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Promoting Civic Engagement at the University of California

Recommendations from the Strategy Group on Civic and Academic Engagement

December 2005

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Acknowledgements

The lead authors for this report are Jodi Anderson (School of Education, UCLA) and John Aubrey Douglass (Senior Research Fellow, Center for Studies in Higher Education, UC Berkeley), in association with Alice Agogino (Chair, UC Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate; Professor of Mechanical Engineering, UC Berkeley), and Kathleen L. Komar (past Chair, UCLA Division of the Academic Senate; Professor of Comparative Literature, UCLA).

The Symposium Steering Committee – co-chairs Jodi Anderson and John Douglass, along with Cliff Brunk (Chair, Academic Council, UC Academic Senate), Julius Zelmanowitz (UCOP Office of Academic Initiatives), and Dennis Galligani (UCOP Student Academic Services) – would like to express its gratitude to the UC Office of the President for generously supporting the 2005 Civic and Academic Engagement Symposium.

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An electronic version of this document, along with a compendium report on the proceedings of the June 2005 Universitywide Symposium, *Civic and Academic Engagement in the Multiversity: Institutional Trends and Initiatives at the University of California*, is available at http://cshe.berkeley.edu/events/civicacademic/.

Executive Summary

The University of California is the nation's largest and most prestigious public research institution. As such, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to assume a leadership role in an emerging national movement within higher education, translating our identity as a land grant institution into 21st century terms.

On June 10, 2005, over 70 faculty, students, and administrators, representing all 10 University of California campuses as well as the Office of the President, met to discuss this timely and significant topic. This meeting provided an opportunity to examine current civic engagement activities and strategies to deepen and broaden efforts in this area as well as to explore the leadership role our system might provide. The consensus of the group was that the UC is poised to assume a leadership role in a national movement that seeks to better integrate knowledge production through engaged scholarship with clear and critical public purposes. A compendium report available at http://cshe.berkeley.edu/events/civicacademic/ provides a detailed synopsis of the symposium.

Following the day long symposium, a working group of faculty, students, and administrators met for a half-day at the Center for Studies in Higher Education (UC Berkeley) to discuss strategic next steps that would capture the sentiments expressed during the symposium. This executive summary and the following report provide the findings and recommendations of the Strategy Group on Civic and Academic Engagement concerning how the University of California might proceed. A list of the members of the Strategy Group is provided in Appendix A.

The practice of engaged scholarship leverages the intellectual assets of the institution to identify and address pressing social issues in a collaborative fashion with community partners. Clearly, this occurs more frequently in some disciplines than in others. Engaged scholarship can also be tied to teaching, thus integrating the three educational missions of teaching, research, and service.

Undergraduate as well as graduate students benefit from participation in well-structured and academically rigorous community-based learning and research opportunities. Providing students with environments in which theory meets practice can promote greater cognitive complexity, make learning more relevant to today's social issues, and foster the civic skills and inclinations necessary for society's future leaders.

While the UC's efforts must be informed by *national* research on these fronts, it is also critical that the University connect its own research agenda with public purposes to better understand the impact of community-based learning on students' intellectual and personal development and the role that engaged scholarship might play in the lives of faculty. The three main areas for the development of new knowledge are:

> *At the institutional level*. On the whole, how well do we understand and document the extent of each campus' community engagement? Are campus efforts intentional, coordinated, and communicated clearly to internal and external constituencies? What infrastructures and financial resources exist to support the faculty's engaged scholarship and students' community-based learning? What benefits accrue to the University through civic engagement?

For faculty. How can engaged scholarship improve the morale, reputation, and research productivity of faculty? How can new knowledge networks emerge from interdisciplinary partnerships to more effectively address pressing social issues? Can faculty research agendas and modes of inquiry be enriched through engaged scholarship?

For students. What opportunities exist to engage students in community-based learning and research with public purposes? What are the long-term effects of civic engagement on students' persistence, cognitive development, career choice, post-graduation leadership activities, and relationship with their alma mater? What civic education skills do students gain and retain to make them more effective citizens?

