# Civic Engagement Task Force Report

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Appendix A: Civic Engagement Task Force Membership
Appendix B: Assessment and Evaluation Committee Report
Appendix C: Institutional Incentives Committee Report
Appendix D: Community Connections Committee Report
At a time of diminished public support and novel intellectual and practical challenges, the Engaged University holds the promise for a constructive new era in higher education, in which civic responsibilities and public contributions become central institutional priorities affecting research and scholarship, teaching and learning, outreach and partnership. But institutionalizing an Engaged University is a complex process, with four parallel and inter-related dimensions: intellectual, structural, cultural, and political. The effectiveness of an Engaged University depends on focused efforts across all four dimensions. Task Force accomplishments during the past two years indicate the potential benefits that would result from sustaining civic initiatives on a permanent basis. This report and its recommendations should be considered in conjunction with the Report of the Administrative Advisory Committee on Public Engagement/Outreach. Toward this end, the Task Force makes four principal recommendations:

I. Establish a Council on Public Engagement (COPE)
COPE would serve as the linchpin for current and future civic initiatives and activities throughout the university. COPE would initiate, facilitate, connect, monitor, and publicize engaged programs and activities, including community partnerships, on all four campuses. COPE would provide leadership and become the catalyst for embedding public engagement as an institutional priority affecting research and teaching together with connections to the community. Our other recommendations would also be facilitated through the activities of COPE.

II. Expand Community Partnerships
An Engaged University works in partnership with communities, industries, and organizations to address real issues in society. Moreover, the best of these partnerships directly affect faculty research and teaching, so the university has a serious stake in their success on a number of grounds. But the development of successful community partnerships requires ongoing attention. Issues arise with regard to legal responsibilities, the complexities of diversity, and an increasing emphasis on accountability. COPE would provide a useful mechanism for addressing these issues.

III. Enhance Institutional Incentives
A critical requirement for institutionalizing civic engagement is to encourage engaged professional work through the structure of incentives and rewards. Some practical steps to encourage public engagement through the incentive system are already in place in particular units. To introduce such measures more generally throughout the university would require broad agreement and active support among both faculty and administrators, which would not easily be achieved. Leadership in this effort could be assumed by COPE.

IV. Develop Necessary Assessment and Evaluation
To develop appropriate measures for assessing the impact of public engagement, and for use as indicators in regular reviews of institutional performance, is necessary in order to evaluate carefully the results of civic initiatives. Proposed quantitative measures do not capture the full potential consequences of deepened public engagement, and to devise additional measures for a more comprehensive evaluation would be an important task for COPE in collaboration with committees of faculty governance.

We believe these four recommendations are especially important to further embed civic engagement as an institutional priority. The need for a central body to take leadership in this area is critical. The Council we are recommending would assure the continuation and greater effectiveness of the promising programs that have been launched during the past few years.
AN ENGAGED UNIVERSITY: RENEWING THE LAND-GRANT MISSION

Responding to diminished public support and the mounting pressure toward more market-oriented practices, and concerned about unresolved social problems in their neighboring communities, colleges and universities across the country are reaffirming the critical value of their civic contributions and their vital connections to the larger society. The University of Minnesota is emerging as a leader in these efforts to renew the public responsibilities of higher education. Recommendations in this Report are intended to further improve our effectiveness as an Engaged University. A goal of these activities is to reinvigorate the University's civic identity, strengthen engaged practices, and thereby help to reclaim public support.

VALUE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The University's civic engagement initiative comes at a critical time for higher education. Historic changes in the demographic, economic, technological, and political conditions that affect colleges and universities have called into question basic assumptions about our responsibilities and practices. Moreover, transformations in the world at large, which are creating a novel global information society, pose urgent challenges, dramatized for everyone by the events of 9/11 and their aftermath, that require new knowledge and understanding, new education and skills, new policies and institutions. For the first time in 50 years, colleges and universities are being urged to reconnect with their communities in ways that are unsettling in the short run but can become an occasion for renewed intellectual and institutional energy.

