



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO CIVIC ACTION PLAN





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Summary | 1 |
| Community Engagement At UTEP | 2 |
| Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement | 3 |
| Development Of The Civic Action Plan | 4 |
| Community Engagement Domains | 7 |
| Awareness | 8 |
| Participation | 9 |
| Structure and Leadership | 12 |
| Capacity-Building | 13 |
| Recognition | 14 |
| Integration and Alignment | 15 |
| Community Outreach and Impact | 16 |
| Assessment | 17 |
| Communication and Dissemination | 18 |
| References | 21 |



SUMMARY

Over the past few decades, UTEP has successfully broadened and deepened community engagement through engaged scholarship, student engagement models and community partnerships.

The purpose of the UTEP Civic Action Plan is to build on the progress the University has made as an engaged institution with the intent to further institutionalize values, practices and strategies that will enable a continued commitment to our public purpose.

The Civic Action Plan was developed by the Provost's Community Engagement Council and the Center for Civic Engagement, whose goal is to increase the number of students with community-based engagement learning experiences, support faculty community engaged scholarship, positively impact the community through academic-based and outreach partnerships, and support UTEP's community engaged mission and efforts.

The Plan is focused on four main goals:

- 1) To further institutionalize the centrality of “community” in community engagement discussions, planning, implementation and assessment.
- 2) To enhance existing and successful engagement approaches while building community engagement capacity, strengthening recognition of community engagement, and enhancing the necessary structures and leadership to support it.
- 3) To strengthen collective assessment efforts of community engagement outputs and outcomes to inform necessary improvement that yield reciprocal, equitable and effective partnerships and practices.
- 4) To facilitate communication and dissemination of community engagement activities in order to broaden participation and understand the impact of community engaged scholarship, services and research.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT UTEP

UTEP's commitment to community engagement is both longstanding and deeply embedded in the institution's core mission and values.

UTEP's mission of ensuring access coupled with a commitment to excellence is reflected in rigorous programs, which prepare students to make significant contributions to their professions and communities, and champion the responsibilities of civic life. The University embraces its role as an intellectual, cultural and socioeconomic asset to the Paso del Norte region, and is committed to the growth of this region through education, technological advancement, creative and artistic production, and the generation, interpretation, application and dissemination of knowledge. Working closely with community partners is critical to the fulfillment of the institution's mission.

Classified as a Community Engaged Institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, **UTEP defines community engagement as the exchange of knowledge and resources for the advancement of the public good through equitable, purposeful and reciprocal partnerships with the community, be it local, regional, national or global.**

UTEP fosters a climate of community engaged scholarship to advance community goals. **Community engaged scholarship is the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge, information, and expertise between community partners and university representatives, aimed at addressing social problems and promoting public good.**

Unlike the Foundation's other classifications that rely on national data, community engagement is an elective classification. A campus-wide effort is required to raise community engagement to a high level of priority, while also providing a strategic approach to advancing community collaboration. The University is fortunate to have a large number of community engagement experts, advocates, leaders and mentors – on and off campus – who provide a purposeful and meaningful direction for community engagement on a continuous basis.

Through such partnerships, faculty and community partners find new and effective ways to strategically interweave community engagement into the curriculum, improving student experiences that prepare educated and engaged citizens who ultimately strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility.

CAMPUS COMPACT 30th ANNIVERSARY ACTION STATEMENT

In the mid-1980's, a group of higher education leaders gathered and committed to work together to advance the public purposes of higher education on their campuses, in their communities, and across the country. They became the founders of Campus Compact, a national coalition of over 1,000 colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education.

In 2016, in celebration of their 30th anniversary, the Campus Compact Board of Directors asked presidents and chancellors to join in signing an action statement, declaring a shared commitment to the public purpose of higher education and a promise to develop a Campus Civic Action Plan to realize those purposes more fully.

Given UTEP's longstanding commitment to serve the Paso del Norte border region inside the classroom and in the community, Diana Natalicio, the University's president at the time, gladly became a signatory of the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement, through which the following statements could be collectively affirmed.

Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statements (2016)

We empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus—nearby and around the world.

We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.

We embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.

We harness the capacity of our institutions—through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice—to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.