The main recommendations of the Strategy Group on Civic and Academic Engagement include the following:

1. Secure the Academic Senate's support for, and leadership of, exploration of the recommendations made in the strategy group's report for development of systemwide efforts;

2. Secure funding from the Office of the President to support a systemwide infrastructure (including a staff person) to coordinate civic engagement activities through the 2006-7 academic year;

3. Generate a comprehensive systemwide report on engaged teaching and research activities as well as community-based learning and research at the 10 campuses, culminating in a concept paper for future directions;

4. Plan and hold a follow-up symposium in June 2006 with representatives from each of the campuses who hold leadership positions;

5. Further the development of a University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) sub-group to generate a report on how this analytical tool could assess student outcomes stemming from civic engagement initiatives; and

6. Identify and generate new sources of external funding to expand a civic engagement infrastructure, including promoting web-based resources and communications, monitoring and publicizing model projects and partnerships, and disseminating information on a systemwide basis.

These recommendations, along with detailed Symposium Proceedings and Recommendations, will be submitted to the Chair of the UC Academic Senate and the Office of the President in fall 2005. It is hoped that the future steps outlined in this report will commence in January 2006.

Promoting Civic Engagement: A Report on Benefits, Challenges and Strategic Directions at the University of California

Following a day-long UC systemwide symposium on civic and academic engagement at the UC Berkeley campus on June 10, 2005, more than two dozen faculty, students, and administrators met as a working group to discuss options for enhancing institutional, faculty, and student civic engagement in the University of California (see Appendix A for a list of participants). The strategy group meeting addressed key points presented during the symposium in order to guide future exploration by the university community, and most importantly to discuss strategies that might propel ideas put forth during the symposium.

The strategy group sought to identify the next steps for institutional efforts that would logically flow from the symposium. The following report provides an overview of the discussion and a set of recommendations for consideration by the University of California community.

Defining the Language of Engagement Used in this Report

Civic Engagement
Civic engagement denotes "collaborative activity that builds on the resources, skills, expertise, and knowledge of the campus and community to improve the quality of life and to advance the campus mission. Civic engagement includes teaching, research, and service in and with the community" (Bringle and Hatcher, 2004).

Engaged Scholarship
The National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement defines engaged scholarship as "scholarship in the areas of teaching, research, and/or service. It engages faculty in academically relevant work that simultaneously meets campus mission and goals as well as community needs. In essence, it is a scholarly agenda that integrates community issues. In this definition, community is broadly defined to include audiences external to the campus that are part of a collaborative process to contribute to the public good."

Service-Learning
Service-learning is, "A form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts" (Jacoby and Associates, 1996). Service-learning (or what is also termed community-based learning) integrates theory with practice into the curriculum.

Benefits of Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is reflected in the teaching, research, and public service activities of the University of California. However, activities are often dispersed and therefore not always widely recognized or understood by the institution.

However, it is the sense of the strategy group that the University stands to benefit greatly from a more intentional, comprehensive, systemwide articulation of, and strategy for, promoting civic engagement. Potential benefits include:

1. ***Bolstering the links between civic and academic achievement and between research and teaching.*** Research indicates that learning is enhanced by real-world experiences that broaden a student's perspective and connect theory with practice. In addition, research that is informed by community participation can have a uniquely meaningful impact that is locally visible.

2. ***Improving diversity, student retention, and progress to degree.*** A university that more fully integrates community engagement into its research and teaching endeavors develops stronger ties to multiple communities and may be better able to attract and engage a diverse student body. In addition, research shows that engaged students remain in school and progress to degree at a greater rate than students who are not engaged.

3. ***Re-energizing the faculty around engaged scholarship.*** Creating a civic engagement initiative and providing a supportive infrastructure may re-energize faculty teaching and research by providing a fresh perspective on the value their work brings to society.

4. ***Connecting the university to policymakers.*** Universities are being questioned about their relevance, lack of transparency, and high costs. Bringing more visibility to the value that the university provides the public through community-based teaching and research is one way to "live" the public mission and reinforce the important role that the university plays in serving the public good.

5. ***Building an interdisciplinary research capacity.*** The problems of society are complex, and addressing them requires expertise as well as research that crosses disciplinary lines. These capacities should be supported among faculty and nurtured in students.