As a response to these historic changes, the Engaged University holds the promise of a constructive new era for higher education, in which civic responsibilities and public contributions become central to research and scholarship, teaching and learning, outreach and partnership. Civic engagement is not incidental to traditional activities; it becomes an important motivation and justification for professional work and institutional practices. The integration of civic engagement into normal professional work has far-reaching implications, which are detailed in Appendix C. Civic engagement becomes an intrinsic part of professional work, not a separable add-on. It reflects a way of thinking about the uses and impacts of scholarly disciplines. In each discipline and in interdisciplinary approaches as well, finding and developing the civically engaged component of faculty work is a significant scholarly frontier.

Characteristics of an Engaged University

What distinguishes an Engaged University? What promise does it hold for the future? The promise and value of civic engagement may be conveyed by identifying some characteristic features of an Engaged University:

- civic engagement is emphasized explicitly and regularly by university officials, including the president, provost, and deans, and members of the board of regents in communicating with the public and within the University
- civic activities are considered in a discipline-appropriate manner in tenure, promotion, and salary decisions
- the University is part of a national movement that recognizes the importance of civic engagement in order to maintain and increase public support
- civic engagement is an integral part of the University's grassroots culture, so that scholarly work is viewed in a broad social context as well as a focused disciplinary context
- researchers and service providers working in communities have established appropriate connections with people in those communities as partners in co-learning experiences
- with increased support from state government and foundations, more community-based clinical and educational centers have been established through a variety of colleges
• all colleges have established stronger ties with K-12 and with under represented groups so as to provide all segments of the population with first-quality higher education
• with input from people outside the University, more interdisciplinary programs have been developed -- both within and between colleges -- that focus on broad social issues
• cooperatively taught courses have been developed that bring teachers and students together on problem-centered rather than discipline-centered learning
• faculty help foster engaged teaching and create diverse learning opportunities for students and colleagues
• new programs have been launched with enthusiasm but then tracked with realism and careful assessment to assure their effectiveness
• University Relations has developed regular ways of working with faculty to develop and promulgate stories about civically-related research, teaching, and partnership
• consciousness of the importance of civic engagement, and the new programs that result, has extended throughout the state, expanding the University's presence
• through aspects of civic engagement that focus on strengthening democracy, the University has instilled greater civic-mindedness in students, helped empower communities, and provided the public with greater capacity for effective citizenship

In short, civic engagement infuses the University with a renewed sense of public purpose that expresses the vital role higher education must play in strengthening a democratic way of life in the 21st century.

INSTITUTIONALIZING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In a time of diminished public support and novel intellectual and practical challenges, civic engagement holds the promise of reinvigorating the University. But how can this promise be realized? How can civic engagement be embedded into the life of the University? Put another way, how can civic engagement be institutionalized?

Institutionalizing civic engagement is a complex process with four parallel and inter-related dimensions: intellectual, structural, cultural, and political. Although each dimension is important in its own way, the four are interdependent: the success of institutionalizing civic engagement depends on deliberate efforts across all four dimensions.

Intellectual

Intellectually, civic engagement raises basic issues concerning the conduct of Engaged Inquiry (in John Dewey's term) and the epistemologies of different disciplines; the relations among research/scholarship, teaching and learning, and connections to the community; the relations of basic research/scholarship and its practical applications; pedagogical, curricular, and experiential implications of civic learning; the role of the university in a democratic society. These are fundamental issues that call for thoughtful consideration throughout the University. The intellectual issues underlie whatever other steps are taken with respect to institutional structure and culture. Every practical measure prompts a debatable question: what is the meaning of Public Scholarship? does Public Scholarship distract from basic research? do community partnerships limit the autonomy of disinterested scholarship? Addressing these and other such questions is critical in institutionalizing civic engagement, which can founder through lack of clarity about its intellectual rationale and implications.

Structural

Structural arrangements of several kinds are needed to embed civic engagement as a regular part of institutional priorities and practices. A central body and/or senior administrator should assume responsibility and leadership in facilitating, monitoring, and assessing engaged activity throughout the University. Particular engaged projects and programs may thrive independently in one unit or another, but without central leadership to encourage and connect engaged activities,
the institution as a whole loses the important internal and external benefits that result from a
publicly-recognized identity as an Engaged University.

