

# REVITALIZING OUR DEMOCRACY: BUILDING ON OUR ASSETS

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2016 Annual Member Survey  
Executive Summary



Campus Compact



## INTRODUCTION

The 2016 Campus Compact annual survey provides evidence of the diverse spheres in which network members build connections across their campuses and with community partners to open up a world of engagement possibilities for students. The data gathered this year demonstrate that member institutions are embracing an asset-oriented mindset towards engagement; students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners are all involved in extending the reach of possibilities for community-based learning. Moreover, member institutions are building the data environments needed to advance their public purpose missions strategically and effectively. This work of building communities, preparing students for lifelong public participation, and catalyzing campus engagement provides the framework for this report.

## CAMPUS COMPACT MEMBERS BUILD COMMUNITIES

Campus Compact's membership reflects the full range of diversity among colleges and universities in the U.S. including public and private, two-year and four-year, rural and urban, and those classifying themselves as faith-based, women's, tribal, Hispanic-serving, and historically black colleges and universities, among others. Our members are anchored in communities equally as diverse. This context naturally supports the value of place-based approaches to partnership development. The 2016 results reflect this dynamic and diverse landscape through partnerships focused on a range of issues and approaches to student learning.

### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Members were asked to identify the types of organizations with which they have “mutually beneficial, reciprocal, community partnerships.” Our respondents are actively collaborating across all spheres of society, from nonprofit and community-based organizations (99%) to for-profit businesses (67%), faith-based organizations (82%), and K-12 schools (95%) [Table 1].

Results from the survey also highlight that across the range of partnerships recognized by respondents, students at Campus Compact member institutions are exposed to a wide range of community issues. The primary mission focus of community partners

shows continued emphasis on priorities such as college readiness in K-12 education (90%), food security (86%), individual and community health (85%) and housing/homelessness (82%). Community partners also focus on topics ranging from economic development (77%) to the arts (68%), voting (49%) and transportation (27%), among other issues [Table 2].

**TABLE 1. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS IN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Non-profit/community-based organizations	99%
K-12 schools	95%
Faith-based organizations	82%
Government	77%
International communities or organizations	70%
For-profit businesses	67%
Other higher education institutions	59%
Other	4%
The institution does not currently have mutually beneficial, reciprocal community partnerships	1%

**Network members build connections across their campuses and with community partners to open up a world of engagement possibilities for students.**



Notably, community partners are not simply passive recipients of student volunteers. They are active co-creators of the student learning and engagement process. For example, 59% of respondents indicate that their institution has developed shared outcome goals with one or more community partners. Moreover, community partners bring their expertise and insight to bear through various on- and off-campus activities including visiting classes as speakers (94%), assisting with the creation of syllabi and course design (33%), providing feedback on community engagement programs (83%), and serving on campus committees related to learning goals and/or engagement activities (47%) [Table 3]. Member institutions responding to the 2016 survey reveal purposeful and diverse collaborations with community partners across a range of sectors and issues.

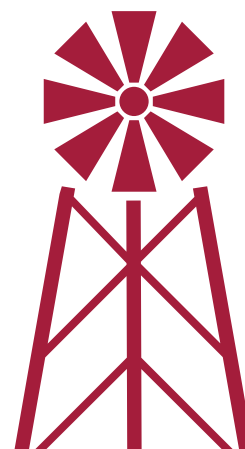
# Community partners are active co-creators of the student learning and engagement process.