We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIC ACTION PLAN

Fully embracing the Action Plan's statements, which are deeply embedded in the University's ideals, President Natalicio commissioned the Provost's Community Engagement Council with initial development of the plan. The Council is composed of UTEP's Center for Civic Engagement, the Division of Student Affairs, representatives of UTEP's colleges, schools and different units, and key members of various community sectors. The Council's purpose is to guide and inform UTEP's strategic community engagement direction.

At the initial stage of this project, council members acknowledged that elevating UTEP's commitment to community engagement required recognizing what the University had in place, and then seek to enhance it. Recognizing the existing forms of engagement on campus, as well as

the different degrees of depth and breadth among the units, colleges and schools, the Council decided to develop community engagement action plans for all units represented on the Council.

The Council then utilized community engagement indicators and dimensions drawn from the Carnegie Classification, Barbara Holland's (1997) key organizational factors for institutionalization, and recommendations articulated in a community engagement report produced in 2012. The Council focused on nine engagement indicators, which are referred to as *Community Engagement Domains* in this action plan.

By virtue of a powerful foundation of advocates at UTEP, discussions about community engagement have always led to fruitful conversations about the various ways in which units and departments understand, approach, implement and operationalize community engagement. These conversations have also led to understanding that “the next step” looks very different from unit to unit. Therefore, in order to achieve a more cohesive, campus-wide plan, the Council created and adhered to a common framework to identify the various elements that are part of community engagement, the efforts in place, and how they might be advanced.

To help guide the plan’s framework and outcomes, council members were tasked with identifying the priorities within their units in their civic action plans, taking into account:

- Priorities most relevant to their unit or college
- Existing efforts in relation to the nine community engagement domains
- Existing political will or enthusiasm
- Enhancement of assessment efforts



Community engagement addresses college priorities and community needs through research, teaching, and service in a mutually beneficial partnership and sustainability.

Research:

Community-based participatory research
Practice-based research

Service:

Community service
Volunteerism
General outreach

Teaching:

Community-based academic learning

- Practicum-based learning
- Service-learning
- Field experiential learning
- Clinicals














COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DOMAINS

This section provides a description of each community engagement domain, along with a summary of existing efforts, areas of improvement and college-specific enhancements to address each domain. Specific activities and timelines are not articulated as each unit will have its own unique challenges and opportunities.

The Council will utilize the areas for enhancement, indicated in the following pages to:

- (1) Articulate to the council and overall campus leadership a common direction for improvement in each domain
- (2) Aid unit representatives in identifying their particular role within the overall objectives

College/Unit Legend

| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  DSA Division of Student Affairs |  ENG College of Engineering |  CEC Community Engagement Council |
|  CCE Center for Community Engagement |  CHS College of Health Sciences |  SON School of Nursing |
|  COBA College of Business Administration |  CLA College of Liberal Arts |  SOP School of Pharmacy |
|  EDU College of Education |  COS College of Science | |

AWARENESS

Awareness refers to the various ways the university community understands and applies community engagement. Awareness also refers to knowledge of the resources or activities which may already be in place at UTEP.

To raise awareness about community engagement, UTEP has a number of existing strengths in the form of infrastructure, programs, attributes and practices:

















- Leadership buy-in
- Community Engagement Council
- Inclusion of community engagement in new faculty and staff orientation
- Community engagement inclusion in curriculum
- Widespread student and, faculty participation
- Tenure and promotion guidelines
- Integration of community engagement in the quality enhancement plan, UTEP Edge.
- Coordination of data collection process
- Support for ongoing community engagement events

Areas for Enhancement:

- Increase awareness of the specific models of community engagement at various levels
- Enhance community awareness of UTEP resources and connection
- Grow faculty and administrative awareness of the recent Tenure and Promotion guideline changes
- Strengthen the culture of recognizing engaged scholarship

Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 4

College-specific enhancements and strategies:

- CE workshops and trainings for faculty development  
- Awareness through departmental CE leaders or division-wide councils     
- Use of Expertise Connector
- Showcase engaged scholars (in departmental meetings) 
- Communication strategies (social media, calendar of events, campus screens)     
- Integration of strategies into existing plans, adaptation and operationalization of CE definitions (hiring strategies, specify CE goals)    
- Include in student orientation and student affairs  
- Develop and align community tours into new faculty orientation 
- Inventory and disseminate CE practices 

PARTICIPATION

Participation in community engagement refers to the amount or extent of community engaged activities among faculty, students and staff and efforts to increase engagement at any level. Participation can additionally focus on student or faculty models such as engaged scholarship, teaching service-learning or participation in community projects.

