LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

20th Anniversary Stories and Priorities
Minnesota Campus Compact supports civic engagement and democratic renewal through its diverse network of colleges and universities. We envision a state in which every student experiences service-learning or civic engagement, graduating with a determination to contribute to the public good; and every college or university is fully engaged with its communities, working together to educate citizens, solve problems, and build a strong democracy.

Each member campus creates different programs and partnerships based on the distinctive priorities, cultures, and assets of the institution and surrounding communities. Yet through this coalition, we learn from each other and work towards common goals: promoting the success of Minnesota’s increasingly diverse students; advancing the kinds of community-engaged learning that develop the knowledge, skills, creativity, courage, and persistence critical for work, life, and citizenship; and developing innovative collaborations that advance civic capacity, educational and economic opportunity, environmental sustainability, public health, and other social goods.

Thank you to all of our members and partners for the great work that you do.
Capturing results is much more difficult than counting activities or outputs, such as the number of campus-community partnerships developed or students involved for how many hours. Such numbers are basic indicators of participation in public life. The national Civic Health Index focuses largely on the percentage of the population who report voting, working on community projects, expressing their political views, and other actions deemed civically meaningful. The national Campus Compact has also tracked and applauded growth in service-learning and civic engagement programs and institutional support for them. Yet we know that output or participation measures—even combined with good intentions and principled rhetoric—are inadequate indicators of success. We all want to do work that truly matters.

“Service-learning opened my eyes to the world around me.” “I’ve learned to be a good listener.” I’ve realized “the importance of taking initiative and becoming a catalyst of change rather than waiting for it.” “Conducting research and learning about things really does no good if one cannot share or utilize that information.” I gained skills in “networking, creating and maintaining professional relationships, and teamwork. These skills have been essential in my professional and personal life.” My community-based project “taught me how to be confident in dealing with multiple moving parts and people in ‘authority’ and more. I even received my first job offer through the project.”

When Minnesota Campus Compact asked member campuses to share an example of civic and community engagement efforts that had yielded positive results for students and communities, we received powerful testimony not only from students but also community leaders and campus faculty and staff. The stories that follow illustrate how colleges and universities and their community partners are:

- Encouraging democratic participation
- Supporting K-12 student success
- Promoting college student success
- Increasing student interest in STEM
- Creating safe communities for all
- Fostering inclusive communities
- Providing much more than meals
- Improving public health
- Expanding economic opportunity
- Enhancing environmental stewardship and sustainability

We are committed to gathering more stories as well as more research and assessment data, both to capture the good work already going on and to identify opportunities for increasing the quality, depth, and impact of civic work and learning across the state.
William Mitchell College of Law: We, the Students

Can a school restrict students’ clothing? Discipline students for Facebook posts? Since 2009, more than 60 second- and third-year students at William Mitchell College of Law have gotten St. Paul teenagers thinking critically about those and other Constitutional issues. In teams of two, Fellows with the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project lead senior American government classes four or five days a week for nine weeks, introducing key concepts and engaging students in legal arguments and, ultimately, a moot court competition.

St. Paul Central High School student Ursula Simmer won the 2012-13 local competition and went on to earn National Runner-Up honors in the national competition. Now a student at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, she says the law students’ presence and “their teaching methods helped me to become fully invested in the class. They made learning fun. . . . and the competition made a lot of kids realize that it’s not so awful to get up and talk in front of a large audience.” Partly due to the success and popularity of the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project at Central High School, the entire St. Paul school district has now adopted Constitutional Law and the Bill of Rights into the new 12th grade social studies curriculum for all St. Paul public high schools. They’re willing to deal with some challenges to school policies if it means students are excited and learning.

William Mitchell launched its participation in the Marshall-Brennan Project with a presentation by Mary Beth Tinker, who made Constitutional law history as a 13-year-old when she violated school policy by wearing a black armband in protest of the Vietnam War, took her case to the U.S. Supreme Court, and won. “You don’t have to be a special person to have a chance to make a difference,” said Tinker. “I tell kids that if you don’t know your rights and use them like muscles, you will lose them.” To Associate Dean Mary Pat Byrn, who leads the Fellows’ seminar, understanding one’s rights and responsibilities is essential to citizenship at all ages. Participating law students also “really get to know the subject matter,” she says, and “strengthen their public speaking, presentation, and management skills while gaining experience in explaining complex legal ideas.” All of which adds up to what former Fellow Brian Bender deemed “the best experience of my law school career.”

ENCOURAGING DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION
St. Catherine University: Learning from One Another at the Jane Addams School for Democracy

The idea was to come together in a democratic education environment where “everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner.” The Jane Addams School for Democracy (JAS) formed in 1996 after much conversation among a diverse group of people who sought to be of use to one another, including immigrants from St. Paul’s West Side neighborhood, Neighborhood House staff, faculty and students from St. Catherine University and the University of Minnesota, and Center for Democracy and Citizenship staff. Though their perspectives varied, all participants agreed that they could work on their own learning goals while helping others achieve theirs. As Nan Kari, central to bringing JAS to life, wrote in We Are the Freedom People, JAS “is a people’s democratic institution claimed by the people, where the colleges act as resources for different kinds of learning.”

JAS provides a democratic space where all people can participate fully, overcoming barriers of language, culture, race, and gender. Over a thousand immigrants involved there have become naturalized U.S. citizens. Hundreds of St. Kate’s students have been engaged with them through work-study positions and service-learning classes including Public Health, Sociocultural Aspects of Clothing, Global Search for Justice, The Reflective Woman, and Communicating Across Cultures. Often JAS allows them to connect their college learning with their own communities, cultural identities, and the real issues that matter to them.

With other college students and community members in the Hmong Circle, Mim Cheng, for instance, advocated at the Minnesota Legislature for a resolution recognizing the atrocities still being committed against the Hmong people in Laos. This was especially important as the U.S. moved ahead with normalizing trade with Laos. For Mim, it was meaningful work that also developed key skills: “networking, creating and maintaining professional relationships, and teamwork. . . . [skills that have] been essential in my professional and personal life—both in the U.S. and abroad.”
College of St. Scholastica: Collaborating to Support Successful Youth and a Strong Community

For sixteen years, the College of St. Scholastica has partnered with an elementary school and a variety of youth and community development agencies to support student success and build assets in the Hillside neighborhood of Duluth, one of the poorest, least served, and most diverse areas of the city. Kathy Bogen, the current Executive Director of the Myers-Wilkins (formerly Grant) Community School Collaborative, did not know what she was starting when, as a PTA member, she wondered what they could do better to engage American Indian families in the school community. Conversations with American Indian parents suggested a powwow, and that first collaboratively planned cultural event has grown into an extensive set of after-school and multicultural enrichment programs for youth. Staff, volunteers, and teachers are all involved in defining goals, planning programs, and assessing outcomes, with parent and youth councils and program participants providing critical input throughout the year.

The academic impact on elementary school students has been impressive, with significant increases in attendance, grades, and Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment test scores. More than 200 college and community members annually are involved in a variety of tutoring, mentoring, and program leadership roles. Recruiting and training parents as instructors for afterschool and summer programs also builds leadership capacity and job skills. The college students who get involved through service-learning classes, work-study positions, or volunteering learn about economic, cultural, and social differences, as well as positive youth development, evaluation, and organizing.

