

CIVIC ACTION PLAN



At UWL, Community Engagement involves fostering mutually beneficial reciprocal partnerships that enhance student learning, address societal concerns and improve quality of life by co-creating partnerships that meet community needs.

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“Our sincere hope is to work along-side community assets to help address societal concerns while educating students for civic and social responsibility.”

**- Joe Gow
Chancellor**

Dear Colleagues and Community Members,

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse has long been committed to the health and success of our community. The Pandemic of 2020, the loud cries for racial justice in our nation, and our polarized political climate are just a few examples of the complex issues our society faces. Now, more than ever, we need to come together.

Through collaboration, teaching, learning and the sharing of expertise, our community —both on and off campus—can continue to create change while preparing educated and engaged citizens. It is this spirit of reciprocity that inspires us to welcome increased partnerships between institutions. Together, through mutually beneficial relationships, we can make an enormous impact on the future of our community while, at the same time, sustain the high quality of life that already exists throughout our region.

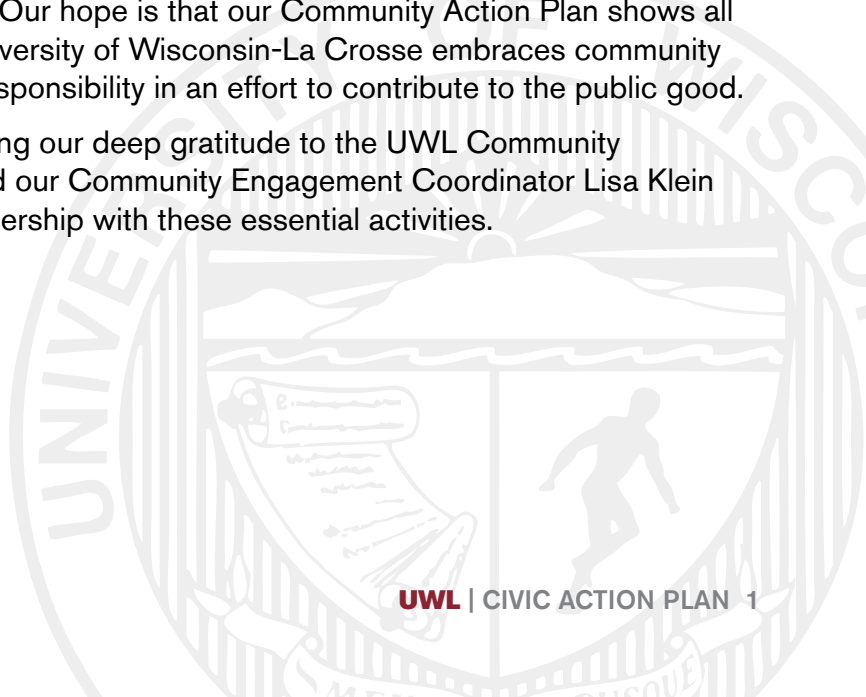
As a symbol of UWL's continued commitment to community engagement, as well as ongoing efforts to improve our partnerships, which are a key aspect of our university's strategic plan, UWL's Community Engagement Council and I would like to present our inaugural Civic Action Plan (CAP). The CAP acknowledges our institution's deep understanding of the public purpose of higher education and the role we play as a community partner. Our sincere hope is to work along-side community assets to help address societal concerns while educating students for civic and social responsibility.

On the pages ahead, you will find a plan created by UWL's Community Engagement Council that will provide guidance and structure on how our institution plans to move Community Engagement and Community Engaged Learning (CEL) forward. Our hope is that our Community Action Plan shows all constituents how the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse embraces community engagement and civic responsibility in an effort to contribute to the public good.

Please join me in extending our deep gratitude to the UWL Community Engagement Council and our Community Engagement Coordinator Lisa Klein for their outstanding leadership with these essential activities.

In continued partnership,

Joe Gow
Chancellor



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is renewing its commitment to the Wisconsin Idea which is one of the longest traditions surrounding the University of Wisconsin System. The Wisconsin Idea signifies a general principle: that education should influence people's lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom. By creating a Civic Action Plan (CAP), UWL hopes to both strengthen existing and build new partnerships to provide civically engaged and authentic experiences for students while addressing critical societal issues in our greater community. **The CAP encompasses the goals and action steps created for the university's "Sustaining Excellence" strategic plan.**

The following five strategic planning goals were developed and will be the focus of the Community Engagement Council.

- Goal 1:** Initiate strategies that create and promote increased opportunities for students' community engagement that are academically grounded.
- Goal 2:** Measure community engagement across UWL.
- Goal 3:** Market mutually beneficial relationships between UWL and private/public organizations in the greater La Crosse community, state, and region.
- Goal 4:** Advocate for integrating community engagement into UWL policies and procedures.
- Goal 5:** Have the Community Engagement Council serve as a resource for funding initiatives associated with community engagement.

The following action items are the first steps the university will take to achieve the Civic Action Plan goals.

