

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

OFFICE FOR
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A TEN-POINT PLAN

for Advancing and Institutionalizing
Public Engagement at the University of Minnesota



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Through a set of far-reaching, strategic initiatives, the University of Minnesota is working to advance the infusion of public engagement into its research, teaching, and service/outreach activities across all five campuses of the system.

Over the last decade, the University has put in place a number of structures and systems to support and strengthen high quality community-engaged scholarship and teaching. In recent years, the University community has:

1. provided financial incentives, seed grants, and other resources to create, expand, and improve community engagement initiatives in ways that further the institutionalization of engagement into the University's academic programs;
2. reframed promotion and tenure guidelines to articulate higher expectations for community-engaged scholarship;
3. established a systemwide Office for Public Engagement and the position of Associate Vice President for Public Engagement to advance the engagement agenda across the five University of Minnesota campuses;
4. established the Community Engagement Scholars Program, which provides interested students with articulated and advanced opportunities to connect public engagement work with their academic majors and goals; and
5. created a University-wide metrics framework to assess the impact of community engagement activities on students, faculty, the institution, and the community.

Building on these and other existing engagement-related efforts and initiatives, today's agenda for public engagement seeks to maximize the potential of community-based work as a strategy to accomplish key University-wide goals, including:

1. producing cutting edge, significant research that addresses some of the most complex and difficult issues in society;
2. ensuring high quality teaching and instruction in all academic programs;
3. securing a more articulated curriculum that supports students' development as scholars, researchers, leaders, and engaged citizens;
4. advancing opportunities for interdisciplinary research and teaching;
5. expanding the internationalization of the University through transnational research, teaching, and service initiatives; and
6. building opportunities for students and faculty to work in diverse, multicultural settings.

Office for Public Engagement



In 2008, the University put into action this Ten-Point Plan, which articulates specific tasks to be completed in the next phase of the University's public engagement work. The plan presents a bold agenda designed to further the institutionalization of all forms of public engagement across the University system.

Achieving the goals of this plan will:

1. establish a more systematic approach to assessing the range, scope, and impacts of the hundreds of engagement activities, programs, and initiatives taking place across the University;
2. cultivate stronger, sustainable community connections in ways that address the most pressing immediate and longer-term needs of society;
3. support University personnel, programs, and centers involved in engagement work in the development of their expertise and prominence as national and international leaders in the engagement field;
4. provide and support opportunities for individuals and units, across the University to convene to share their work and expertise, cultivate new collaborations (e.g., new interdisciplinary initiatives), and build alliances that enhance participants' capacity to advance their work;
5. garner extramural funds that support new engagement initiatives and programs;
6. raise the University of Minnesota's status as an "engaged" research university;
7. expand opportunities for the University to participate in national and international engagement networks;
8. support, implement, and evaluate innovative public engagement initiatives that advance the University's key institutional priorities;
9. support the cultivation of emerging engaged scholars who will serve as civically engaged leaders, citizens, employees, and researchers; and
10. develop, support, and implement strategic initiatives that raise the status and legitimacy of engaged scholarship in ways that promote the advancement of the University of Minnesota as a top research university.

The University's Public Engagement Council, which advises the Associate Vice President for Public Engagement, is working with the University community to develop policy proposals and recommendations that will advance the goals and agenda of the Ten-Point Plan.

For more information, visit engagement.umn.edu.

engagement.umn.edu





Engaged Departments

The Engaged Department Grant Program provides funds to departments each year to plan, establish, implement, and evaluate strategic initiatives that advance the integration of public engagement into the departments' research and teaching activities. For a list of Engaged Departments and their action plans, go to http://engagement.umn.edu/engaged_departments.

1. Scholarly Value of Engagement

Develop, support, and implement strategic initiatives that raise the status and legitimacy of engaged scholarship in ways that advance the University of Minnesota as a top research university.

1. Develop a status report of the level of engaged scholarship across the disciplines;
2. Expand opportunities for faculty and academic leaders to maximize their capacity for engaged scholarship.
3. Create a series of departmental institutes that engage departmental teams in the development of strategic plans for infusing engaged teaching and the scholarship of engagement into the overall goals and practice of the discipline;
4. Develop a webpage that lists various disciplines' engaged scholarship criteria, paradigms, and expectations;
5. Establish University awards that honor outstanding engaged scholarship;
6. Develop a University policy and system for nominating University personnel for internal and external engagement awards;
7. Work with deans, department chairs, and personnel review committees in developing clarity, expectations, and criteria for engaged scholarship, as it pertains to the current faculty promotion and review guidelines;
8. Recruit outstanding engaged scholars at the University to serve as spokespersons for engagement and to demonstrate different ways of developing an engaged scholarly agenda;
9. Develop criteria for reviewing and optimizing the quality of service-learning courses, internships, clinical practice, and other community-involved educational experiences.