Student Participation


Student participation is part of UTEP's academic and co-curricular efforts. This domain is integrated in the UTEP Edge, the university-wide initiative that develops students' assets by participating in a variety of high-impact practices. Student programming is available through:

- Center for Civic Engagement
- Student Engagement and Leadership Center
- Student Professional Associations within respective colleges
- Integration into upper division capstone courses, practicums, clinicals, internships or field experiences
- Various service-learning programming opportunities
- Community-based research and service projects

Areas for Enhancement:

- Increase student participation through the further integration of high-impact practices and community engagement
- Improve the quality of engagement through deeper collaborations with community partners
- Explore and establish pathways for students to enhance their community engagement learning, experience, social consciousness and impact in the community
- Catalog community engagement content and courses

College-specific enhancements and strategies:

- Set college-wide goal to increase student participation   
- Add co-curricular experiences  
- Integrate service learning in first year experiences 
- Study away  
- Create student advocates and leaders 
- Identify courses with additional embedded community engagement and categorize accordingly 

Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 2, 4



Faculty Participation

Faculty participation in community engaged scholarship is critical to the University's community engagement efforts. Currently, there are over 380 courses that integrate academic community engagement each year.

To further strengthen the initiative, the University established a Community of Engaged Scholars, which is made up over 100 faculty and community leaders who engage in seeking and securing funds related to scholarly research and programming.

Areas for Enhancement:

- Increase the number of faculty who can integrate their research, teaching and service through community engaged scholarship
- Increase the number of faculty who may mentor and support other faculty in CES
- Increase the number of faculty who can strengthen their own CES competencies to effectively engage with additional community partners

Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 2, 4

College specific enhancements and strategies:

- Increase faculty participation through all and various engagement models (service learning, study away, CE grants and research) **SOP** **ENG**
- CE leadership positions **EDU** **CLA** **CHS**
- Establish additional community partnerships **COBA** **EDU**
- Seek internal and external funding for faculty to integrate CE **CLA** **CHS**
- Identify faculty who are doing CE through ORSP **CLA**
- Increase participation of faculty on boards, publications, presentations and editorial boards **SON**

Staff Participation

Professional and administrative staff members play a vital role in UTEP's community engagement mission through specific programs, grants and activities such as the largest day of service known as UTEP Project MOVE. Additionally, a number of UTEP staff serve on community boards, committees, and commissions.



Areas for Enhancement:

- Explore and establish the most relevant and useful ways for staff to engage with the community through UTEP

Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 2, 4

College-specific enhancements and strategies:

- Recruit staff to divisional CE council **DSA**
- Establish ways to increase staff participation **ENG**
- Identify and engage additional staff who support CE and are not already part of the Council **CLA COBA**

STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Structure and leadership refers to the infrastructure and support available on campus. This domain indicates structural needs that require improvement in order to increase and facilitate engagement. Ultimately, structure and leadership facilitates and enables the scope and breadth of engagement across campus.

UTEP has made significant strides to institutionalize community engagement, and has the following structure and leadership in place:

- Dual reporting line to the Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs
- Community Engagement Council
- Center for Civic Engagement
- Community engagement-focused staff appointments and positions
- Community of Engaged Scholars (Community of Practice)
- Provost's Faculty Fellow-in-Residence Program
- Existing community engagement requirements and outcomes consistent with accrediting bodies
- Additional established community engagement committees, centers, sustainable partnerships and structures
- Support for service-oriented grants
- Integration of community engagement in hiring decisions in some units

Areas for Enhancement:

- Increase leadership and support at various levels of the institution
- Increase participation of students leaders in community engagement planning
- Increase community leadership participation in community engagement planning
- Broaden the inclusion of community engagement priorities in hiring decisions
- Strengthen and expand existing established committees and structures

Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 2, 4

College-specific enhancements and strategies:

- Establish divisional advisory committees, structures and liaisons



- Identify and set accrediting standards



- Strengthen community participation



CAPACITY-BUILDING

This domain describes the educational support and knowledge-building needed in order to effectively engage, evaluate, assess and promote community engagement using proven and theoretically-based models. Capacity-building may encompass training and awareness that is conveyed and shared across leadership levels as well as participant levels.