For Jay Newcomb, who coordinates the College of St. Scholastica’s involvement in the Collaborative, one key to its success is the connection made between professionals, students, and children: “what I just love...is that when I’m walking home through the neighborhood after being at Myers-Wilkins for a while, little kids will come running across the street to me and say I know who you are, you’re so-and-so’s mentor.” Those personal relationships, combined with participatory planning and a relentless focus on evaluating results, have been truly transformative. Now, with support from the superintendent, the mayor, and the local United Way, community members are aiming not only to maintain the Collaborative’s good work but also to scale the model across the entire Duluth school district.
Minnesota State University Mankato: Developing Effective Teachers

A 25-year partnership between Minnesota State University Mankato (MSU) and eight school districts in southern Minnesota has been a hub for the development of innovative P-12 educational practices. The Professional Development School (PDS) puts teachers from elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and the University, as well as teachers in training, in the same space—a space that encourages the development of an educational system across school boundaries.

Participants have created active learning communities, trainings, and assessments that relate to specific educational strategies, including the use of technology for early field experiences and a variety of co-teaching models. They have also initiated collaborations including one in which future teachers at MSU tutor in K-12 AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) classrooms, supporting college preparation among students who have high potential but are under-performing (and also come from a low-income household, minority group, or family without college experience).

In 2012, the PDS was recognized by the National Association for Professional Development Schools for achievements in nine areas, ranging from advancing equity, to collaboration, reflection and communication, to innovation, to sharing best practices. April Rosendale, a teacher at one of MSU’s partners, Le Sueur-Henderson Public Schools, acknowledges the tangible results of the University’s relationship with her district: "When a second-grade classroom’s reading scores rise after intentional interventions are delivered in a co-taught environment; when new teachers and mentors alike cite the mentoring experience as professional development that improved their practice; we have evidence."
Macalester College: A Transformative Partnership with Minnesota Internship Center Charter School

Since Minnesota Internship Center Charter School (MNIC) opened in 2003, Macalester College has been involved with the school through the work of volunteers, interns, student employees, and community-based learning courses. ESL tutors have enabled “MNIC to give students the individualized attention they need to be successful learners” and allow[ed] teachers to divide students into small groups based on skill level thus better meeting student learning needs,” according to Amy Libman, MNIC’s volunteer director. Some have also initiated valuable capacity-building projects, including developing a comprehensive new math curriculum specifically designed for ESL students, collecting more culturally diverse books for the school library, and holding a “coffeehouse” for MNIC students to share their own written stories and poems.

A relatively new aspect of the partnership involves Macalester students as Health Advocates, who conduct vision screening, research local clinics, work one-on-one with students on health referrals, and carry out projects that promote monthly health themes such as diabetes or healthy relationships (the latter included a “Love is…” campaign in which all 290 MNIC students participated). As a result, many MNIC students have gotten much-needed glasses and care—and some have taken on leadership roles themselves, establishing a student-led health club and peer education program with support from the Macalester Civic Engagement Center’s Action Fund and Macalester students.

Many Macalester students stay connected to the school for multiple years. “Student interaction has been the highlight of my time at MNIC,” reflects Wynonna, a sophomore; “despite hardships, students are incredibly resilient and welcoming. I’ve learned to be a good listener. . . . I’ve gained a much deeper understanding of many socioeconomic issues that surround disadvantaged communities and have been introduced to many different perspectives that have changed the way I view the world.” She has also learned—as have many of her peers—“the importance of taking initiative and becoming a catalyst of change rather than waiting for it.”
Gustavus Adolphus College: Building Strong Ties for Student and Youth Leadership Development

In 1963, students at Gustavus Adolphus College saw an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of youth in their community. More than 50 years later, Big Partner Little Partner (BPLP), the organization they created, has become the largest student volunteer organization on campus, involving nearly 200 students a year.

Partnering with local schools and social workers, BPLP connects youth and their families to Gustavus student volunteers. The program’s goal is to help foster interpersonal, intrapersonal, and academic development in Little Partners through one-on-one and group activities. BPLP committed to regular program evaluation, which is yielding some impressive numbers:

- Overall, 89% of parents indicated a significant positive impact on their child by participating in the program, with the remaining 11% recognizing some positive impact on their child.
- 95% of participants indicated a positive increase in Social Skill Development.
- 90% of participants indicated a positive increase in Self-Awareness.
- 59% of participants indicated an increase in Academic Achievement.

The mother of a young boy, who has been paired with a Gustavus student named Jason for three years, offers her own view of the impact of the program: "Having a positive role model is so important. I love to watch as my son grows in his relationship with Jason. I know Jason will be a part of his life for a very long time. Jason is very special."
Century College: Service-Learning in Criminal Justice Studies

What prepares a Correctional Officer to defuse potentially violent situations? For Shane Warnke Jr., it was partly a week-long Crisis Intervention Training that helped him respond calmly when a delusional hospital patient took a nurse hostage, holding scissors to her neck, and then lunged at him too. Introducing himself by his first name, Warnke started a conversation with the patient and convinced him to put down the scissors. That effective response earned Warnke the Exemplary Citizenship Award from the Minnesota Commissioner of Corrections and the National Meritorious Service Medal of Honor from the American Correctional Intelligence Network.

Warnke had been developing his skills and empathy for years as a student at Century College. “Service learning opened my eyes to the world around me,” Warnke says. In his Police in the Community course, he provided building photos and layouts to the Vadnais Heights Fire Department so first responders would be prepared for emergencies. Later, for a Families in Crisis class, he organized a benefit for an Iraq War veteran’s family whose home had fallen victim to arson. Those service-learning experiences and another with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe “tied everything together,” making the book and classroom learning more meaningful and allowing him to network with professionals in his field. As a result, he is a better communicator, a continuous learner, and an active leader—one who volunteered to participate in the Crisis Intervention Training.

Service-learning is required of majors in Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement at Century because it engages them directly with complex issues and systems. According to department co-chair Mary Vukelich, students initially “may not understand the need for such an intensive experience, but by the end of the semester most students are grateful for the experience and share it as one of the ways the lessons of the classroom have come to life for them.” They gain valuable knowledge and skills while contributing thousands of hours to public agencies and diversion programs dedicated to improving outcomes for young people.
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities: The Community Engagement Scholars Program

In order to advance civic learning and development among its undergraduates, the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, established the Community Engagement Scholars Program (CESP), which engages students over several years in course-based service-learning experiences, significant co-curricular community engagement work, structured reflections, and an integrative capstone project. Student interest in the program far exceeded administrators’ expectations, with over 450 students enrolled. Beyond its core civic purpose, CESP also contributes to students’ academic success, building skills and a sense of belonging.

The chance for students to get to know and work with a particular community organization over time is particularly important to developing and implementing a capstone project with real benefits for the organization. Past projects have included developing workshops on tenants’ rights, a tutor training manual, resources for survivors of domestic violence, and research on social networking among volunteers—all of which the partners agree will shape their work in the long run. Amy Libman of the Minnesota Internship Center Charter School has worked with service-learning students since 2004; “I was so excited when the CESP was formed. My first thought was, ‘I wish they had that when I was at the U of M!’ MNIC has been very fortunate to work with several CESP students. They have completed valuable projects. . . . [but] perhaps most of all I appreciate the CESP students’ commitment to learning and serving in their communities.”

April Valete encourages her peers to participate in CESP because “there don't seem to be many spaces that push you to reflect so deeply,” uncovering and analyzing your assumptions, social location, systemic inequalities, and potential strategies for change. Many Scholars report that the program helped them to clarify their career and civic goals and to address the issues they cared about. Yet they have also learned the importance of humility and listening, and the effects of power and privilege, no matter what their path forward.
Minnesota State University Moorhead: Preparing Students for Professional and Civic Leadership

Since her first experience teaching, Communication Studies faculty member Theresa Hest has been incorporating academic service-learning into courses at every level. Part of her motivation is the fact that students learn in different ways: “a student may not understand how to develop a supportive communication climate, for example, but after conducting trust and team-building activities with a group as part of a service project, this student may realize how climate building happens.” Community-based projects tend to be a bonding experience for the class and also build networks between students, MSUM, and community members.

