

Western
Carolina
UNIVERSITY



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

CARNEGIE FOUNDATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING
WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY | AUGUST 2014



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The Carnegie Community Engagement Reclassification Application
and Summary Report are projects of the Office of the Provost.

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OVERVIEW

Western Carolina University submitted its application to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to be reclassified as a “Community Engaged” university on April 15, 2014. WCU originally received this elective designation in 2009, and designated universities must reapply every five years. Applicants will be notified in December 2014 whether they will be reclassified, and the results will be announced publicly in January 2015.

Since WCU's application was more than 100 pages, the purpose of this report is to share, in a summary format, highlights and examples of WCU's responses to the questions Carnegie asked in its reporting framework.

Carnegie defines community engagement as those activities and collaborations between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

WCU's application is a comprehensive report of the university's community engagement activities across all areas, including curricular, co-curricular, outreach and partnerships. Carnegie's reclassification framework also requires applicants to document organizational support for community engagement in their mission, strategic planning, marketing/public relations, fundraising, personnel, and budget processes. Institutions applying for reclassification were directed to focus on what has changed in these areas since the last classification.

To compile the report, data were collected from a wide variety of individuals and units across the university and in the community. Faculty members responded to surveys about their curriculum-based, community-engaged activities, including their scholarly productivity; students completed a number of surveys including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the National Assessment of Service and Community Engagement (NASCE); deans and department heads identified exemplary community engagement partnerships; community partners responded to surveys and participated in focus groups to assess their satisfaction and perceived benefit/impact of their WCU engagement partnerships; and various units provided documentation and reported their outreach activities. Thanks to the willingness of these individuals to share information and perspectives, WCU's application is distinct, descriptive and, hopefully, deserving of reclassification.

SECTION I. FOUNDATIONAL INDICATORS

A. CHANCELLOR'S LEADERSHIP STATEMENT:

Chancellor David Belcher provided a letter of support affirming the centrality of community engagement to the fulfillment of WCU's mission.

April 11, 2014

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
51 Vista Lane
Stanford, CA 94305

Dear Carnegie Community Engagement Reclassification Review Committee:

I write with pleasure to affirm the centrality of community engagement to Western Carolina University and the fulfillment of its mission. Founded 125 years ago to provide educational opportunities for the youth of the mountains of Western North Carolina, Western Carolina has remained true throughout its history to its foundational commitment and charge to serve the people of the region. Western Carolina is a public institution and proudly owns the obligations, responsibilities, and privileges associated with its public mission. Community engagement has emerged as a primary manifestation of this commitment.

In the 2011-2012 academic year, WCU undertook a strategic planning initiative through an inclusive process led by a steering committee comprised of faculty, staff, students, and ten members of the external community. While the resulting document charted an ambitious course forward for the University, it also overtly reaffirmed the institution's commitment to community engagement, embracing "collaboration with and respect for our communities" as one of WCU's core values and guiding principles, identifying a vision of being a "national model for student learning and engagement that embraces its responsibilities as a regionally engaged university," and articulating the enhancement of our external partnerships as one of the University's six strategic directions. In sum, community engagement is front and center in WCU's strategic vision of its future. In addition, Western Carolina revised its mission statement in fall 2013 to reinforce engagement as a core endeavor.

Community engagement is, though, more than words for Western Carolina; rather, it is a fundamental component of the way we undertake the work of the University. Thus, faculty members engage their students in a wide range of community efforts such as developing public relations and marketing campaigns in concert with a local community whose tourism-based economy was hard hit by the recent recession; working with local schools and a local non-profit in a farm-to-school program to foster an understanding among school children of the origins of their food and healthy eating habits; and undertaking public history projects related to local communities and organizations. Faculty and students pursue research topics that emanate from real problems in the region. And the University conducts its business in partnership with the community and local organizations, for example, collaborating with a local church to donate felled trees for processing as firewood for the underprivileged in our rural area; inviting community involvement, including membership on task forces, in campus master planning to ensure that campus development integrates seamlessly with the plans and infrastructure of the external community; and participating in mutual aid arrangements between the university's police force and external law enforcement personnel. Western Carolina lives its community engagement mantra, and the people who constitute the University continually explore new possibilities to integrate instructional, scholarly, and service efforts in response to external challenges and opportunities.

The institutionalization of community engagement to ensure its sustainability at Western Carolina is a dynamic topic and likely always will be. The University has clearly integrated engagement into its work: faculty, staff, and students feel empowered to pursue a wide range of engagement activities; community engagement is a valued component of faculty evaluation processes; the University hires institutional leaders based in part on their demonstrated commitment to engagement; and WCU has organized its engagement work through such functional operations as the Center for Service Learning and the Office of Millennial Initiatives. As Western Carolina's range of community engagement work continues to expand, however, we need to ensure that we organize and coordinate our efforts for greatest effectiveness, negotiating a careful balance between the organic energy which surrounds our mission, on the one hand, and the necessity of managing for maximum impact, on the other. Indeed, this reclassification process has informed our understanding of our current strengths and highlighted opportunities for improving our engagement efforts going forward.

