IV. Strategies for the Incorporation of Civic Education in the Classroom

Table 1: Strategies for Incorporating Civic Engagement

Develop novel approaches to research papers and projects that enable students to relate their coursework to real world problems and increase student accountability by
- assigning projects and/or designing websites that provide resources for community partners
- requiring students to "take a stand" on policy issues in written and oral assignments
- requiring students to conduct research in the community

Use exercises that enable students to empathize with individuals working for social and political change by
- conducting mock electoral debates and conventions
- asking students to adopt historical personas in role-playing exercises
- teaching past and present social and political issues from the perspectives of multiple groups or individuals working for change

Provide opportunities for private and public reflection that connect coursework with civic engagement experiences by
- using journals and informal reflective essays
- assigning written assignments that combine reflection with a critical analysis and/or application of academic texts
- creating courses devoted to reflection after being away from campus for a semester or year-long civic experience
- making reflection public, especially by using the internet

Design collaborative and student-led projects that help students learn to work with diverse individuals and groups by
- using students as facilitators when interacting with community partners
- designing service learning components in which students teach what they have learned in class to members of the community
- modeling democratic dialogue in class discussions

Expose students to differing opinions and approaches to help them view issues from multiple perspectives and relate coursework to multiple contexts by
- offering team taught and/or interdisciplinary courses
- inviting guest speakers to class (faculty and members of the community)
- organizing interdisciplinary conferences on campus related to the subject matter of the course

In this section, we discuss five strategies for incorporating civic engagement into the classroom. Although these pedagogical tools are not unique to civic engagement courses, the CEC faculty found them especially effective for achieving the three learning outcomes previously discussed (see pages 11-12).

Novel Approaches to Research Papers and Projects:
Enabling Students to Relate Their Coursework to Real World Problems
and Increasing Student Accountability

Several courses transformed traditional research assignments by incorporating projects that grew out of semester-long collaborations with community partners.[24] These projects helped students connect classroom content with problems facing their local communities. They inspired a deeper commitment and sense of accountability that, in turn, yielded higher quality work.

Transforming research projects in ways that enable students to connect "theory and practice" can deepen student engagement with materials in the humanities. In one example, in a course entitled "Museums and Their Communities" at Ursinus College, art historian Susan Shifrin's syllabus explained to students that they would apply what they learned in the course by "envisioning, planning, revising, implementing, and evaluating a museum- and community-based partnership project." For this project, several students developed a public forum about the preservation, presentation, and sustainability of a historic site known as "The Speaker's House," the home of Frederick Muhlenberg, the first Speaker of the U.S. House, as well as a member of the Continental Congress and the first signer of the Bill of Rights.[25] Capturing a feeling expressed by many CEC faculty, Shifrin wrote that this kind of project not only achieved "the successful integration of theory and practice" but also fostered a deeper "sense of commitment and engagement on the part of the students" to the course.

This strategy – assigning research projects that directly filled a need in the community – worked in the natural sciences as well. Adrian Hightower, a physicist at Occidental College, designed a course that incorporated an assignment for students to work with and contribute to local community organizations in the form of a written report. In his class, "Energy Conversions and Resources," students conducted energy audits with partners in the Los Angeles area, including the Audubon Center, for which students assessed the potential of purchasing an electric vehicle and connecting the Center to an electrical grid. Hightower's evaluation stressed "reciprocal benefits" of this community partnership, noting that "the information produced by the physics students has enabled Audubon staff to hold a more informed conversation and more clearly articulate the Center's operational, financial and programmatic goals to their consultants contracted for [a] mechanical systems evaluation."

Faculty in the social sciences also found that projects that served a real purpose in the community deepened student enthusiasm and dedication to their courses. At Macalester College, geographers in three courses collaborated to have students write reports on local water conservation and present them at an undergraduate research conference. As David Lanegran, one of the three geographers, explained in his syllabus, "For this class we assume the structure of a consulting firm that has a contract to produce a report for a policy implementing organization."