- Assess and revise the current Project Opportunities Board/Community Engagement Portal on UWL's website.
- Create a recording mechanism for cataloging community engagement activities across campus.
- Create an external and internal marketing campaign to increase awareness of the types and amount of community engagement produced by UWL.
- Create a system to identify and designate Community Engaged Learning (CEL) courses at UWL.
- Create a webpage dedicated to listing potential funding resources for Community Engaged Learning (CEL).

FROM THE BEGINNING...

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse embraces community engagement as a key component to our teaching, scholarly, and service mission and is one of the four pillars of our “Sustaining Excellence” strategic plan. In an effort to continue to expand on UWL’s current engagement with our surrounding community, the Community Engagement Council, under the leadership of Lisa Klein, created this Civic Action Plan (CAP).

The Community Engagement Council was first formed in 2017 and was made up of faculty and staff who collected input and feedback on the university’s engagement efforts, as well as perceptions of the university from the campus and the greater La Crosse area community. This included focus groups, facilitated discussions and surveys of faculty, staff, students, and community members. In 2019, UWL hired Klein as the university’s first Community Engagement Coordinator to help move this initiative forward. This Civic Action Plan serves as UWL’s promise of the university’s commitment to mutually beneficial partnerships. It was written by members of the Community Engagement Council which has been expanded to include a student representative, a UWL diversity and inclusion representative, and community members.

The CAP includes five UWL Community Engagement Strategic Planning Goals which can be found in more detail on pages 4-6. These goals, objectives, and metrics provide guidance for implementation strategies, which will be developed by the Community Engagement Council. It is anticipated that this plan will be a continuously evolving document.

Through strong partnerships developed through UWL’s dedication to our community, the faculty and staff at UWL hope to expand on a culture of community service, engagement, and learning for all students. UWL values its relationships with community, civic, and business organizations, and strives to cultivate new opportunities that enhance and advance the university and the surrounding regions.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND METRICS

The target date to review the goal metrics is fall 2024.

GOAL 1

Initiate strategies that create and promote increased opportunities for students' community engagement that are academically grounded.

Objective

Inquire about community engaged practices on other campuses looking for evidence of best practices.

Educate campus on Community Engaged Learning (CEL) as a High Impact Practice (HIP). Focus on communicating best practices and opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.

Ensure that students have awareness of and access to Community Engaged Learning (CEL) opportunities (i.e., internships, service learning, undergraduate community engaged research, volunteering, etc.)

Metric

Host one workshop per semester with the Center for Teaching and Learning on best practices for Community Engaged Learning (CEL).

Assess and revise the current Project Opportunities Board/Community Engagement Portal on UWL's website.

GOAL 2

Measure community engagement across UWL.

Objective

Identify metrics for how to measure community engagement for UWL.

Create a recording mechanism for cataloging community engagement activities across campus.

Apply for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

Metric

Increase the number of student hours reported for volunteering in the community annually.

Increase participation in internships/clinical field experiences by UWL students to 62% of graduating seniors by Fall 2023.

Apply for Carnegie Community Education Classification.

GOAL 3

Market mutually beneficial relationships between UWL and private/public organizations in the greater La Crosse community, state, and region.

Objective

Create an external marketing campaign to increase the public's awareness of the types and amount of community engagement produced by UWL.

Create an internal marketing campaign to acknowledge, celebrate, and educate the campus on the types and amount of community engagement produced by UWL.

Metric

Increase the number of projects in progress or completed through the UWL Project Opportunities Board.

GOAL 4

Advocate for integrating community engagement into UWL policies and procedures.

Objective

Create an Office of Community Engagement that would serve as a resource to faculty/staff who are building engagement efforts of scholarship, research, creativity, and teaching, as well as public relations with external partners.

Continue to use the Community Engagement Council to provide consultation for issues related to UWL's engagement with the community, as well as Community Engaged Learning (CEL).

Collaborate with faculty senate to investigate including engaged scholarship as part of promotion, review, and tenure.

Metric

Create a system to identify and designate Community Engaged Learning (CEL) courses at UWL.

GOAL 5

Have the Community Engagement Council serve as a resource for funding initiatives associated with community engagement.

Objective

Community Engagement Council identifies financial needs in Goals 1-4 as they develop and mature.

Community Engagement Council partners with UWL Foundation employees or board members to ensure that fundraising initiatives reflect UWL's commitment to community engagement and Community Engaged Learning (CEL).

Metric

Create a webpage dedicated to listing potential funding resources for Community Engaged Learning (CEL).

Community Engagement Coordinator serves on the UWL Foundation's Philanthropy and Community Engagement Committee.



THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COUNCIL

The Community Engagement Council (CEC) serves as the primary advisory committee for UWL's Community Engagement Coordinator. The committee is composed of faculty, staff, students, and community members interested in fostering collaborations between UWL and the larger community. In particular, there is a focus on fostering Community Engaged Learning (CEL), including experiential learning and research collaborations, as well as civic engagement for undergraduate and graduate students in and out of the classroom with community partners.

The Community Engagement Council spent six months creating a document that supports UWL's strategic plan in a way that is intended to be meaningful to the community.