6. ***Building a research community around California's most challenging policy issues.*** Focusing on issues that are of public concern brings the unique strengths of a research university to bear on the most pressing challenges that face the state. This can enhance public knowledge of and appreciation for the university system, thereby making more tangible the return on public investment in higher education.

7. ***Bringing in new resources and funding.*** Both government and private funders are calling for more collaborative approaches to projects as a condition of funding (reflected, for example, in National Science Foundation grant requirements for an outreach component in funded projects). In addition, local and regional funders who may not normally contribute to other university endeavors may have greater interest in investing in projects with clear public purposes and applications.

8. ***Building social capital among students, faculty, and communities.*** Academic inquiry not only addresses critical research questions but also enhances the ability of students, faculty, and communities to take action and build ongoing relationships that yield multiple benefits. The development of such social capital has been shown by research to strengthen communities, making them more resilient and healthy. New networks of trust and cooperation are likely to emerge and create new academic partnerships for scholarly work.

9. ***Leveraging UC's multi-campus structure and size.*** By creating a systemwide philosophy and structure around civic engagement, the University of California can leverage its resources to facilitate interaction and address pressing social issues on a large scale to better serve the entire state of California.

10. ***Becoming a leader in a growing national movement.*** According to statistics from Campus Compact and the National Center for Education Statistics, more than 12.5 million K-12 students are involved in service-learning, more than 700,000 college students participate, 44 percent of campuses have a service-learning center, and 13 percent of faculty teach courses with a service-learning component. The movement is growing, but as yet there is no clear leader among research universities.

In addition to discussing civic engagement, the strategy group also focused on how community-based learning could enrich student learning and foster meaningful community engagement. Community-based learning embeds service into the curriculum to enhance both student learning and community life. Such experiences can be transforming for students, making learning more relevant, helping them explore academic majors and career choices, developing their civic and leadership skills, and encouraging them to be productive participants in the community.

While service-learning is already taking place at some campuses within the University of California, it lacks support at others; there is no systemwide institutional framework that supports it and encourages its growth. Without a coherent and comprehensive institutional agenda that provides a supportive infrastructure, service-learning is not easily institutionalized. It flourishes when it is identified as a means to accomplish the institution's mission and goals. This pedagogical practice can help institutions achieve a variety of goals, including:

- Improving retention and diversity,
- Strengthening undergraduate research capabilities and achievements,
- Improving town-gown relationships,
- Enriching instruction and learning outcomes,
- Fostering interdisciplinary work,
- Strengthening the relevance of the research agenda,
- Attracting new streams of revenue,
- Demonstrating performance and accountability to stakeholders, and
- Addressing critical public issues.

Given the numerous potential benefits, the strategy group concludes that UC should contemplate a more systematic approach to the promotion and greater integration of civic engagement in the teaching and research activities of the University, with the primary purpose of enhancing the academic experience of our students, enriching the work of faculty, and better conveying the public purposes of our research institutions.

Issues and Challenges to Address

The strategy group also identified a series of challenges that should be addressed, as well as issues that must be considered in order to foster a systemwide civic engagement initiative. The challenges include:

- Creating a developmental process and strategic plan that are generic enough to allow for systemwide innovation and creativity, but specific enough to make the initiative meaningful for individual campuses;

- Creating an engagement infrastructure so that the initiative is sufficiently coordinated and well supported without imposing an additional burden on faculty;

- Clarifying the criteria for an engagement agenda (what is included and what is not) and the development of effective partnerships (across disciplines, with communities, and with others);

- Developing a faculty culture which respects the knowledge assets of the community, as well as one that supports the sharing of power and control within research projects;

- Developing an academic structure and culture that values engaged scholarship as a mode of teaching and research and rewards faculty for their participation based on agreed-upon assessment methods linked to retention and tenure policies;

- Creating a faculty development agenda, including building a clear understanding of the terms and knowledge base around engagement as well as providing instructional support; and

- Making engagement visible through recognition events and presentations of projects and research findings both within the University and beyond its institutional walls.

In addition, there was discussion around several key questions.

What is meant by "civic engagement" and the "scholarship of engagement"? What does it include and what does it exclude?

