Dear Graduate Students,

The Graduate School is pleased to collaborate with the Office for Public Engagement and Student Affairs on two initiatives below.

**Introduction to Civic Engagement**
*Friday, September 11, 10 - 11:30 am*  
[Register](#)

Graduate students will explore different models of democracy and citizenship, as well as understand the differences between mobilizing (used in political campaigns and protest politics) and community organizing (used to solve problems in the broader community working across differences and to develop leaders who become change agents). Facilitators: Dennis Donovan, National Director for Public Achievement/Humphrey School Adjunct Professor and Merrie Benasutti, Office for Public Engagement.

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**University District Civic Leadership Program**  
*Fall 2020 through Spring 2021*

Graduate students are encouraged to [apply](#) for the University District Civic Leadership Program! The University District Civic Leadership Program aims to build an effective partnership between the University of Minnesota and the neighborhoods adjacent to the Minneapolis campus.

Respond to the present and emerging needs of our University neighborhoods impacted by the direct and indirect effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the aftermath of the
death of George Floyd while building professional skills.

Program Expectations

Graduate students can earn a Gold Badge from the Graduate School by:

- Completing 20 hours of service per semester with University District neighborhoods through engagement and discussions to understand the complex and intersecting cultures and identities within neighborhoods.
- Participating in monthly forums on topics related to civic engagement to reflect on what community experience teaches us about larger issues in society.

Community Engagement Projects

University District Civic Leaders will have the opportunity to volunteer with the community through our neighborhood, city-recognized participation organizations. Opportunities will include preparing for, promoting and supporting events and projects in the University District focused on community building. Depending on student’s individual interests, students will be connected directly with longer term opportunities, such as serving on a neighborhood board, sharing expertise in a certain field with a community organization, or an opportunity related to research interests.

During this pandemic, the nature of community-engaged work takes on new meaning. Under normal conditions, the term refers to conducting high touch work that typically involves on-site, in-person activities built on mutual exchange and reciprocity among participants. However, in light of COVID-19, the terms of engagement must be modified to protect the safety, health, and well-being of all. All 2020 community engagement activities will be conducted remotely.

View calendar of forums and events.

Application

Graduate students are encouraged to apply for the University District Civic Leadership Program! The application deadline is Monday, September 21, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact Merrie Benasutti at benas021@umn.edu