At the end of the course, students generated an annotated atlas that documented population distribution, economic development, and environmental concerns and public policies pertaining to the Crow River Watershed. The atlas was created as a resource for residents dealing with issues resulting from the transformation of the rural landscape from an area of production to one of leisure and consumption.[26] As in Shifrin's art history course, Macalester geographer Daniel Trudeau found that "the external accountability component of the public scholarship project inspired students to aim very high and do excellent scholarship." Their experiences support a recent study's findings that such assignments "yielded a stronger base of political knowledge and understanding, and an array of political skills, particularly in research, writing, and critical thinking; communication; strategic thinking; collaborative work; and leadership."[27]

Other courses opted for oral and visual presentations as capstones to community partnerships. At the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Elon University, in "Social Issues and Problems in the Local Community," Angela Lewellyn-Jones and Pamela Kiser asked students to identify a "social problem" in the community, select and work with community partners to address that problem, connect scholarship from the course to the problem, and finally design an ideal "social entrepreneurship project" to present to the class at the end of the semester.[28] For this project, one group of students identified the need for a local Headstart center to better serve a growing Hispanic population, and the team used a social entrepreneurship grant provided by Elon to purchase bilingual books for the center.

Comments from students in Myrna Breitbart's "The Crafted City: Art, Urban Regeneration, and the New Cultural Economy," an urban studies course at Hampshire College underscore the ways in which these types of projects enable students to apply course content and skills to community needs. In this course on the politics of the aesthetics in the design of urban spaces, students produced a variety of resources for the community: a guide for students interested in working or volunteering in nearby Holyoke, MA; a public presentation of the South Holyoke Community Arts Initiative Evaluation; and a public workshop on "Creating Sustainable Neighborhoods in Holyoke." Commenting on the power of such projects in the course evaluation, one student wrote, "It was refreshing to do research for a direct, applied purpose," noting the "higher stakes and added accountability." Another contrasted "this kind of writing" with "academic writing," concluding, "I felt it was a good learning experience to use my analytic and writing skills for a community-based purpose." The student also added that "the connections to the course material were clear to me and I was able to explain some of the connections in my reflection paper." In Breitbart's class and others like it, research projects involving community partners enabled students to connect course materials to real problems facing local communities in concrete ways and to use what they learned in the classroom to begin to address those problems.

While these examples reveal that working with community partners is an effective strategy for transforming research projects, our analysis of the CECs suggests that there are others. Several courses without community partnerships adapted research papers in ways that enabled students to relate course materials to pressing real world problems and view these problems from diverse perspectives.

Requiring students to take a position on a pressing social issue is one approach. At Wagner College, "The Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications of the Genome" modified the traditional

research paper by requiring students "to identify issues, take a stand, recommend a policy, and anticipate the desired outcome of their policy." The class was co-taught by sociologist John P. Esser and biologist Ammini Moorthy, who noted that the assignment "forces students to think about social problems stemming from developments in genetic science."

Another approach is to send students to conduct research outside of the library by requiring them to talk with groups directly affected by the subject matter of a course. At Pitzer College, in "Topics in Native American Art History: Native California," students conducted research at one of several local museum collections. As art historian Bill Anthes wrote in his course syllabus, "students will learn the value of… incorporating Native voices into the study of Native American art and cultural history" in order "to develop an appreciation of the history and continuous importance of indigenous issues and perspectives in the contemporary civic sphere."

Innovative research projects, such as ones that ask students to "take a stand" or use alternative research methods, stimulate students to "think about social problems." These projects expose students to new perspectives and connect their coursework to the world outside academia. While undertaking these projects, students develop the "knowledge, skills, values and motivation" that they need to become engaged citizens.

Exercises that Enable Students to Empathize
with Individuals Working for Social and Political Change

Several faculty employed variations of role-playing to expose students to the challenges involved in working for social and political change. Students assumed the roles of people affected by political or social problems in order to understand the world from the perspective of the personas they adopted.[29] From the standpoint of civic education, role-playing exercises enable students to view social problems from a variety of perspectives and connect their course materials to the dynamics of political processes in the real world. For example, a political science course might ask students to adopt first Republican and then Democratic positions in a debate in order better to understand opinions with which they do not necessarily agree.

