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## Civic Action Plan

### Plan Rationale and Purpose

Warren Wilson College is a national liberal arts college that fully integrates on-campus work and off-campus community engagement into its curriculum. In addition to its innovative experiential program, the College and its students are known for their strong commitment to environmental sustainability, diversity and social justice. These commitments and values position the college to work towards and claim civic identity as the central focus of a Warren Wilson College education.

In 2012, The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement released a watershed report, *A Crucible Moment*, calling on educators and public leaders to make a fundamental shift in approaches to civic engagement by centralizing it within the college curriculum and overall college experience. The AAC&U (2015) describes *A Crucible Moment* as a call to action through its documentation of our nation's anemic civic health and its recommendations with regard to campus culture, general education, and civic inquiry within higher education (*A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*).

This call to action has mobilized many institutions of higher education to explore and enhance how civic engagement is lived by students on campus through academic, student life, and co-curricular programming. Warren Wilson College is fortunate to enter this conversation with an already-developed foundation of civic engagement programming as well as a rich history of service. However, the development of a civic identity requires much more than service-learning experiences or what programming from a single office can provide. This call to action, coupled with Warren Wilson College's current strategic plan, provided the impetus for convening a working group in July 2015 to revisit earlier work on finding a common learning outcome/s for the college. Extensive progress has been made since 2015; however, the work to describe common learning outcomes at Warren Wilson has been in progress for well over five years.

After much discussion about what common learning outcome would align with strategic initiatives, encompass the exemplary work that happens daily across campus, and provide a distinctive signature for Warren Wilson, the working group landed on the concept of civic identity as the potential "it" that we are all striving toward through our unique educational program. Civic identity is a term that derives from research out of IUPUI on a civic-minded graduate, who is defined as, "a person who has completed a course of study and has the capacity and desire to work with others for the common good" (Sternberg, Hatcher, and Bringle, 2011, p. 429). A student with a civic identity is described by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as a person who, "...sees her or himself as an active participant in society with a strong commitment and responsibility to work with others



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towards public purposes.” (Association of American Colleges and Universities. Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric) The development of a civic identity requires a developmental emphasis on knowledge, skills, values, and collective action, and encompasses experiences that students could have within classrooms, in residence halls, and on work crews. Therefore, Warren Wilson College aims to focus on civic identity as the central feature of a Warren Wilson College education, building a developmental model that encompasses academic, co-curricular, and student life experiences. This aim corresponds with the College’s mission to provide a “distinctive undergraduate...liberal arts education” that “combines academics, work and service in a learning community committed to environmental responsibility, cross-cultural understanding, and the common good.”

The civic identity draft model takes into account the developmental process of foundational, intermediate, and upper level skills, knowledge, values, and collective action that comprise civic identity. The model heeds the call from the AAC&U to elevate the public purposes of higher education and offers a distinctive signature to the Warren Wilson College experience.

### **Strategic Approach**

When Warren Wilson College’s president, Steve Solnick, signed Campus Compact’s 30th Anniversary Action Statement, a group of faculty and staff had already started the process of institutionalizing civic identity as the primary student outcome. Starting in the summer of 2015, a group of WWC faculty, staff, and administrators convened to discuss the common outcomes across all WWC experiences. This initial list included civic engagement as one of four common outcomes. In May 2016, the group produced consensus around Civic Identity as *the* Warren Wilson College outcome. Since this gathering, this group has moved forward thoughtfully and strategically in order to bring this vision to life.

The individuals who originally started this conversation, and who have continued to collaborate to actualize this vision, are in leadership positions across campus. Each of the following faculty and staff members have a role in engaging with administrators, faculty, staff, and students, enacting college practices, and determining and assessing student learning outcomes. The team members who have collaborated on this civic action plan are:

- Brian Ammons - Director of Spiritual Life / College Chaplain
- Paul Bobbitt - Associate Dean of Work
- Nathalie Burford - Assistant Director of Center for Gender and Relationships / Residence Life Area Coordinator
- Ellen Graves - Director of Work Learning and Programs
- Geoffrey Habron - Director of E-portfolio / Director of First-Year Seminar
- Annie Jonas - Director of Faculty Community Engagement / Education faculty member

- Amy Knisley - Director of Writing Across the Curriculum / Environmental Studies faculty member
- Langdon Martin - Director of General Education / Chemistry faculty member
- Brooke Millsaps - Associate Dean of Community Engagement
- Wendy Seligmann - Associate Dean of Advising and Career Development
- Tacci Smith - Director of Student Activities

To date, multiple strategies have been enacted in order to identify campus support and feasibility of civic identity as the primary student learning outcome for Warren Wilson College. These include:

- Drafting a developmental model for focusing on civic identity throughout the Warren Wilson College educational experience.
- Proposing the model to key administrators, including the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Applied Learning, Vice President of Enrollment, Associate Dean for Faculty, and Dean of Students.
- Updating catalog language to include civic identity as a key learning outcome.
- Gathering feedback from the campus community. These groups included:
  - Academic Division chairs
  - Division of Applied Learning
  - Academic Divisions: Fine Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Library
  - Athletics Department
  - Targeted student work crews
  - Center for Community Engagement Advisory Committee
  - Student Life directors
  - Branding committee
  - General Education committee
  - Revising General Education, and including civic identity as a central element.
  - Revising the model based on feedback and presenting revised model to various stakeholders

Future approaches for our Civic Action Plan include:

- Bringing in the class of 2017 under a revised General Education model that includes:
  1. Civic Identity as a central feature
  2. A First Year Seminar that is focused on developing a civic identity.
- Engaging the division of Student Life, Center for Community Engagement and Work Program Office in reviewing their outcomes and programming in light of the civic identity model.
- Engaging appropriate stakeholders in the examination of faculty and staff evaluation and performance reviews and departmental assessment goals with their alignment with the civic identity model.

