



Issue Area IV. Committee on Democratic Engagement

Purpose

In reference to Issue Area IV, parts (A) and (B), the *NJCC Committee on Democratic Engagement* will work to broaden the use of collective impact practices in community engagement and secondly, promote community engagement as a strategy to increase student commitment to local communities and New Jersey.

Institutional Representation on the Committee

The goal of shared benefit will focus the selection of representation on the committee. **Liaisons to NJCC are asked to select key question(s) put forward below as a workplan for the committee.** The Executive Director will have final say on representation and committee members will complete a *Commitment to Serve* contract with NJCC for a period of one-year, renewable for up to three years. A Chairperson, to be nominated by the Board of Directors, will participate in an ex-officio capacity at board meetings and will make recommendations on behalf of the committee. A minimum of three people per question below must self-identify in order to proceed. In the case of fewer than three people self-identifying, the executive director will request that certain people shift focus to allow for group work to proceed.

Timeline for Phase I: September 2014 to May 2015

- Meet with the NJCC executive director in October '14 to review committee expectations and workplan pertaining to democratic engagement. During the meeting, the committee will create a timeline for a mutually agreed set on targets bound by a June 2015 completion date, necessarily including progress targets within two month increments.
- Meet with the NJCC executive director in December '14 to review progress on the first set of targets and made the necessary adaptations.
- Meet with the NJCC executive director in February '15 to review progress on the second set of targets and made the necessary adaptations.
- In April 2015, the Chairperson shall present the workplan and evidence of progress to date.
- In May/June 2015, the committee will present findings to all NJCC liaisons during a reception.
- Based on the opinions of the board in April, the findings of the committee may be incorporated into the agenda of the June 22nd 2015 Strategic Planning Retreat for NJ Campus Compact, which all committee members will be requested to attend, possibly leading to its inclusion in a small number of multi-year strategic priorities.
- Committee members will be provided overnight accommodation at the Seaview Resort Hotel on June 21st

Function and Procedures

The committee will strive to explore the following questions:

1. **Beyond the case examples provided in “[Issues of our Time](#)” (also see [here](#)) , what are the most successful collective impact programs here in New Jersey that have one or more higher education institutions serving as integral partner(s)?**
 - a. **How can NJCC build momentum from their achievements?**

The committee will begin by generating a plan to create an audit or descriptive account of all such programs in New Jersey. “Best programs” analyses will use some or all of the following indicators, provided by the [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#):

1. Cradle to career approach that has a clearly articulated continuum/persistence pathway
2. Coordinated through a centralized infrastructure and dedicated staff
3. Involves a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities
 - a. Developing a common vocabulary, utilizing shared virtual platforms
4. Requires cross-sector involvement of government agencies, corporate and private foundations, school district leadership, leaders among the local higher education cluster, and the business and nonprofit sectors
 - a. From these sectors - set up an oversight group/steering committee/executive committee
 - b. Have targets - Match small number of indicators with working groups. See the video on assessing large-scale projects
5. Shift the funding conversation: Overcome the funding challenge, meaning, confront funders’ reluctance to pay for infrastructure and preference for short-term solutions, for example, by focusing on a social return on investment .

The committee may, based on the evidence uncovered, develop strategies for scaling up the practices uncovered in other strategic community engagement initiatives.

2. **How can we uncover a set of strategies and practices to enhance student and institutional commitment to place, ie, to local communities right here in New Jersey.**

The Democratic Engagement Committee, along with New Jersey Campus Compact, will provide the structure and support for regional summits where community partners, local higher ed institutions, elected officials, religious leaders, government constituencies, Department of Labor and Workforce, and more are convened to address issues of commitment to place. One goal will be to better understand how our individual institutions may better allocate resources and organize to create change. This collaborative process should identify new and different ways for faculty, staff and students to engage with their communities.

Goals

- 1) Address issues in Crucible Moment and other reports in order to identify opportunities for action.
- 2) Strengthen lines of communication between institutions and community stakeholders to inform practice.

- 3) Establish a regional network to better respond to local issues and create awareness or campaigns.
- 4) Enhanced collaboration, ie, establish common language across network
- 5) Look for best practices from the Arts community regarding "*Creative Place-Making*"

Targets

December 2014 Target: Identify key players to join the network and begin communications electronically.

February 2015 Target: Develop meeting themes, agenda, and facilitator/speaker list

April 1 2015 Target: NJCC and partner campuses host four regional meetings

Recap of Issue Area IV. Democratic Engagement

Fueling Engagement in Democracy and Community Resilience

Democratic partnerships have an explicit and intentional democratic dimension framed as inclusive, collaborative, and problem-oriented work in which academics share knowledge generating tasks with the public and involve community partners as participants in public problem-solving. Such forms of engagement inform scholarly work that is conducted with shared authority and power with those in the community in all aspects of the relationship, from defining problems, choosing approaches, addressing issues, developing the final products, and participating in assessment. Democratic engagement is demonstrated both by a capacity to learn in the company of others and not to rely solely on the expertise of the academy and by expertise in solving social problems that is sought by communities.

New Jersey Campus Compact will focus on the following two issue areas:

A. Collective Impact

No single agency will alleviate the scale of inequality that is lived out right across the state and nation. History has never been on the side of the poor, represented disproportionately by people of color, when it comes to accessing and profiting from a quality education. A cross-sector approach that supports inclusive access to opportunity can strive for the sort of collective impact that can counteract these inequalities once and for all.

B. Commitment to Place

Commitment to place can be defined as a deep felt desire, borne out of a multitude of personal and shared experiences over time, to reside and contribute civically, socially, and financially in an identified community. The extent to which higher education develops ways to elicit this learning outcome will be reflected in the viability and resilience of the institution itself.

New Jersey Campus Compact is striving to build the capacity of this learning outcome to uncover new innovative career niches for graduates and partner organizations. The higher education community recognizes that the places identified as the primary locations for institutional engagement, coalitions, and partnerships, inevitably become the geographical boundaries where students and faculty network with communities. Through education and experience, these locations forge commitments and lasting relationships that inform students' decision-making upon graduation. The outcomes for both alumni and for institutions' neighbors are positive and lasting.