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Engagement: It's In Our Leadership DNA

A CIVIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH GEORGIA



Campus Compact

Executive Summary

At the University of North Georgia, we believe that engagement through authentic partnerships with our communities should be an integral part of our DNA as an institution, not only determining the fabric of who we are, but also who we are going to be in the future.

The Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement has provided us with the opportunity to renew our commitment to preparing students for democratic citizenship, strengthen our partnerships for change, and ensure that our teaching, research, and institutional actions contribute to the public good.

At UNG, community engagement is the means by which we express our scholarly, academic, and professional genes through mutually-beneficial community-campus partnerships. This Civic Action Plan serves as a map for improving the depth and pervasiveness of our community engagement work.

The University of North Georgia

Our Vision

The University of North Georgia will be a regional and national leader for academic excellence, engagement, educational opportunity, and leadership development.

Our Mission

The University of North Georgia, a regional multi-campus institution and premier senior military college, provides a culture of academic excellence in a student-focused environment that includes quality education, service, inquiry and creativity. This is accomplished through broad access to comprehensive academic and co-curricular programs that develop students into leaders for a diverse and global society. The University of North Georgia is a University System of Georgia leadership institution and is The Military College of Georgia.

Our Values

- Excellence - Promoting standards of performance and accountability that exceed expectations
- Student-focus - Facilitating success and educational goal attainment for all students and fostering a welcoming environment that values and reflects diversity and inclusion.
- Integrity - Cultivating in ourselves and in others the willingness and steadfastness to act honestly and ethically
- Engagement - Promoting active involvement, intellectual inquiry and creativity, collaboration, and community partnership
- Service - Giving of oneself to enhance the life and richness of the university and all of its members, as well as the larger community

In 2010, the University of North Georgia became one of the first public institutions in the state to receive the Carnegie Foundation's elective Community Engagement Classification. In line with Goal III of the University of North Georgia's 2014-2019 Strategic Plan, we will maintain this classification during the 2020 cycle.

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. Campus Compact challenges all of higher education to make civic and community engagement an institutional priority.

Campus Compact puts special emphasis on partnerships to support educational equity and helps colleges and universities advance community goals in areas such as K-12 learning, college readiness, college access, and the development of student civic knowledge and skills at every level. Campus Compact's work strengthens colleges and universities as contributors to educational equity now while developing the next generation of citizens and leaders for our communities.

In recognition of Campus Compact's 30th anniversary in 2015-16, the Board of Directors asked member presidents and chancellors to join in signing an Action Statement, a declaration of shared commitment to the public purposes of higher education and a promise to develop a Campus Civic Action Plan to realize those purposes more fully. UNG President Bonita Jacobs became a signatory on the Action Statement in January 2016, committing the University of North Georgia to develop a campus Civic Action Plan, which is intended to be a living document that celebrates on-going community-engaged work, across our five campuses, identify opportunities for new programs or initiatives, and emphasize capacity-building for sustainable change.

To advance the public purposes of higher education, the University of North Georgia affirms the following statements, which characterize our current commitments and name the ideals toward which we will work with continued dedication, focus, and vigor.

- **We empower** our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus—nearby and around the world.
- **We prepare** our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.
- **We embrace** our responsibilities as place based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.
- **We harness** the capacity of our institutions—through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice—to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.
- **We foster** an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.

