

How College Students Benefit from Civic Learning and Engagement

Outcomes for Students	Summary of Findings from 2022 AAC&U Synthesis of Research on Community-Based and Civic Engagement
Graduation and retention (11 studies)¹ and other institutional outcomes (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More likely to graduate ▪ Earned more credits ▪ More likely to re-enroll ▪ Institutional implementation of collaborative and participatory pedagogies ▪ Students practicing collaborative and mutual learning
Mindsets and dispositions (17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased openness to and understanding of diversity ▪ Increased awareness of social issues and social justice ▪ Increased adaptability ▪ Positive self-perceptions of socially responsible leadership ▪ More positive attitude toward school and enjoyment of challenging tasks ▪ Increased self-efficacy and sense of belonging
Personal and social responsibility (28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased civic attitudes and civic mindedness ▪ Increased civic and community-based engagement (desire/goals, behaviors during and after college, perceived value) ▪ Civic learning ▪ Perceived civic and social responsibility ▪ Moral and ethical reasoning and actions
Intellectual and practical skills (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved interpersonal skills: communication, collaboration, and teamwork ▪ Increased problem-solving and critical thinking skills ▪ Increased academic content learning and skills such as research, writing, and mathematical analysis
Career preparation (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better career exploration skills ▪ Increased career exploration in a field related to public service ▪ Increased career-related knowledge and skills
Learning gains (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved grades and GPA ▪ Improved test performance and assignment scores ▪ Self-reported general learning gains
Findings for underserved students²(11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Findings are most consistently discussed in terms of race effects across student populations. ▪ Studies tend to focus on a small set of outcomes, such as cumulative GPA, retention rates, credits earned, and graduation rates.

Source: [Chittum, J. R., Enke, K. A. E., & Finley, A. P. \(2022\). *The effects of community-based and civic engagement in higher education*. American Association of Colleges and Universities.](#) The research synthesis was funded by a grant from Lumina Foundation. This chart is adapted from Table 4.

¹Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of publications with findings related to each outcome category. The total number of publications exceeds the sample size because many studies included multiple outcomes of focus.

²Where applicable, studies examining effects for underserved students are also included in each of the other outcome categories.