Examples:

- UTEP provides support and training for student organizations to enhance volunteerism by adding reflection components.
- UTEP is building the capacity of senior faculty and administrators to effectively evaluate faculty dossiers that incorporates community engaged scholarship work for tenure and promotion reviews.

UTEP builds capacity for community engagement among its stakeholders through a variety of mechanisms, programs and strategies:

- Faculty through the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute, Community Engagement Council, Community of Engaged Scholars (community of practice) sessions, related workshops and through one-on-one mentoring and web-based modules through the Center for Faculty Leadership and Development
- Student program-specific training for service-learning courses, practicums, field-based courses, community-based work study internships, or community service positions
- Workshops and trainings for community partners on student management or faculty collaborations. Additional capacity-building trainings are offered for organizational management purposes

Areas for Enhancement:

- Increase capacity-building opportunities to reach more stakeholders within different units and departments
- Offer campus-wide and consistent educational series through the UTEP Center for Faculty Leadership and Development
- Build capacity around the evaluation of Community Engaged Scholarship at different levels of faculty leadership
- Create effective Service-Learning Practices and Models videos for faculty

College-specific enhancements and strategies:

- Peer-to-peer training module to increase knowledge and awareness of CE 
- Establish workshops and trainings  
- Formalize capacity building within existing and new structures (curriculum committees, annual review committees, research committees)       
- Formalize faculty mentorship for CE scholarship best practices 
- Strategize and discuss building capacity of administration recognizing community engaged scholarship 

Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 2, 4

RECOGNITION

Recognition refers to rewarding, incentivizing and validation of community engagement as a legitimate academic enterprise. Students, faculty and staff are recognized through a variety of awards and processes such as:

- Exemplary work through Tenure & Promotion
- Community Engaged Scholarship Awards
- Golden Impact Awards
- President's Community Engaged Scholarship Dinner
- Community Golden Impact Awards
- Gold Nugget Awards
- Staff Service Awards
- Student organization awards and scholarships

Recognition of faculty scholarly work also takes place through Digital Measures, UTEP's faculty activity reporting system, and through the integration of community engaged scholarship within unit and college specific evaluation processes.

Community engaged scholarship is also now part of the institution's Tenure and Promotion Guidelines and Handbook of Operating Procedures (www.utep.edu/vpba/hoop/). Additionally, UTEP encourages and supports applications for external awards for faculty and to disseminate the UTEP story.

Areas for Enhancement:

- Establish a Community Engaged Scholarship Award for Faculty
- Establish a campus-wide recognition system for student community engagement that takes into account the pathways for community engagement established
- Strengthen capacity-building efforts for the recognition and evaluation of community engaged scholarship
- Systematically integrate awareness and facilitate support for applications of external awards for community engaged faculty

College-specific enhancements and strategies:

- Student awards and recognition (CE stoles for graduation)

CHS ENG DSA CLA EDU SON COBA

- CE Awards for faculty and staff

SOP EDU CHS COS ENG COBA

- Personalized recognition from Dean or Administration

SOP CHS COS SON

- Integration into annual review and T & P

EDU CHS COS CLA SON ENG

- Financial support (mini grants) for CE projects

CLA COBA

- Faculty spotlights on college and campus-wide website

COBA CCE EDU CEC ENG CHS CLA SON SOP COS DSA

Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 2, 4

INTEGRATION AND ALIGNMENT

Integration and alignment refers to institutional frameworks that identify and implement effective community engagement.

To successfully integrate and align the Civic Action plan with existing frameworks, the Council identified established UTEP programs, efforts and norms.











Integration of community engagement is happening at UTEP in meaningful ways:

- UTEP Edge (also known as the University's quality enhancement plan or student-success initiative)
- Inclusion of community engagement within college, school and unit mission statements
- Integration of community engaged scholarship into a subset annual evaluations
- Integration of community engagement into existing UTEP awards and recognition mechanisms

Areas for Enhancement:

- Integrate community engaged scholarship support and training in collaboration with the UTEP Center for Faculty Leadership and Development
- Integrate community engagement training for specialized faculty and staff (i.e. introductory freshmen instructors, Academic Advising Center)
- Integrate community engagement in student graduate and undergraduate research programming
- Improve the existing integration of community engagement data tracking into the new data tracking systems for student participation and learning outcomes

College-specific enhancements and strategies:

- Ongoing UTEP Edge alignment 
- Integration into ongoing program specific activities 
- Integrate into assessment efforts 
- Collaborate with Faculty Leadership and Development Center 
- Establish departmental liaisons 
- Institutional strategic planning 
- Presidential Merit Awards 
- UTEP Edge 
- Core Curriculum competencies operationalizing efforts 
- Inclusion of CE in Mission statement 

Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 2, 4

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND IMPACT

This domain accounts for existing and planned community engagement outreach efforts and their impact. Additionally, community outreach and impact embraces maintaining equitable and reciprocal partnerships in the University's efforts to address community needs.

