

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Community Engagement in the CSU

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Summary

In March 2000, the California State University Board of Trustees passed a landmark resolution in response to a request from the governor for a community service requirement for all students in California's public institutions of higher education. In a strong display of support for community engagement, the CSU Board of Trustees' resolution called for the chancellor and each CSU president to "ensure that all students have opportunities to participate in community service, service learning (deemed academically appropriate by faculty), or both."

In response to CSU's commitment to ensure all students have opportunities to participate in service, the State of California has authorized \$1.1 million each year over the last decade to support the expansion of service opportunities on all CSU campuses.

In 2008/2009, CSU campuses reported that more than 170 new service-learning courses were created, with the total number of service-learning courses offered reaching more than 2,575. Service learning is a teaching method that promotes students learning through active participation in meaningful and planned service experiences in the community that are directly related to course content. Nearly 65,000 CSU students provided more than 1.2 million hours of service to their communities through service-learning courses in 2008/2009.

Additionally, a 2007 CSU survey revealed that more than 194,000 CSU students performed community service totaling 32 million hours, representing a 43 percent increase in the number of students involved in service from a decade ago. If service learning, community service and civic engagement hours were totaled for the nearly half of CSU's students who provide some type of

service, the total economic impact approaches \$650 million (based on the accepted national volunteer rate).

These efforts supported by the State of California have been strengthened with external support as well. Across the system, \$3,935,880 in grants from external sources was secured in 2008/2009 to support community engagement, a return on investment of nearly \$4 for every dollar invested by the state.

The CSU's great success in providing service opportunities for students has been possible because of valuable and enduring partnerships with local community organizations, businesses, government and the philanthropic sector. In 2008/2009 CSU campuses reported partnerships with more than 5,794 sites for student placement, compared with 3,560 in 2007/2008.

During the challenging economic times California now faces, partnerships are more crucial than ever to sustaining communities, helping students access higher education and providing high-quality learning opportunities that meet the ever-changing needs of California and its residents.

For more than 20 years, a highly productive and successful partnership between CSU and California Campus Compact (CACC) has existed to ensure university students are engaged in service to their communities.

California Campus Compact, founded in 1988, is a coalition of California's leading colleges and universities. CACC builds the collective commitment and capacity of colleges, universities and communities to advance civic and community engagement for a healthy, just and democratic society. Through innovative programs and initiatives, grant funding, training and technical assistance, professional development and influential research studies and publications, CACC each year invests in and champions more than 500,000 students, faculty members, staff, administrators and community members involved in diverse and groundbreaking civic and community engagement activities.

The benefits of partnership with CACC have been tremendous for the CSU. In 2009/10, the average cash value received from CACC in student education awards and grants to fund service-learning and civic engagement programs per CSU member campus was \$24,885 – 60 percent more than the average cash value received among all member campuses in California (\$14,863).

In return, CSU presidents have demonstrated their support, leadership and collective commitment to community engagement by serving on the CACC Executive Board. Dr. Richard Rush, CSU Channel Islands, is the current chair of the Executive Board. San Francisco State University, under the leadership of Dr. Robert Corrigan, has hosted CACC since 1995, and the vast majority of CSU campuses have been active, involved members of CACC since its founding.