There are a variety of terms, concepts, and models connected with civic engagement. It is necessary to understand the nuances and distinguishing characteristics in order to inform discussions of the University of California's approach. Extensive literature and research are available to provide guidance and clarity, but ultimately the University of California must provide its own definition and strategies within the context of its role in society and its own academic culture.

Civic engagement can refer to a wide spectrum of activities that engage students and faculty in community activities. However, the primary focus of the systemwide symposium, and of the strategy group, is on a particular aspect of civic engagement, or what is referred to as the "scholarship of engagement."

In general, the *scholarship of engagement* is articulated as a form of research and teaching that connects intellectual work to significant public issues. In engaged scholarship, research is done

in collaboration *with*, rather than *for* or *on*, a community – an important distinction. The research produces knowledge that is beneficial to the discipline as well as the community. Engagement creates a porous and interactive relationship between the academy and the community. The advantage to the community is that research draws upon community knowledge, reflects their concerns better, and ultimately yields a practical benefit. The benefit to the academy is that research agendas and methodologies are broadened to include critical questions that cannot be addressed without community engagement. Figure 1 provides an outline of the differences between traditional views of scholarship and the characteristics of *the scholarship of engagement*.

Figure 1. Traditional Views on Scholarship Versus the Scholarship of Engagement

Traditional Scholarship	Scholarship of Engagement
Breaks new ground in the discipline	Breaks new ground in the discipline and has a direct application to broader public issues
Answers significant questions in the discipline	Answers significant questions in the discipline, which have relevance to public or community issues
Is reviewed and validated by qualified peers in the discipline	Is reviewed and validated by qualified peers in the discipline and members of the community
Is based on a solid theoretical basis	Is based on solid theoretical and practical bases
Applies appropriate investigative methods	Applies appropriate investigative methods
Is disseminated to appropriate audiences	Is disseminated to appropriate audiences
Makes significant advances in knowledge and understanding of the discipline	Makes significant advances in knowledge and understanding of the discipline and public social issues
	Applies the knowledge to address social issues in the local community

Source: Andy Furco, Director of Service-learning Research, UC Berkeley

Civic engagement may thus be more narrowly interpreted as working with surrounding communities to identify and address challenges through research and service projects, or it may include more broadly building the capacity of students to become informed citizens who are capable of participating in policy debates and making informed political choices. Some in the work group felt strongly that the civic engagement initiative should include, as a desired goal for students, political engagement (meaning that students develop skills and motivations to engage in political processes).

To what degree should civic engagement become a hallmark of the University of California?

While the general goals are to make civic engagement intentional, coherent, and embedded, decisions must be made about level of commitment. How does civic engagement connect to other priorities embraced by the university? There was substantial support for engaging in a dual strategy for both top-down and bottom-up initiatives and support. For example, at both the systemwide and campus levels, administrators might support specific initiatives and, in particular, provide real financial support. At the departmental level, faculty should be supported in efforts to find ways to embed civic engagement in their curricula by providing developmental opportunities, highlighting successful existing examples, and creating systemic rewards for participation.

How can civic engagement be supported and sustained? What kind of infrastructure, which is key to sustainability, is needed to support faculty embedding these principles in aspects of the curriculum?

To some extent, engagement can be a low- or no-cost initiative because if it is embedded in existing curriculum and courses (conversely, an add-on approach would require an investment in the capacity to teach more or different courses). However, there is general recognition that for engagement to become a powerful, systemwide initiative, some new resources and coordination will be necessary.

To keep engagement from becoming a string of unintentional and disconnected projects, UC will likely have to invest in a physical as well as a financial infrastructure: space where work can take place, in addition to financial resources to support engagement efforts and conferences/events that provide for faculty development and for campus efforts to share information and successes.

How will this be viewed by faculty? What will motivate faculty to embrace the scholarship of engagement? What obstacles are there? What opportunities exist?

Faculty may find that engaged scholarship dovetails with their research interests and personal values, connecting with their original motivation to enter the teaching/research profession. Motivations to become involved may include incentives or rewards, evidence of effectiveness and success of example projects, opportunity to enhance their reputation, and a shift in the culture/standards of their discipline.

