Connecticut's children. By developing the leadership skills of parents to make real change in schools, communities and state and local government, parents impact the present and future for their children. Parents are the best advocates for their children because they know what they need. The state of Connecticut and the Graustein Memorial Fund provide funds for the Parent Trust Fund that allows local agencies to apply for funding to offer UConn PEP in their communities. The Parent Trust Fund is a Connecticut family civics initiative established through legislation passed in 2001. It supports parent engagement and leadership training to improve the health, safety, and education of children across Connecticut.

Community Partners: Waterbury Hospital, New London Youth Affairs, Plymouth Family Resource Center, Enfield Key Initiatives to Early Learning, Greenwich Discovery Program, West Hartford Bridge Family Resource Center, Bristol Family Resource Center, Danbury Children First, Hartford Catholic Charities, Hartford Mount Olive Child Development Center, Stamford Parent Leadership, Torrington Early Childhood, EASTCONN Head Start, Alliance for Bloomfield's Children

Intended Outcomes: UConn PEP facilitator trainings were offered three times enrolling a total of 50 facilitators from across the state. Each program had seven to ten participants who were predominantly female and approximately 50 percent diverse.

The Parent Trust Fund awarded grants to 21 agencies in which trained facilitators offered the UConn PEP Program. Each program grant varied but an average of \$9,000 was spent by each agency to deliver the UConn PEP program to local communities.

Participants in the local UConn PEP programs volunteered for over 600 hours of community service that served over 7,000 community members.

Through a partnership with the Center for Applied Research in Human Development, the participants in the UConn PEP program completed a pre- and post-test evaluation of the UConn PEP program. A total of 347 participants from 19 sites participated. Repeated measure analyses revealed significant positive changes at three levels: individual (e.g., self-assertive efficacy, the sense of mastery), relationships (e.g., parent-child relationships, family problem-solving skills), and community (e.g., engagement). In other words, participants reported increases in their ability to express themselves confidently toward others and the sense of control over oneself and one's environment. Also, participants reported significant increases in parenting satisfaction, family problem-solving skills, and community engagement.

Community Outreach, Programs, Services, and Initiatives

Objective: Community Outreach's mission is to engage students in meaningful service activities that enrich their learning and enhance the quality of life for others in our local, national and international communities. Community Outreach works in collaboration with our community partners to create change in our community and support the development of global citizens.

Undergraduate students take on leadership roles for all service and operational functions of the office. The students design and implement activities that recruit, train, and supervise volunteers and work-study employees to best meet the identified needs of the community partners and



clients. The office currently works with over two thousand three hundred students and over one hundred and fifty non-profit agencies

Approach: Community Outreach works in a reciprocal relationship with our community partners in creating programs, services and initiatives that meet their identified needs while also providing a range of programs for UConn students to participate in. The office supports four main program areas; one time service projects, semester long experience, alternative break trips and democracy and political engagement initiatives. The office also provides a variety of educational events and trainings to support student development, and learning stressing the importance of reflection and reorientation to the work.

Community Partners: Academy of Art and Learning; Columbia Public Schools; Community Children's Center, Coventry School District; Eastern Area Health Education Center, Hartford Hospital, Hartford Public Schools, Holy Family Shelter, Horizons Inc., Manchester Area Conference of Churches, Manchester YWCA, Mansfield Board of Education, Mansfield Discovery Depot, Mansfield Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center, Mansfield Public Schools, Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters, Petey Green Program, Preschool at Willow House, Rockville YMCA, Special Olympics Inc., Town of Mansfield, Trinity Health of New England, UConn Extension, UConn School of Nursing, Vernon Regional Adult Basic Education, Vesta Corp., Willington Public Schools, Willow House, Windham Area Interfaith Ministries, Windham Public Schools, Windham Regional Community Council, Windham Region No Freeze Shelter

Intended Outcomes: The connection of our students and faculty to communities for varied service delivery promotes enhanced understanding of diversity, a sense of belonging and a commitment to action.



Responsible:

MPH Student Practicum Projects

Objective: UConn's Master of Public Health Program requires all students to participate in field experience during which time they work within local and state health departments as well as non-governmental organizations addressing a range of population health concerns.

Approach: Students meet (in teams or as individuals) with community stakeholders to define local concerns, articulate student involvement and anticipate project deliverables. Students commit 135-hours of field experience, completion of project tasks and submit reflective essays on public health practice competencies demonstrated through the experience.

