

Updated Engagement Strategic Plan

We define engagement as:

“Collaboration 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.”

The purpose of engagement is:

“The partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.”

Build a Common Understanding of Engagement

1. Establish a common understanding of Engagement by clearly defining engagement, extension, outreach, and service and establish clear and measurable connections between engaged scholarship, research, creative activities, and teaching.
2. Define the purpose of Engagement as it relates to our university identity, and promote and encourage a university culture that widely embraces Engagement as core to its identity.
3. Locate the purpose of Engagement within the strategic priority areas of the university including: A) aiding student recruitment, B) strengthening student retention and graduation, and C) fostering greater cultural understanding.

Strengthen Kansas State University's Engagement Infrastructure

1. Identify a central office and senior level administrator responsible for promoting and coordinating Engagement activities across campus, measure and report their impacts for Kansans and beyond, and designate Engagement liaisons to serve as champions and advocates.
2. Increase the emphasis on recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse faculty and staff with an appreciation of and commitment to Engagement, and encourage all faculty to strengthen their professional profiles with more engaged scholarship work.
3. Expand our Engagement with local, state, regional, national, and international communities, build on our current capacity to respond to their needs, adopt effective practices at all levels and ensure the communities have a voice in defining our engagement activities.

Enrich Engaged Scholarship, Research, and Creative Endeavor

Work with campuses, colleges, and departments to strengthen Engagement scholarly activity by:

- A) redefining the concept of scholarship to include Engagement;
- B) characterizing impacts (both disciplinary and community) in assessments of the value of research and education activities;
- C) revising promotion/tenure, evaluation, and rewards systems to recognize and value community-engaged scholarship;
- D) continuing and deepening professional development programming to strengthen faculty and staff understanding and practice of community-engaged scholarship;
- E) assisting faculty to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of Engagement activities;
- F) supporting faculty efforts to generate funding through Engagement activities;
- G) encouraging research on campus and in communities that generates products employed by the general public, and;
- H) increasing funding and resources to support Engagement activities, including grants management and impact reporting.

Enhance Engaged Curriculum

1. Integrate Engagement into the undergraduate student experience, expectations, and student learning outcomes through strategies including: A) encouraging students to have at least one meaningful, high-quality Engagement experience before graduating, B) increasing the number of students involved in community-based research, C) working with the registrar to tag service-learning courses in the course catalog and line schedules, D) noting Engagement experiences on transcripts, and E) increasing research grants and funding available that involve undergraduates in community-based research activities.
2. Establish guidelines that define what comprises a quality service-learning experience for students and faculty and assign leadership, accountability, and resources that coordinate service learning.
3. Seek greater collaboration between the Center for Engagement and Community Development and Leadership Communication faculty and students to more fully integrate community engagement within the Leadership Communication Ph.D.
4. Continue to expand the Leadership Communication Ph.D.

Strengthen Democratic Values and Civic Responsibility

1. Convene and support a student/staff/faculty coalition dedicated to improving the campus climate for civic issue learning and political action*

** IDHE defines political action as, "voting, running for office, attending a town meeting, lobbying and other forms of engagement with government, as well as activism such as "Community organizing, public deliberation, and protest." (Thomas, N. and Brower, M 2017. IDHE Report Politics 364: Fostering Campus Climates for Student Political Learning & Engagement, p. 12, <https://tischcollege.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/Politics%20365.pdf>*

2. Through the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy, the Staley School of Leadership Studies, and additional curricular and non-curricular programs, promote training for facilitators of dialogue, deliberation, and community organizing.
3. Proactively engage staff, students, and faculty in voter registration, issue learning, and election participation, building on previously successful processes (e.g. ID Center), structures (e.g. Housing & Dining Services) and community relationships (e.g. Riley County Elections Office, League of Women Voters).
4. Support faculty across all disciplines employing curricular and co-curricular opportunities to discuss salient political, policy, and controversial issues, offering professional development and leadership incentives.
5. Identify and celebrate transformative partnerships between campus and community entities that have collaborated to resolve a local issue of social equity.
6. Reinforce and relay campus Diversity and Inclusion programs and tools to community partnerships, supporting training in intercultural development and communication across difference.

Address Critical Societal Issues

1. Promote cross-disciplinary, cross-sector work addressing such salient issues as sustainability, social equity, and armed conflict.
2. Increase engagement capacities around KSRE's Five Grand Challenges: global food systems, health, leadership, community vitality, and water.
3. Increase our emergency response capabilities through activities such as greater participation of the university community in providing emergency preparedness classes, identifying an "emergency response service" corps to deal with community crises wherever needed, and contributing research that identifies best practices applicable to a given need.

Achieve Engagement Recognition

1. Celebrate, recognize, promote, and communicate the results and impact of Engagement activities at the same level as other K-State accomplishments.
2. Collaborate with faculty and professional staff to achieve state, regional, and national recognition for K-State engagement work.