In Leadership 498, the capstone course for Leadership Studies minors, individuals or pairs of students apply and develop leadership knowledge and skills they have learned in previous courses to benefit a community partner. They are required to develop and implement a service project that involves at least 30 hours of service connected to the academic elements of team-building, administrative leadership, group communication skills, and interpersonal communication. Students consult with a potential non-profit partner, then submit their idea for approval, conduct research on workability issues, and create a prospectus before implementing the project with a group they also recruit.

While the projects vary greatly, many involve fundraising events. Some students have created programs through their workplaces, such as donating gently used prom dresses to high schools, which have continued after the course is complete. Even when projects don’t work out as well as everyone had hoped for, students still learn from the process. Former MSUM student Zach Johnson calls his bicycle race “a total flop” due to pouring rain, “but it was a great experience, taught me how to be confident in dealing with multiple moving parts and people in ‘authority’ and more. The race has become a yearly event and I was able to hand the reins to another individual.” He also received his first job offer through that project.
South Central College: Dental Assisting Service-Learning

Beginning in 2005, students in their first semester in the South Central College (SCC) Dental Assisting program spent four hours at the Open Door Clinic in Mankato, a nonprofit, sliding-fee scale clinic, providing culturally sensitive health care to the uninsured and under-insured. The original intent was for students to observe providers interacting with patients in the dental clinic to experience varying levels of oral health care along with exposure to societal and cultural differences within our community due to affordable health care options or lack thereof. Out of this short observation has grown a service-learning project in which students spend additional hours throughout the year, working with providers on direct patient care and other areas of the clinic.

Students reported that the eye-opening experience not only built their confidence and skills but also, for some, changed their sense of career possibilities. One student said, “I never thought I would want to work at a clinic like Open Door but after being there, meeting the staff, and seeing how much patients appreciate the service, it is something I will consider!” Many realize how vital teamwork is to a successful clinic and respect the staff at the Open Door Clinic for their commitment, communications, and collaborative spirit. Concerned about lack of access to care, a large group of students also volunteered to spend three days in Bemidji giving their time and expertise to patients served through the Minnesota Mission of Mercy.

The staff at Open Door Clinic are very supportive of the program, welcoming the opportunity to teach and to open students’ eyes to the world in which they’ll work. **With increased student involvement, the clinic has received grants that allow it to expand its services—and has hired several graduates of the SCC dental assisting program.**

PROMOTING COLLEGE STUDENT SUCCESS
St. Olaf College: Engaging Science Education for K-12 and College Students

In 2010, St. Olaf College began partnering with Carleton College and Northfield’s St. Dominic and Greenvale Park elementary schools to create the Food and Nutrition Service-Learning Collaborative. Through nine service-learning courses, St. Olaf students developed curriculum, helped create school gardens at both elementary schools, produced a Farm to School directory and marketing posters, and conducted research on food issues. In the first growing season, St. Dominic harvested lettuce four times and used it for the school lunch program. Third grade teacher Tony Seidl reported that his “students were motivated by the hands-on work we did here in class. The nutrition unit in health was fantastic this year with the resources the college students provided.”

Students at St. Olaf (and other campuses involved in the six-state grant program) were surveyed in order to better understand the extent to which service-learning enhanced student interest and participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Of the St. Olaf students, 70.7% of them female (higher than typical STEM course enrollment): 89.7% agreed that the use of service-learning had enhanced their understanding of the scientific elements of the course. Their level of interest in STEM fields also increased significantly, going from an average of 7.0 (on a 10-point scale) before their enrollment in the course to 8.2 after the course—and the number of people responding 5 or lower fell from 24.1% to 6.9%.

Asked how their involvement in the project had contributed to their education, the college students noted the value in teaching and learning with kids, applying statistical principles, synthesizing information, clarifying their career goals, and getting outside the college “bubble.” Civic work also made their studies matter in a different way: “In order to present the information, I had to research it in detail so I could be sure I was teaching them valid facts and healthy practices; this led me to be very thorough. . . . Conducting research and learning about things really does no good if one cannot share or utilize that information.”
Inver Hills Community College: The Power of Both Teaching and Learning

How do you remember more from your experience dissecting a sheep’s brain? You might try teaching what you learned to a middle school student. That is exactly what students in the Inver Hills Community College (IHCC) Biology department’s Anatomy and Physiology class did, and it had a positive impact on everyone involved.

As part of its commitment to college access and success, IHCC collaborates with AVID programs in local school districts. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is a college readiness system that helps K-12 students, who might not otherwise see college in their future, excel academically and connect with opportunities to learn more about how education is a key to their future success in life. IHCC Biology faculty member Laurine Ford decided to support the school’s commitment to AVID students through a service-learning project that would, hopefully, also help her college students.

A campus visit by eighth graders from a local middle school included a lab experience with IHCC Anatomy and Physiology students. During the lab, students from IHCC worked in small groups with the 8th graders, explaining the brain’s structure and function to them. The AVID students gained a little knowledge of the brain and, just as importantly, were exposed to a real college atmosphere, working with college students who were not so different from themselves, in a real college lab. Through their experience as teachers, IHCC students improved their own retention of the information about the brain and nervous system. Ford reported that in a semester-to-semester comparison, with the only variable being her students’ interaction with the middle school students, test scores for that unit improved from a median score of 75 to a median score of 95. There’s the learning in service-learning.
Winona State University: Collaborating to Reduce Gender-Based Violence

The Women’s Resource Center of Winona (WRC) and Winona State University (WSU) have a long history of collaborating to address gender-based violence. In 2008, the WRC and WSU’s Child Advocacy Studies Program co-developed the course Gender, Violence and Society, now offered every semester as a core offering in the Women’s and Gender Studies program and an elective in the Child Advocacy Studies program. This course connects students with community leaders in law enforcement, the judicial system and various advocacy systems—a step forward in a long-standing effort to institute a peer-based sexual violence education and advocacy program on campus. Participating WSU students complete 45 hours of advocacy training, resulting in domestic and sexual violence advocacy certification in Minnesota.

For Emily Dierling ’12, this experience was critical: “Without the partnership between WSU and the Women’s Resource Center of Winona, I would not be where I am today. The real-world learning opportunities that were available to me while attending WSU allowed me to gain knowledge and understanding of not only how the WRC functions as an organization, but the importance of activism within the community. The work I was able to do through the Women’s Resource Center while in college really opened my eyes and allowed me to discover what I was really passionate about. Without that experience, I don’t know that I would be where I am today, both professionally and personally.”

Because of the strong partnership, WSU was awarded a highly competitive $294,000 Department of Justice/Office on Violence Against Women grant in September 2013 to fund a Peer Gender-Based Violence Education and Advocacy Program, which will further enhance their efforts to reduce sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual harassment, and stalking.
University of St. Thomas: Collaborative Research Changes Policy

The University of St. Thomas’ Community Justice Project and the St. Paul Chapter of the NAACP have worked together since 2006 to challenge laws and policies that have a negative impact on communities of color. The partnership—which won Minnesota Campus Compact’s 2010 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Partnership Award for Campus-Community Collaboration—has engaged law students, local youth, and disenfranchised community members to address civil rights issues, increasing dialogue and improving relationships between law enforcement agencies and communities of color.