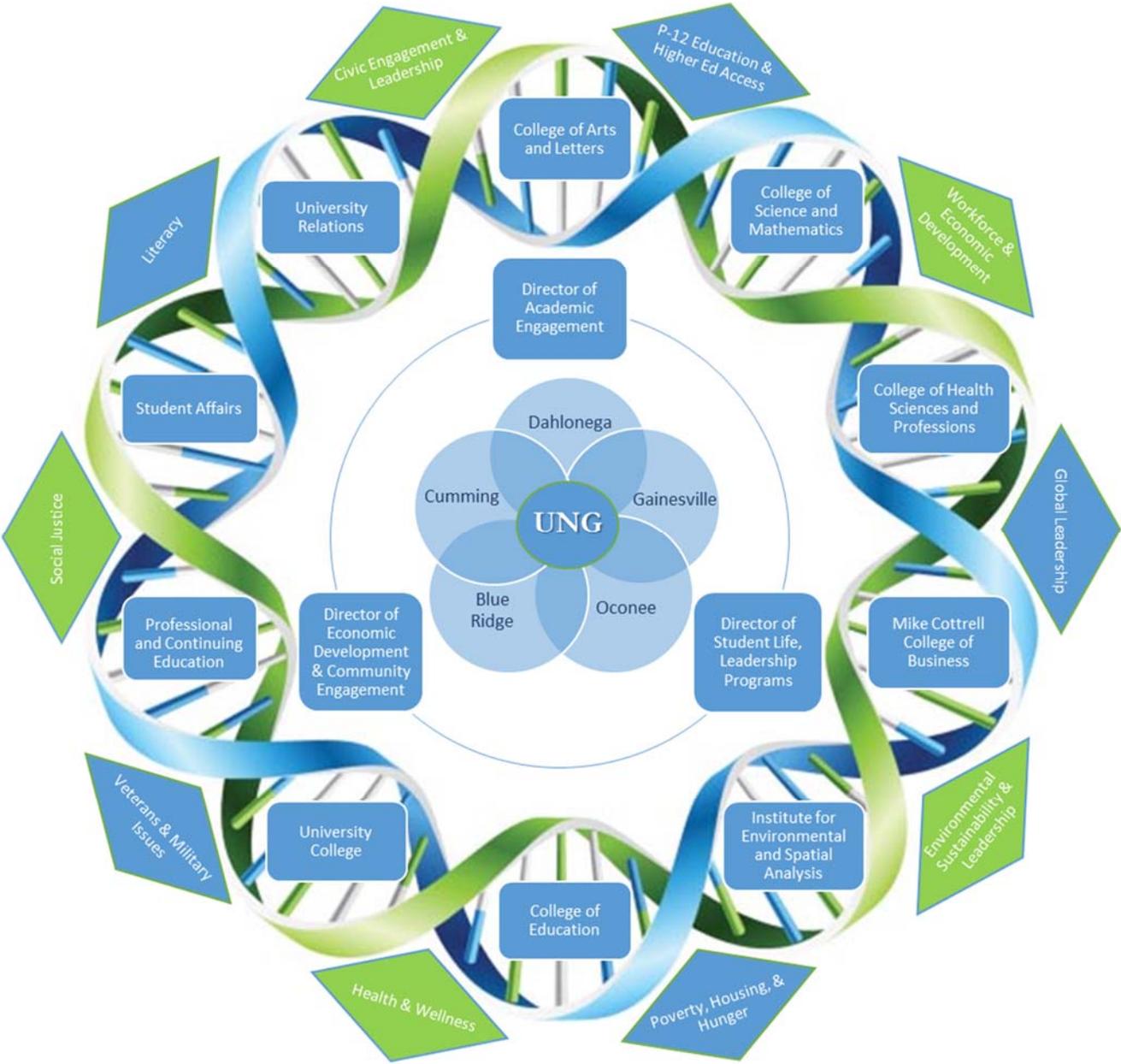
Consistent with our Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, the University of North Georgia defines community engagement as the:

...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 community 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.

As an institution committed to the public purposes of higher education, we believe that UNG can be among the "colleges and universities [who represent] one of the greatest hopes for intellectual and civic progress... for this hope to be fulfilled, the academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic and moral problems, and must reaffirm its historic commitment to ... the scholarship of engagement."

Boyer, E. (1996). The scholarship of engagement. *Journal of Public Service and Outreach*, 1(1), 11-20.

Engagement is how we conceptualize responding to a changing world. In recognition of the multiple pathways to engagement, the figure below demonstrates UNG’s interconnected institutional approach to community engagement.



In 2012, Chancellor Hank Huckaby recommended a series of institutional consolidations within the University System of Georgia, including the merger of North Georgia College & State University and Gainesville State College, to become the University of North Georgia. In an effort to build institutional unity post-consolidation and further establish UNG as an engaged institution, the 2014-2015 Academic Year was declared the Year of Engagement. At the conclusion of the Year of Engagement, a series of faculty focus groups were held to identify areas of continued growth for UNG's engagement mission. A White Paper was produced that identified areas for further clarification and growth, including developing a common language and approach and reinforcing the scholarly rigor of community engagement.

This Civic Action Plan represents a continuation of this work. The University of North Georgia's current strategic plan, which emphasizes community engagement, expires in 2019. Our Civic Action Plan will strategically position community and civic engagement to continue to serve a central role in the next strategic plan.