Nor can civic engagement be sustained unless it is acknowledged and valued through the
structure of incentives and rewards. There are a number of practical measures by which at each
institutional level public engagement can be recognized and encouraged, as described in
Appendix C. Some of these measures have already been instituted on a piecemeal basis within
particular units. The challenge is to adapt them for broader application.

Added impetus for civic engagement comes from changes in the external support system for
academia. Federal funding agencies, foundations, and professional societies are paying
increased attention to outreach, community connections, the social impact of research and
partnerships. In devoting effort to civicly engaged activities, faculty will find support from
emerging trends within their professions.

Cultural
An Engaged University differs from a conventional research university in which an ideal of
disinterested scholarship dominates the institutional culture. In the conventional culture,
responsiveness to social needs and connections to the community are incidental at best and
distractions at worst. The change from a culture of Disinterested Research to a culture of Public
Scholarship entails a significant transformation. Such a change cannot be mandated from above;
it emerges through new awareness and assent. A change in institutional culture occurs as faculty,
staff, students, and administrators value an Engaged University as the institutional environment
which enables them to do their best work.

Political
Institutionalizing civic engagement depends also on a political process to involve stakeholders
and constituencies without whose support the effort falters. Strategies for enlisting support vary
according to circumstances in each university, but the active support and leadership of key senior
administrators and faculty leaders is critical everywhere. Civic engagement cannot succeed
without positive support from institutional leaders and diverse publics.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

Building on a remarkable range of ongoing engaged activities, the Task Force during the past two
years has sponsored a variety of initiatives to increase awareness of the University's civic
contributions and to strengthen public engagement, including innovative community partnerships,
on all four campuses. These initiatives are detailed in Appendix E under a number of headings:

Seed Grants for Civic Projects
- 27 civic projects were funded from some 150 proposals representing all campuses and many
different units
- based on written reports and oral presentations, lessons are being learned about promising
directions for future grants

Coordination with other Initiatives to Leverage Resources
- through discussions with leaders of other initiatives, including Vital Aging, Distributed
  Learning, GRASSRoutes, and others, areas for mutual support were identified and pursued

Civic Forums
- forums are being held in some dozen colleges on all four campuses to discuss how civic
  engagement relates to the distinctive work of each unit
• conversations with deans about topics for these forums, as well as issues connected with civic learning, elicited widespread interest in the meaning of civically engaged work and the nature of public contributions within their respective units

Involvement of Faculty Governance
• meetings with committees of faculty governance have led to promising discussions about their direct involvement with civic engagement and to formation of a special SCEP committee on civic learning

Civic Engagement Website (http://www.umn.edu/civic)
• a website was developed and is being maintained which serves as a statewide and national information clearinghouse for civic engagement activities

Civic Engagement Inventory
• an Inventory has been constructed and regularly updated, available on the website, listing more than 150 faculty/staff/student courses, programs, partnerships and other forms of civically engaged activities

Foundation Support
• members of the Task Force have received significant foundation grants for projects directly related to civic initiatives, including awards from Ford, Kellogg, Carnegie, Pew, and FIPSE

Consultation with other Universities
• delegations from Tufts, Auburn, and Penn State have visited the campus to discuss Minnesota's experience with civic engagement, followed by reports on our efforts from Tufts and Auburn
• our work here is being drawn upon in establishing similar task forces at Michigan and Maryland

Presentations and Publications
• members of the Task Force have been making presentations locally and nationally about our civic engagement initiative
• regular reports have been issued about ongoing civic activities, and several publications are forthcoming or in preparation

National Recognition
• in June the Kellogg Foundation is sponsoring a national conference in the Twin Cities on the topic "Institutionalizing Civic Engagement," which will feature our work here as a prominent civic initiative

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Accomplishments during the past two years indicate the potential benefits that would result from sustaining Task Force initiatives, as well as other related programs, on a permanent basis. Our recommendations stem from discussions within three Task Force committees, whose reports are attached as appendices: Assessment and Evaluation, Institutional Incentives, and Community Connections. The four recommendations are:

I. Establish a council on public engagement
II. Expand community partnerships
III. Enhance institutional Incentives
IV. Develop necessary assessment and evaluation

Recommendation I. Establish a Council on Public Engagement (COPE)

Purpose
COPE would serve as the linchpin for current and future civic initiatives and activities throughout the University. COPE would initiate, facilitate, connect, monitor, assess, and publicize engaged programs and activities, including community partnerships, on all four campuses. COPE would provide leadership and become the catalyst for embedding public engagement as an institutional priority affecting research and teaching together with connections to the community.