The CJP-NAACP partnership also involved students in research that has changed public policy in St. Paul. One study, analyzing arrests for Obstructing Legal Process (OLP), argued that the charge was being misapplied and overused regarding African Americans, resulting in unjust prosecutions. After this research was presented in a memo to the St. Paul City Attorney, he agreed with the analysis and retrained all city prosecutors—and the dismissal rate for OLP cases being prosecuted doubled (from 26 to 49 percent). The CJP, St. Paul NAACP, the City Attorney, and the St. Paul Police Department also started a first-of-its-kind Restorative Justice Program that brought officers and African Americans who were charged with OLP together for a circle process to discuss the underlying incident and each actor’s perspective on the case. John J. Choi, who was the St. Paul City Attorney at the time, said, "Without question, the work of the NAACP and the University of St. Thomas Law School was a key component to making change happen."

These partners also advocated for legislative change regarding Minnesota’s gang databases, resulting in major changes in Ramsey County data collection procedures, which now include a parental notification provision when children are added to the databases. That work also laid the foundation for a partnership with the Aurora-St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corp. to start Brotherhood Inc., a support system for young African American men who had been involved in gangs or the law enforcement system. Engagement in these collaborative efforts offers law students an opportunity not only to learn about civil rights and community and government stakeholders, but also to integrate social justice commitments into their professional identities.
Concordia College: The New Americans Program

For two decades, Concordia College students have been practicing global citizenship in their own backyards. The New Americans program, hosted by Fargo/Moorhead Lutheran Social Services, offers resettlement services for those coming to the United States as refugees, providing initial housing, helping families secure employment and enroll children in school, and setting up appointments at the health clinic. Of course, there is a lot more that goes into acclimating to life in a new country, which is where Concordia students come in. Each semester, three classes partner groups of students with approximately 20 families in the New Americans program, and those students visit with their partner families once a week to support them as they navigate basics such as grocery shopping, using public transportation, helping children with homework, and using the library.

New Americans Community Support Services Supervisor Darci Asche credits the students with greatly expanding the program’s capacity, increasing the time spent with each family and also easing families’ transitions through real human relationships. Some refugee parents feel “very anxious about what will happen with their children here,” Asche says; “our students are an awesome model of what youth in the United States can be.”

This shared work also has a great impact on students, many of whom stay connected to Lutheran Social Services long after their service-learning assignment with the New Americans Program has ended. Some maintain informal friendships with their partner families, many go on to do internships at the organization, and some get hired as employees. Mackenzie Lindquist was so struck by the isolation of adult refugees that she has now been awarded a scholarship to research and develop a community learning program for older adults, which will start this summer. Lindquist plans to become a physical therapist, and she notes that she approaches problems differently in her internship because of her engagement with the refugee community. She recalls a boy who came in because adults in his life were concerned that he might need special education services—but she wasn’t convinced. It turned out that he was very smart and capable; he just needed more help learning English. She plans to carry this forward and be a “more aware and understanding” practitioner.
St. Cloud State University: Communicating Common Ground

“Peace building begins with communication” is the philosophy behind a high-impact program that brings St. Cloud State University communications studies students together with culturally diverse groups of local high school students to discuss significant and often sensitive issues. Since 2007, hundreds of Professor Eddah Mutua’s students and students from two St. Cloud high schools and three neighboring school districts have developed appreciation for different perspectives and acquired intercultural knowledge, awareness and sensitivity needed to navigate complex intercultural spaces in the 21st century.

The theme for 2014 Communicating Common Ground dialogue sessions held in local high schools is “peaceful coexistence,” a topic of vital importance in a school district where 25 percent of elementary students do not have English as their first language. Stacie Vos, assistant principal at St. Cloud’s Tech High School, says, “Eddah’s students do a nice job of facilitating by bringing up issues from world affairs to local and personal challenges. Every year we see how powerful it can be when kids realize through these discussions how they fit into the world. They emerge with a much more accepting view of the world when they learn to see it through other points of view.”

College students benefit from the opportunity to apply theoretical classroom learning to real life experiences, which gives them tools to tackle local community issues. As one student from St. Francis said, “being able to learn from children who have such a passion to create peace motivated me even more [and] opened up many ideas as to how I would like to create a larger impact in the future.” Mutua involves her students via Skype in conversations with students at a high school in her native Kenya too: “We are using a collaborative learning approach to promote cultural knowledge exchanges between Kenyan and Central Minnesota students. Students learn about global and local barriers to peace, diverse conflict management styles and opportunities for peace in the world and communities where they live.”
In just over ten years the Latino population of Morris, MN, has risen more than 274 percent, prompting University of Minnesota, Morris students, faculty, and staff to pilot initiatives designed to facilitate intercultural connections. These efforts began in 2008 when two students began offering English classes to new immigrants. To accommodate the overwhelming response, these classes grew into what is now the Community English as a Second Language (ESL) program. With support from community partners as well as the University’s Spanish faculty and Office of Community Engagement (OCE), ESL now offers six levels of classes to almost 100 immigrants annually in addition to literacy activities for children in the ESL Tutoring, Reading, and Empowering Children (TREC) program.

Drawing on their ESL experiences and lessons learned at the Jane Addams School for Democracy in West St. Paul, in 2011 students initiated the Morris Jane Addams, an organization that hosts bilingual meetings and activities aimed at bringing together Hispanic and non-Hispanic members of the campus and greater community. Its latest projects involves photographing Latino residents holding signs that illustrate their stories in order to promote understanding and acceptance.

Not content simply to act, the University also assesses its efforts. “We wanted to see if the events and programs we were providing were actually working,” says Jordan Wente ’15, one of the students involved in these efforts since 2012. Most recently AmeriCorps VISTA and alumna Keni Zenner ’12 partnered with University faculty and students as well as Morris Area School District administrators to conduct assessments regarding pre-K–12 English language learners. “This will be a comprehensive look at how we can best meet the needs of a growing immigrant population in terms of education,” says Argie Manolis, coordinator of OCE. While the University’s outreach efforts are, in some respects, still developing, at least one thing is clear—what began as a few student-led classes has grown into a campus-wide initiative to create an inclusive community.
Bethel University: Living Reconciliation with the Bethel Frogtown/Summit-University Partnership

Bethel University’s Frogtown/Summit-University (FSU) partnership began as an intention: the intention to enter a community respectfully, to build trusting relationships, and to experience reciprocal learning and reciprocal growth. Organizers sought to live out the college’s Christian values through community engagement, and they looked to an area that, to some, felt a world apart—but was actually near the college’s first St. Paul location. Sixteen years later, the Bethel community no longer partners with the FSU neighborhoods; it considers itself part of them.

Today, community members take Bethel classes offered in Frogtown. Bethel students perform their student teaching at the King Family Foundation Child Development Center (King CDC), a program housed in its own building and fully staffed with teachers, which began in borrowed space with volunteers at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church. Now at King CDC, neighborhood children springboard into their educational and spiritual lives, receiving critical early childhood education, as well as out-of-school time programming for K-6 graders. Neighborhood kids visit the Bethel campus to watch sports games and to gain comfort in collegiate spaces, where they will hopefully someday walk as students. The neighborhood also provides current Bethel students with service-learning opportunities to engage with and learn more about the community and its members.