Finally, allow me to assert my own personal commitment to community engagement. It is my belief that a public university such as Western Carolina University exists to serve the public which supports it, and when I interviewed for the WCU chancellorship three years ago, I was gratified to find that the institution shared this perspective. Our work in community engagement will continue to evolve as we explore new options and as new opportunities arise; however, our fundamental commitment to our engagement mission will be the constant.

Sincerely yours,

David O. Belcher

Chancellor

CHANCELLOR'S STATEMENTS

Documentation of the chancellor's recent public statements affirming community engagement included excerpts from and links to a variety of annual addresses, published editorials, campus publications, and videos. Sample excerpts/links included:

"I want to remind you, this is going to be a strategic plan. Everything cannot and will not be a priority," Belcher said. "Achievement of such a plan will require rejection of myopia and commitment to the good of the whole. We will be guided by our long-held values, excellence and high standards first and foremost above all things. We will be guided by our commitment to student success – the success of every student. And we will retain that value that has defined us for years, an external focus and external engagement." 2011-12 Opening Assembly Address: <http://thereporter.wcu.edu/2011/08/assembly-convocation-help-launch-2011-12-school-year/>

"WCU has embraced a mission focused on the institution's connectedness to its external community, its commitment to addressing local, state, and national priorities. If we truly embrace this mission, we will respond to our leaders who have called on us to increase the number of people we graduate." 2013-14 Opening Assembly address: <http://thereporter.wcu.edu/2013/08/chancellor-discusses-focus-on-graduation-and-retention-rates-budget-and-the-strategic-plan-at-opening-assembly/>

"The educational research component that WCU will add to this region has been noted by many economic developers as a key driver of job growth in many other successful communities around the state and nation," Cecil said. "Consolidation of WCU programs in Asheville at Biltmore Park lauded," Asheville Daily Planet: <http://www.ashevilledailyplanet.com/news/2878-consolidation-of-wcu-programs-in-asheville-at-biltmore-park-lauded>

“This commitment to our external region is our bread and butter. It’s who we are. It’s in our DNA,” Belcher said, pointing out that next year’s major regional conference will coincide with the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the institution’s founding. “What a great thing to have this conference in a year in which we celebrate who we are. It certainly will be an opportunity to look back, but I think it also will be a catalyst, not just for Western Carolina but for the region that it serves, as we head forward.” October 1, 2013, news release about regional conference: news-prod.wcu.edu/2013/10/leaders-examine-strategies-for-better-partnerships/

B. INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE:

Community engagement is prioritized in WCU’s mission, vision statement and articulation of core values. For example, WCU’s vision is “To be a national model for student leaning and engagement that embraces its responsibilities as a regionally engaged university.” Three of the six strategic directions in the “2020 Vision: Focusing Our Future” strategic plan include significant initiatives and foci around community engagement. <http://www.wcu.edu/about-wcu/leadership/office-of-the-chancellor/wcu-2020-plan/2020-vision-focusing-our-future-wcu-strategic-plan/>

As part of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), WCU developed a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) centered on integrated and experiential learning inside and outside the classroom. One of the five global learning outcomes of the QEP is “practice civic engagement.” <http://www.wcu.edu/about-wcu/leadership/office-of-the-provost/ugstudies/qep/>

WCU reported significant changes in mission, planning, organizational structure, personnel and resource allocation related to community engagement since 2008, including:

- The Campus Master Planning process
- The reorganization of the Division of Advancement and External Affairs
- The elimination of the Institute for the Economy and the Future (IEF) due to budget cuts in the wake of the economic crisis of 2008
- A new office of Millennial Initiatives and the development of the 344-acre Millennial Campus
- The opening of the \$46 million Health and Human Sciences Building
- The consolidation of graduate and undergraduate programs in Asheville at the new Biltmore Park instructional site
- The hiring of several new leaders, such as Chancellor Belcher, Provost Alison Morrison-Shetlar, Chief of Staff Melissa Wargo, Executive Director of Millennial Initiatives Tony Johnson, Director of the Center for Service Learning Lane Perry, Director of External Affairs Meredith Whitfield and Director of Marketing Robin Oliver.

C. INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT:

INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2013, The Center for Service Learning (CSL) developed a strategic plan to directly align with the institution-wide 2020 Vision. The primary mission of the CSL is as follows:

“In all development, promotion, and measurement of programs and initiatives, the CSL engages all

partners in the mutually reciprocal process that is community development with the intention of fostering a sustainable campus culture and personal habit of community engagement in our students.”

FUNDING

While internal funding for the CSL and QEP has increased significantly over the last six years, WCU reported a 38% decrease overall in internal budget allocations related to community engagement since 2008. This is due mainly to the elimination of the IEF.