Two CECs used the 2008 presidential election to allow students to organize and participate in mock debates. At Macalester College, students in political scientist Julie Dolan's "Presidential Campaigns and Elections" hosted a mock political convention during which the students "educated, informed, and engaged the larger community in the presidential election season." Each student adopted the role of either a candidate or a campaign manager. Students wrote campaign literature and speeches and invited their peers and local high school students to attend the convention, where all present participated by voting on a party platform. In this exercise, students directly applied the political science literature on campaigns and elections to the creation of a public event. In course evaluations, numerous students commented that they appreciated the opportunity to experience a "real world" or "practical" application of academic "theories" and "concepts." Dolan observed that students learned "a great deal about campaigning, political communication, caucusing, party conventions, targeting and mobilizing voters, and event organizing." In addition to reading about these topics in course books, students combined their academic learning with an experiential role-playing exercise that deepened their

knowledge of the materials, helped them develop skills for political action and education, and engaged the wider community.

At New England College, political scientist Wayne Lesperance's "Campaigns and Elections" was such a powerful experience for students that they were inspired to form an organization called CiviCorps. As part of the course, students hosted a mock convention open to the entire campus. Because of New Hampshire's prominence in the primary cycle, students were able to invite presidential candidates and other leading civic figures and media experts to campus. After the course, several students formed CiviCorps, an organization that Lesperance described as composed "of citizen scholars dedicated to promoting applied citizenship on campus [and] in the community." In addition to conducting voter registration drives and community service projects, the students who lead CiviCorps have also organized town hall meetings and congressional debates, directly applying the skills they learned in class. Lesperance wrote, "It is my belief that their introduction to service and the importance of applied citizenship through the Campaigns and Elections course provided these students with a platform from which to move forward as engaged citizen scholars." In this example and many others, students gained the knowledge and skills to relate their coursework to real-world problems and also the motivation and capacity to take action.

Another strategy involved the use of role-playing in the classroom in order to help students understand the challenges of forming consensus and dealing with dissent in the civic realm. Historians use role-playing exercises in order to teach the importance of individual agency and contingency in understanding the events of the past.[30] At Allegheny College, historian Barry Shapiro used this form of experiential learning in "Citizenship, Democracy, and the French Revolution." His goal, according to the syllabus, was to encourage students "to reflect on the meaning of citizenship and civic engagement" as they acted "out the responses of revolutionary participants to various revolutionary situations." These participants included not only well-known revolutionary leaders but also ordinary men and women of the day. Shapiro's students responded favorably to this unconventional approach, so much so that he concluded that this course was "one of the most successful I have ever taught." Students commented not only that they mastered the content much more effectively through role-playing than they would have in a traditional lecture course but also that they learned such civic lessons as "the difficulty in reaching consensus when dealing with extremes" and the "frustration" experienced by political actors "on a personal level." For Shapiro, one of the greatest achievements of the course was that by associating so closely with historical figures "on a personal level" students came to appreciate the challenges of reaching consensus in deliberative processes.

At Berea College, historian Rebecca Bates also sought to enable students to identify with individuals and groups working for social change. She taught "Seminar in Modern European History: Social Responses to Poverty" from the perspectives of groups of social reformers and philanthropists working to eradicate poverty. In class and in written assignments, students focused on a specific approach or reform of their choice. Bates commented that as a result students both came to consider the influence of economic policy on people's daily lives and to empathize with historical actors through a greater understanding of "the limitations" they "encountered in the past." In short, both Shapiro's and Bates's courses helped students to

understand the multiplicity of perspectives and actors involved in political change and to empathize with the challenges involved in working to bring about such change.

Finally, at Bethune-Cookman University, Linda Scola used a variety of experiential techniques in her introductory sociology course to enable students to understand the life experiences of members of different classes and their relation to political, social, and economic structures. In one exercise, students began by planning a budget for an individual working for minimum wage. Scola then asked them to "examine the structural and institutional factors that establish and maintain the wage, including the various social agencies that exist to 'serve' the poor, the employment of middle-income range workers who dispense and monitor the social services, and the effects of economic factors such as the current recession." Students benefited from this type of exercise, developing a deeper engagement with the subject matter of the course and empathy for diverse individuals. According to Scola, "Incorporating civic engagement related topics appears to have increased overall classroom engagement in the regular classroom environment."