Civic Action Planning Committee members

- Gary Adcox, Director of Campus Success and Strategic Initiatives (Oconee)
- Christian Bello Escobar, CAMP Program Director (University-wide)
- Susan Brantley, Lecturer of Biology (Oconee)
- Donna Gessell, Professor of English (Dahlonge)
- Kay Keller, Director of Economic Development & Community Engagement (University-wide)
- Kelly McFaden, Associate Professor of Teacher Education (Dahlonge)
- Cyndee Perdue Moore, Executive Director (Oconee)
- Drew Pearl, Director of Academic Engagement (University-wide)
- Nathan Price, Assistant Professor of Political Science (Blue Ridge)
- Michael Proulx, Associate Professor of History (Dahlonge)
- Robert Robinson, Director of Multicultural Student Affairs (University-wide)
- Mallory Rodriguez, Director of Student Life, Leadership Programs (University-wide)
- Rebecca Rose, Head Librarian (Cumming)
- Don Walsh, Associate Professor of Physical Therapy (Dahlonge)

Special thanks to Mary Anne Brown (Administrative Assistant to the Associate Provost for Research and Engagement) and Claudia Nelson (2017-2018 ACE Fellow). The work of this committee was generously supported by the University of North Georgia's Office of Research and Engagement.

Commitments from the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement

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We empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus—nearby and around the world.

The University of North Georgia is a community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends who are committed to educational excellence, leadership development, and community engagement. This culture is supported regionally through five campus communities, globally through the Institute for Leadership and Strategic Studies and the Center for Global Engagement, and through the Corps of Cadets as a Senior Military College. We strive to provide the necessary infrastructure and awareness to effectively and intentionally facilitate mutually-beneficial, reciprocal, and transformational partnerships, including appropriate recognition, rewards, and celebration. Our engagement initiatives address pressing social, civic, economic, and ethical issues, guided by the principles outlined in Ernest Boyer's (1996) *Scholarship of Engagement* and the AAC&U's (Association of American Colleges and Universities) *A Crucible Moment* report.

We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.

As a state-designated leadership institution, the University of North Georgia takes great responsibility to prepare and motivate our students as leaders for a diverse and global society. Through a variety of experiences such as service-learning, internships, study abroad, community service, and leadership development opportunities, our students gain essential skills that propel them into lives of engagement. Through these experiences, our students become critical thinkers who learn to identify community needs and develop strategies to address social issues facing our regional communities and beyond.

We embrace our responsibilities as place based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.

As an anchor institution operating on five campuses and serving a 30-county region in north Georgia, each campus embraces the responsibility to fully appreciate and understand the unique economic, social, environmental, educational, and political needs and opportunities within their service area. This enables the university to develop a supportive and holistic community-university approach to engagement in order to build and sustain partnerships for a more vibrant community, committed to providing innovative opportunities for scholarship and service.

We harness the capacity of our institutions—through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice—to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.

As an institution committed to providing a culture of academic excellence, we embrace Ernest Boyer's (1996) charge that the university should work toward the mutually reinforcing goals of intellectual and civic progress as we actively seek to address social, civic, economic, and ethical problems. To fully realize the strengths of our faculty, staff, students, and community partners, the University of North Georgia works to appropriately recognize and reward those who take a community-engaged approach to their work.

We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.

To affirm the centrality of the public purposes of higher education at the University of North Georgia, it is critical to demonstrate how community engagement cuts across all missions of the institution. This requires a purposeful alignment of organizational goals, and for these goals to be included in the performance metrics at the unit, college, department, and individual levels. Therefore, this Civic Action Plan should serve as a living document that is regularly accessed, referenced, and updated by students, faculty, staff, and community partners.

Goal 1

UNG Values: EXCELLENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Increase the profile and celebration of community engagement activities through purposeful opportunities to connect the campuses with their communities. Each of these opportunities would be open to students, faculty, staff, and the community.