Specific Responsibilities
Facilitation
• promote and monitor the integration of public engagement into core activities through public scholarship, civic learning, and community partnerships
• foster multi-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary initiatives that further public engagement as an institutional priority
• support innovative projects and sustained discussion of the practical implications and civic contributions of public engagement within different units
• identify and address barriers to public engagement that affect core activities at all levels of the institution
• work with Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) to support civic engagement as an institutional priority

Connection among Programs
• connect programs and EVPP initiatives related to public engagement across all campuses, including Extension Service, Continuing Education, Distributed Learning, Vital Aging, Center for Teaching and Learning, and others
• coordinate with colleges/campuses to identify their distinctive contributions

Connection to Communities
• develop and promote best practices in conducting community partnerships, as discussed below in Recommendation II
• serve as an institutional bridge between the university and external communities and organizations by including community representatives as members of COPE

Strategic Planning
• propose and support strategic investment of resources through the compact process, foundation programs, and other sources of funding to strengthen engaged initiatives throughout the University

Institutional Incentives
• continue annual Community Service Awards as a permanent form of institutional recognition for exceptional public contributions
• help to institute institutional practices to encourage and reward engaged work as a regular part of faculty and staff activity, as discussed below in Recommendation III
• foster the integration of public engagement within the University’s institutional culture that affects expectations for professional work, student orientation programs, curricular and co-curricular experiences, and external relations

Liaison
• serve as liaison to other colleges and universities, including through CIC, in sharing information and furthering engaged programs

Assessment and Evaluation
• develop measures for assessing public engagement as an indicator of institutional performance, as discussed below in Recommendation IV
• report annually to the Provost on the effectiveness of public engagement as an institutional priority

**Communication**

• assist in articulating and communicating the University's civic responsibilities and public contributions internally and externally
• identify and communicate important benefits of public engagement to the community and the University

**Organization**

**Membership**

• COPE would be composed of no more than 20 members, appointed by the Provost, including a mix from all campuses of senior administrators, deans, faculty leaders, staff representatives, student leaders, and representatives of the alumni association, and community partners from all campuses
• members should have a strong personal commitment to public engagement as an institutional priority
• Council would include liaison members from Consortium of Children, Youth, and Families, Rural Development Council, Regional Partnerships, TEL Council, etc.

**Terms**

• members would ordinarily serve for a three-year term, with the possibility of renewal
• initial appointments would be made in June, 2002, with terms to start in September

**Meetings**

• COPE would meet at least once each semester, with particular responsibilities assigned to subcommittees which may invite the participation of other appropriate individuals from inside and outside the university

**Chair**

• the Chair would be designated by the Provost

**Outcomes**

Anticipated outcomes from COPE are both short-term and long-term, specific and more general. As a key element in institutionalizing civic engagement, COPE holds important promise for strengthening the Engaged University in a number respects.

**Increased Public Support**

The public supports the University not simply for the benefits we provide as an engine of economic progress and a source of technological innovation but for our civic contributions that help to strengthen a democratic way of life for the people of the state, the nation, and around the globe. These civic contributions, which were discussed in our Report to the Provost last year, are central to the mission of an Engaged University. But they do not happen spontaneously; they require institutional attention and encouragement. COPE will help to assure such attention and encouragement on a continuing basis, and thereby it will help to reclaim public support for the University.

**Improved Recruitment and Retention of Undergraduates, Especially Minority Students**

The experience of other universities has shown that students respond positively to opportunities for civic learning. Surveys also confirm that students seek civic involvement as part of their college education. By helping to expand the number and variety of civic learning opportunities, COPE will assist the recruitment and retention of undergraduate students.