Opportunities for Private and Public Reflection
that Connect Coursework with Civic Engagement Experiences

Many faculty asked students to write personal reflections on their service learning and other civic experiences. These reflections, submitted only to professors and not to community partners, provided students with an opportunity to consider the relationship of their course work to their experiences in the community. Recent scholarship on service learning indicates that reflection plays a crucial role in amplifying the learning experience.[31] Pedagogical techniques that involve "structured reflection" are an important component of civic education, often making use of discussions, journals, and informal essays to help students identify and question their own assumptions, process experiences in the community, and connect course materials with work in other disciplines and their real-world application. Under this model, reflection is a teachable skill that enables students to achieve these ends.[32] Most of the CECs that involved service learning and other forms of community partnerships included some type of reflective exercise. While many incorporated personal journals in their courses, here we highlight two broad categories of innovative approaches to reflection.

First, a number of courses augmented reflective exercises by adding longer, more formal written assignments that enabled students to connect the content of their courses directly to their service learning experiences. At Macalester College, philosopher Amy Ihlan's course on "Civic Engagement, Ethics and Community" combined philosophical texts on the meaning of citizenship and public life with a community-service requirement. Students wrote graded essays "reflecting on their experiences in light of the ideas and readings" assigned for the class. According to Ihlan, allowing students to combine personal reflection with critical analysis of philosophical texts on the meaning of civic engagement helped students bridge theory and practice. This approach was effective in empowering students and inspiring them to take action. In course evaluations, one student commented, "I have definitely become inspired to become more involved," while another claimed, "I never used to believe that one person can make a difference but … I now think differently."

One faculty member created an entire course devoted to this type of reflection. At Hampshire College, cultural psychologist Kimberly Chang taught "Returning to Hampshire" for students who had participated in study abroad programs and domestic and international community internships. The course enabled students to connect civic engagement experiences with the psychological literature on what Chang described as the relationship between "power and resistance," "subjectivity and agency," the "global and local," and "academics and activism." Chang combined discussions and readings on these topics with reflection and research papers. Her goal was to provide students with a "conceptual vocabulary" with which "to frame and analyze their experiences in terms of larger social/cultural/political contexts and issues."

Students responded positively to the course. One commented that the class was "invaluable" because it helped him grow "as a person and not just a student." For Chang, such comments highlighted "the need for courses that provide students with a space where they can bring what are often profoundly transformative yet largely unexamined community-based learning experiences." In both Ihlan's and Chang's courses, faculty assigned graded essays that incorporated reflection with an analysis and/or application of course materials. These assignments helped students connect philosophy and psychology respectively to their practical applications outside the classroom in order to deepen their understanding of their civic experiences and encourage and enable students to continue to be active citizens in the future.

Second, several CECs transformed reflection from a private to a public activity.[33] As one recent study claims, "Engaging in reflection that clarifies personal values is not necessarily a task accomplished individually; small group activities and collaborative work can create meaningful dialogues that promote clarification of values."[34] Along these lines, three CECs found that using on-line forums for public reflection deepened student interactions with each other. Jürgen von Mahs's urban studies course on "Engaging Urban Homelessness" at The New School created several online forums for students to interact, asking "students [to] post their course diaries as blogs online." Nancy Zrinyi Long's English course on "Literature and Writing," combining literature and community service at Bethune-Cookman University, assigned reflective essays and current-events journals. Long found that posting student journals on a course discussion board deepened both student interest in the course and interaction with each other. She also discovered that "blog"-style journals that allowed for greater "color" and "creativity" were particularly effective. Caroline Heldman's political science course on "Disaster Politics: New Orleans in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina" at Occidental College used a blog to share response papers and a Facebook group to enable students in the course to connect with each other. She found that students continued to use the Facebook group after the end of the course. These opportunities for public reflection allowed students to share their own views on how the materials they read in class related to the experiences in the community and also to be exposed to the views of peers who may have understood these relationships differently.[35]