However, we can expect that obstacles will include lack of time, unclear priorities, lack of confidence in skills or expertise in this kind of scholarship, lack of resources or infrastructure, and perceptions that rewards go to other types of behavior such as the traditional scholarship necessary to secure tenure and promotion.

To help mitigate these obstacles, the University could pursue a variety of strategies. Faculty development programs could include mentoring, thematic teams focused on the scholarship of engagement, partnership events, conferences and publications, readings, speakers, exchange visits, and portfolio training. Among the “training” tools that could help interested faculty are the following:

- Clearer definitions (the language of engagement),
- Characteristics of effective community partnerships and successful practices,
- Methods for community needs analysis and asset mapping,
- Methods of applied research and participatory action research,

- Evaluation methods,
- Documentation strategies,
- Best practices of engagement in their discipline,
- Curricular redesign and syllabus development, and
- Guidance on how to present engaged scholarship in faculty review files.

In addition, there are opportunities to use the newly revised Academic Personnel Manual to reshape the culture pertaining to faculty rewards and tenure. Currently, the reward system discourages junior faculty from moving beyond the traditional scope of teaching, research, and service – this standard illustrates the challenges inherent in the socialization process.

How does this change the conduct and assessment of scholarship?

The National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement has identified a set of objectives and criteria for judging faculty work that includes assessing the level of engagement, the degree to which new ground is broken, the way indicators are defined, the existence of linked service and learning objectives, and other factors. It is important to emphasize that rigorous research reconnects the academy to its public purpose.

How can collaboration between the administration, faculty, students, and communities be facilitated?

Because the essence of engagement is collaboration, the work group agreed that it is important to create a UC engagement initiative with input from and participation by not only faculty and the administration, but also students and external communities. One suggestion was that each campus appoint faculty and student co-chairs to lead campus-based efforts.

Potential Useful Strategies and Options

The work group discussed a variety of strategies to move the initiative forward. The list includes:

Begin to address cultural issues to make civic engagement a more valued component of the university's mission. A variety of reports in higher education urge that civic engagement be made a clearer priority for research universities. Currently, research, teaching, and service are the three core missions of such universities, and while the *scholarship of engagement* embraces all three, it is important that university leaders articulate its specific and central role.

Provide faculty development opportunities to begin the bottom-up adoption of engaged scholarship. As noted in the previous section, faculty who are not involved in service-learning may feel uncomfortable without information and guidance on how to facilitate civic engagement within their discipline and courses. Various organizations (Academic Senate, Academic Council, disciplinary societies, etc.) can showcase engagement successes and sponsor discussions about opportunities for embedding engagement. Overall, faculty development is a critical step toward faculty support and participation.

Include engagement in the hiring criteria and orientation process for new faculty. At the campus level, one could imagine the integration of a select number of faculty positions that emphasize civic engagement or that outline the importance of this function in departmental hiring and program plans.

Create incentives, rewards, and recognition. Faculty will more readily choose to embrace civic engagement when they see that this work is rewarded and recognized.

Invest in infrastructure. The argument needs to be made that this should be a priority, even in times of budgetary constraints. Infrastructure should include centralized coordination, financial support, and information dissemination.

Provide support for curriculum reform. Faculty need examples of curricular models, as well as resources for embedding engagement in the curriculum, instructional development, and research opportunities.

Continue to collect data on students, faculty, and the community. The University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) is a valuable tool that can be enhanced to collect additional data on engagement progress and outcomes. The information will be useful not only to measure how the initiative is growing and to provide feedback for improvement, but also to demonstrate the type of successes that will encourage greater faculty interest and institutional support.

Identify existing and potential resources. It is important to inventory what already exists – not only programs and projects but also prior reports. Resources such as Campus Compact and the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse can provide research expertise and models both for the University as a whole and for specific disciplines, as well as general research. In addition, any comprehensive strategy should seek extramural funds from local, regional, and national funders, many of whom are eager to support community engagement initiatives.

Next Steps – Recommendations

The purpose of the Civic and Academic Engagement symposium held in June 2005 was to discuss and analyze institutional commitment to civic and academic engagement and to explore ways to further expand civic engagement as a core component in the University of California's teaching, research, and public service mission. This report has attempted to provide a preliminary list of ideas and options generated by the strategy group for the University to pursue a more strategic approach to integrating civic engagement in the UC.