Grant funded allocations also changed significantly as many of the grants identified in 2008 ended and new grants began. The total amount of external funding dedicated to supporting institutional engagement with the community in 2013 was approximately \$2.5 million.

During the 2013-14 academic year, WCU provided scholarship support in the amount of \$158,054 to 54 students who demonstrated a commitment to community service and/or involvement in civic activities in the scholarship application process and criteria.

WCU documented how it invests its financial resources in the community by providing examples of state budget support for the WCU Cherokee Center, Local Government Training, Mountain Heritage Day and the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC).

DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

WCU described the systematic tracking and assessment mechanisms that capture the community-engaged work of its faculty, students, and staff in curricular, co-curricular, and other areas. These mechanisms include the University of North Carolina’s General Administration Community and Economic Engagement Metrics, the Curriculum-Based Community Engagement Faculty Survey, the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the National Assessment of Service and Community Engagement (NASCE), the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the SBTDC Student Engagement Report, the WCU School Services Report, the Lily Community Engagement Award (LCEA) program participants, the CSL Service Learning Course Designations, the Community Partner Impact Survey and community partner focus groups.

Based on these documentation/assessment mechanisms, WCU reported key findings on the impact of its community engagement for students, faculty, the community, and the institution.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

WCU’s community engagement efforts have impacted thousands of students through a range of curricular and co-curricular avenues. Curricular-based community engagement experiences have engaged nearly 3,000 students (duplicated headcount) and co-curricular experiences have engaged well over half of WCU’s student body.

- 53% of WCU students participate in service.
- 88% of students believe that the volunteer efforts of WCU students will have a substantial impact on the lives of those that need assistance.
- The 900 students who completed the LCEA “post-service reflections” associated with their co-curricular experiences reported a mean response of 4.12/5.00 (agree) that their service experiences positively influenced the identification and development of their personal values.
- Community engagement has had a significant impact on students’ personal responsibility, citizenship and leadership. Data from four programs were provided as examples (Public Relations Campaigns/ Dillsboro, Local Food and Farm to School Education Project, CARE Conference, Undergraduate Research/Geosciences and Natural Resources Management).

IMPACT ON FACULTY

Of the 291 faculty members who responded to the 2013 Curriculum-Based Community Engagement Faculty Survey, 60.1% reported scholarly productivity directly tied to at least one of their community-engaged courses during the 2013 calendar year.

- 25 reported books or book chapters
- 55 reported peer-reviewed journal articles
- 75 reported presentations
- 67 reported creative works or projects

Controlling for duplication in individual faculty members reporting co-authored works, a qualitative analysis revealed 18 unique peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters related to community engagement were published (or in press) by 33 WCU faculty in 2013.

Sixty-three faculty members reported citations that could be classified as Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL).

WCU's faculty scholarship emanates from all of the Colleges, runs the gamut from creative projects to technical reports to peer-reviewed publications, and addresses a wide range of community engagement topics. While there were no 2008 baseline data to compare the productivity of faculty scholarship connected to community engagement, the above numbers and products appear to reflect an overall enhanced scholarly profile, or at least a better understanding of productivity, for WCU faculty related to community engagement.

IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

Applicants were asked to provide one key finding in this area, and WCU described the results of its work in Dillsboro, NC over the last four years. Focus groups with town leaders and merchants identified numerous positive benefits, including:

- WCU's work with the Dillsboro Lights & Luminaries "led this festival to unprecedented growth, resulting in several merchants reporting December 6, 2013 (WCU Night) as the most successful day since the economic downturn."
- Three new businesses opened in 2013, a craft brewery is expanding to the town, and a Business Plan Competition generated proposals from six hopeful entrepreneurs.

The WCU partnership has been identified as the "engine" driving this recovery. A Dillsboro merchant stated, "...people are viewing Dillsboro as a place to reinvest. And that is what WCU has done for us."

Other benefits included: hope ("What WCU gave us in very desperate times was the hope to hang on a little bit longer."); community unity ("We pulled together with WCU. It pulled us together); and capacity building ("WCU prepared us to continue. They've left the building blocks for what we need to keep going forward.")

IMPACT ON INSTITUTION

WCU's master plan, approved by the WCU Board of Trustees in December 2013, emphasizes community engagement as a central part of WCU's future. The extensive campus master planning process included interviews and forums with more than 70 internal and external groups and the administration of institutional surveys to assess current campus adequacy and determine future direction and needs. The steering committee created the Integrating Community and Preserving Campus Heritage taskforce to examine WCU

and Cullowhee and to make recommendations on future development, integration of adjacent businesses/property, preservation of cultural heritage sites on campus, and relationships with community partners.