In "Art of the Essay: Making the Personal Public," a writing course at New England College, Douglas Haynes used public reflection without the aid of the internet to help students master writing skills for public engagement. Haynes asked students to use immersion journalism (a method of journalism covering events from an intensely personal perspective) to write personal, narrative-based reflection pieces about their civic experiences.[36] While some approaches that combine service learning and composition focus on self-awareness and personal empowerment

as learning outcomes,[37] Haynes's goal was to help students realize "that personal writing does not just have to be about self-expression but can also be publicly-engaged," an important lesson "for college students who are often trained not to use the first person and not to offer their own points of view." In this type of reflective exercise, students processed their community experiences for their own benefit and also learned how to relate these experiences to a wider community. For some students, the course was transformative. In evaluations, one described it as "one of the most rewarding experiences I have had at this college," even concluding that "[i]t has changed my life." Another student emphasized the specific skills s/he had gained, claiming "I have learned by example what qualities and steps are necessary to become a persuasive activist . . . I will be better prepared for future civic engagement opportunities."

Other CEC faculty noted that providing students with opportunities to present and discuss reflective pieces in class was also crucial. Macalester College's Ihlan added this type of exercise to the private, formal, philosophical essays she assigned, noting that it was important to incorporate "time and space in class for student-led presentation and discussion of their own experiences and analysis of them," especially towards the end of the semester. Political scientist Patricia Moynagh and historian Lori Weintrob of Wagner College shared this sentiment when discussing their team-taught courses, commenting that "student presentations were often the best measure for evaluating the success of the course from a civic engagement perspective." These presentations at the end of the semester helped students "to organize their own efforts in the community as they relate [them] to the intellectual work" of the class. Like personal journals, formal written assignments and public reflection online or in class are valuable pedagogical tools that enable students to relate civic activities outside of the classroom to academic materials and thereby deepen both their community and academic experiences.

Collaborative and Student-Led Projects that Help
Students Learn to Work with Diverse Opinions and Groups

The ability to work with others is indispensable for engaged citizens in a democratic society. Through collaborative assignments, students develop skills for collective action and for working with people from diverse backgrounds.[38] Class discussions that elicit multiple opinions and perspectives also foster an aptitude for deliberation that is crucial for political participation.[39] Especially in the liberal arts setting of Periclean colleges and universities, collaborative pedagogies are a practical tool for fostering an awareness of and respect for multiple perspectives on issues of social concern. The ability to consider and respect divergent opinions helps students develop the skills and values necessary to act as engaged citizens in a democratic society.

A majority of the CECs integrated collaborative exercises that required students to work together. These group projects helped students learn to collaborate to achieve common goals. At Berea College, in Billy Wooten's communication course on "Political Communication," students organized issue-awareness campaigns and community forums; in Rebecca Bates's modern European history seminar, students made group presentations and designed a course website. Several other faculty worked to deepen students' collaborative experiences in two additional ways: the use of peer mentors, teachers, and facilitators both in the classroom and in the community and the explicit creation of models of democratic dialogue in the classroom.

Numerous courses used peers as an approach to modeling democratic participation in the classroom. A recent study of peer facilitators in service learning courses argues that the use of upper-level undergraduates represents a "more democratic pedagogical model" in which students become active participants in the process of learning and teaching. Not only do the undergraduate students in the course benefit from this model, but the peer facilitators do so as well by serving others and developing skills for conflict resolution, communication, respectful listening, and working with groups.[40]

The use of peer teachers and mentors in the classroom can deepen overall student engagement and help students make connections between coursework and community engagement. At Widener University, Sandra Miller found that using students as teachers in the classroom in her business law course, entitled "Business Law and Environmental Action," helped them to connect theory to practice and to hone a variety of skills necessary for collaboration. According to Miller, "Putting students into the role of teacher proved to be an excellent way of actively engaging the students." Miller also noted that using students as teachers deepened their interest in service learning topics. Ecologist Brian Schultz at Hampshire College made similar observations about his use of peer mentors in "Agriculture, Ecology, and Society." Schultz asked students in two courses, one introductory and one advanced, to work together on projects with community partners that promoted sustainable agriculture. He found that peer mentoring deepened student interest in course materials and community projects and enabled them to make stronger connections between the two.