2. Accounting and Assessment

Establish a set of systems for accounting and assessing the broad range of engagement activities, programs, and initiatives across the University.

1. Identify and review current approaches that units, departments, and programs are using to assess the scale and scope of their engagement initiatives;
2. Identify areas where engagement data can be aggregated across programs and units;
3. Work with the Office for Institutional Research and other appropriate units to identify places in which engagement survey items can be inserted into existing questionnaires and data collection processes;

Student Experience in the Research University

In conjunction with seventeen other major U.S. universities, the University administers the Student Experience in the Research University survey to all undergraduate students every other year. Among the survey's four modules is a community and civic engagement module that assesses undergraduate students' attitudes toward and participation in various engagement experiences, providing a glimpse into our students' community engagement experiences and an opportunity to analyze different facets of student development.





Public Engagement Metrics Committee

In 2010, the Office for Public Engagement established the Public Engagement Metrics Committee, bringing together individuals with experience in the creation and implementation of systemwide metrics. The committee is charged with developing a plan for instituting a comprehensive metrics system for public engagement, and building a long-term strategy for assessing the impact of public engagement on students, faculty, staff, collegiate units, and external communities.

4. Mine existing institutional data to document the impacts of engagement and identify gaps in knowledge;
5. Establish an agenda for measuring specific longitudinal impacts and trend outcomes of engagement as they pertain to students, faculty, the community, departments, and the University;
6. Work with national organizations and networks to identify, revise, and test benchmarking tools for engagement institutionalization;
7. Create a repository of instruments that can enhance units' abilities to measure the impacts of engagement;
8. Disseminate findings about engagement participation and outcomes to a variety of audiences in ways that are useful.

3. Student Experiences and Development

Institute strategies that promote a robust range of community engagement experiences that are academically integrated and incorporate high quality practices.

1. Support the development of programs that facilitate students' abilities to participate in increasingly advanced engagement opportunities that build on their prior experiences;
2. Offer engagement merit scholarships to students who exhibit extraordinary civic leadership or potential for marked growth through community engagement;
3. Develop a set of opportunities across disciplines for students at all levels to have educational experiences in environments that are different from their own as a means to build their competence as global citizens and leaders;
4. Cultivate and garner support for more courses that build students' capacities to conduct community-based research and research in the public interest;
5. Develop a University-wide strategy or initiative that makes engagement an important part of every student's educational experience;
6. Cultivate and garner support for more discipline-based service-learning courses.

Community Engagement Scholars Program

A model of exemplary practice, the Community Engagement Scholars Program empowers students by providing them with a foundation of analytical and reflective skills to apply to their engagement experiences, connecting their engagement work with their academic goals. The program requires 400 community engagement hours, eight credits in service-learning courses, and one community-based capstone experience; since its inception in April 2005, 250 students have completed the program.



North Minneapolis Tornado Relief Efforts

In late May 2011, tornadoes hit North Minneapolis, and the effects on the community were devastating. The University's Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center, located in the heart of the Northside, was able to organize University efforts around food, shelter, and cleanup in the wake of the tornadoes. Ongoing relief efforts will continue for at least three years as the community rebuilds, and the University plans to be engaged in those efforts for the duration.



Engagement Zones

In 2010, the University initiated a set of neighborhood-based collaboratives designed to improve impact by bringing together and building synergy among existing University-sponsored community engagement projects that are addressing the same issue in the same community, but are otherwise working independently. Engagement Zones are designed to avoid duplication of efforts, maximize resource efficiency, and build stronger and more collaborative partnerships to leverage capacity and maximize societal impact. The University is working with community partners to build Engagement Zones in the Twin Cities' neighborhoods of Cedar-Riverside, North Minneapolis, Frogtown, and Prospect Park.

Professional Development Grants

In 2011, the Office for Public Engagement established a grant program that supports the professional development activities within the University's public engagement units and centers, enhancing the capacity of public engagement units' staff members to contribute more fully to the University's institutional goals for public engagement.



4. Community Connections

Secure mutually beneficial partnerships between the University and business/industry, non-profits, educational institutions, and governmental agencies at the local, regional, state, national, and global levels.

1. Strengthen the University's reputation as a visible, reliable, and present body in addressing the most pressing immediate and long-term public needs;
2. Continue dialogue and discussions with the community to assess needs and issues concerning the University;
3. Engage community members in key decision-making boards and review committees pertaining to the establishment of engagement policies and programs;
4. Participate in and give support to community-sponsored events and activities;
5. Develop and formalize short- and long-range plans and action steps for securing community enhancement and development;
6. Network existing community programs to encourage greater collaboration, sharing of resources, and leveraging of organizational capacities through the cultivation of Engagement Zones.