Another essential element of the university’s efforts to develop collaborative relationships, break down social divisions, and embrace diversity is the Bethel Anti-Racism and Reconciliation Commission. Evidence of changes comes in the form of an academic major in Reconciliation Studies and informal reconciliation lunch discussions in Frogtown, but also in individual lives. Many of the key figures in this program actually live in the neighborhood. Shawn Moore, the assistant director of service-learning and civic engagement, is a local resident, pastor, and long-standing member of the FSU Partnership Advisory Committee. Bethel professor Sandy McNeel lives in Frogtown now too; she moved there from Arden Hills because of her involvement. **Now it’s not just a project—this is her life.**
Augsburg College: Growing a Strong Community with Trinity Lutheran Church

In 1872, Trinity Lutheran Church issued an invitation to Augsburg College, located in Marshall, Wisconsin, to move to Minneapolis. Since that time Augsburg and Trinity Lutheran have been connected in deep, ongoing, and reciprocal ways. Building on that historic relationship and mutual commitment to their common Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, the Trinity congregation and Augsburg College have expanded their relationships and collaborations for the benefit of all.

Over the past 18 years, in addition to providing food and recreational activities for local residents, Wednesday night suppers have created space for relationships and trust to be built. Conversations there have also sparked the development of specific projects, such as the Campus Kitchen, which offers cooking and gardening classes for neighborhood youth, supports a community garden with over 80 spaces for local residents and organizations, and prepares 2,000 meals each month for youth programs, seniors, and community centers.

Another powerful collaborative project is the Safe Place Tutoring Program, which supports more than 40 East African youth and adults every weekday during the school year. Parents who saw their children’s growth requested the creation of an adult-focused program as well, and some youth who benefited from the tutoring now volunteer as tutors themselves. One of the parents, Fayo Umar, has been bringing her daughters to homework help this year and reports, “my two kids were previously behind in school. However, the program has helped changed this fact. . . . We have all had a good experience at Trinity and have a very good relationship with everyone here.” More than 120 Augsburg students serve as tutors each year, and whether their own heritage is European, East African, or something else, they have learned about culture, religion, and community as they connect week-after-week with their neighbors.

photo: http://minneapolis81.com/
Providing Much More Than Meals

Metropolitan State University: Building Community and Enhancing Wellness

Back in 2005, leaders in the First Lutheran Church on St. Paul’s East Side started holding community breakfasts to consider the question, “Does love live here?”—and the answers resulted in the Love Grows Here Wellness Center (LGHWC). Church staff, Metropolitan State University instructors and students, and other partner organizations provide services grounded in a commitment to “creating community, possibility, acceptance, and wellness brought forth.”

Each Thursday evening, 120-200 people, visitors and volunteers, put on the same kind of nametag and gather for socialization, wellness services, and a healthy dinner. Many visitors are experiencing homelessness, but LGHWC provides a safe, welcoming space that also encourages people to dream. Seven-year-old Desiree, for example, has come to LGHWC with her parents for two years and now wants to grow up to be a doctor, nurse, cook, and art teacher so she can run the center.

Metropolitan State University students in the School of Nursing offer health and nutrition education, foot care, blood pressure screenings, and medical referrals. Visitors are also offered transportation to the university’s dental clinic in Maplewood, where Advanced Dental Therapy students conduct free oral assessments and provide both restorative and preventive treatments. The Love Grows Here Wellness Center connects people to each other and to critical community supports, while preparing Metro State graduates to enhance the health of all Minnesotans for years to come.
To the United States Department of Agriculture, food insecurity means “consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year.” The College of Saint Benedict (CSB) is located in Stearns County, where approximately 10.4 percent of the population experiences food insecurity. CSB's new Community Kitchen program is making a dent in that number by distributing high-quality, nutritious food in a dignified manner to local residents.

Feeding people in Saint Joseph, Cold Spring, Saint Cloud and parts of rural Stearns County is just part of the project's goal. CSB also sees it as a platform for campus-community collaboration, education, action, and advocacy. The project established early collaborations with Casa Guadalupe Multicultural Community's youth program and English Language Learner class in Cold Spring, and with Reach-Up Inc. on a nutrition and cooking course. The meals are used to spark increased participation in educational courses, build relationships, and share information about other services available to low-income residents.

The Kitchen is also a partner on a new community-wide effort in Saint Joseph related to poverty. Together with Central Minnesota Catholic Worker, Gateway, Resurrection Lutheran, and St. Benedict’s Monastery, the Kitchen convenes the "Joe Town Table," a monthly event that is open to the public. Students from CSB volunteer at the meal, which provides an opportunity for community members to address rarely discussed issues not in some abstract manner, but in authentic, face-to-face dialogue between neighbors.
Normandale Community College: Nourishing Student Success
Exploring hunger issues can be challenging, especially when it hits close to home. A group of service-learning students from the Nursing program confronted this challenge at Normandale Community College in the fall of 2011, when they discovered that students had been sleeping in their cars or were choosing to give their kids a meal before school, while they nursed a soda during the day to stay alert. Faculty also revealed that they were buying students meals and keeping bowls of fruit in their office because they knew some students were not eating regularly.

Students without adequate food and nutrition frequently fall asleep in class and cannot concentrate on learning. Motivated by what they found about the financial challenges and food insecurity facing Normandale students, the service-learning class advocated for the creation of what is now known as the Campus Cupboard. Without their passion and the commitment of a longstanding local partner, Good in the ‘Hood, it would not have been possible. Service-learners from Normandale had assisted this Bloomington organization with its bi-monthly food shelf and other programs. When approached about providing food on campus as well, they responded with great enthusiasm and generosity, and Normandale found space for a satellite site of Good in the ‘Hood.

Since the Campus Cupboard opened in the fall of 2012, the program has provided more students than expected with food for the day. In 2012-13, 517 unique students were served 12,050 food items, and those numbers are already higher this year. Students remain critical to moving this project forward, with 60 volunteers, 20 service-learners in classes on nutrition and health, 4 work-study students, and 2 Leadership through Service students involved each semester. As one student who has used the Campus Cupboard reflected, “It definitely helps you to focus, for sure. I need to have food before I go to do anything else . . . and it's nutritional.” On a daily basis, students are both benefiting and giving back in ways that boost their academic success and future goals.
Carleton College: Pathways to a Healthier Community with the HealthFinders Collaborative

For Rice County residents lacking quality health insurance, the HealthFinders Collaborative (HFC) has provided primary care, wellness programs, and patient advocacy since 2005. With one office in Northfield and another in Faribault, HealthFinders has welcomed the opportunity to partner with neighboring Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges. This year alone, 21 Carleton interns serve an average of more than 850 patients per month as facilitators and coordinators of the Pura Vida wellness program and the Diabetes Program, and as interpreters in the clinic. According to HFC Executive Director Charlie Mandile, “Pura Vida wellness programs would not exist” without this engagement.

In addition to the interns, thirteen Academic Civic Engagement (ACE) classes at Carleton also assigned students to collaborative projects last year, with end products ranging from research papers and grant writing to social media and video productions to benefit HFC and its patients. Prior to using the ACE model, biology professor Debby Walser-Kunz remembers, “My students would write wonderful research papers, but the problem was, I was their only audience.” Now their writing has wider impact; for example, a group of students researched and prepared materials for HFC’s ongoing diabetes educational program. The presentation they developed is incorporated into a series of monthly events for participants in the diabetes program, who also receive free medical supplies and monthly check-ups.