Faculty who used peer facilitators and teachers when working with community partners made similar observations. At Berea College, psychologist David Porter used two sophomores as contacts with community partners in his first-year seminar "Questioning Authority." Porter felt that his "realization of the value of peer leaders … on student learning and performance" was one of the most important outcomes of the course. The peer leaders in the course played a crucial role in forging connections and commitments between the first-year students and community partners. Similarly, in "Nonviolent Social Change" at Pitzer College, sociologist Kathleen Yep found that "having the students not only learn about nonviolent social change but … teach the material to another community" at a nearby juvenile detention center was crucial in achieving the goals of the course.

Students teaching what they have learned to others proved to be beneficial in the humanities as well. In an English course at Pace University, Patricia Hamill used folk tales to help students understand current moral dilemmas and analyze definitions of ethical behavior. She added a service component to "The Individual and Society: Folklore and Fairy Tales" in order to give her students the opportunity to transform the insights they gained from her course into action. The Pace students read and discussed folk tales with elementary and high school youths. As a result of her experiences in this course, Hamill reaffirmed her belief "the Humanities in general and literature specifically have their place in community service and that academic service learning also enhances the learning experience of the undergrads who must live the work and not just learn it."

Another technique explicitly presents the classroom as a model for democratic dialogue, encouraging students to listen to other opinions respectfully and consider diverse opinions on contentious topics. At Hendrix College, Jay McDaniel introduced foreign exchange students to "American Ways of Life" in an American studies course that served as an example of democracy in action. He asked his students to attend a variety of forums and talks on campus that they later discussed in class. According to McDaniel, the most notable accomplishment of the course was the creation of a "micro-democracy through cross-cultural dialogue." "The key," McDaniel wrote, "is to develop a climate of democracy in the classroom through small numbers. This is what we did. Another key is to realize that the climate of democracy requires that people listen as well as talk. I think as a class we all learned to listen." In this example, modeling democracy in the classroom provided a space for students to react to what others had said and consider multiple perspectives in a respectful environment.

Exposing Students to Differing Opinions and Approaches to Help Them
View Issues from Multiple Perspectives and Relate Coursework to Multiple Contexts

The faculty who offered interdisciplinary CECs or team-taught CECs within a single department developed innovative teaching methods in line with one of the most significant trends in higher education today. Contemporary discussions of reform often call for the need to create more opportunities for learning across the disciplines. The increasing use of learning communities, defined by a recent study as "conscious curricular structures that link two or more disciplines around the exploration of a common theme," reflects a desire to utilize collaborative approaches to learning to help students view issues from multiple perspectives and value the contributions of diverse participants.[41] Scholars increasingly suggest that learning communities and other integrative approaches to liberal arts education are especially valuable in the field of civic education.[42] A study published in 2009 finds that that "integrative and interdisciplinary education that embeds civic engagement is one of the most promising means" of "preparing students to be civically engaged citizens, scholars, and leaders…." It concludes that "innovative leaders of higher education" who experiment with such approaches "will continue to transform how faculty teach, how students learn, and how institutions of higher education serve as responsible members of local and global communities."[43] The faculty of the CECs that offered interdisciplinary courses or team-taught courses within a single department acted as such "innovative leaders."

Some CECs combined faculty collaborations with service learning. At the Center for Social Work Education at Widener University, students in Marina Barnett's "Generalist Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations" worked with students in an environmental studies course to use graphic information system (GIS) technology to make an "asset map" (an inventory of community strengths and resources) of Chester, Pennsylvania. The social work students collected information from the community and then worked with environmental studies students to create a handbook and on-line interactive map for use by local community leaders and residents. Similarly, at Macalester College students in three separate courses in the geography department came together to write reports on local water conservation, create an annotated atlas using GIS technology, and deliver presentations at an undergraduate research conference. The community was able to use this information to highlight disparities and increase support for

neighborhood revitalization. In both examples, the joint efforts of faculty members in separate courses enabled students to work together to produce successful final projects for community partners.

