



NJ Campus Compact's new Website and Report say Civic Engagement = Competitive Advantage

Statewide Higher Education Presidents' Coalition Demonstrates That Engagement with Communities Increases Access, Promotes Success, Creates Jobs and Enhances Community Resilience

For Immediate Release

Thursday, June 12, 2014

New Jersey Campus Compact (NJCC), a statewide higher education presidents' coalition devoted to civic engagement, is launching a new website and report titled "*Issues of our Time*" that each provide comprehensive evidence of the value of civic engagement and the need to increase the scale and quality of campus-community partnerships.

New Jersey is one of 35 states in Campus Compact, a national coalition of nearly 1,200 college and university presidents and representing some 6 million students. Over 20 of New Jersey colleges and universities, representing public, private, two-year, four-year, and proprietary sectors currently make up the NJ Campus Compact network. The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey in Galloway and William Paterson University in Wayne are the host institutions.

"New Jersey's presidents are committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education," said Dr. Saul Petersen, NJCC executive director.

"We have to provide consistent and clear supports, sequences of lived learning experiences and, over time, ALL students can develop the personal characteristics desired in the 21st century job market – leadership and responsibility, intellectual and personal humility, and attributing purpose to work and life," he stressed.

Dr. Petersen noted that these qualities also lead to being an active citizen or good neighbor, enhance social cohesion, innovate new career niches, build the local economy and commitment to communities.

"What we're now seeing is that civic engagement helps students network their way into jobs," the executive director stressed.

"As the only national higher education association dedicated solely to campus-based civic engagement, Campus Compact promotes public service and consistent attention to local
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community issues in order to support students' career aspirations and develop active citizenship skills," Dr. Petersen said.

He explained that New Jersey Campus Compact is designed to help campuses forge effective community partnerships and provides resources and training for faculty seeking to develop a public scholarship agenda. This includes training faculty on the various ways to apply their academic skills to public issues, advising on the ways to work across sectors for what Petersen calls 'indiscriminate success,' convening teams of campus-community partners in order to increase the scale and impact of their work, among other initiatives. "New partners for this new organization will be key in tackling the issues successfully," admits Dr. Petersen.

"There's a compelling argument for New Jersey to ramp up its community engagement for the good of all students in order to get a competitive advantage while getting an education, as well as for the long-term resilience of communities," Dr. Petersen said. "*Issues of Our Time* makes the case, using evidence-based research and proven models, for a collective approach to tackling four key interconnected areas: Excellence Socially Applied, Valuing Engaged Scholarship, Social Connectedness, and Democratic Engagement."

"When students see clear pathways to success and are around positive role models, they connect to the learning process and realize how their lived experience ties in. When young minds see clearly the meaning to their learning they become forces of nature and allies in our work," he added.

"At the college level, faculty feeling a sense of ownership and freedom to express their knowledge in scholarly yet broad ways are key ingredients to success that need to be recognized", he added. "Service-learning and engaged scholarship are perfect strategies to engage students and faculty civically in the issues facing their communities," Dr. Petersen emphasized.

Click for more information on the New Jersey Campus Compact [website](#) at www.njcampuscompact.org. To get engaged in a discussion of the issues online, or to view more of the research, go to the NJ Campus Compact's [Virtual Hub](#).

NJCC Executive Director Dr. Petersen is available for interviews on the role of civic engagement in supporting a strong economy and resilient state. He may be reached at njcc@stockton.edu

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