**TABLE 2. PRIMARY MISSION FOCUS OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

College readiness in K-12 education	90%
Food security	86%
Individual and community health	85%
Environment/sustainability issues	82%
Housing/homelessness	82%
Economic development	77%
Poverty alleviation	77%
Arts	68%
Access and retention in higher education	63%
Civil rights/human rights	63%
Immigrants/migrant worker rights	54%
Criminal justice and legal representation	54%
K-12 student civic learning	53%
Voting	49%
Disaster preparedness	38%
Conflict resolution	35%
Transportation	27%
Other	7%

**TABLE 3. COMMUNITY PARTNER INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT**

Come into classes as speakers	94%
Provide feedback on the development/maintenance of community service/volunteering/community engagement programs	83%
Provide reflection on-site in community settings	68%
Participate in the design and delivery of community-based courses	48%
Serve on campus committees that determine learning goals and/or engagement activities	47%
Act as uncompensated co-instructors	38%
Assist in creating syllabi and/or designing courses	33%
Act as compensated co-instructors	27%
Other	8%
Community partners are not currently involved in student learning and engagement activities	3%



## CAMPUS COMPACT MEMBERS PREPARE STUDENTS FOR LIFELONG ENGAGEMENT

Campus Compact is committed to advancing the public purposes of higher education by identifying and facilitating the implementation of successful, high-impact learning experiences for all students on member campuses. Student participation in curricular and co-curricular opportunities related to civic skills and competencies is one avenue to promote learning and success. Member institutions are extending engagement beyond graduation by recognizing alumni as assets in contributing to learning opportunities for current students. The 2016 Campus Compact survey highlights the range of college and university practices in both areas.

### STUDENT CIVIC LEARNING

More than one-half of respondents (58%) report that a portion of their graduates took at least one community-based learning course before graduating [see Table 4].

**TABLE 4. PERCENTAGE OF GRADUATES TAKING AT LEAST ONE COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING COURSE DURING THEIR ACADEMIC CAREER**

0% of graduates	6%
<10% of graduates	10%
10% to 25% of graduates	17%
26% to 50% of graduates	10%
51% to 75% of graduates	9%
76% to 99%	7%
100% of graduates	5%

To assess progress toward a goal of preparing students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good, institutions were asked to report on the ways they tracked participation in courses contributing to the development of civic skills and competencies. Respondents indicated that they tracked participation in courses that focus on: diversity (35%); building skills in deliberative discussion (16%); and contributing to democratic participation (14%). Approximately 62% of respondents do not track participation in courses with these skills/competencies.

Just over half of respondents indicate that their institutions identify specific student outcomes for community engagement (51%). For these respondents, the outcomes cover a range of areas including critical thinking (80%), civic or democratic learning (77%), and engagement across difference (77%). Table 5 provides additional details about the range of outcomes identified by survey respondents.

Building skills that support students in working across lines of difference, analyzing information, effectively and respectfully participating in dialogue, and understanding policy making sets students on a pathway to effectiveness in careers (regardless of sector) and in contributing to the health of our democracy.

**TABLE 5. PERCENTAGE OF INSTITUTIONS THAT IDENTIFY THE FOLLOWING OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Critical thinking	80%
Civic or democratic learning	77%
Engagement across difference	77%
Global learning	64%
Social justice orientation	62%
Policy knowledge	28%
Media literacy	21%
Other	23%

### ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Alumni of Campus Compact member institutions are important stakeholders in our communities and assets for the development of partnerships and opportunities for student civic learning. The 2016 member survey asked respondents about their engagement with alumni. Responses show the broad scope of institutional connections with alumni focused on community engagement. These include inviting alumni to serve as speakers or mentors to current students (72%), recognizing alumni for service in publications (60%), communicating service opportunities to alumni (57%), and cultivating alumni donors to support service activities (49%) [see Table 6].



**TABLE 6. PERCENTAGE OF INSTITUTIONS THAT IDENTIFY THE FOLLOWING OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Invites alumni to serve as speakers or mentors to current students	73%
Recognizes alumni for service in publications	60%
Communicates service opportunities	57%
Gives awards to alumni for service	50%
Cultivates alumni donors to support service activities	49%
Coordinates day of service or service weekend activities	41%
None of the above	13%
Other	9%

Campus Compact members are also providing services specifically for alumni entering public service careers. Just over one-half of respondents provide informational programming on public service careers (51%) and 35% of respondents maintain a network of alumni in public service careers. Such activities provide evidence of the broad commitment our member campuses make to strengthening our democracy.



