Assessing Civic Engagement at CCSU

Thank you for your interest in CCSU’s second year of Civic Engagement Assessment. We believe that the assessment of our students’ Personal and Social Responsibility through Civic and Community Engagement is as important as the assessment of their Intellectual and Practical Skills, including Critical Thinking, Written Communication and Quantitative Literacy. Your participation in this initiative is welcome and greatly appreciated.

As part of the Multi-State Collaborative (MSC) Assessment initiative, we are seeking out student artifacts/work from those involved in courses, individual volunteerism, community-based research and/or service-learning within a given setting. In particular, we are seeking student artifacts in which students are working to make a difference in the civic life of a community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference (Ehrlich, 2000).

1. **What type of academic setting best generates student work for Civic Engagement artifacts?**

Multiple types of work samples or artifacts which encompass actions wherein *individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community* may be utilized to assess Civic Engagement. These may include but are not limited to:

- Service-Learning Projects – Educational experiences in which a student participates in an organized service activity.
- Course-Imbedded Assignments with a Field Experience Component
- Internships with an organization, movement, campaign, etc.
- Volunteer Work in a Civic setting (i.e., Election Poll Worker, Free Tax Preparation Clinics, State and/or National Parks)
- Research-Based Learning
- Service Program Engaging Others in a Common Cause
- University-Wide Student Activity (i.e., SGA programs not linked to a specific course)

2. **What might a Civic Engagement artifact look like?**

Similar to other MSC student artifacts (viz., Written Communication, Critical-Thinking), a Civic Engagement artifact is an assigned written commentary/document submitted by the student to you, the faculty member. This assigned commentary allows the student to reflect on the Civic Engagement experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of the content and purpose of the experience, a broader appreciation of the discipline or experience, and an
enhanced sense of personal value and civic responsibility. (See attached “Civic Engagement Assignment Guidelines” for sample written commentary assignment questions.)

3. **How do I know if my existing course assignment, internships, and/or other Civic Engagement-related projects are aligned with CCSU’s Civic Engagement Assessment initiative?**

Using the assignment review chart, consider whether the instructions for your assignment specifically instruct students to address each of the categories in the rubric. You should complete and return this rubric review chart to Yvonne Kirby. You may review the complete Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric, the instrument that national MSC and CCSU scorers use to assess Civic Engagement artifacts, also located at this link. If your assignment does not address each category, please consider how assignment modifications will ensure better alignment with the rubric categories. Dr. Cassandra Broadus-Garcia is available to review your rubric review chart and assignment instructions with you and to make recommendations on the level at which your assignment and rubric categories are aligned. You may contact her at broadusc@ccsu.edu or 860-832-2643 or 860-680-6807 (c).

4. **How do I submit my students’ assigned Civic Engagement commentary papers?**

Collect commentary papers (electronic if possible) from students and provide a copy of the assignment (artifact) to Yvonne Kirby by the end of the semester. This can be done by email, Blackboard Learn, Dropbox, etc. Cassandra Broadus-Garcia is available to assist you.

References

Reflecting on Your Civic Engagement Experience

The following introductory information and subsequent questions are provided to help you as you prepare a written commentary in which you are asked to reflect upon your Civic Engagement Learning experience.

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Describe the learning experience or internship for which you have been engaged. The introductory description should inform the reader about the key factors of your experience, such as setting, the type of engagement, the goal(s) of your assignment, and the community or group of individuals with whom you were working. In addition, include information about any community constituents, such as teammates, community or agency members and/or individuals with whom you served or collaborated.

As you write your reflective commentary, be sure to address the questions below but not necessarily in the order presented. When appropriate, incorporate examples of events or experiences to illustrate your points.

1 Diversity of Communities and Cultures

Describe how your ideas and attitudes were alike or different from others with whom you served.

2 Analysis of Knowledge

If applicable, describe how this learning experience provided opportunities for you to incorporate knowledge acquired from your academic field and directly connect it to your experience.

3 Civic Identity and Commitment

How did this experience increase your level of commitment to “get involved” in individual, organizational, civic and/or community participation?

OR

Did your service-learning experience change your attitude about volunteerism in a positive or negative way? Explain your answer.

4 Civic Action and Reflection
Through this experience, do you think you made a significant contribution to the organization, individual and/or community? Why or why not? Describe the level at which you were involved, any collaborations that you had with others, and the accomplishments of your actions.

5 Contexts/Structures

Overall, what are some important points that you learned from this experience?

How did this experience enhance your ability to learn and/or work individually or with others to participate in or accomplish a goal(s)?

Would you consider taking advantage of another service-learning, volunteer, or civic or community engagement opportunity? Why? Why not?

Resources


https://www.smsu.edu/campuslife/civicengagement/?id=2986