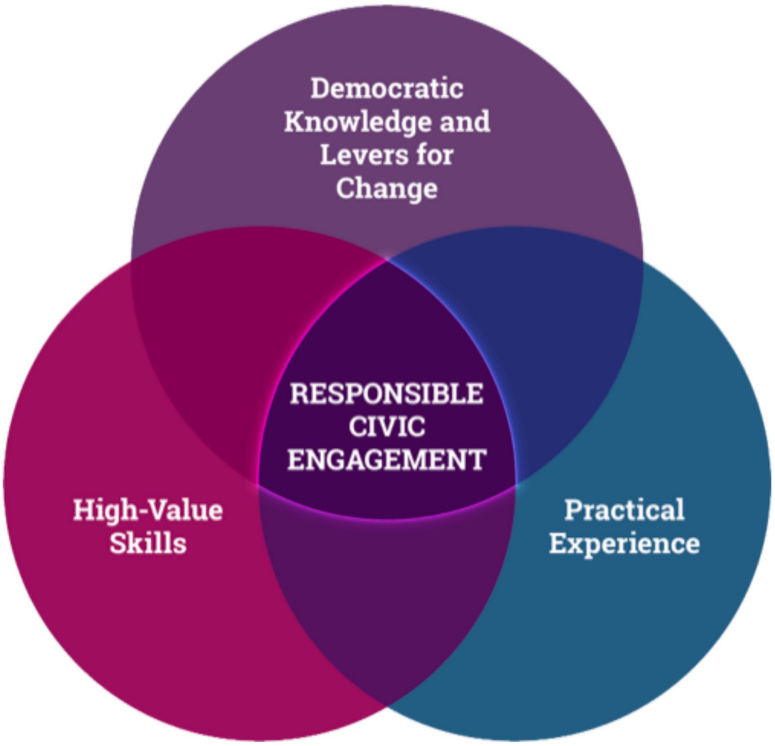
What Should Students Gain from Civic and Democracy Engagement in College?[1]



College civic learning is undergirded by students' reflecting on their own identities, practicing productive dialogue with those who disagree, and examining—both in general and career-related studies—how choices affect individuals and communities.

Democratic Knowledge and Levers for Change.
Encompasses local, state, national, and global systems with attention to public and policy choices related to students careers. Students explore:

- Key democratic principles and debates about meaning and application
- Constitutionalism and political systems that frame democratic governance
- Founding and freedom texts for the U.S. democratic republic
- Historical and comparative knowledge of freedom movements, U.S. and global
- Authoritarianism and other anti-democracy movements
- Policy and equity issues/choices related to students' career learning
- Political levers for influencing change–in civil society and career fields

Where? In general education programs and courses that explore democracy's development, principles, contestations, and challenges, including movements for policy and societal change. And in students' majors, including career and technical fields.

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[1] Note: **This framework is presented as a Draft for Discussion and Revision**. It was developed by leaders in the Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Coalition and will be revised and published in the fall of 2023. Please send comments for strengthening the framework to Carol Geary Schneider at cscarolgeary41@gmail.com.

Practical Experience. Students Help Create New Solutions through:

- Work with Diverse Partners on Research Projects Related to Public Good Questions
- Work with Diverse Partners and Community Organizations on Significant Problems, Including Problems Related to Their Career Choices
- Presentation of Project Results to Others
- Collaborative Reflection—With Mentors and Peers—on Insights Gained from their Community-Based Learning and Implications for Future Work.

Where? Research and/or Action Projects Completed to Meet Degree Requirements—in Majors and/or General Education

The projects will likely be part of one or more high impact practices, such as undergraduate research, service learning, community-based projects, practicums, diversity and global learning, capstones and/or e-portfolios.

High-Value Skills. Students Practice:

- Systems Thinking about Public Issues and Questions
- Critical Inquiry and Evidence-Based Reasoning
- Digital, Data, and Media Literacy
- Engaging Difference, Working for Equity and Inclusion
- Deliberation and Bridge-building With Partners Who Hold Different Views
- Testing and Improving Solutions with Diverse Partners
- Ethical Reasoning and Action

Where? Practiced Across General Education and All Majors, including Career and Technical Majors, and in **Co-Curricular and Community-Based Experiences and Projects**

►►► Resulting In: Responsible Civic Engagement and Graduates' Own Choices for the Future

Through their course-taking, practical experiences working on public questions, and guided reflection on their own identities, goals, and civic voice, students will make their own decisions about how they want to contribute to the public good beyond college.