Students say that serving with and learning from HealthFinders has critically influenced their college paths and career plans. Sameena Ahmed credits HFC with expanding her professional scope: “I want to go to medical school and become a doctor,” she says, “but I want to do clinical work, and community work, and healthcare policy. I think it’s important to have somebody who can see all levels.” Kate Atkins ’11 performed an ACE project for HealthFinders in her sophomore year and also got hooked. She continued to engage with HFC through other classes and as a volunteer, intentionally building on her prior projects, and is now preparing to go to medical school. While engagement with HFC supports high-quality, evidence-based primary care in underserved communities, the lessons of that engagement will also carry far beyond Rice County.
Hazelden Graduate School of Addiction Counseling:
Supporting Recovery in Diverse Communities

Over the past five years, diversity and inclusion has been an intentional focus across the Hazelden Graduate School of Addiction Studies (HGSAS), which is dedicated to educating future leaders to improve treatment and recovery from alcohol and drug dependence. Roy Kammer, dean of HGSAS, says a new advisory panel, “comprised of external experts in the area of diversity, supports, guides, and advises the school in its efforts” to infuse diversity into the school’s programming and training. The provost and faculty have also launched a research study on developing multicultural competency and self-efficacy among addiction counselors to inform this ongoing work.

Through required clinical placements, students contribute at least 880 hours each to support recovery among underserved, low-income, and racially diverse clients at organizations such as the Minnesota Aids Project (MAP), PRIDE Institute, and Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge. HGSAS students “have more than taken up the challenge. [They] have performed remarkably in all aspects of the internship,” reports Christine Kerno, manager at MAP.

Students have also organized a Multicultural Association of Student Counselors (MASC) and the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) to promote awareness of multicultural issues and develop multicultural counseling competencies. “Nothing has been more fulfilling to me than sponsoring the MASC and GSA groups,” says assistant professor Annie Peters. “The groups provide a safe environment for students to share, connect, and help others. I also believe that these groups set an example for the entire Foundation on the importance of allyship, advocacy, and pride for multicultural individuals and communities.”
Northwestern Health Sciences University: Partnering on a New Model of Integrative Health Care

Tucked away in the Powderhorn community of Minneapolis is a little-known clinic that’s changing the way people think about health care. Every Wednesday and Saturday, students studying chiropractic, massage therapy, acupuncture and Oriental medicine, psychology, and health coaching team up with nursing and medical students to provide free health care at the Pillsbury House Integrated Health Clinic. Through this collaborative effort between Northwestern Health Sciences University, the University of Minnesota, and the Adler Graduate School, local residents receive an individually tailored combination of medical, psychological, and natural health care treatments.

This distinctive care model was designed to benefit both the patient and the student. A patient first visits with a student who serves as a patient advocate and documents their health history. Then the patient visits with an integrated health care unit—an idea designed by the students—which involves students with various specialties. High patient demand has prompted expansion of the clinic’s physical space and hours.

In addition to providing integrated services to community members who could not access care otherwise, the Pillsbury Clinic offers future health professionals a rich clinical learning experience. Darcy Ward, a former Northwestern acupuncture student, found it “beneficial for all the students to see the outlook of the others, and gain respect for the other modalities. It builds trust among the providers.”
University of Minnesota Rochester: Creating a Collaborative, Health-Focused “Community Campus”

If you were to create a new campus, what would it look like? How would it be integrated with and contribute to the community, while providing students with an excellent education in health science and biotechnology? These are questions the University of Minnesota Rochester (UMR) has asked—and part of the answer is a new required course called Community Collaboratory (Co-Lab). One crucial aspect of its design is long-term continuity. Offering the course every semester and in the summer means that students can build on previous work and continue to enhance that work over time.

Students have also been involved—together with a multi-disciplinary instructional faculty team and community advisors—in exploring and developing partnerships from the start; as Capstone and Community Engagement Relationship Manager Jenny Hegland puts it, “students aren’t just learning how to do something in the community to provide a service. They are learning about the process of collaboration and are doing it right alongside us.” Teams working with Olmsted County Public Health, for example, have participated in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) over the past three semesters, developing lists of partners addressing the top five health indicators determined by the CHNA, as well as developing strategies to reach populations underrepresented in the first cycle of data collection. For recent graduate Samantha Calvin, the experience taught her several critical lessons, including dealing with ambiguity and complex problems that do not have simple answers, but instead are “multi-layered, [where] one answer can lead to another problem”—and thus benefit from genuine collaboration.

Because the CHNA will be conducted every three years in Olmsted County, UMR’s students will be able to build on these initial efforts, adapt with the collaborative process, and establish sustainable ways of adding value. UMR Chancellor Stephen Lehmkuhle adds, “the new campus is not only developing programmatic ways to extend the student learning experience into the local community that also benefit the community, it also plans to develop physical ways to integrate its new campus into the community that will benefit both students and community members. UMR is engaged in a capital planning process with several anchor community organizations to imagine a physical campus that serves both students and the community.”
Bemidji State University: An Entrepreneurial Student Launches a Social Enterprise

As a low-income Bemidji State University (BSU) graduate student, Jason Edens found himself applying to a fuel assistance program in order to get his family through the cold northern Minnesota winter. As someone seeking a degree in Environmental Studies, Jason recognized that a one-time payment to offset part of a fuel bill was not using public funds effectively or addressing long-term challenges for poor households. He knew there was a better solution, and now he is creating that solution through Rural Renewable Energy Alliance (RREAL), the nonprofit organization he founded.

The idea of replacing payments to fuel companies with the installation of solar thermal panels on the homes of low-income people began to occupy more and more of Jason's thinking. BSU faculty worked with him to align his Master's Degree with that goal of delivering solar heat to low-income communities, empowering families to heat their homes for decades with a one-time investment in solar energy, while also reducing government costs and dependence on fossil fuels. The seeds of innovation were sown.

Edens started RREAL in his basement and garage in 2000. Today, the organization employs 14 people at its Pine River facility. The work is funded through multiple public/private partnerships that have embraced the value proposition that investments in renewable energy offer sustainable solutions to fuel poverty. RREAL also operates a separate business that does market rate solar installations, and the profits from that business directly support the nonprofit work. Edens remains connected to BSU too. He is keenly aware of the value of bringing student energy and interest into an organization and sees opportunities for students in multiple disciplines to apply their learning to RREAL's innovative work. Jason says, "The curricular value of renewable energy is extremely broad and exciting. . . . It's not just science, technology and math. It's social studies, it's history, it's economics."
Concordia University-St. Paul: Realizing the Full Potential of “Ethnic Capital”

Bruce Corrie, Associate Vice President, University Relations and International Programs, and Professor of Economics at Concordia University-St. Paul, is a very public scholar. He has spent his academic career researching and explaining the economic contributions of minority and African, Asian, and Latin American immigrant communities locally and nationally. He has worked alongside organizations including the Asian Economic Development Association, Neighborhood Development Center, and African Economic Development Solutions, to increase wealth in lower income Minnesota communities.

As a response to the constant portrayal of immigrants as needy, he began compiling research that paints a very different picture: Minnesota’s African, Latino, Asian, and Native American communities represent $12 billion in buying power and pay an estimated $1.8 billion in taxes. Corrie’s ethniccapital.com website (and now phone app) contains research to bolster the case for support for equitable policies and practices. He has also been a policy adviser to public officials on ethnic entrepreneurship. Commenting on the awards he has received for this work, Corrie says, “in some ways I think it’s not me that’s getting the award, but it is lifting up the community, and the community is recognizing or appreciating that its own value that is being celebrated.“

Corrie does not do this work alone. Together with Concordia staff member Kelly Matthias, he recently engaged students in a research study on “The College Student Market for Ethnic Food.” Their campus survey found that students spend significant sums eating out and ordering food to be delivered to their home or dorm rooms, and they represent a significant current and potential growth market for local restaurants. The students have shared these results and recommendations with restaurant owners eager to understand the preferences and budgets of college students.
Rochester Community and Technical College: Engagement in Sustainable International Development

By definition, service-learning centers upon “learning through service,” not simply “learning to serve.” Participants in the Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC) Cambodian Service-Learning Trip visit Angkor Wat, the world’s largest religious structure, the tragic “killing fields,” and beautiful, white-sand beaches. The focus of this program, though, is working side-by-side, interacting with and learning directly from Cambodian college students and young people active with RCTC’s Cambodian partner schools, villages, and non-governmental organizations to build sustainable partnerships that advance local goals.