## Outcomes

*The following are the expected outcomes of Warren Wilson College's Civic Action Plan:*

1. Development of a civic identity is central to the Warren Wilson College student educational experience.
2. Warren Wilson College faculty and staff understand how to incorporate civic identity into their work.
3. Departments across campus are oriented and assessed on civic identity performance.

| Outcome | Measure(s)   | Indicator(s)  |
|---------|--|---|
| 1       | 1) Campus-wide assessment measures, including: BSSE, NSSE, CIRP, HEDS<br><br>2) Inclusion of Civic Identity into educational frameworks, to include General Education, Work, Student Life, and Community Engagement.                                     | 1) An increase in student percentage on associated questions over time<br><br>2) All educational departments will explicitly state civic identity related outcomes.   |
| 2       | 1) Review of evaluation documents, including: ARSE and Supervisor Performance Evaluation<br><br>2) Number of faculty and staff attending workshops focused on civic identity<br><br>3) Inclusion of civic identity on faculty and staff job descriptions | 1) Civic Identity will be included in performance review criteria in the ARSE and Supervisor Performance Evaluations.<br><br>2) Each year will have an increase in classes and work crews that explicitly identify civic identity outcomes.<br><br>3) A common civic identity statement will be included on all job descriptions. |
| 3       | 1) Campus-wide process for departmental evaluation will include civic identity.  | 1) Increase in departments who explicitly link their outcomes to civic identity.  |

## Implementation

| <b>Activity</b>  | <b>Date</b>               | <b>Responsible</b> | <b>Status</b> |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Finalize Civic Identity Language   | March 1                   | Entire Team        | Completed     |
| Meet with Gen Ed committee to finalize Gen Ed proposal   | March 3 (via e-mail)      | Langdon Martin     | Completed     |
| Finalize the Civic Identity Visual   | March 10                  | Brooke Millsaps    | In process    |
| Review catalog language and modify with Civic Identity language for the 2017-18 catalog  | March 13 - 17             | Langdon Martin     | Scheduled     |
| Propose revised General Education model (to include civic identity broadly and a FYS specifically focused on civic identity)   | April 2017                | Langdon Martin     | In process    |
| Talk with Registrar about college catalog deadlines (in order to include Civic Identity language)  | Spring 2017               | Wendy Seligmann    | In process    |
| Convene VPAA, VPAL, VPSA regarding faculty/staff outcomes  | Late March                | Brooke Millsaps    | Completed     |
| Center for Community Engagement - review mission and Community Engagement Commitment outcomes and language to align with Civic Identity                              | Spring 2017 - Summer 2017 | Brooke Millsaps    | Pending       |
| Present Civic Identity model to cabinet and discuss assessment   | Mid-late April            | Brooke Millsaps    | In process    |
| Gather feedback from Student Government Association  | Spring 2017               | Tacci Smith        | In process    |
| Go through existing campus-wide surveys (to identify questions related to Civic Identity that we are already asking; use this information to develop assessment plan | Spring 2017               | Wendy Seligmann    | Completed     |

|  |                |                                    |                  |
|--|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Develop rubrics  | Summer 2017    | Langdon Martin & Brooke Millsaps   | Pending          |
| Plan workshops and trainings for faculty and staff (to include developed rubrics)  | Summer 2017    | Entire Team                        | Pending          |
| Student Life - focus summer retreat around Civic Identity  | Summer 2017    | Tacci Smith and Brian Ammons       | Pending          |
| Operationalize Civic Identity with the fall 2017 incoming class  | Fall 2017      | Annie Jonas and Carol Howard       | Scheduled        |
| Center for Community Engagement - present revised mission and language to Community Engagement Advisory Committee                  | September 2017 | Brooke Millsaps                    | Scheduled        |
| Re-convene Community Partner Advisory Board  | Fall 2017      | Brooke Millsaps                    | Scheduled        |
| Develop Civic Identity Messaging Plan  | Summer 2017    | Entire Team                        | Pending          |
| Develop plan to review evaluation and assessment practices for faculty, staff and departments.                                     | Summer 2017    | Entire Team                        | Pending          |
| Plan for Civic Identity discussion and/or training at Fall 2017 supervisor retreat (dependent on spring 17 conversation with VP's) | Summer 2017    | Paul Bobbitt and Ellen Graves      | Need to schedule |
| Plan for Civic Identity discussion and/or training at Fall 2017 Faculty Retreat (dependent on spring 17 conversation with VP's)    | TBD            | TBD                                | TBD              |
| Develop overall assessment plan  | Summer 2017    | Brooke Millsaps and Langdon Martin | Need to Schedule |

## References

Association of American Colleges and Universities (2015). A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future. Retrieved from <http://www.aacu.org/crucible>.

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