1. Embed community engagement discussions, education, and celebration at the Symposium on Innovation, Research, and Engagement (SOIRE) and Annual Research Conference (ARC) through collaborations with the Office of Research and Engagement, the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Leadership (CTLL), and the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (CURCA). (Fall 2018; Spring 2019)
2. Raise the profile of the annual Best Practices in Service-Learning and Scholarship of Engagement Awards, and expand the awards to recognize and celebrate the contributions of community partners. (AY 2018-2019)
3. Plan and facilitate meet-and-greet sessions and opportunities to serve together in each of the five campus communities at least once per semester. (Spring 2019)
4. Host multi-disciplinary, mini-conferences or symposia focused on community engagement. The approach of these conferences will be to simultaneously celebrate each individual campus identity and build overall institutional unity. These conferences would include discussions on critical issue areas, opportunities to socialize, and multiple presentation formats to showcase ongoing partnerships and projects, including a poster session. (AY 2019-2020)

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Goal 2

UNG Values: EXCELLENCE, ENGAGEMENT, AND SERVICE

Form a community of practice for faculty and staff members focused on community engagement. This community of practice will be purposefully aligned with the existing Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Initiative at UNG.

1. Faculty and staff members will be invited from each academic department and relevant unit on campus to advocate and serve as a resource and example for their colleagues. (AY 2018-2019)
2. The community of practice will be provided with specific professional development opportunities related to community engagement and will be purposefully connected to the existing High-Impact Practices (HIP) and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Academies. (AY 2018-2019)
3. Encourage language around Promotion & Tenure Guidelines that supports the scholarship of engagement and serve as advocates for these guidelines with the Faculty Senate. (Spring 2020)
4. Within their departments or units, members of this community of practice will be encouraged and given the tools to influence policies that affect community-engaged scholarship, notably promotion and tenure policies. (AY 2019-2020)
5. Consider a peer review process to encourage, support, and advance the scholarship of engagement at UNG. (AY 2019-2020)

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Goal 3

UNG Values: EXCELLENCE, INTEGRITY AND ENGAGEMENT

Explore the resources required to expand community engagement efforts at UNG. This will include input from an analysis of peer institutions and will be informed by the current literature.

1. Generate a report that recommends the necessary resources (i.e., financial, infrastructure, policies, etc.) to support community engagement at all five UNG campuses. (Fall 2018)

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Goal 4

UNG Values: EXCELLENCE, STUDENT-FOCUS, INTEGRITY, AND ENGAGEMENT

Evaluate and identify areas of improvement for the data collection and assessment practices for community engagement.

1. Establish a consistent system for tracking student participation that effectively integrates with existing software systems. Students will be involved in the process to determine what measurable outcomes are important to their experiences. (AY 2018-2019)
2. Establish a consistent system for faculty and staff members to report and be appropriately recognized for their community engagement work. This system should integrate with their annual reports/evaluations. (AY 2019-2020)
3. Establish a consistent system for evaluating community partner relationships and impact. This should include ensuring that community voice is included in the process of identifying goals and measures of success. (AY 2019-2020)

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Goal 5

UNG Values: EXCELLENCE, STUDENT-FOCUS, ENGAGEMENT, AND SERVICE

Establish deeper relationships across the institution to ensure that community engagement plays a central role in the identity of the University of North Georgia.

1. Strategically position community engagement values to be intentionally included in the next Strategic Planning process at UNG. (AY 2019-2020)
2. Re-design the UNG Service-Learning website (and all related websites) and develop a plan for keeping all associated content current. The website will include resources for students, faculty, staff, and community members. (AY 2018-2019)
3. Develop a service-learning (community-based learning) toolkit specific to UNG and the communities we serve. (Spring 2019)
4. Cultivate an online presence through social media platforms and branding that reach all stakeholders and share the community engagement story more broadly. (AY 2018-2019)
5. Disseminate notable community engagement stories and newsworthy efforts to the Office of University Relations to share more broadly across campuses and the community. (AY 2018-2019)

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Goal 6

UNG Values: **STUDENT-FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT**

Work with Deans of Students, campus Student Government Associations, and leadership on each campus to determine an appropriate pathway for the civic education and mentoring of students. This process will leverage existing efforts, advocate for incorporating civic learning to appropriate co-curricular activities, and identify areas of needed programming. (AY 2019-2020)

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Goal 7

UNG Values: **EXCELLENCE, ENGAGEMENT, AND SERVICE**

Determine critical issue areas that help UNG focus its community impact efforts.

1. Identify Signature Projects/Partnerships in each critical issue area. (AY 2019-2020)
2. Develop a mechanism to measure and report on the impact in those critical issue areas. (AY 2019-2020)
3. Develop a university-wide strategy to align UNG’s existing civic engagement initiatives. (AY 2019-2020)

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