## CAMPUS COMPACT MEMBERS CATALYZE CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

Institutions are building on their assets to create cultures of engagement. The results from 2016 highlight the positive practices of member institutions working to understand how individuals on their campuses are connecting with communities. Efforts to identify and record community engagement activities inside and outside the classroom, among students, staff and faculty, and a range of other offices across campus, are essential for understanding and growing positive public impact and increasing student civic learning.

### **TRACKING COMMUNITY-BASED ENGAGEMENT**

62% of respondents indicate that their institution has formally adopted a definition of community-based learning or a related term, such as service-learning. Survey participants were also asked to indicate whether or not their institution formally designated community-based learning courses. Community-based designations could include, for example, service-learning, internships, practica, or clinicals. 52% responded affirmatively that their institution formally designates such courses, while 48% do not.

Open discussion about how community-based learning is defined and designated can contribute to campus wide understanding of engaged teaching and research. Designation can also assist institutions seeking to track the number of community-based learning courses being offered and understand the number of faculty and staff using high impact practices such as service-learning.

**Alumni of Campus Compact member institutions are important stakeholders in our communities and assets for the development of partnerships and opportunities for student civic learning.**



**TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS TRACKING STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULAR OR CO-CURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS**

Fundraising	29%
Philanthropy	27%
Advocacy	27%
Activism	22%
Social entrepreneurship	19%
None of the above	57%

81% of respondents are tracking the number of students participating in curricular and/or co-curricular community engagement. Fewer (66%) are involved in tracking the number of hours that students spend completing these engagement activities. Respondents were also asked if they track student participation in specific areas such as fundraising (29%) and philanthropy (27%) (see Table 7 for additional results).

67% of respondents track the number of community-based learning courses offered, regardless of whether those courses were designated or undesignated. For the purpose of analysis, respondents who do not track were asked to provide their best estimate of the number of community-based learning courses offered by their institution in 2015-2016. A robust 33,975 community-based learning courses were offered across all respondents in the survey. Fewer institutions (62%) report tracking the number of staff and faculty teaching community-based learning courses.

**DATA ENVIRONMENTS THAT GENERATE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The process of gathering the data to complete this annual survey is not a small task. Respondents were asked to collaborate with all knowledgeable stakeholders in order to achieve the most comprehensive and accurate understanding of the community engagement practices on their campuses. Those efforts were worthwhile. Respondents were asked to share how their institution will use the information gathered for this survey. Table 8 reveals the variety of ways that member campuses can use their work to inform processes such as strategic planning and accreditation, and to share knowledge with various constituencies. In short, respondents will make use of their participation to continue to advance the work of catalyzing engagement.

**TABLE 8. PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO WILL USE THE INFORMATION GATHERED FOR SURVEY IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS**

Share with relevant contacts on campus	84%
Use to inform strategic planning for the institution	65%
Share with the president or chancellor	64%
Use to complete the application for the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll	58%
Use to inform strategic planning for the institution	53%
Share with marketing and public relations	45%
Share with relevant contacts in the community	44%
Use to complete the application for the elective Carnegie Community Engagement Classification	39%
Share with prospective students	31%
Share with current and/or prospective donors	29%
Use to inform accreditation	28%
Share with alumni	27%
Share with institutional governing board	24%
Other	8%
None of the above	5%

Tracking participation throughout the year can make it easier to access data to complete the variety of surveys and recognition programs focused on engaged practice. Moreover, systematic approaches to ongoing data collection may relate to the overall climate for community engagement on campus. For example, in the 2016 results, institutions that report tracking the number of community-based learning courses on their campuses report offering more of such classes on average than those that do not track. This is one area for further exploration.

