1) Topic of the Day

Civic Engagement

Definition: For definition's sake, civic engagement is the broader motif, encompassing service-learning but not limited to it. One useful definition of civic engagement is the following: individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern.

Civic Engagement - American Psychological Association

www.apa.org/.../civic-engagement.aspx

1. What does civic engagement mean to you as a member of the UWEC campus?

As you ponder this question, think about the following:

What do you do in your teaching, scholarship, service that you consider to be “civic engagement”?
What does your department/unit do that might constitute "civic engagement"?
What sorts of “civic engagement” could you imagine yourself doing?

Discussion

- Would this address an issue of racism or inequity?
- Is it local, regional or global?
  - It could be all of those so activity in any of the three should count
  - It just needs to be mutually beneficial
- APA definition includes the applied practical side, the action, but it should include work that teaches students how to do good community work, teaches students theory and best practice
  - Work has to be mutually beneficial
  - It doesn't have to be outside of the classroom, but it could be
- Classroom work that gives students framework to unde4rstand societal systems
- Scholarship like community-based research that contributes to community decisions or community interests, etc.
- Cast as wide a net as possible
  - Partnerships, creative work, scholarships
- Increasing and valuing civic engagement can increase the relevance of the institution in the state
  - Maybe civic engagement is a counter to the current rhetoric that the institution is elitist or out of touch, etc. and getting to see us in the community
- Other states have “service areas” for state campuses
  - We don’t have that sort of system here in Wisconsin
- Different departments value and frame civic engagement in different ways
- It can be protesting or campaigning as long as it is passionate and from the heart
- Should not be mandated
- Is service learning and civic engagement
- We have other colleagues who incorporate civic engagement in teaching
  - DNR, Pine Lake Association
  - Would be nice to include the Farmer’s Market, local food banks, non-profits, animal shelters, LE Phillips Senior Center, Putnam Park
- Engagement in various agencies
- Efforts to research should be embedded
- Civic engagement becomes part of some jobs when you incorporate research
- Questioning if we are changing into an extension office
- Creating courses/teaching in response to requests from teachers
- Have had presentations to the public (economy, Geography, local research about gas prices) and offer resources (tax resource and service for students and faculty, immersion camps, ask a scientist, Health Surveys)
- Public good/benefiting disciplines and students as they become educated citizens
- Engagement, education, research needed for society to flourish
- Civic engagement is contributing to society
- Real world learning for students
  - Intended to have a beneficial effect on the community
    - City, government, non-profit organizations
- Assumption that this is important to do
  - Would like to equip students with the tools to questions/critically think about civic engagement and decide for themselves it it’s good to do
- Civic engagement can be broad
  - Some tasks are mundane and some are more skilled
- Should students be involved
  - It’s more work than just doing it oneself
  - Can faculty/staff do civic engagement without student involvement
    - For learning, yes, but can be just employees applying expertise in the community
- Continuity is important
  - Having a faculty/staff point person is ideal
  - Students should be allowed to be independent and make mistakes
    - Sometimes this reflects poorly on the university
- Questioning if there are incentives for this work and if so what would the metrics be?
- The Confluence and the Menomonie Street Project are good examples of City/University partnerships
- Clearing House
  - How do we communicate between the city when a student project is needed or the city needs students for a project
  - We need a mechanism to help young faculty and staff know that civic engagement is valued and encouraged
  - A clearing house could help employees generate ideas
  - We can compile what has already been done
  - Is a way for the community to request student/university involvement
- Some departments define “service” to include civic engagement but it varies across campus
- Continuity
- Issues of reliability
- Reciprocity
- Student learning opportunities
- Doesn’t necessarily have to involve students
- Giving students and opportunity to struggle or fail
- Connection between community and UWEC can be broken
- Is it always in the best interests of the students, the university and community
- Are there incentives or rewards for this type of work
- What is the metric we use to evaluate
  - Are we comparing apples to oranges
- Need for institutional consensus or direction
- Is there a mechanism to encourage faculty to engage in civic engagements so they feel safe to do so
  - Part of a tenure/promotion process
- Limitation of student projects (length of the semester)
- Does not have to have a service component
- How do we engage the public
- Will this be a requirement
- Are there guideposts
- Potential for public impact
- Related to discipline
- Two way exchange
- Teaching and scholarship
- It engages students
- Assignments in courses
- Tie capstone projects into service learning projects
- Teaches students to be civically engaged
- It draws connections between real issues that people experience and student learning
- Faculty/students can be resources for existing teachers
- Getting students involved in solutions
  - Sense of responsibility
  - Not just volunteering but understanding issues
  - Not going to the community with solutions before we get an impression of what the issues are
  - Helps build long-term relationships with faculty
  - Gets us out of the ivory tower
  - Working for a change with the community
  - Open to understanding issues of poverty, racism
  - Being an active part of the community
  - Are aware of issues and seek out information
  - Building relationships
- Does it have to be a solution to a problem or can it be a relationship
- Partnerships or goal oriented
- Not talking at but working with
- Designed to address public concern
- Seen civic engagement in research and in service
- Questioning how it differs from service components
- Is about getting involved in a more constructive way in groups
- Environmental issues play a part in sciences
- We have to value all of it and shouldn't push certain areas as we all have our areas of passion
- Civic engagement can be very broad
- Use resources on campus for helping
- Is it awareness versus action
- Does it really need to address a concern but just contribute to society as a whole
- Implications for internally versus externally and what are we hoping to accomplish and not be unrealistic about what we are trying to achieve
- Is overlap between service learning and civic engagement
- If mandated does the idea of civic engagement change
- Great to get students to care about something but concerned that we are asking faculty to do too much
  - Hard to have everything be your number one priority
- What does it mean for faculty time if it becomes a requirement
- How we choose to engage has an impact on the perception of this university
- Would hate to see any additional requirements but could be valued in lieu of current responsibilities
- It may not added on top but incorporated into our values in our curriculum
- Is end game to incorporate for 100 percent of our students
- Interested in where this is going
  - One of the 4 guideposts that will shape to where we are heading is that all students will be part of a high impact practice but one part might be civic engagement
  - Want to expand the opportunities beyond study abroad, internships, faculty/student research
  - There is a diff between high impact practices and civic engagement
    - Is a value and it goes back to our philosophy
  - Hopefully we can bring students alongside but to require is touchy territory
    - Could be something we encourage but shouldn't say this is what we are all doing
      - Is the first of many steps