Some students may work on public good questions related to their professions and/or workplace. Others may become active in local and/or faith communities. Some will choose public service as their career. Many will contribute primarily as engaged and knowledgeable voters.

Whatever their choices for the future, all students should graduate civic-ready as well as career-ready. And they should be deeply conversant with public good questions directly related to their intended careers.

CIVIC ★ LEARNING for an ENGAGED ★ DEMOCRACY

Know. Experience. Act.

The Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Coalition (CLDE Coalition) includes education and policy organizations committed to making civic learning for an engaged democracy a priority across higher education and in public policy. The coalition is led by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, Campus Compact, College Promise, Complete College America, and State Higher Education Executive Officers.

CIVIC LEARNING for an ENGAGED DEMOCRACY

Know. Experience. Act.

How—and Why—Colleges Teach Civic Learning for an Engaged Democracy

Civic learning for an engaged democracy is an intentional approach that builds three elements into college students' coursework: learning about democratic principles and levers for change; honing high-value skills, such as critical inquiry, communication, and problem-solving; and developing practical experience through collaborative work in real-world settings. All of this work is undergirded by students' reflecting on their own identities, practicing productive dialogue with those who disagree, and examining how choices affect individuals and their communities. **Civic learning for an engaged democracy** results in significant benefits for both students and the nation.

Colleges build civic learning for an engaged democracy into students' coursework

Through Content

- Democratic principles and levers for change
- Civic inquiry and learning related to careers
- Constitutionalism and the political systems that frame democratic governance
- Founding and freedom texts for the U.S. democratic republic
- U.S. and global freedom movements
- Authoritarianism and anti-democracy

By Building Students' Skills

- Critical inquiry and evidence-based reasoning
- Digital, data, and media literacy
- Productive engagement with diverse views and experiences
- Ethical reasoning and actions
- Problem-solving with diverse partners
- Purpose and agency grounded in a strong sense of identity

With Practical Experience

- Collaborative projects and problem-solving with diverse partners
- Community-based research and projects
- Service learning
- Intergroup dialogue and exploration
- Equity and justice engagement and action
- Guided reflection on students' learning from real-world experience and problem-solving

All college students participate in CIVIC LEARNING FOR AN ENGAGED DEMOCRACY

Benefits to Students

- Higher levels of persistence and completion
- Development of a personal code of ethics and values
- Deeper engagement with issues of justice, freedom, and responsibility
- Deeper understanding of people from other backgrounds
- Better informed choices about civic and equity issues in careers and communities
- Stronger interest in solving public problems across difference
- Stronger collaborative and problem-solving skills
- Increased self-efficacy and sense of belonging

Benefits to the Nation

- Graduates ready to address significant public problems in both careers and society
- Graduates with practical problem-solving skills desired by employers
- Graduates with practical problem-solving skills needed in a diverse democracy
- Graduates more committed to civic action, social responsibility, and equity
- Graduates both prepared and motivated to bridge societal differences
- Higher levels of voting and community service
- Higher levels of engagement with democracy

Sources: Chittum, J. R., Enke, K. A. E., & Finley, A. P. (2022). *The effects of community-based and civic engagement in higher education.* American Association of Colleges and Universities; and Valentine, J., Price, D., & Yang, H. (2021). *High-impact practices and gains in student learning: Evidence from Georgia, Montana, and Wisconsin.* Lumina Foundation.

Every Student, Every Year

Sample Guided Pathway with Civic and Problem-Centered Learning

CIVIC LEARNING for an ENGAGED DEMOCRACY

Know. Experience. Act.

Through **civic learning for an engaged democracy,** students focus deeply on civic inquiry, ethical inquiry, diversity, and democracy across the curriculum. Colleges connect all of these areas to problem-solving and weave them into general education and majors.

Students develop democratic knowledge, ethical responsibility, equity engagement, and high-value problem-solving skills that are essential for participating in a democratic society and adapting to a changing workplace.

This sample curriculum includes complex civic and democracy questions; inquiry and problem-solving related to the major; a required community-based practicum; and guided reflection about students' development of purpose, agency, and voice from their first to final year.

