

Notes on Breakout Sessions

Voting and Census, facilitated by Gloria Blackwell, University of Maryland, College Park, and Natalie Scala, Towson University

- Civic engagement involves connecting assets from the community to the assets of the campus, and the census and voting are part of that.

Census

- City of College Park was undercounted in the census (49% form return). Beyond just counting residents, the census is important for representation and allocating resources, such as financial aid (particularly important for college students), transportation, and services for nonprofits working in the community. The census can affect decisions that have impacts on school safety, Pell grants, adult education grants, educational programs in agriculture, science, and engineering, etc.
- There are still challenges in the accurate counting of students. One challenge encountered with college students is that the students feel they will be counted at their home. Additionally, Baltimore City students, e.g., might prefer to have funds go there instead of to their college community. While this is a valid sentiment, they should report where they are on April 1, and the students in Baltimore will be counted in Baltimore. Another concern is student misreporting in shared housing; there should be processes and procedures in place at institutions to avoid this potential problem.
 - In order to solve these challenges, we need to work on reaching out to students about the census and educating them. We have to make the Census relevant to what the students know and understand. For example, the UMB area is a food desert, so it is helpful to explain to students that Census data is used for business location decisions; to get more stores, an accurate count is needed. Pop-up classes from College Park Scholars and nonprofit organizations helped inform students.
- Online forms are now possible, but there are still potential issues with access and literacy. Door knocking remains part of the process, and the Census is hiring at good pay, which is another way to get students involved. Individuals may have concerns about privacy and possible interference with the online form, but there are penalties (fines and jail time) for

USM Civic Education and Civic Engagement Workshop
November 8, 2019

the improper release of Census data. In mid-March a postcard will go out with a request for basic information and details on next steps for accessing the form online.

- There may be a lack of clarity about the process for institutions getting access to the student data, for example about whether the Census or the institution should make contact first, so it's a good plan to ask a Census Complete Count committee member for details for each campus. Additionally, there may be confusion around international students, but they also need to be counted, so the messaging should take this into account. College presidents need to help engage the whole campus community, and tailoring the message through the deans is one way to ensure the message resonates with the relevant groups. The current phase of work in messaging is general awareness and advocacy, whereas in the spring, the process will get more focused on getting the forms in.

Voting

- MD has a standard election process across the state. However, the MD training manual has very little guidance on security. A team of student researchers with a partner in Harford, MD wanted to learn more about the details of the process and looked for potential vulnerabilities. Examples include hacking, tampering physically, issues with the election judge (mistakes and corruption).
- Students can be poll workers, even if not a resident of the county. In Maryland, poll workers must be at least 18 years old and must also be a citizen. High school students can take the (free) training, even if they are not eligible to vote. Perhaps making training available to high school students as part of a civics course could increase later engagement and participation.

Carnegie Classification, facilitated by Matthew Durlington, Towson University; Nancy Young, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; and Maarten Pereboom, Salisbury University

- Campus Compact is a great resource when applying for the Carnegie Classification
- When doing outreach, the activity must be mutually beneficial to the community as well as to the entity on campus doing the reaching out. The institution needs to provide evidence that you are *with* the community, not just going out *into* the community.
- The application process takes about 2 years, so it is important to start early. Each campus needs 2 years of data for the application; therefore work must start now in order to make

USM Civic Education and Civic Engagement Workshop
November 8, 2019

the next cycle in 2024. The most difficult part of the application process can be gathering what everyone is doing in order to map it out. The application includes and requires assessment throughout the process.

- Focus on dimensions of engagement across the campus: pedagogical, mission, partnership, epistemological.
- The work can be viewed as a “gate-connecting process” instead of “gate-keeping” because often there are multiple efforts going on done in silos, but identifying impact clusters on campus and the ability to *aggregate* the work on campus are critical.
- The effort for this work must come out a centrally located office/place (or “hub,” as others have described it), and the strength of the chair for the Carnegie application on the campus is critical for pulling everything together.
- How can the institution infuse service learning into courses? Some courses lend themselves more easily to implementation compared to others. Work with Campus Compact around creating or supporting a “community of practice” and how involvement can be incentivized, e.g., stipends for faculty and community members involved.
- Each institution needs to think about what success looks like for them, although Carnegie provides a definition of “community engagement” itself. Foundational indicators are a key focus of the institutional commitment. The process helps the campus to see what they are doing well. In the long run, the process of preparing for and then applying ends up being more important than actually getting the designation.

Curriculum Integration, facilitated by Sarah Surak, Salisbury University, and Michael Mathias, Frostburg State University

- A major theme discussed was the relationship between the university (as a whole, and faculty and students) and the community and depends, in part, on how you define “community” -- whose and which community? Students are already involved in their communities in many different ways; campuses face a challenge in *recognizing* and *supporting* that involvement (since it’s done on personal time, without institutional support or structure).

USM Civic Education and Civic Engagement Workshop
November 8, 2019

- Civically engaged faculty also face challenges with obtaining institutional support for their work.
 - There is a need for dedicated funding and a “hub” (whether individual or office) on campus to channel students and resources to each other and make important connections, rather than disparate actors competing with each other for limited resources. Significant effort is required to consolidate and strategize to help allocate resources and distribute information. This can place a large burden on one person or a small group of people, though, so there’s a concern for how to avoid burnout (especially when faculty are doing this work without course releases). For institutions that don’t have the central hub, one of the first steps to take is doing inventory of what’s happening on campus by whom.
 - Another challenge is getting institutions to view some practices (e.g., community outreach centers) as *research*, not just as *service*; tenure and promotion demands force faculty members into boxes for how they prioritize activities and allocate their time. Salisbury has worked through faculty senate to add civic engagement work to T&P packets.
- Participants also described experiences with (including challenges and techniques for) facilitating “big conversations” with students, whether in content courses or outside-of-class activities, and whether there is potential for embedding CECE components into general education courses for maximum reach.
- There are also questions about how best to document and/or measure the value and impact of CECE programs, and how that information can be leveraged for funding and strategic priority. Campus Compact is working on formative assessments for use throughout the semester and a summative survey to measure how 21st century skills are being developed by students; they also include operational process, in addition to programmatic work, by focusing on developing reflective practice. MLDS also helpful tool for tracking longitudinal data. The Curriculum Integration Committee has also worked on a “maturity model” for (self-)assessing institutional status and progress in civic engagement; the model is currently in draft form and undergoing the feedback and revision process by committee members and other stakeholders.