

Winona State University Campus Civic Action Plan

The mission of Winona State University is “a community of learners improving our world.” We prepare students to create lasting change in their communities with emphasis on the areas of sustainability, equity, and global citizenship. WSU’s formal commitment to making civic engagement and community service a part of our students’ experience began in 2007 when we created the Center for Engaged Teaching and Scholarship (ETS). Broadly speaking, the ETS Center encompassed a faculty director, the university Community Liaison, and an advisory committee of faculty, staff, students, administrator and community member. The Center had a small budget and worked to leverage opportunities to coordinate with other groups on and off campus. The Center has morphed over the years into a Faculty Liaison of Engagement, a Director for Student and Community Engagement, and the Learning and Community Engagement (LaCE) all university committee of faculty, staff, students, and community members.

LaCE’s mission is to advance the concept of engagement at Winona State University as a form of pedagogy and scholarship. The two main focuses of LaCE are the annual University theme and the President’s Civic Engagement Awards. LaCE works with the WSU community and partners to develop ideas for the upcoming themes, reviews applications, and selects a theme. The theme year consists of a concerted effort to involve thousands of students, as well as WSU and Winona community members, in a variety of class projects, lectures, common book reading, theatre and dance productions, and other supporting activities around the theme. In 2009, we started the practice of offering mini curriculum grants to faculty for developing engaged course components around the theme. Additionally, LaCE solicits and reviews nominations annually for the President’s Civic Engagement awards to recognize faculty/staff,

students, and community partners for their contribution to civic engagement. LaCE also hosts the annual awards celebration.

Thus, we have a foundation and structure for civic engagement at WSU. This foundation and structure supports all of the Campus Compact five action statement commitments¹ to some extent. The area we strive to build on is the fourth action statement: “We harness the capacity of our institutions – through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice – to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequities that threaten our democratic future.” At this point, we anecdotally know faculty, staff, and students are doing civic engagement work. We have made several attempts to capture snapshots of data to understand the breadth and depth of this work. However, we do not have a full picture of what this looks like academically or co-curricularly from the perspectives of faculty/staff, students, and the community. This lack of data limits our ability to “harness the capacity of our institution” because we do not have a baseline or collective view of the civic engagement work at WSU. We believe that we must create a framework for collecting such data before we can create a more cohesive, institutional plan for civic engagement.

We have two goals for obtaining baseline data on the academic and co-curricular civic engagement work.

- 1. LaCE will work with faculty, the registrar, and University leadership to create, implement, and recognize civic engagement and service learning course designators in the registration system by May 2018.**

¹ *Creating a Great Campus Civic Action Plan*, Campus Compact, 2016, <http://compact.org/Campus-Compact-Action-Plan.pdf>

2. LaCE will work with student life and development, institutional reporting and University leadership to create and implement a process for co-curricular transcripts including civic engagement by May 2018.

These goals will give us information on academic courses and co-curricular activities, with service learning and civic engagement components as well as numbers of students, faculty, and community partners involved in such courses and activities. This data will be used to continue to grow and develop our culture as a community of learnings improving our world.