High-Value Skills Needed in Both Careers and Democracy

- Critical inquiry and evidence-based reasoning
- Digital, data, and media literacy
- Productive engagement with diverse views and experiences
- Ethical reasoning and actions
- Problem-solving with diverse partners
- Purpose and agency grounded in a strong sense of identity

KEY

- *Civic and/or democracy emphasis*
- *Problem-solving emphasis*
- *May explore questions related to public good*
- *Engaging diverse views & perspectives*
- *Courses related to student's major*
- *High-impact practices (HIPs)*
- *Additional courses in student's major*

Core Learning for an Interconnected World

- FIRST-YEAR WRITING WITH INDIVIDUAL & COMMUNITY THEMES/TEXTS
- FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR ON COMPLEX PROBLEMS
- QUANTITATIVE REASONING & DATA ANALYSIS
- CROSS-CULTURAL AND GLOBAL STUDIES
- CREATIVE & ARTISTIC INQUIRY
- CULTURAL/ HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION
- SCIENCE EXPLORATIONS
- SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS
- CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY
  Core texts, contested questions, levers for change
- SECOND-YEAR INQUIRY SEMINAR ON COMPLEX PROBLEM-SOLVING
  Community-based course with project and guided reflection on learning

Problem-Centered Course Clusters

ADVANCED CIVIC INQUIRY AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

Drawn from multiple disciplines, these course clusters help students explore problems that are important to the future of democracy and to their intended careers. They emphasize policy issues and debates, engaging diverse perspectives, equity and inclusion, ethical reasoning, and practical experience in problem-solving.*

- DEMOCRACY AND JUSTICE
  (U.S./Global)
  At least 1 course
- CIVIC INQUIRY AND PROBLEM-SOLVING RELATED TO CAREERS**
  At least 3 courses across multiple disciplines
- COMMUNITY-BASED PRACTICUM WITH COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING AND GUIDED REFLECTION***

- CULMINATING WORK
  A student's best work, which can take many forms (e.g., senior project, internship, field work, research, community-based research, creative portfolio)

E-PORTFOLIO SHOWS STUDENT'S WORK ON CIVIC AND SOCIETAL PROBLEMS OVER TIME AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH-VALUE SKILLS

* Research methods and/or evaluation of evidence are presumed to be part of the major.

** Sample problems for course clusters: health policies and politics; social mobility; health and well-being; fueling the world; quests for justice and social power; traditions, cultures, and change; education and democracy; and markets and values.

*** This practical problem-solving experience may be part of the Problem-Centered Course Clusters or a standard part of the major. Where practicums are already required, faculty may choose to strengthen their civic, ethical, and equity components.

How College Students Benefit from Civic Learning and Engagement

Outcomes for Students	Summary of Findings from 2022 AAC&U Synthesis of Research on Community-Based and Civic Engagement
Graduation and retention (11 studies)[1] **and other institutional outcomes** (2)	▪ More likely to graduate ▪ Earned more credits ▪ More likely to re-enroll ▪ Institutional implementation of collaborative and participatory pedagogies ▪ Students practicing collaborative and mutual learning
Mindsets and dispositions (17)	▪ Increased openness to and understanding of diversity ▪ Increased awareness of social issues and social justice ▪ Increased adaptability ▪ Positive self-perceptions of socially responsible leadership ▪ More positive attitude toward school and enjoyment of challenging tasks ▪ Increased self-efficacy and sense of belonging
Personal and social responsibility (28)	▪ Increased civic attitudes and civic mindedness ▪ Increased civic and community-based engagement (desire/goals, behaviors during and after college, perceived value) ▪ Civic learning ▪ Perceived civic and social responsibility ▪ Moral and ethical reasoning and actions
Intellectual and practical skills (9)	▪ Improved interpersonal skills: communication, collaboration, and teamwork ▪ Increased problem-solving and critical thinking skills ▪ Increased academic content learning and skills such as research, writing, and mathematical analysis
Career preparation (4)	▪ Better career exploration skills ▪ Increased career exploration in a field related to public service ▪ Increased career-related knowledge and skills
Learning gains (10)	▪ Improved grades and GPA ▪ Improved test performance and assignment scores ▪ Self-reported general learning gains
Findings for underserved students[2](11)	▪ Findings are most consistently discussed in terms of race effects across student populations. ▪ Studies tend to focus on a small set of outcomes, such as cumulative GPA, retention rates, credits earned, and graduation rates.

Source: Chittum, J. R., Enke, K. A. E., & Finley, A. P. (2022). *The effects of community-based and civic engagement in higher education*. American Association of Colleges and Universities. The research synthesis was funded by a grant from Lumina Foundation. This chart is adapted from Table 4.

[1]Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of publications with findings related to each outcome category. The total number of publications exceeds the sample size because many studies included multiple outcomes of focus.[2] Where applicable, studies examining effects for underserved students are also included in each of the other outcome categories.