The post-symposium strategy group discussed how this might be used to inform and possibly influence University policy makers. The route to accomplish this is via the faculty and, specifically, the Academic Senate. While there are many benefits to promoting civic engagement and engaged scholarship, the core of any effort should strive towards the goals of:

- Improving the undergraduate experience and knowledge of our students, and

- Encouraging faculty and graduate students to identify and address challenges facing society and to integrate these into their teaching, research, and public service responsibilities.

Such an effort will become more important as California grows in population and becomes increasingly diverse in its demographic mix – introducing new pressures and increasing expectations that the University respond to emerging public needs. In addition, as it expands, the University of California must aggressively seek creative ways to meet the academic and social needs of its students, with the ultimate goal of shaping their future role as leaders in society. It is recognized, too, that costs and benefits of initiatives proposed in this report must be considered, and since many of the initiatives would require commitment of university resources, they must compete with other important needs.

It is, however, the collective opinion of the strategy group that some formal strategic approach is warranted under the following rubric:

> *As the largest research university system in the United States, and one of the most prestigious public universities in the world, the University of California has an historic opportunity to take a leadership position in integrating civic engagement, and more specifically the scholarship of engagement, into our teaching, research, and public service efforts. Developing innovative approaches to educating students and generating new knowledge within contemporary America must be priorities for research universities in the 21st century.*

The following steps are recommended:

1. **Academic Leadership**
   It is the collective opinion of the strategy group that consideration of the options noted in this report requires that the Academic Senate assume a leadership role.

2. **Secure Funding from the Office of the President**
   This report will be submitted to the Academic Council with the recommendation that, with support from UC Office of the President, funding be provided for a special focus on civic engagement led by the Academic Senate.

3. Generation of a Comprehensive Systemwide Report

Future work should include the generation of a comprehensive systemwide report on engaged teaching and research activities as well as community-based learning and research at the ten campuses – culminating in a concept paper for future directions and the proposal of specific policies or programs.

4. UC Civic Engagement Follow-up Event

Resources should be invested in planning a follow-up UC civic engagement symposium in June 2006 for academic leaders.

The community developed as a result of the systemwide symposium should in some form continue and possibly be expanded. This might include expanding the symposium website, which includes national and UC-specific reports; planning a series of follow-up workshops and a work group that might assist the work of the Academic Senate and the proposed Civic Engagement Task Force; and providing a forum for discussing best practices and strategies.

This effort could continue under the auspices of the UC Academic Senate, subject to the Senate's recommendation for next steps. It is requested that the UC Office of the President provide a budget for this activity for the remainder of the 2005-06 as well as the 2006-07 academic years.

5. A SERU21-UCUES Sub-Group and Other Analytic Tools

In support of the Senate's Task Force and the Civic Engagement Forum, and to support a greater understanding of current civic and academic activities of faculty and students, the existing Student Experience in the Research University project should form a sub-group to:

a) Explore existing data and sources related to civic engagement,
b) Inventory existing civic engagement programs, and
c) Further develop UCUES in relation to civic engagement and possibly create special surveys and focus groups.

This effort should include faculty as well as representatives from the various campus institutional research offices and the UC Office of the President.

In addition, in coordination with the proposed Task Force, the existing General Education Commission, chaired by Neil Smelser and Michael Schudson, should consider the role of civic engagement in future GE requirements.

The General Education Commission is currently examining the philosophy, aims, curricular implications, organizational contexts, and directions of reform and implications for general education. The commission will also provide "an analysis relevant to undergraduate education in other large public university systems." We suggest that a comparative look at the formal role of civic engagement within general education programs be part of that analysis.

6. New Sources of External Funding

New sources of external funding should be identified and generated in order to expand a civic engagement infrastructure. Such funds could support web-based resources and communications, the monitoring and publicizing of model projects and partnerships, and the dissemination of information on a systemwide basis.

Appendix A

Participants in the UC Systemwide Strategy Group on Civic and Academic Engagement

Saturday, June 11, 2005

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