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# Engagement: It's In Our Leadership DNA

A CIVIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH GEORGIA



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Campus Compact advances the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students in civic and social responsibility. Campus Compact envisions colleges and universities as vital agents and architects of a diverse democracy, committed to educating students for responsible citizenship in ways that both deepen their education and improve the quality of community life. Campus Compact challenges all of higher education to make civic and community engagement an institutional priority.

Campus Compact puts special emphasis on partnerships to support educational equity and helps colleges and universities advance community goals in areas such as learning, college readiness, college access, and the development of student civic knowledge and skills at every level. Campus Compact's work strengthens colleges and universities as contributors to educational equity now while developing the next generation of citizens and leaders for our communities.

In recognition of Campus Compact's 30th anniversary in 2015-16, the Board of Directors asked member presidents and chancellors to join in signing an Action Statement and a declaration of shared commitment to the public purposes of higher education and a promise to develop a Campus Civic Plan to realize those purposes more fully. UNG President Bonita Jacobs became a signatory on the Action Statement in January 2016, committing the University of North Georgia to develop a campus Civic Action Plan, which is intended to be a living document that celebrates ongoing community-engaged work across our five campuses, identify opportunities for new programs or initiatives, and emphasize capacity-building for sustainable change.

To advance the public purposes of higher education, the University of North Georgia affirms the following statements, which characterize our current commitments and name the ideal toward which we will work with continued dedication, focus, and vigor.

- 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 ability of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.

Consistent with our Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, the University of North Georgia defines community engagement as the:

...collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

As an institution committed to the public purposes of higher education, we believe that UNG can be among the "colleges and universities [who represent] one of the greatest hopes for intellectual and civic progress... for this hope to be fulfilled, the academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic and moral problems, and must reaffirm its historic commitment to ... the scholarship of engagement."

Boyer, E. (1996). The scholarship of engagement.

(1), 11-20.

Engagement is how we conceptualize responding to a changing world. In recognition of the multiple

In 2012, Chancellor Hank Huckaby recommended a series of institutional consolidations within the University System of Georgia, including the merger of North Georgia College & State University and Gainesville State College, to become the University of Georgia. In an effort to build institutional unity post-consolidation and further establish UNG as an engaged institution, the 2014-2015 Academic Year was declared the Year of Engagement. As the Year of Engagement, a series of faculty focus groups were held to identify areas of continued growth for UNG's engagement mission. A White Paper was produced that identified areas for further clarification and growth, including developing a common language and approach and reinforcing the scholarly rigor of community engagement.

This Civic Action Plan represents a continuation of this work. The University of North Georgia's current strategic plan, which emphasizes community engagement, expires in 2019. Our Civic Action Plan will strategically position community and civic engagement to continue to serve a central role in the next strategic plan.

#### Civic Action Planning Committee members

- Gary Adcox, Director of Campus Success and Strategic Initiatives (Oconee)
- Christian Bello Escobar, CAMP Program Director (University-wide)
- Susan Brantley, Lecturer of Biology (Oconee)
- Donna Gessell, Professor of English (Dahlonega)
- Kay Keller, Director of Economic Development & Community Engagement (University-wide)
- Kelly McFaden, Associate Professor of Teacher Education (Dahlonega)
- Cyndee Perdue Moore, Executive Director (Oconee)
- Drew Pearl, Director of Academic Engagement (University-wide)
- Nathan Price, Assistant Professor of Political Science (Blue Ridge)
- Michael Proulx, Associate Professor of History (Dahlonega)
- Robert Robinson, Director of Multicultural Student Affairs (University-wide)
- Mallory Rodriguez, Director of Student Leadership Programs (University-wide)
- Rebecca Rose, Head Librarian (Cumming)
- Don Walsh, Associate Professor of Physical Therapy (Dahlonega)

Special thanks to Mary Anne Brown (Administrative Assistant to the Associate Provost for Research and Engagement) and Claudia Nelson (2017-2018 AICE Fellow). The work of this committee was generously supported by the University of North Georgia's Office of Research and Engagement.

Commitments from the Campus Compact 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Action Statement  
To advance the public purposes of higher education, the University of North Georgia affirms the following



Goal 2

UNG Values EXCELLENCE , ENGAGEMENT , AND SERVICE

Form a community of practice for faculty and staff members focused on community engagement. This community of practice will be purposefully aligned with the existing



Goal 3

UNG Values: EXCELLENCE , INTEGRITY AND ENGAGEMENT

Explore the resources required to expand community engagement efforts at UNG. This will include input from an analysis of peer institutions and will be informed by the current literature.

1. Generate a report that recommends the necessary resources (e.g., personnel, financial, infrastructure, policies, etc.) to support community engagement at all five UNG campuses. (Fall 2018)

Campus Compact Civic Commitments

Goal 4

UNG Values: EXCELLENCE , STUDENT -FOCUS, INTEGRITY , AND ENGAGEMENT

Evaluate and identify areas of improvement for the data collection and assessment practices for community engagement.

1. Establish a consistent system for tracking student participation that effectively integrates with existing software systems. Students will be involved in the process to determine what measurable outcomes are important to their experiences. (AY 2018-2019)
2. Establish a consistent system for faculty and staff members to report and be appropriately recognized for their community engagement work. This system should integrate with their annual reports/evaluations. (AY 2019-2020)
3. Establish a consistent system for evaluating community partner relationships and impact. This should include ensuring that community voice is included in the process of identifying goals and measures of success. (AY 2019-2020)

Campus Compact Civic Commitments

## Goal 5

### UNG Values: EXCELLENCE , STUDENT -FOCUS, ENGAGEMENT , AND SERVICE

Establish deeper relationships across the institution to ensure that community engagement plays a central role in the identity of the University of North Georgia.

1. Strategically position community engagement to be intentionally included in the next Strategic Planning process at UNG. (AY 2019-2020)
2. Re-design the UNG Service-Learning website (and all related websites) and develop a plan for keeping all associated content current. The website will include resources for students, faculty, staff, and community members. (AY 2018-2019)
3. Develop a service-learning (community-based) toolkit specific to UNG and the communities we serve. (Spring 2019)
4. Cultivate an online presence through social media platforms and branding that reach all stakeholders and share the community engagement story more broadly. (AY 2018-2019)
5. Disseminate notable community engagements and newsworthy efforts to the Office of University Relations to share more broadly across campuses and the community. (AY 2018-2019)

### Campus Compact Civic Commitments

Goal 6

UNG Values:STUDENT -FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT

Work with Deans of Students, campus Student Government Associations, and leadership on each campus to determine an appropriate pathway