**Expanded and Effective Community Partnerships**

Constructive community partnerships are a critical priority for an Engaged University, but there are serious issues and challenges in forming such partnerships. A primary responsibility of COPE is to coordinate and facilitate efforts to develop and sustain effective community partnerships.

**Strategic Investment of Resources**

Widespread faculty, staff, and student interest in engaged projects is evident from the variety of existing projects and programs and the response to Task Force RFPs for additional projects. But not all engaged projects and programs, however worthwhile, can be supported with University resources. A major responsibility of COPE is to recommend how best to invest University resources to achieve the most significant positive results.

**Enhanced Public Scholarship**

Significant Public Scholarship is a distinctive contribution of an engaged research university. Fostering Public Scholarship is a vital institutional priority which COPE will further by helping to institute incentives and rewards that encourage greater recognition of the importance of Public Scholarship as a valued civic contribution.
Culture Change
While COPE cannot by itself instigate a change in culture, its activities will help bring about such a change. COPE’s leadership as a high-level body responsible for facilitating engaged work and programs will focus attention on the importance the University attaches to civic engagement. Its encouragement of engagement through practical incentives will also contribute to a change in culture. Our interviews and civic forums show that many faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as students, would welcome such a change.

Budget
Funds are needed for small grants, visiting speakers and conferences, council meetings, community service awards, community civic forums, and moderate staff support.

Recommendation II. Expand Community Partnerships

The civic engagement initiative has stimulated discussion about the University's social contract and its participation in work structured through interdependent, shared-power, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial partnerships. An Engaged University works in partnership with communities, industries, and organizations to address real issues in society. Moreover, the best of these partnerships directly affect faculty research and teaching, so the University has a serious stake in their success on a number of grounds. In community-university partnerships, all parties are full partners in the project. Civically engaged research, learning, and service are created by a variety of interests that operate in mutually beneficial relationships for common purposes. The new constellation of community-university partnerships is about people working together, not citizens working on behalf of the University or the University working on behalf of citizens. This kind of partnership is not owned or managed by any one of the partners, but by all of them together.

Based on an examination of a wide range of successful partnerships, we find that there is no one "best model" but rather a variety of partnership types. (See Appendix D for further elaboration of the characteristics of different types of partnerships.) The types include:

Consultative Partnership
In this kind of relationship, a faculty-member, unit, department, or school has the same relationship to a client as a self-employed or privately established consultant. The work of the Humphrey Institute with the legislature and cities and of the Extension program on Business, Relationships, and Expansion fit this category.

Technical Assistant Partnership
In this kind of relationship, a client entity has much more comprehensive responsibility for identifying a need and specifying an outcome or product of the relationship. The work of the University of Minnesota, Crookston with school districts and with natural resource consortia fit this category.

Partnership of Convenience
This is the converse of the Consultative Partnership in that the relationship is initiated by an academic entity (faculty member, department, school, etc.) with an external party. Many community-based research activities, such as Ken Hepburn's Savvy Caregiver research, fit this category.

Generative Partnership
This is a relationship between some part of the University and some external entity that produces something -- deliberately vague -- that takes on a life of its own. As such, this third entity may begin to interact independently with each of its progenitors. There are a number of striking examples of this type of partnership. The Community University Health Care Center, the Regional Geriatric Education Centers, and the Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships fit this category.

Partnerships for Mutual Benefit
In this relationship, a University and an external entity recognize that each can gain from working on a common project. The clinical center for interdisciplinary geriatric education fits this category.

Outreach
In this relationship between University entities and either organizations (including communities) and/or individuals, the balance of power tilts toward the University. Many of the examples provided by the University of Minnesota Extension Service fit this category. With all these partnerships, issues arise that need careful attention in order to avoid disappointment, failure, or even litigation. Forming constructive partnerships would be facilitated by an institutional body with responsibility for providing guidelines and arranging practical assistance of various kinds, from faculty development to contractual advice (see Appendix D for additional details).