Community Partners and Project Descriptions: Meriden Department of Health & Human Services Develop and implement training program for elderly residents and care givers on warning signs of elder abuse. Hartford Health & Human Services Department Standardize operating protocols of home visiting programs that support pregnant women. Connecticut Department of Public Health Collect and interpret healthcare-associated infections occurring at CT dialysis clinics. March of Dimes, CT Chapter Strengthen statewide coalitions to implement models of pre-/inter-conception care and pilot sustainable program of prenatal services. Manchester Schools Readiness Council Document obesity among kindergarten and 6th grade students and facilitate implementing 9-5-21-0 activities. West Hartford – Bloomfield Health District identify and organize community partners for community-driven strategic planning process. UConn Urban Service Track Develop informational tools for grandparent and aging care givers of young children. Community Health Centers Association Participate in evaluation of CT Practice Transformation Network initiatives seeking to improve clinical experiences and patient engagement.

Intended Outcomes: Students demonstrate their capacity as inter-professional public health practitioners through real-life, real-time problem solving.

Sustainable Food Systems

Objective: Contemporary food systems are shaped to generate profits and power for those who can maximize sales via the large-scale production and distribution of inexpensive food. The problem is this system places far less value in the principles of sustainability: environmental integrity, economic vitality, and social equity. A *Sustainable Food System* can meet our needs for fresh, healthy, affordable food today without jeopardizing the ability of future generations from doing the same. This is a global issue that we are tackling locally, statewide, and regionally in New England.

Approach: Our core impacts areas are 1) Advancing business models and practices that will help food producers succeed and be profitable; 2) Helping consumers connect to



fresh, healthy, affordable food through local food system practices and consumer education; 3) Developing the next generation of food system leaders through training, internships, and service learning; and 4) Supporting stakeholder networks that are working on strategies that support the values sustainability in our food system.

At its essence, this work is guided by the values of democratic empowerment and sustainability, where we care equally for ecosystems and people to ensure our quality of life in the future. While the conventional food system continues to grow, our investment in smaller units of our food system such as community gardens, school cafeterias, and CSA farms helps to safeguard the connection residents have to sources of their food. In so doing, we connect residents to the geography, land, and resources essential to support human populations. Small farm owners that are motivated by ecological values and the desire to feed their own community are central pillars to this approach.



Community Partners:

Campus Compact, CitySeed, CLICK, Common Ground, Community Health Services, Community Renewal Team, Cooking Matters, Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, CT Food Bank, End Hunger CT!, Foodshare, FoodCorps CT, FRESH New London, Green Village Initiative, GROW Windham, Hartford Food System, Knox, Ledge Light Health District, Massaro Community Farm, New Britain Roots, New Haven Farms, Norwalk Grows, South Windsor Food Alliance, TEEG.

School Nutrition Association of CT and the Public School Food Service offices of Coventry, East Hartford, Groton, Hartford, Mansfield, Meriden, Middletown, Norwich, New Haven, New London, Waterbury, and Windham

American Farmland Trust, Community Farm of Simsbury, CT Farmland Trust, CT NOFA, CT Farm Bureau Association, Killingly Agri-Science School, Land for Good, New CT Farmers Alliance, USDA/FSA, USDA/NRCS, Working Lands Alliance,

CT Food Policy Council, CT Food System Alliance

CT Dept. of Agriculture, CT Dept. of Education, CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection, Corporation for National and Community Service (state office)

Food Solutions New England, Farm to Institution New England, North East Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG),

Discovery Center, Institute for Social Change, VISIONS, Inc.
Kendall Foundation, JF Merck Foundation, Merck Family Fund

Intended Outcomes: Put Local on Your Tray – A new program with CT Dept. of Education designed to promote local food in school cafeterias. The program completed the design of a full suite of graphics (posters for dairy, greens, seeds, seedlings, beets, carrots, zucchini, berries, and corn), and also implemented a pilot harvest-of-the-month program with 4 school districts (Region #4, East Hartford, Middletown, and Windham).

Solid Ground – A federally funded 3-year training project for new farmers (those who have been farming for less than 10 years) that launched in August 2016. The program recruited staff, consultants, and gathered 8 organizational partners to prepare for winter 2016-2017 core trainings and events.