Consequently, the master plan explicitly incorporates elements of community engagement and enhancement; for example, a recommendation for a new building dedicated to student engagement and experiential learning; the creation of multiple, well-defined and inviting entrances to the campus; promotion of the millennial campus as a model for public-private partnerships; and adequate parking and facilities for hosting community events that are linked to WCU's teaching and learning environment. Other internal processes have reinforced the findings of the master planning committee that WCU and its community are partners and additional opportunities should be created to foster that relationship.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WCU has significantly increased its support for faculty development, as well as its support for the scholarship of engagement. This is evidenced in the Coulter Faculty Commons' Faculty Associate for Campus Engagement (FACE) programs and annual retreats such as the Boyer Scholar Retreat (2012). Additionally, various campus units have partnered to provide annual leadership retreats and the WCU Leadership Academy was founded in 2013.

FACULTY ROLES AND REWARDS

To encourage the hiring of faculty with expertise in and commitment to community engagement, WCU created the following new statement to be included in all advertisements for faculty positions:

"WCU embraces its role as a regionally engaged university and is designated by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a community engaged university. Preference will be given to candidates who can demonstrate a commitment to public engagement through their teaching, service, and scholarship."

Regarding tenure and promotion policies that reward scholarly work that uses community-engaged approaches and methods, WCU highlighted a significant revision that has been added to departmental tenure and promotion templates: "Peer review can include traditional forms (journal reviewers, editors, committees awarding grants) but it can also include a broader community of scholars."

- 16 WCU departments specifically and distinctly mention public service/scholarship as a potential emphasis for faculty seeking tenure and promotion;
- 29 WCU departments (out of 33, which includes library departments) provide a mechanism for the review of non-traditional products in the scholarship of engagement category. Notably, the Kimmel School of Construction Management and Technology instituted an Engagement Committee for the purposes of review of scholarship.

WCU provides professional development for faculty and administrators who review candidates' dossiers, such as department heads' workshops, individual and group consultations through the Coulter Faculty Commons, and new faculty orientation.

STUDENT ROLES AND RECOGNITION

Student leadership in community engagement is recognized in various ways. For example, the Catamount Service Corps is a CSL initiative that engages WCU students in leadership roles across a range of activities, such as organizing Alternative Breaks and serving as community agency liaisons. The annual CSL awards banquet recognizes community-engaged work in nine different areas.

Community engagement is noted on student transcripts.

DIVERSITY

Community engagement is connected with diversity and inclusion work at WCU for both students and faculty/staff. The Office of Intercultural Affairs (OIA) and WCU's Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity programs coordinate various activities and workshops, including intergroup dialogue sessions on race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. An example of this commitment to diversity and community engagement is found in the OIA's Social Justice Institute.

STUDENT RETENTION AND SUCCESS

WCU highlights, emphasizes, and encourages community engagement as part of its student recruitment, transition, retention and success efforts. Examples include, instilling a sense of community responsibility and engagement is embedded within the WCU Community Creed as one of the five pillars and the First Year Experience initiative emphasizes civic engagement.

SECTION II. CATEGORIES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A. CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT

Over 200 course sections (10 percent of all courses) from 25 departments (86 percent of all departments), taught by 135 faculty members (18 percent of all faculty), to nearly 3,000 students (29.5 percent of all students, duplicated headcount) meet the service-learning course designation criteria. These course sections incorporate community-based activities that connect academic content through critical reflection and provide at least a moderate to high level of benefit (≥ 7 on a 1-10 Likert scale) to both community partners and students.

While 207 courses meet the criteria for the service-learning course designation, only 55 WCU course sections currently carry this designation. In response to these findings, CSL staff will be contacting those faculty members who meet the criteria to encourage them to apply for the service-learning designation, which has been streamlined in response to faculty feedback.

Significantly, more than two-thirds (69 percent) of WCU's academic departments have a community-engaged course offered at the core course level.

Exemplary community engagement is occurring in capstone and senior-level courses throughout all of WCU's Colleges.

Results of a 2012 assessment of the "practice civic engagement" student learning outcome indicated that first year and senior students showed statistically significant increases in the instances and self-perception of activities associated with practicing civic engagement between 2006 and 2012.

STUDENT RESEARCH

Since 2008, the number of WCU students presenting at the National Conference for Undergraduate Research has steadily increased. In 2014, WCU had 70 proposals accepted to NCUR, placing WCU in 2nd place among the 460 colleges and universities that had student projects accepted. Many of these research projects are directly related to and focused on issues associated with the local community and/or region.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP COURSES

WCU's Leadership minor was revamped in 2009 to focus on the Social Change Model of leadership and subsequently aligned with curricular-based community engagement. By connecting service and engagement in both theory and practice, the Leadership minor helps WCU better serve both students and the community.

INTERNSHIPS/CO-OPS

While Career Services & Cooperative Education manages roughly 20-25% of all WCU student internship placements, the remaining are organized at the departmental level. WCU highlighted several exemplary internship programs with a community engagement connection, including those from Engineering, Hospitality and Tourism, Sport Management, and Public History.

STUDY ABROAD

The number of WCU students going abroad each year has held steady at approximately 180-250 per year. Nearly all of these partnerships offer service and volunteer opportunities for WCU study abroad students to participate in while abroad. WCU has seen a dramatic increase in faculty-led programs overseas with community engagement components built into that experience.