Several other interdisciplinary courses that did not involve service learning also helped students develop these skills:

At Allegheny College, faculty members in four disciplines (communication arts, environmental science, geology, and political science) taught separate courses on global health policy that collaborated throughout the semester with joint field trips, guest speakers, and colloquia. Students in all four classes worked together on research papers, with a student from each class using his or her "discipline-specific course learning" to serve as an "expert" at joint meetings. Students responded positively to the team project. Eighty-three percent agreed that "the team project helped them to better understand the connection between their academic studies and problems facing our wider communities," and seventy-five percent noted that the team project helped them to develop skills to work in a professional setting. Moreover, according to environmental scientist Caryl Waggett, the collaborative teaching "provided unique inquiry and shared enthusiasm among the faculty which was brought to the students in the classroom." At the end of the semester she concluded, "Without the interdisciplinary perspectives that helped to link the sciences, public policy, and public awareness, this type of connection between course learning and community would not have been as successful."

At Hampshire College, sociologist and scholar of Middle Eastern Studies Berna Turam taught a course on "Civil Society and the State" that invited guest speakers to the course to discuss "real world" examples. These guests were often student activists who shared their own experiences of interacting with the government. As part of the course, Turam hosted a two-day interdisciplinary conference "Religious Modernity and Secularist Resistance in Modern Turkey" that students helped organize and attended. According to Turam, the papers presented "featured the issues discussed in the … course and created an opportunity for students to expand their classroom dialogues and be further supported through exposure to respected academics" from Amherst College, Columbia University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and University of Chicago in the United States, McGill University in Canada, and Galatasaray in Turkey. Turam expects these papers to be published in an interdisciplinary and interregional journal in the fall of 2009.

Two student comments illustrate some of the achievements of Turam's course:

> I came to this class with general knowledge beyond Social Science, but after taking this class I have a much deeper, more specific, and more contextualized understanding of the subject itself and how it relates to a much wider context. To say the least, I learned a lot and the class far exceeded my expectations.
>
> I got everything I expected to get out of this course. I now have greater understanding of 'civil society' and a different view of the world.

At Wagner College, two CECs were part of the college's programs involving learning communities. Wagner defines learning communities as "clusters of courses that are linked together by a single theme" that share "overlapping assignments, common readings and joint problems" and often field placements as a means of experiential learning.[44] Political scientist Patricia Moynagh and historian Lori Weintrob joined their respective courses, "Crossing Boundaries, Raising Voices: The History and Politics of Feminist Activism" and "Leadership in the Face of Conflict: Twentieth Century Crises." Students combined their studies of history, politics, and political theory with either community service, community activism, or oral history in a neighboring Liberian community in Staten Island.

In a learning community that did not involve service learning, sociologist John Esser and biologist Ammini Moorthy co-taught "The Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications of the Genome." They commented that helping students develop the "[a]bility to integrate sociology and genetics into a multi-disciplinary approach to the crucial emerging genetic ethical, legal, and social issues of our day" was one of the most successful outcomes of the course. They also concluded that interdisciplinary collaboration was crucial to the integration of civic engagement into their subject matter: "If you truly want to teach civic engagement on Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues (ELSI) surrounding genetic research, you really need professors from different disciplines working together. In this respect, Wagner's learning communities, and specifically the team-taught learning community concept, is well suited to teaching this topic. If this course were taught independently by two separate professors, neither the students nor the professors would have the benefit of seeing the same issue from different disciplinary perspectives."

V. Managing Expectations: Challenges and Solutions to Some of the Unique Demands of Civic Education

While the vast majority of the CEC faculty found their experiences rewarding, many also noted the unique challenges posed by incorporating civic education into academic courses. The evaluations of the faculty suggest that recognizing and managing expectations – of colleagues, of faculty themselves, of students, and of community partners – can help ease some of these challenges. Some faculty and administrators claim that civic education, particularly when it includes service learning or other forms of community partnerships, can detract from the academic content of a course. While many of the CECs demonstrated that faculty believe that civic components often improve student learning by relating theory and practice, several CEC faculty noted that by attempting to "accomplish too many goals" they were not able "to include everything" or "cover the full range of topics and readings originally planned." Moreover, in some cases students felt overwhelmed by the added time commitments of CECs, and community partners were frustrated that their expectations and needs were not being fully met. Yet the CEC Program clearly demonstrates that careful planning can minimize such problems. In their evaluations, the CEC faculty provided numerous specific suggestions for other faculty members interested in incorporating civic engagement in their courses that address these types of challenges.

Civic Engagement in the Classroom:

Strategies for Incorporating Education for Civic and Social Responsibility in the Undergraduate Curriculum

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