BuyCTGrown/10% Campaign – A collaborative effort with CitySeed to build consumer awareness about buying local agriculture products and helping residents discover Connecticut agriculture through the website buyctgrown.com. The program continued to promote its public engagement tool (CT 10% Campaign), developed a mobile app for Android (IOS is complete), and raised funds for future research on consumer perceptions (conducted in Feb-Apr 2017).

Reported Outcomes:

- 14 producers gain new knowledge and skills in Tractor Operation, Safety & Maintenance
- 80 farmers acquired new knowledge about financial management systems to improve profitability
- 45 farmers acquired new knowledge about selling to institutions
- 90 producers/distributors were engaged in selling to schools
- 600+ farmers receive digital copy 2015 CSA Price Study
- 600+ farm and food businesses have reduced marketing risk through better access to new buyers through the buyctgrown.com website and the CT 10% Campaign
- 12,011 school children have improved knowledge of healthy, nutritious eating through programming led by FoodCorps Service Members
- 178 tasting events held in school cafeterias by FoodCorps Service Members
- 3,000 school children have improved knowledge of local food through taste tests in the Put Local On Your Tray pilot program
- 21 tasting events held in school cafeterias through the Put Local On Your Tray program
- 69 enrichment events held at summer meal sites through the Summer Meals Outreach Team VISTA Project
- 60 school gardens supported, 10 community gardens supported through FoodCorps programming
- 495 new participants in free summer meals through the Summer Meals Outreach Team VISTA Project
- 16,000 free summer meals were served with assistance through the Summer Meals Outreach Team VISTA Project
- 557 volunteers recruited to assist with education, outreach and referrals in food justice programming
- 319 volunteers recruited to assist with healthy school environments and school gardens
- 132 organizations across Connecticut have increased capacity to work with their community and address issues of food insecurity through CT Food Justice VISTA Project

- 50 adult individuals are better able to serve their organization and community as a result of service learning, training, and internship opportunities in the field
- 1200 individuals and 250 businesses have increased awareness and commitment to buying locally grown products

Moving Forward:

1. Support Community involvement with the University by:
 - a. Increasing public access around the state to campuses and educational programs
 - b. Building opportunities for community members, agencies and businesses to work across disciplines
 - c. Providing social media access to University programs, services and initiatives
 - d. Expanding opportunities for inclusion of underrepresented/underserved for students, faculty and staff
2. Align teaching, learning and research to Civic Action for:
 - a. General Education Requirements and or (CORE Classes in discipline)
 - b. Promotion, Tenure, Reappointment and Merit metrics
 - c. Civic Action Minor
 - d. Transcript recognition for civic action activities
3. Create shared best practices of Civic Engagement initiatives by
 - a. Inventorying courses, programs and partnerships that address civic action, global citizenship, and/or dialogue
 - b. Promoting civic action through awareness campaign
 - c. Supporting Faculty engagement in civic action initiatives to ensure mutually beneficial relationships
4. Create a permanent task force on Civic Action through the Provost Office charged with
 - a. Supporting increased knowledge and support of continued work on campus
 - b. Supporting Community Partner involvement in committee
 - c. Securing fiscal resources to support civic action activities
 - d. Recruiting and retaining faculty and staff who prioritize civic action in their teaching, research and practices

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Commitments from the 30th Anniversary Action Statement

<https://compact.org/actionstatement/>

Vision for Civic Action at UConn

Limitations to this work; ensuring partnership and work across campus and our communities/society.

Define Civic Action for our campus Community Partnerships

Academic

Mission & Goals

Outcomes

As a University, a community and as individuals we face substantial and in some respects unprecedented uncertainty about tomorrow. This concern extends across numerous domains.

Such ill-ease, occurs in a time of explosive growth and interconnectivity of information and relationships. It is undoubtedly true that we know and share more today about human existence than in prior times. This is the context within which UConn this civic action plan is prepared and will be judged.

1. Promote civic action initiatives through an awareness campaign including but not limited to:
 - a. Competition for poster design
 - b. UConn reads focus on Civic Action
 - c. Theme for year
 - d. One civic action speaker/dialogue per semester

Wagner & Owen-

- a. Minor would include Critical thinking
- b. Civil Discourse
- c. Leadership
- d. Multicultural Awareness
- e. Understanding of Social Issues
- f. Ethical responsibility
- g. Practical Competence