GENERAL EDUCATION

Since the last classification in 2008, WCU undertook a comprehensive review of the current Liberal Studies program and proposed a new general education curriculum with deeper and stronger emphases on community and civic engagement (2013). Elements of the new program are under consideration for implementation.

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE COURSES

The Ripple Effect Learning Community, initiated in 2013, incorporates change theory, organized action, and community engagement in a four-course sequence for entering freshman. Students from the first cohort found the opportunity so valuable that they have petitioned to develop a sophomore living-learning community based on their first year experience (note: this is one LC example, there are a number of other LC's that incorporate some form and degree of community engagement).

CAPSTONE/SENIOR LEVEL PROJECTS

Community-engaged capstone courses are implemented in programs across the university. WCU showcased the following as exemplars: ENGR450 Engineering Capstone 2; ES495 Senior Research Seminar in Environmental Science; NRM440 Integrated Resource Management; PRM483 Capstone Internship in Parks and Recreation Management; and ENT475 Entrepreneurship Capstone.

IN THE MAJORS

Based on data faculty provided in the 2013 Curriculum-Based Community Engagement Survey, 25 of 29 departments (86%), representing all six Colleges/Schools, have curricular-based community engaged courses in their majors.

GRADUATE STUDIES

The range of graduate programs that include community-engaged experiences within their curricula has increased since 2008. WCU highlighted projects emanating from numerous graduate programs.

OTHER

WCU highlighted its annual interdisciplinary campus themes, including the Global Poverty Project (2011-2012); the Citizenship and Civility (2012-2013); and The 1960s: Take it all in... (2013-2014). Each of these themes has examples/formulations of community engagement projects that were showcased in the application.

WCU provided evidence that faculty have parlayed engaged teaching into SOTL research through the following five examples:

Clark, C., Faircloth, V., Lasher, R., McDonald, M. (2013). Alternative spring break Jamaica! Service learning and civic engagement in a developing country. *Global Partners in Education Journal* 3(1), 49-56. [Nursing, Middle Grades Education, Social Work, and Political Science].

Kinner, F. (2013, March). Student reflections in an undergraduate institutional SoTL course: A gateway to learning, leadership, and social change. Paper presentation at the 2013 Conference of the Southern Regional Faculty and Instructional Development Consortium, Jacksonville, FL. [Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching Excellence].

Perry, L., Williams-Howe, C., Hamshaw, K., Hilsher, J., O'Steen, B., Sammons, G., & Alden, A. (In Press in 2013). Learning from disaster: Three models to engage students in disaster response. *Issues in Engaged Scholarship: An Exploration of Service-Learning and Community-Campus Collaborations for Community-Campus Readiness: Approaches to Disaster Preparedness* 3. [Center for Service Learning].

Metcalfe, S. E. (In Press in 2013). The impact of leadership development: A shared nursing educational service-learning partnership. In L. Caputi (Ed.), *Building the future of nursing* (pp. 75-84). Baltimore, MD: National League for Nursing. [Nursing].

Walkingstick, J. & Bloom, L. (2013). Creating community and support using Native American values in an inclusive third grade setting: An action research case study. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction* 7(1), 55-78. [Special Education].

These scholarly outputs were supported through a range of internal (e.g., Chancellor's Travel Funds and departmental travel allocations; QEP-focused awards) and external grants, and through professional development opportunities through the Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching Excellence, e.g., instructional design consultations, Summer Institute for Teaching and Learning, and the Engaged Scholars Retreat. WCU also provided funding for faculty presentations and attendance at discipline-specific, and general higher education conferences, which promote community engagement teaching, scholarship, service, and assessment.

SUMMARY NARRATIVE DESCRIBING OVERALL CHANGES AND TRENDS IN CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT SINCE LAST CLASSIFICATION:

While 2008 data tracking community engagement across all of the curricular areas does not exist, 2013 data suggest community engagement is an essential thread in WCU's curricular tapestry. From freshman learning communities to required core courses in majors to capstone/internship experiences to leadership and study abroad opportunities, community engagement is a defining characteristic at WCU.

"Experience beyond the classroom" is part of WCU's everyday philosophy. Internships/capstone projects provide meaningful, real-world professional development experiences for students while simultaneously providing community partners with valuable resources and expertise. The finding that more than two-thirds (69%) of WCU's academic departments have a community-engaged course in their core requirements suggests that community engagement is institutionalized at the curricular level.

Increased collaboration/coordination across campus and with the community has helped students become agents of change. The annual interdisciplinary themes enable campus and community to rally around specific community engagement-related topics. Multiple departments/units have helped students realize the QEP goal “to practice civic engagement,” as NSSE data illuminated.