Now in its ninth year, the program engages students in a wide variety of projects—and for much more than a January-term trip. Each student on the trip works with a team of “returnee students” (former participants who maintain ties and contribute to the program, e.g., orienting students prior to the trip), the instructor, and Cambodian partners to develop individualized projects drawing upon student skills, interests, passions and academic goals consistent with those goals already established with the Cambodian partners. Students have built toilets and wells for rural schools, planted trees, created documentaries about the genocide, raised more than $60,000, and lobbied for changes around human trafficking and human rights. They have also developed lasting initiatives, including the Sewing for Sustainability nonprofit, which purchases Fair Trade items from groups like the Cambodian Handicraft Association (CHA) to sell in the United States.

Former RCTC student Melanie Joyce sees this collaboration as “important because every person deserves the opportunity to feel self-worth, ownership and responsibility.” CHA director Kim Tha has “hope for these women who others see as only disabled. When we teach skills, we can change lives. . . . We create a community together.” Thus RCTC’s engagement not only increases students’ cultural sensitivity, self-awareness, honor, integrity, and self-direction—it helps their international partners continue that powerful development work.
North Hennepin Community College: Launching Careers through Service-Learning

Every day, people at North Hennepin Community College see why service-learning is considered a high-impact educational practice. According to Troy Nellis, Director of Service Learning and adjunct business faculty at NHCC, “service-learning can be a large part of our students’ success.” It provides real-world work experiences and makes learning meaningful, while also contributing to the larger community.

Emma Granberry gained confidence through a service-learning requirement in her Introduction to Social Work class. Eugene Dix, director of the African American Action Committee in Brooklyn Park remembers “being very impressed with Emma’s questions and curiousness about getting involved in the community.” The research she conducted on mentoring programs led to the organization implementing a mentoring program in the local schools. Eager to do more, Emma was hired as a community outreach specialist intern to recruit volunteers and raise awareness about a free Foreclosure Prevention Program. Her valuable contributions led to her appointment as the youngest member of the African American Action Committee’s Board of Directors, while she also continued her studies at Metropolitan State University.

Mieso Koji arrived at NHCC as a refugee from Ethiopia, and his ultimate goal is to help Ethiopian communities as a nurse or a doctor. As a service-learning project in one of his first English for Speakers of Other Languages classes, he selected Ebenezer Care Center, where he served as an Activities Assistant, helping elderly residents with everyday life activities. After completing his service-learning hours, Mieso continued volunteering at Ebenezer. Dawn Lund, Director of the Adult Day Program, found him to be a natural at working with the elderly—so when a Nursing Assistant Register position became available, “I offered him a letter of recommendation and encouraged him to apply.” He was hired and, after only one year in that position, was promoted to Trained Medication Aide.
It started three years ago, with a knock at the door. Chris Anderson, a Natural Resources Aviation major at the University of Minnesota Crookston (UMC), introduced himself and told Heidi Hughes, manager of the Agassiz Audubon Center, "I've been coming out here to walk the trails over a couple of years now, and it looks like you could use some help. Do you have a volunteer program?" Ever since, Chris and his fellow students have been "regulars," driving the 60 miles roundtrip from Crookston to Warren, tackling projects they often initiated with Heidi’s support, and recruiting younger students to take over when they graduate. Students have cleared trails, removed invasive plants, downed dangerous trees, and taken aerial photographs to advance the Center’s habitat management and restoration work.

More recently, the partnership between UMC and Agassiz began including service-learning as well. Dani Johannesen, who teaches Writing in Your Profession, set goals with Heidi: increasing tourism and economic development in Northwestern Minnesota, and increasing awareness of and appreciation for the unique attributes of the region. Students have written blog posts and brochures, created Facebook pages for impoundments, placed stories and images in local newspapers, presented public programs, and formed a collaboration of businesses and residents to support the Crookston Kestrel Watch. This semester they are working on seasonal survival guides, an educational video, and promotional materials about wildlife viewing and outdoor recreational activities.

"Students saw the value of doing research, consulting subject matter experts (like Heidi), and presenting accurate, researched information in a readable, concise way. . . . From encountering copyright and fair use laws to realizing the importance of word choice, the students learned what it takes to produce quality, professional content." Many also got to know the local Aspen Parkland region better. To Heidi, "what these students have done over the past three years is astonishing."
University of Minnesota Duluth: Creating a Land Lab for Sustainable Solutions

The Sustainable Agriculture Project at the University of Minnesota Duluth (SAP) formed in 2009 to institute education, research, and community engagement around agro-food systems and sustainable land management in the western Lake Superior region. Housed in the College of Liberal Arts, a SAP interdisciplinary faculty collaborative manages a ten-acre organic-transition farm that produced 20,000 pounds of produce for UMD Dining Services in 2013 alone—while also engaging over a thousand students in paid, internship, coursework, or volunteer capacities and hosting numerous school groups, Upward Bound groups, community days, and a harvest festival highlighting the connections between healthy foods, healthy lives, and a healthy landscape.

Additional community partnerships animate the activities at the SAP Farm. The Teacher Training Garden works with the Duluth Community Garden Program and the Duluth Public School System in conducting workshops for both practicing and aspiring teachers to gain skills in building, maintaining and using school gardens. The Intertribal Agriculture Council grows tribally maintained flint corn from several areas in the broader region on the farm. SAP is also working with the Northeast Beekeepers Association and the Xerces Society to build habitat and hold workshops on both western honeybees and native pollinators. A small ethnobotanical garden features medicinal and dye plants, and a large new tea garden will market to the campus coffee shop and provide entrepreneurial and ecological opportunities for students.

Our interest in modelling more sustainable, distributed systems for critical infrastructure goes beyond sustainable food production. In the summer of 2014, a 5-kilowatt wind turbine will be installed on the farm and tied into the grid, modelling farm scale energy production for our broader region and serving as a research site for students and faculty. This project is led by the UMD Office of Sustainability and the Department of Civil Engineering, with further input and collaboration by the Department of Electrical Engineering, the Biology Department, and the UMD Facilities Management. SAP’s growth over the past few years has taken collaboration within and beyond campus, exploring how we can talk and walk sustainability together.
Southwest Minnesota State University: The Redwood River Mentoring and Monitoring Project

Sometimes the best way to learn is to teach. At Southwest Minnesota State University, Professor Emily Deaver makes the most of this strategy and multiplies its effect through the Redwood River Monitoring Project. This project works to educate local citizens of all ages about the importance of water quality, to provide useful data for the management of water resources, and to develop a stewardship ethic and deepen students' investment in the community.

Since 2004, students in Environmental Science 115 have been getting their hands (and boots) dirty as they learn about water resource management and water quality assessment on the Redwood River. After building their own knowledge base, SMSU students then travel to Marshall High School where they mentor three classes of high school biology students. In turn, the high school students, upon mastery of the information, mentor three classes of seventh grade students, with guidance and oversight by the SMSU mentors. The following week all groups of students meet at the Redwood River to demonstrate what they have learned as they collect data. As of fall 2013, a total of 2438 students and 9 teachers have been involved in the project—with very positive results.