Community Engagement Coordinator

Lisa Klein
lklein@uwlax.edu
608.785.8153
Cleary Alumni &
Friends Center

Namyun Kil - Faculty Member

Assistant Professor, Recreation Management & Therapeutic Recreation

Nick Ragner – Staff Member

Social Media Specialist, University Communications

Jamie Schloegel – Community Member

Executive Director, La Crosse Community Foundation

Lindsay Steiner – Faculty Member

Associate Professor, English

Lynsee Thompson – Community Member

Supervisor of Access Operations, Mayo Clinic Health System.

Jodi Vandenberg-Daves – Faculty Member

Professor, Women Gender Sexuality Studies

Becky Vianden – Staff Member

Director, Academic Advising & Career Services

Milandrie Wakim – Staff Member

Program Manager, Extended Learning

Jose Rubio-Zepeda – Staff Member

Transfer Retention Specialist, Multicultural Student Services

Student Association – Rotating Student Member

Local Affairs Director

Community Engagement Council

Scott Baker - Faculty Member

Assistant Professor, Educational Studies

Karolyn Bald – Staff Member

Interim Director, International Education & Engagement

Scott Cooper – Faculty Member

Professor, Biology and Director, Undergraduate Research and Creativity

Karen DeSchepper – Staff Member

Financial Aid Associate, Financial Aid Office

Kelsi Grubisich – Staff Member

Civic Engagement & Leadership Coordinator

Mary Hamman – Faculty Member

Associate Professor, Economics

Teri Holford – Faculty Member

Assistant Professor, Murphy Library

Janie Morgan - Staff Member

Director, Alumni Relations

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Carnegie Community Engagement Classification: an elective classification that involves data collection of important aspects of institutional mission, identity, and commitments to community engagement. It is an evidence-based documentation of institutional practice to be used in a process of self-assessment and quality improvement. The documentation is reviewed by a national review panel to determine whether the institution qualifies for recognition as a community engaged institution.

Center for Teaching and Learning: is an office at UWL that provides instructors with tips, tools, and resources to make teaching more organized, inclusive, evidence-based, feedback-enriched, technology-supported, and programmatic by design.

Civic Action Plan: a plan that strengthens the campus commitment to community engagement and provides guidance to implement action steps to meet institutional goals.

Community Engagement: is the campus to community relationship that results in beneficial services that take place outside the scope of teaching and learning. Community outreach may, or may not, be related to an academic program or curriculum and can be performed by students, faculty, and staff. There are three types of Community Engagement in Outreach: Direct Service and Events, Civic Engagement, and Philanthropy.

Direct Service and Events – works to address the immediate needs of individuals or a community, often involving contact with the people or places being served.

These activities include, but are not limited to: Art/Theater/Music performances, athletic events, contracted services, facility/equipment rentals, programs/camps, training/consulting/facilitating, etc.

Civic Engagement – is involving, educating, and mobilizing individual or collective action to influence or persuade others. Civic Engagement also includes participating in political processes, policymaking, and public governance.

These activities include, but are not limited to: social justice activism, volunteering, community development, involvement with city council/county board/school board, etc.

Philanthropy – is donating or using private funds or charitable contributions from individuals or institutions to contribute to the public good.

Community Engaged Learning: is the classroom to community relationship that involves academically-based community engaged courses where student learning takes place in partnership with a community organization/business. The student has course content related reflection and/or faculty mentorship that enhances student learning while also providing a service to the partnering agency. There are two types of Community Engaged Learning: Community Engagement in Research & Scholarship and Community Engagement in Teaching & Learning.

Community Engagement in Research & Scholarship – is scholarship resulting from a mutually beneficial partnership between UWL faculty/staff/students and an external non-higher education partner to conduct research. Scholarship is creative intellectual work that is validated by peers (if it is not proprietary) and communicated to a specific audience.

These activities include, but are not limited to: contracted research, curriculum development, engaged scholarship, practice-based research, undergraduate research, problem-based research, capstone, and course-embedded undergraduate research.

Community Engagement in Teaching & Learning – is a teaching and learning strategy that uses reflection to link community needs with academic course objectives to enrich the educational experience of students, teach civic responsibility, and meet the needs of the community.

These activities include, but are not limited to: service-learning, field visit/experience, guest speakers, event planning, job shadow, problem-based learning, internships, preceptorship, externship, clinicals, student teaching, course-based volunteering, experiential learning, product development/design, program development/design, and independent study.

Engaged Scholarship: is the co-creation of knowledge that shifts the position of students and community groups from knowledge consumers to knowledge producers and partners in problem-solving. Engaged scholarship is the generation of new knowledge through the combining of academic knowledge and community-based knowledge, eliminating a hierarchy of knowledge and a one-way flow of knowledge outward from the college or university.

UWL Project Opportunities Board: is a space for both community members and faculty members to connect. Community members go through a submission process where they can request project support from UWL faculty. The information the community partner provides is used to match a project opportunity with the appropriate resources at UWL. Faculty members can also scroll through the projects listed on the board to connect with a community member about a particular project.