At the core of these changes is a clarified understanding of what community engagement is and how to measure/monitor it at the institutional level. Creating a culture where this is expected and habitual takes time, and WCU is on this trajectory. With the direction offered by UNC-GA, the sustained assistance from NC Campus Compact, and a campus-wide effort to align practices with WCU’s 2020 Vision, WCU’s understanding, application, monitoring, and measurement of community engagement is maturing.

At the center of WCU’s 2020 Vision are community engagement, economic development, and high-quality academic programs. The CSL expands on WCU’s 2020 Vision. While WCU’s engagement, impact, and measuring/monitoring of community involvement are much more encompassing than the CSL, the Center serves a key role in explicitly identifying and operationalizing community engagement on campus (<http://www.wcu.edu/about-wcu/leadership/office-of-the-provost/ugstudies/center-for-service-learning/about-the-center-for-service-learning/SL-Mission.asp>).

In 2010, WCU started a review of the general education program to address concerns about the existing program, review the national literature about goals of a liberal education, and create alignment with the institutional mission and strategic plan. The General Education Taskforce has recommended that all students should complete a course with a service-learning component before graduating. This reflects the current value placed on community engagement by faculty and is an indicator of the future trajectory of curricular-community engagement.

Historically, WCU, like other UNC institutions, has received state appropriations based on student credit-hour generation. Four years ago, UNC-GA adopted performance-based funding using ten indicators; five are mandatory, and the remaining five selected by individual institutions. At the time, WCU didn’t select community engagement as one of the institutional indicators because the monitoring mechanisms/infrastructure were deemed immature. Since then, WCU further refined and enhanced its approach to community engagement. Future iterations of performance-based funding indicators will include community engagement as a barometer of institutional performance.

B. OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

Outreach focuses on the application and provision of institutional resources for community use with benefits to both campus and community.

WCU documented changes in its outreach programs since 2008. As articulated in WCU’s strategic plan, there is an enhanced focus on building partnerships and providing service to the community. Online and continuing education learning opportunities are increasingly being offered to enhance WCU’s non-credit offerings. WCU has enhanced operations in camps and conferences, particularly during the summer months, including streamlining processes for community use of campus facilities.

WCU provided the following three programs as examples of representative outreach programs:

- WCU’s Forensic Anthropology program is the premier supplier of training for cadaver dog handlers in the nation.
- WCU’s Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and Mission Health System in Asheville, NC are partnering to help Mission use entrepreneurial techniques to address the changing and challenging world of healthcare.

- WCU hosted a regional conference on tourism in April 2014 to help local businesses, county planners and governmental agencies learn to use tourism data to describe economic impact to decision makers.

WCU documented changes in institutional resources (co-curricular student service, work-study student placements, library services, athletic offerings, etc.) provided as outreach to the community and provided representative examples.

Between 2008 and 2013, WCU added nearly 30 community partners, three large Days of Service, a Dance Marathon event (which fundraises nearly \$30,000 each year) as well as programming during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. The number of volunteers and community service hours has substantially increased, to a duplicated count of 3,057 volunteers (i.e. same individuals volunteering multiple times) who contributed 14,748 hours of service in 2012-2013.

Comparable to 2008 numbers, each year since, tens of thousands of people attend a variety of athletic events; between 20,000 to 30,000 attend Mountain Heritage Day; and approximately 30,000 attend cultural events at WCU's \$27 million Bardo Fine & Performing Arts Center (BF&PAC).

The BF&PAC director collaborates with local schools and social agencies to help expose rural and disadvantaged children and families to live theatrical and musical productions through three outreach programs.

Perhaps one of the most exciting changes since 2008 is the work of Hunter Library faculty and staff to mount eleven distinct digital collections in collaboration with a host of regional cultural heritage organizations. These eleven collections can be found at: (<http://www.wcu.edu/hunter-library/collections/digital-collections.asp>.)

Another significant WCU Hunter Library outreach initiative involves an interdisciplinary collaboration between a library faculty member, a criminal justice professor and the Jackson County Library to strengthen library services for inmates in several regional county jails. (<http://news-prod.wcu.edu/2014/01/research-into-jail-book-collections-sparks-service-project/>)

Partnerships focus on collaborative interactions with community and related scholarship for the mutually beneficial exchange, exploration, and application of knowledge, information, and resources (research, capacity building, economic development, etc.).

Quality of partnerships-Twelve of the 15 partnerships reported for the 2008 classification hailed from just two areas, the Kimmel School and the IEF. The 15 partnerships WCU submitted in 2014 are more organic, more diverse, and more representative of the entire university. Today's partnerships address challenges and opportunities in areas spanning education, economic development and community revitalization, humanitarian and development aid, food insecurity, environment and conservation, health care, leadership, and diversity. Quality in terms of "degree of excellence" is reflected both in the processes and the outcomes of these partnerships. One of the most important quality indicators is the alignment between WCU's academic curriculum and its institutional mission, and today's partnerships clearly reflect this alignment.