As mentioned briefly above, there is a useful role in facilitating the development of community partnerships for the proposed Council on Public Engagement. Its role could include:

• to provide on an ongoing basis an inventory of effective community partnerships and to identify practical measures for developing partnerships across a full range of activities, which will clarify what is meant by "best practices" for partnerships, remove barriers to their development, and help measure their success
• to connect partnerships with institutional resources
• to address problems in keeping partnerships viable
• to recognize and celebrate effective community partnerships (through continuation of the Community Service Awards)
• to develop a shared understanding of the integral connection among public scholarship, civic learning, and community partnerships
• to address the question, How do we have authentic community partnerships without the University being the "500 pound gorilla"?

All this work would be aided by including community representatives as members of COPE.

The University has a direct and major interest in fostering effective community partnerships. But the development of successful partnerships requires ongoing attention. Issues arise with regard to legal responsibilities, the complexities of diversity, and an increasing emphasis on accountability. COPE would provide a useful mechanism for addressing these issues.

**Recommendation III. Enhance Institutional Incentives**

A critical requirement for institutionalizing civic engagement is to encourage engaged professional work through the structure of incentives and rewards. Practical steps to encourage public engagement through the incentive system include the following, some of which are already in place in particular units:

- **Recruitment:** Include a statement in job descriptions about positive expectations for publicly-engaged professional work. For example, "The department welcomes applicants with an express interest in the public connections of research and teaching."
- **Institutional Messages:** Emphasize the value and benefits of public connections for research, teaching, and other professional work as well as the importance of public contributions for an engaged university in statements from department heads, deans, and senior administrators.
- **Evaluation:** Include "public impact (or public connection) of research, teaching, and service" as an explicit category in annual activity reports and merit recommendations.
- **Promotion and Tenure:** Consider evidence of "public impact of professional work" as a criterion in assessing professional achievement in the P & T process.
- **Institutional Recognition:** Continue the Community Service Awards as official acknowledgment of the value attached by the university to public contributions.
- **Sponsored Civic Projects:** Continue to fund innovative, multi-disciplinary, publicly-engaged projects as a special institutional program.

These are a limited number of specific examples of how public engagement can be incorporated into the incentive and reward structure. To apply such measures more generally throughout the institution would require broad agreement and active support among both faculty and administrators, which would not easily be achieved. Yet an effort to introduce such measures,
perhaps incrementally within individual units, is a vital step toward embedding civic engagement as a recognized institutional priority. Leadership in this effort could be assumed by COPE.

**Recommendation IV. Develop Necessary Assessment and Evaluation**

To develop appropriate measures for assessing the impact of public engagement, and for use as indicators in regular reviews of institutional performance, is necessary in order to evaluate carefully the results of civic initiatives.

Possible quantitative indicators of University-wide engaged activity include the following:
- Number of faculty and staff engaged in CE activities
- Number of public members participating in CE activities
- Satisfaction surveys of public
- Number of public (not regular UM employees) employed in UM community projects
- Number of CE projects
- External funding of CE projects - might/should include all grants from federal and state agencies
- Number of mentions of CE activities in news media
- Number of collaborative teaching ventures focused on a social issue
- Number of collaborative research ventures focused on a social issue

Civic engagement might be evaluated in ways similar to the present evaluation of teaching:
- student (and community) evaluations
- peer evaluation
- courses and lectures (and community contacts and projects) engaged in teaching (CE) portfolio
- pedagogical (CE) innovations, etc.

We recognize that these assessment measures do not capture the full potential consequences of deepened public engagement, which are discussed further in Appendix B. To devise additional measures for a more comprehensive evaluation would be an important task for COPE in collaboration with committees of faculty governance.

**CONCLUSION**

We are making four recommendations which we believe are especially important to continue embedding civic engagement as an institutional priority. Other proposals could have been added to extend projects already underway, but we focused on the basic dimensions for institutionalizing civic initiatives. The need for a central body to take leadership in this area is critical. The Council we are recommending, COPE, would assure the continuation and greater effectiveness of the promising programs that have been launched during the past few years.

The promise of the Engaged University as the direction for the future development of American higher education is historic. The University of Minnesota is helping to point the way toward this future. The land-grant tradition is a source of inspiration for this effort. In reaffirming the University's civic responsibilities, public contributions, and connections to the community we are seeking to renew the land-grant mission in contemporary terms. And as an Engaged University we can reclaim the public support that has been gradually eroding. We should seize this opportunity.