The 2016 results also point to alumni activities as another area to build data collection to inform institutional practices. To cite one example, more than half of responding institutions (66%) do not track the number of graduates entering national service programs such as AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, or Teach for America.

# Campus Compact members embrace a broad vision of student engagement that extends into a range of private, public, for-profit, and nonprofit partnerships in their communities.

## CONCLUSION

The 2016 annual member survey provides evidence of the practical ways colleges and universities advance their public purposes. By building communities, promoting learning and success, and catalyzing campus engagement, our members continue to express the wide variety of ways colleges and universities can contribute to the public good. Results from this survey suggest that Campus Compact members embrace a broad vision of student engagement that extends into a range of private, public, for-profit, and nonprofit partnerships in their communities. As in the past, the results of this survey will guide Campus Compact's work in supporting the engagement efforts of our members.

## ABOUT CAMPUS COMPACT

Campus Compact advances the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility. Campus Compact envisions colleges and universities as vital agents and architects of a diverse democracy, committed to educating students for responsible citizenship in ways that both deepen their education and improve the quality of community life. We challenge all of higher education to make civic and community engagement an institutional priority.

The national office for Campus Compact is located in Boston, MA. Supported by state and regional Compacts, our network of member campuses extends throughout the United States and beyond.

## ABOUT THIS SURVEY

### Purpose

Conducted each year since 1986, Campus Compact's member survey is the most widely-distributed review of community-based learning, community partnerships, and civic education in higher education. The survey provides institutions, researchers and higher education organizations with a powerful tool to capture curricular and co-curricular engagement, campus engagement, infrastructure, and an array of other elements of higher education's community engagement landscape.

### Methodology

For nine weeks beginning in October 2016, Campus Compact partnered with TreeTop Commons to conduct an online member survey to capture student and faculty involvement in communities; assess institutional support and culture; and gather information on community-campus partnerships, tracking mechanisms, and more. Community engagement professionals at member colleges and universities were asked to coordinate a single institutional response with the most complete and accurate data possible.

Descriptive statistics were calculated from the responses and are utilized throughout this report. Percentages have been rounded for reporting purposes.

This iteration of the Campus Compact Annual Survey returns to the process of alternating questions bi-annually. The data gathered will be useful for practitioners and researchers, and Campus Compact members will find that the process of responding gives them a head start in data collection for other institutional and national purposes.

### Respondents

Past iterations of the annual survey invited open participation by members using the online tool Survey Monkey. For the first time, in 2016, individual survey leads on each member campus were invited to complete the survey on behalf of their institution through a unique survey link via Qualtrics (sponsored by the Office of Community Engagement at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis). Survey leads were identified via Campus Compact's membership database. The population size for this survey includes 1,002 member institutions.



Survey leads were expected to help gather data, convene campus stakeholders, and complete the comprehensive survey report online via their unique links. Challenges to data collection included inaccuracies in contact email addresses, staff turnover at member institutions, and the use of spam filters on member campuses. 396 institutions responded to the survey, resulting in a national response rate of 39.52%.

### Limitations

While we encouraged member institutions to complete the survey with input from multiple stakeholders, in some cases the data may reflect the understanding and perspectives of a single individual or office. It is also difficult to ensure that the survey is completed by the individual at the institution with the most comprehensive understanding of community engagement. Some institutions may have had difficulty completing the survey, and the total membership population is not accounted for in the results; this may create non-response and potential response bias.

Campus Compact continues to be committed to strengthening the survey methodology in the coming years. We have found value in creating Affinity Reports, which cluster respondents by various institutional characteristics, as they allow for a more narrow comparison of data. These reports will be accessible on the Campus Compact website.

This Executive Summary highlights only a portion of the data collected by the Campus Compact member survey. If you are interested in reviewing the raw data, or have questions about the 2016 survey, please contact Danielle Leek, Director of Professional Learning (dleek@compact.org).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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