Quantity-Since 2008 the number of students and faculty involved in partnerships has increased substantially. For example, the SBTDC/COB have seen a dramatic increase in the number of undergraduate students involved in partnerships. In 2013, WCU's SBTDC matched 309 students with more than 80 clients/community partners across the region. Collectively, these students invested more than 12,200 hours assisting partners with business and marketing plans, financial analysis and reporting, human resources, market research, special events, and other services. In another example, the number of WCU students participating in the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project/Local Food & Farm to School Education Program (ASAP/

LFSEEP) increased from 70 to 750 and the number of participating faculty/staff increased from 3 to 46 over the past five years.

Impact-The impact to the institution and community is reciprocal and mutually beneficial. Perhaps a community member participating in focus groups to measure the impact of the Dillsboro/WCU Partnership said it best: "I think the whole hands-on piece is so important. We lose so much of that in our education system and WCU has lots of knowledge and for it to just sit over there would be so sad. They learn, we learn—just that wonderful synergy."

Since the last classification, WCU has deepened and improved partnerships by encouraging authentic collaboration and reciprocity with community partners. Several individual units have become more intentional in their collaboration with external partners and assessment of the reciprocal benefits of the partnerships. WCU highlighted partnerships in the Kimmel School, the COB/SBTDC, ASAP/LFSEP, and the Mission Health Innovation Fellows Program in this section.

Representing both increased input of community partners at all stages of the relationship and mutually beneficial outcomes, WCU provided the Kimmel School's Center for Rapid Product Realization's two-semester, multi-disciplinary Engineering Capstone Project as an exemplar. During AY 2012-13, the Kimmel School executed 15 projects with outside industry, community and government agency partners. Students and faculty did not select the projects, rather external partners gave the student teams "industry-relevant" problems, many of which were constructed to solve real problems on the manufacturing floor and in the community. Student teams, under faculty mentorship, were required to thoroughly research the industry sponsor, their need, applicable technologies, and solution implementation. Multiple trips were made to the sponsor site as part of the research. In at least one case, the sponsoring company hired two of the students from the capstone team.

WCU assesses community partners' satisfaction and shares this data in a variety of ways. Three examples follow:

To assess partners' satisfaction with students' performances in the engineering capstone experience in the Kimmel School, surveys are sent to the partners at the end of each of the two semesters of the yearlong experience. The partners' feedback for improvement is incorporated into the program where feasible. Survey responses are posted on a share drive accessible by all faculty in the Kimmel School. At the end of the second semester, an open poster session is held, where projects and results are showcased for the general public. Immediately after the session, the Kimmel School hosts an industry forum to solicit feedback on the program and engagement initiatives.

The SBTDC asks partners to rate their student teams in communication, professionalism and content. There is also an overall experience rating of the engagement activity. These assessments have been used for process enhancement, which has resulted in improving communication with the business partners, managing their expectations, and determining the project's appropriateness for the class. These assessments are shared with the professor, the students, and the SBTDC. A final semester follow-up discussion between the faculty and SBTDC results in process improvement suggestions and recommendations on next steps for the COB/SBTDC to continue the relationship with the partner. The 2013 SBTDC Student Engagement Report showed that, overall, clients indicated a high level of satisfaction with student work. The SBTDC report is shared internally, included in accreditation reports, and distributed to the UNC General Administration for final inclusion in a report to the UNC Board of Governors.

The CSL's Community Partner Impact Survey assesses whether its 120 (approximate) partners believe WCU volunteers help them meet their goals and positively impact their organizations. Results from 2013 data confirm a strong and positive relationship between WCU and its community partners. Partners agree (n=25; 20% of partnerships represented) that WCU helps them meet their goals, makes them better at

what they do, and that student volunteers contribute in constructive and beneficial ways—all resulting in a substantial impact on their organizations.

WCU faculty members have collaborated with community partners to produce scholarly products of benefit to the community. These have ranged from technical reports to creative works to traditional conference presentations and publications. WCU provided the following five examples of faculty scholarship:

Business Plans/Reports: Students in a management capstone course provided a 100-page business plan to help guide development of a self-sustaining primary care health clinic in the new HHS building. “Students draft business plan to help develop WCU health clinic,” *The Sylva Herald*, May 22, 2013, (http://www.thesylvaherald.com/news/article_fd67a27a-c30d-11e2-9cba-0019bb30f31a.html)

Creative Works: Film and Television Production faculty/students have helped local charities increase awareness about their services and raise money by providing video documentaries. (<http://thereporter.wcu.edu/2013/08/students-and-faculty-video-for-nonprofit-shown-at-fundraiser/>)

Presentations & Publications:

Lunnen, K., Carzoli, J., & Dollar, N. (April 2013). Collaboration between Vecinos and the Physical Therapy Program at Western Carolina University. Presentation at North Carolina Farmworker Institute Summit, Durham, NC.

Schrodt, L., Lias, J. Chaplin, R. (October 2013). Partnering with community aging programs to optimize physical therapy outcomes. Presentation at North Carolina Physical Therapy Association Conference, Asheville, NC.