5. Cultivating and Supporting Campus Leaders

Institute initiatives that strengthen engagement leaders' capacities to further the institutionalization of engagement across the University of Minnesota.

1. Develop a leader of leaders mentorship program in which campus engagement managers and directors are trained to provide professional development to new and emerging engagement leaders at the University;
2. Invite national and international experts in engagement to share insights on university-wide engagement institutionalization and development;
3. Cultivate leadership opportunities that enhance professional, administrative, and civil service staff members' involvement in engagement initiatives;
4. Provide opportunities for University administrators to develop their understanding of engagement;
5. Strengthen engagement leaders' capacities to maximize their units' potential and secure achievement of their engagement goals.

6. Visibility and Value

Deepen understanding across the system of the role engagement plays in advancing the University's research and teaching missions.

1. Support University members' involvement and participation in prominent national and international engagement conferences;
2. Develop and study innovative and cutting edge approaches to engagement and disseminate experiences and findings widely;
3. Develop a public relations campaign that spotlights the range and depth of the University's engagement initiatives through multimedia venues;
4. Ensure the inclusion of engagement programs and activities in the University's publicity, which includes admissions, new faculty and new student orientation, staff recruitment, course catalogues, and websites;
5. Develop promotional materials that highlight the University of Minnesota's accomplishments and progress as an engaged research university.

7. Program Alignment and Integration

Ensure the full integration of public engagement activities into the University's key institutional policies, priorities, and programs.

1. Strengthen linkages between key University teaching and research initiatives and overarching public engagement goals;
2. Support other University units in enhancing their capacity to incorporate engagement into their existing work;
3. Conduct a study of other universities and their approaches to infusing engagement into key research and teaching objectives;
4. Conduct University-based and community-based focus groups that explore issues and concerns for incorporating engagement in key University initiatives.

8. Internal Networking

Provide and support opportunities that bring together individuals and units from across the University to share expertise, cultivate new collaborations, and build alliances that enhance their individual and collective engagement work.

1. Establish a University consortium that facilitates opportunities for engagement managers and leaders to share their work and better align to their respective program goals;
2. Advance the understanding and delivery of high quality engagement practices across all University units through the leadership and guidance of the Public Engagement Council.

Engaging U Tube

This series of videos explores the work and impact of engagement initiatives across the University. To see the videos, visit <http://engagement.umn.edu/videos>.

Graduate Student Forum

The Office for Public Engagement co-hosts a series of forums to address graduate and professional students' concerns about the role of public engagement in their studies. At the first Graduate Student Forum (November 2010), more than 75 graduate students attended to discuss with a panel of faculty and consultants the challenges and intricacies of a career in publicly-engaged work.

Public Engagement Retreat

Each May, the Office for Public Engagement hosts a Public Engagement Leaders Retreat with the various directors and leaders from public engagement units across the University system. The purpose of the retreat is to involve public engagement unit managers in articulating their units' roles in furthering the systemwide public engagement agendas. At the retreat, the University's engagement leaders have an opportunity to create plans for advancing community engagement in their units and to identify strategic relationships to move individual and collective community-engaged research, teaching, and public service work forward.



Talloires Network

Since 2008, the University of Minnesota has been a member of this international consortium of over 200 institutions that works to promote the civic purposes of higher education. The University signed onto the 2011 Talloires Network Declaration, an update to the network's 2005 declaration, which focuses on the civic role and social responsibilities of higher education institutions.



9. National and International Networking

Strengthen the University's participation as a key player in the leading national and international engagement networks.

1. Actively involve University members and partners in national and international engagement boards and associations, such as International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement, Campus Compact, Imagining America, and Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, and the Talloires Network;
2. Engage leading scholars at the University on the editorial boards of leading national and international journals focused on engagement (e.g., Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Metropolitan Universities, and International Journal of Research on Community Engagement).

10. Leverage Extramural Funds

Garner extramural funds that further the University of Minnesota's development as an engaged university.

1. Seek out foundation funding that strengthens the University's engagement infrastructure for furthering the institutionalization of engagement into the scholarly and academic work of the University;
2. Strengthen dissemination vehicles that alert University members and community partners to available funding opportunities for engagement work and initiatives;
3. Cultivate a plan to build endowments for engagement, including endowments that support student scholarships, faculty chairs, and University centers.

Engaging U

The Office for Public Engagement produces Engaging U, a bi-weekly e-newsletter that provides updates to those across campus involved in public engagement work. Alerting subscribers to professional development and funding opportunities, as well as public engagement-related events on campus, Engaging U helps strengthen the engagement network across the University system.



For more information visit the Office for Public Engagement website at engagement.umn.edu