The hands-on, field-based learning experience is effective in teaching environmental science content to the students in seventh grade and high school—**their average assessment scores increase by 37-46 percent.** Dr. Carrie Sueker of Marshall Middle School adds that students “look forward to the time that they spend with their college-aged mentors,” gaining motivation as well as knowledge. SMSU senior Jessie Eckroad also found her professional niche in environmental education through the program; “I love interacting with students and getting to see them get excited about science.” The data collected by program participants also benefit the larger community, going into a database that is shared with the state regulatory agencies and can be used in management of state water resources. Data are also posted on the SMSU and World Water Monitoring websites. Some SMSU students have continued to support healthy water systems by signing up for the Citizen’s Stream-Monitoring Program (CSMP), a volunteer program through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.
Saint John’s University: An Outdoor University for All Ages

The former Saint John's Arboretum has officially changed its name to Saint John's Outdoor University. With more than 2,500 acres of lakes, prairie, oak savannah, and forest owned by Saint John's Abbey and surrounding Saint John's University, the Outdoor University provides environmental and outdoor education through classes, events, and initiatives with the Abbey Arboretum, Saint John's University, and the College of Saint Benedict.

The program's educational programs annually serve over 8,000 public, private, and home school preK-12 students through on-site field experiences and in-class curricula. Annually updated curricula are designed to incorporate local, state, and national graduation standards. The staff works with teachers at partner schools to coordinate the field experience and develop pre-and post-visit curriculum materials with subjects and concepts they are required to teach in the classroom.

Saint John's Outdoor University’s education and outreach extends beyond schools, hosting regular public events. Some of the most popular of these events are connected to Saint John’s Maple Syrup. Community members can participate in maple syrup production and celebrate at a Maple Syrup Festival, the program’s most popular event of the year. This family-friendly event features sap collecting, syrup cooking, horse-drawn rides, demonstrations, and hot maple syrup sundaes.
This coalition’s members, board, and staff have helped lead civic and community engagement work nationally by…

Creating opportunities for student engagement throughout the higher education experience—not only courses that advance civic learning and action, but also community-based work-study positions, internships, and fellowships, certificate or honors programs that engage students over multiple terms, and student clubs, athletic teams, or residence life programs that support volunteer activities

Inviting students to learn and contribute to community change in various ways—not just direct service, but community-based research, advocacy, community organizing, social entrepreneurship, socially responsible daily behavior, deliberative dialogue, voting, and more, as captured in Minnesota Campus Compact’s Social Change Wheel

Articulating and acting on an Engaged Campus Vision that calls for sustained partnerships drawing on the full array of institutional and community resources because how institutions operate directly affects surrounding communities—and students learn from what institutions model as well as teach

Aiming for quality, depth, and impact in all civic and community engagement efforts, rather than simply growth in numbers—and increasing assessment of engagement’s outcomes in order to document results and identify areas for improvement

Bringing faculty together with colleagues in their own academic disciplines, through more than twenty discipline-specific workshops on service-learning (often in partnership with their national disciplinary associations) and engaged department institutes to foster deeper integration in their shared teaching, research, and service goals

Advancing policies and cultures supportive of community-engaged learning and scholarship, in part by convening Chief Academic Officers for two year-long learning communities, then a national institute, and co-editing a book to enhance their understanding and support

Leveraging grant resources for lasting impact, seeding hundreds of new and enhanced campus-community partnerships, as well as key staff positions and both faculty- and student-led initiatives, with over $3 million in grants made possible by federal, state, and private foundation support

Focusing on asset-based approaches to community engagement, people’s identities, and systemic issues and inequities, to understand and share power, critical tasks for effective collaborative work

Creating online hubs for resources related to students’ civic leadership development, online service-learning and digital technologies useful to civic engagement, publishing and funding opportunities, and more

Fostering relationships and a community of practice among key staff and faculty leaders, who benefit from mutual learning and support, gaining new ideas, skills, and strategies for every aspect of this work

Aligning all this work with key institutional priorities, including college access and success, accreditation, high-impact educational practices, and contributions to local economic vitality
Moving Forward

Twenty years ago, the idea of community-engaged learning was fairly marginal in higher education. Now more faculty and a growing body of research recognize it as an effective educational strategy. Community stakeholders and funders also appreciate engaged scholarship and investments in economic development by “anchor institutions” rooted in place.

Minnesota Campus Compact members—public and private, two-year, four-year, and graduate-only colleges and universities across the state—increasingly connect civic engagement efforts with their core institutional identities and missions. Yet there is still room both to increase and to show more evidence of higher education’s public value.

Common themes in our campuses’ missions, visions, values, strategic priorities, and academic or student development outcomes largely overlap with the community priorities identified in Shaping Our Future: How Should Higher Education Help Us Create the Society We Want? dialogues we held around the state with community members including nonprofit leaders, employers, retirees, students, educators, newspaper editors, state legislators, and others.

So where do we want to be in the years ahead?

We want educational environments that allow all Minnesotans to fulfill their potential. Virtually every MNCC institution formally expresses a commitment to diversity, equity, or inclusion. Reducing race and class disparities will require all the hallmarks of high-quality engagement—critically reflective practice, respectful relationships, participatory processes, collaborative assessment and accountability.

In a diverse and interconnected world, we aim to engage both locally and globally. Our institutions vary in the extent to which they focus on a particular region, the state, the nation, or the world, but we agree on the importance of developing individuals’ capacity to build mutual understanding, productive working relationships, and common purpose across differences.

We seek to educate the whole person for a socially responsible, integrated life. Most member campuses declare their intention to educate broadly—e.g., for “work, life, and citizenship” (St. Cloud State University) or “life, work, and leadership” (Saint John’s University). Many identify specific ethical or service-oriented traits they seek to cultivate, while some ground their purpose in specific religious traditions.

That education includes preparing graduates for the changing world of work. We cannot focus only on the jobs that exist now, but must develop in our students—and in our own faculty and staff—the courage, persistence, creativity, and core transferable skills that will allow people not only to adapt to new realities, but also to work entrepreneurially and to lead constructive change.

Integrating engagement more deeply throughout our institutional cultures, curricula, and operations will help us achieve these goals. Inclusive, asset-focused discussions on difficult issues will inform our efforts. Building on scattered opportunities for student engagement to offer clearer development pathways will deepen students’ learning and contributions to community partners. Developing sustained, equitable partnerships that connect numerous staff, faculty, and administrative positions to partners and public purposes will enhance our leadership and results. We assume no single model of excellence but instead support each institution in realizing its distinctive civic mission as appropriate to its context.

At the same time, interest in multi-institutional collaboration is growing—driven by a desire for greater alignment and collective impact as well as cost savings. This priority is already evident within each higher education sector (e.g., MnSCU’s Charting the Future, the University of Minnesota Office for Public Engagement’s Issue Area Networks, and Carleton-St. Olaf collaborations), and Minnesota Campus Compact certainly aims to be a cross-sector coalition with significant benefits to its diverse members and communities.

We hope and expect that the discussions at this 20th anniversary summit will help this coalition move forward with some clear goals and strategies for building on our collective assets to advance those shared goals. Thank you for your participation and your ongoing commitment to this work! May we succeed together in creating powerful educational experiences, democratic renewal, and a better Minnesota for all.
These stories represent just a small fraction of what campuses are doing across the state. Minnesota Campus Compact is committed to gathering more stories like these, as well as more research capturing the impact of campus civic engagement.

Beyond serving as a snapshot of civic engagement activity, this information will also be used to increase the quality, depth, and impact of civic work and learning across the state. If you have a story or some research that can be shared with others in order to advance these goals, please contact us at info@mncampuscompact.org.