Bricker, P., Jackson, E., & Binkley, R. (In Press in 2013). Building teacher leaders and sustaining local communities through a collaboration Farm to School education project: What EcoJustice work can preservice teachers do? In M.P. Mueller & D.J. Tipins (Eds.), *EcoJustice, citizen science and youth activism: Situation tensions for science education*. New York, NY: Springer.

WCU supports community engaged scholarship, conference attendance, and creative activities through various internal and external funding sources.

SUMMARY NARRATIVE DESCRIBING OVERALL CHANGES SINCE THE LAST CLASSIFICATION:

Reflecting on the trajectory of outreach and partnerships at WCU, three themes emerge:

WCU is operating with greater community input at all levels. In addition to the 2020 Vision and Campus Master Planning processes previously highlighted, many other initiatives embrace community input. A Regional Conference Advisory Council, comprised of leaders from business, government, and education, was created to work with an internal steering committee on regional conference planning; various units have added advisory councils or formalized mechanisms for community input into their programs/engagement activities; and the future of the Biltmore Park instructional site is being informed by substantial community input. (<http://ccnt3.wcu.edu/academics/edoutreach/programs-at-biltmore-park/BiltmoreParkStrategicPlanning/>)

WCU is working more intentionally and with more clearly defined roles and expectations. There is greater alignment in WCU’s mission, strategic plan, budget processes, curriculum, and communication around community engagement. Based on needs/opportunities identified by the community and an internal assessment of strengths, WCU selected six curricular areas—the creative arts, education, the environment, health care, innovation/technology, and recreation/tourism—as foci. The 2013 Partnership Grid (partnership

grid is available upon request) and corresponding narrative highlight 15 robust partnerships across these disciplines and further reflect WCU's intentionality in this regard. For example, WCU is poised to address the region's tremendous health care needs through partnerships on the Millennial Campus. (<http://magazine.wcu.edu/2012/12/health-haven/>)

In what has been described as a "game changer," WCU was the only UNC institution to receive program expansion funding from the NC General Assembly during the last legislative session and will receive \$1.4 million to expand its engineering programs to the Biltmore Park instructional site. These programs will primarily focus on serving working professionals and will lead to a general engineering degree that will provide the specific skills sought by regional industry partners, further realizing WCU's role in building the region's talent force. (<http://thereporter.wcu.edu/2014/04/wcu-to-host-sneak-peek-of-new-undergrad-engineering-facility-at-biltmore-park/><http://news-prod.wcu.edu/2013/08/state-budget-includes-funding-for-engineering-program-at-biltmore-park/>)

WCU also has embraced its roles as convener and facilitator. In fall 2013, WCU hosted two regional gatherings. The Western North Carolina (WNC) P-16 Education Consortium held a Mathematics Conference convening faculty and administrators from all public school levels, community colleges and business leaders to address deficits in WNC students' math skills necessary for the workforce. (<http://news-prod.wcu.edu/2013/09/business-leaders-to-educators-at-wcu-convened-conference-strong-math-skills-a-must/>) The Regional Engagement Leadership Retreat brought WCU and external leaders together to explore the university's role in regional economic development and to plan a fall 2014 conference. (<http://thereporter.wcu.edu/2013/10/wcu-community-leaders-examine-strategies-to-forge-stronger-regional-partnerships/>)

WCU is committed to creating new partnerships, and deepening and strengthening existing connections. In addition to the WNC Leadership Initiative, WCU established a Leadership Academy in 2013 to develop high-potential faculty and staff. Strengthening WCU's role as a regional steward by increasing WCU/community partnerships is one of the program's five goals, and the Leadership Academy chose community engagement as the focus of its yearlong project.

The partnership with Mission Health, initiated in 1969 with nursing clinical affiliations, now includes grant-supported collaborations with both CHHS and COB. The 87-year partnership with Highlands Biological Station and the Forest Stewards Program demonstrate WCU's long-standing stewardship of place (literally), and the commitment to sustaining true and strong partnerships with the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians has never been greater.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In summary, community engagement is a priority in WCU's mission and strategic plan, in its fundraising and budget processes, in its curriculum, faculty reward systems, and outreach and partnerships. Community engagement at WCU in 2014 is both deep and wide. However, as a result of this application process WCU recognizes that the overall profile it has presented is not as complete and accurate as it could—and should—be. While WCU is clearly doing excellent work in community engagement across the institution, there is room for improvement in its monitoring and measuring systems. To that end, WCU elected to participate in NC Campus Compact's Measuring and Monitoring Program led by internationally recognized expert, Dr. Barbara Holland. This year-long experience has clearly influenced WCU's approach to measuring and monitoring community engagement from both perspectives of faculty (Community-Based Faculty Survey) and community partners (Community Partner Impact Survey and focus groups). Going forward, considerable communication and coordination will be needed as WCU moves to more systematic mechanisms for capturing community engagement data.



CARNEGIE TEAM/CONTACT:

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