Community outreach at UTEP exists through a variety of practices. UTEP has robust programs, projects and community partnerships to include those from the Office of Outreach and Student Access whose mission is to instill postsecondary educational aspirations in youth, increase resources for college readiness in high schools and improve access to higher education. UTEP also offers continuing education programs as well as cultural and arts offerings to the larger community.

Additionally, UTEP has a strong network of community leaders to engage with, in new and ongoing regional initiatives that benefit the community. UTEP also has mechanisms in place to capture community perspectives and feedback on engagement activities, community engagement councils and leadership-hiring committees.

Areas for Enhancement:

- Continue raise the centrality of community outreach, impact and reciprocity on an ongoing basis and wherever possible
- Improve community impact assessment efforts
- Identify additional effective ways to involve community members in decision-making opportunities
- Explore additional community engagement frameworks to capture both the essence and effectiveness of UTEP's community engagement (collective impact, anch mission, place-based)

College specific enhancements and strategies:

- Work with community partners on identifying and addressing community needs           
- Sustainable partnership model discussion 
- College-level reflections about how their scholarly work affects the public good          
- Develop faculty guidelines for engaging in community partnership development and outreach 

Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 2, 4

ASSESSMENT

Assessment refers to accounting for the quantity and quality of community engagement efforts across campus, a critical domain for measuring the success of the Civic Action Plan.

Due to the variety of assessment methods of community engagement available campus wide, the Council identified the need to acknowledge the varied ways engagement activities are measured by key players and units.

UTEP has improved assessment efforts over the years and currently has the following measurement systems and processes in place:

- **Comprehensive descriptive community engagement data collection process**
- **Established Community engagement Council sub-committee on assessment**
- **An ongoing and developing culture of assessment and support (Assessment Symposium)**
- **Community engagement programming-specific assessment efforts**
- **Established systems for community input**
- **Community perspectives on community engagement at UTEP survey**
- **Student input on community engagement perspectives and NSSE data**

Areas for Enhancement:

- **Integrate into and enhance the developing data collection systems within the university to also capture community and service learning data**
- **Make use of new cataloguing efforts to assess student participation and learning metrics**
- **Engage new faculty fellows for community engagement research and assessment**
- **Further establish community input systems**

College-specific enhancements and strategies:

- **Improve data collection process** SON CLA ENG COS SOP COBA EDU
- **Include community perspectives assessment (to include alumni)*** CHS EDU
- **Attach assessment to specific CE goals** DSA
- **Identify and document existing community partner grants** EDU

Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 2, 4

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

This domain is focused on all external and internal communication as well as dissemination. Community engagement efforts are amplified when they are understood and communicated to a wider audience and rooted in community context. Communicating with a wider audience additionally improves awareness and UTEP’s position to build reciprocal and collaborative relationships in the community. UTEP currently has websites in place with a focus on community engagement, and has developed channels for marketing and communicating community engagement activities to the media.

Areas for Enhancement:

- Establish and develop a campus-wide community engagement website and integrate the expertise connector (a program highlighting faculty profiles and expertise)
- Develop a tagging system for community engagement-related stories within UTEP Communications and the UTEP website
- Continue to support faculty development on the dissemination of research to community and telling their story


Corresponding Civic Action Plan Goal(s): 1, 2, 4

College specific enhancements and strategies:

- Create and enhance CE websites and newsletters        
- Media training for new faculty, students and staff (expanding spokespeople) 







Over the past few decades, UTEP has successfully broadened and deepened community engagement through engaged scholarship, student engagement models and community partnerships.

Through the UTEP Civic Action Plan, the Council seeks to build on the progress UTEP has made as an engaged institution with the intent to further institutionalize values, practices and strategies that will enable a continued commitment to our public purpose.

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