

FULL-PARTICIPATION INSTITUTIONS SHOW HOW TO INCLUDE ALL STUDENTS IN CIVIC LEARNING

Full-Participation Institutions are leading the way in scaling college civic learning by including it as a degree requirement. These institutions showcase a range of institutional missions and approaches that engage all college students in civic learning and democracy engagement goals.

Allegany College of Maryland, a rural community college, is deeply committed to serving the community and democracy. Personal and civic responsibility are embedded in the curriculum through the college's [general education learning outcomes](#) and [Educational Master Plan](#). Students have opportunities to learn about and practice democracy through engagement with the community, often centered on career opportunities. These deep experiences contribute to student success while building civic networks, awareness, agency, and engagement.

“America is at a crossroads, and its democratic institutions are at risk. This is the next frontier for higher education. To secure our democracy’s future, higher education must double down on its commitment to preparing all students for leadership and full engagement in the life of our country.”

Raj Vinnakota, *President*, Institute for Citizens and Scholars

When **Arizona State University** (ASU) revamped its [general studies program](#), it added a Governance and Civic Engagement requirement to teach students to collaborate in the presence of dissenting opinions, develop the skills of civic communication, and emphasize the importance of taking an active role in addressing society’s most pressing questions. Guided by the [ASU Charter](#), faculty from across the institution participated in the design of new requirements that focus on interdisciplinary approaches to collaborative problem solving. Other required general education courses related to democracy and civic engagement include American Institutions; Global Communities, Societies, and Individuals; and Sustainability.

Augsburg University’s [Core Curriculum](#) is designed to prepare students to be “effective, informed, and ethical citizens in the 21st century.” Engaging Minneapolis, a course-based element of the core’s Signature Curriculum, includes substantive field experiences that connect issues in the Twin Cities to the course topic. The focus on off-campus, real-world experience continues in the [Augsburg Experience](#), an experiential learning requirement that is often fulfilled through community or civic engagement efforts. The Senior Keystone course provides an opportunity to integrate the themes of “vocation and the search for meaning in a diverse and challenging world.”

Every **Hendrix College** student takes part in an [interdisciplinary first-year seminar](#) that focuses on what it means to be an engaged citizen while exploring a topic from multiple approaches. Civic learning continues throughout the student’s undergraduate experience both in

the [curriculum](#) and as an aspect of [The Odyssey Program](#), Hendrix's signature engaged learning program. Students complete at least three Odyssey experiences, which can be self-designed, co-curricular, or course based. Odyssey experiences are based on high-impact practices (HIPs), such as global learning, service learning, internships, and undergraduate research.

Civic engagement is a central element of **James Madison University's** (JMU) goal of becoming a national model for campus engagement. The [Madison Center for Civic Engagement](#) plays a large role in that vision. The Madison Center's undergraduate Democracy Fellows lead voter engagement efforts campus-wide and in the community. All first-year and new transfer students receive training and practice in having productive conversations across divides through the Madison Center's [Better Conversations Together program](#). [The Human Community](#) aspires to create informed global citizens of the 21st century, emphasizing knowledge, skills, and values that embrace the common good. JMU's [Assessment Day](#) collects university-wide data on civic engagement activities from every student.

“Democracy is hard work. It's supposed to be. It's the work of continually remaking our nation. Our job at the USM is to make this hard work easier – to educate students for civic life, engage them in their communities, and secure our American democracy for generations to come.”

Jay Perman, *Chancellor*, University System of Maryland (USM)

Kingsborough Community College (KCC) fosters civic awareness while giving students the skills they need to actively participate in their communities. [All students are required to have at least one civic engagement experience before graduating](#). This requirement can be satisfied through coursework or an approved non-course-related experience, and the common assessment measure for these experiences is a reflective assignment. The college has defined three domains of civic engagement (civic knowledge, political knowledge, and social responsibility), and reflective assignments are assessed using a rubric based on these domains. KCC was one of 10 finalists for the 2023 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. This is the third time the Aspen Institute has named KCC as a finalist for the prize, which honors outstanding community colleges.

When **The Ohio State University** began creating a [university-wide general education curriculum](#), education for citizenship was selected as its throughline. The theme was selected for its connection to the university's mission and history as a land-grant institution as well as to support the program's goal of developing emotional, social, and professional abilities. The throughline has resonated across disciplines and allowed the theme to span the curriculum. The curriculum is currently being implemented and features an interdisciplinary first-year launch seminar and a final-year reflection seminar. The bookend seminars are designed to foster civic skills, including information literacy, leadership, and intercultural competency.

Shocked by the events at the 2017 Unite the Right Rally and inspired by the community's desire to respond, **Piedmont Virginia Community College** addressed the topic of civic engagement through the accreditation process. It produced the 2019 Quality Enhancement Plan [Civic Sense: Engaging Students in the Civic Life of Their Communities](#). Changes included enriching [civic engagement opportunities throughout the co-curriculum](#) and adding a substantial assignment focused on civic engagement in every major.

Salt Lake Community College's general education learning outcomes include developing civic literacy and the capacity to be community-engaged learners who act in mutually beneficial ways with community partners. The requirement is assessed through a required e-portfolio. Institutional support is provided for faculty who want to offer a [designated community-engaged course](#); departments can also be designated as community engaged.

“They’re bringing people into our classroom setting that work directly in our communities ... addressing a lot of the things that I was facing, like gentrification, gang violence, and poverty. College was the first time I opened my lens up to look at the world in a different way. I want to be able to obtain my degree to go back and help my community every way I can.”

Ronny Batista, *Class of 2018*, Metro College Success Program, San Francisco State University; *Graduate Student*, San Francisco State University

The [Metro College Success Program](#) at **San Francisco State University** leverages civic learning and engagement as a cornerstone of its student success strategy. Students in the Metro program follow a career-themed general education pathway within a cohort model for their first two years so they are part of a supportive academic community. A drop-in center staffed by peer mentors supports students in navigating bureaucratic barriers so they are more likely to persist. In upper-division GE courses, such as the SF Living Lab, students critically analyze social justice issues within the context of the Bay Area's political economy. This comprehensive curricular and holistic approach to student success empowers students to view themselves as both local and global citizens, as well as professional workers equipped to advance social good in their communities and future careers. The Metro program supports its faculty through a [learning community](#) focused on providing engaging, top-quality instruction on a large scale. The Metro program has successfully [eliminated the gap in graduation rates](#) for its historically underrepresented students compared to a matched comparison group and their more advantaged peers.

Grounded in the college's Catholic, Jesuit values, the [core curriculum](#) at **Santa Clara University** is designed to educate students for interdisciplinary understanding and ethically informed participation in civic life. Learning goals for the core curriculum include civic life, social justice, and civic engagement. Students are also required to take an [Experiential Learning for Social Justice](#) course. This course includes community-based learning, which connects academic work with the wider community.

Southern Methodist University has a [Civics and Individual Ethics Proficiency and Experience](#) graduation requirement for all undergraduate students. This requirement reflects the university's conclusion that students must be able to identify their own ethical convictions, think self-critically about them, and reflect on their merits. The university has established [rubrics](#) to assess whether students "demonstrate an ability to engage in ethical reasoning about civic and individual life."

The [Civic, Liberal, and Global Education \(COLLEGE\) requirement](#) at **Stanford University** is a first-year, three-course sequence offering students a shared intellectual experience through small seminars based on a shared syllabus. The COLLEGE requirement was unanimously approved by the faculty senate in May 2020. The second course in the sequence, [Citizenship in the 21st Century](#), addresses the history and future of citizenship. The course was designed to delve into complex and compelling topics and be taught by faculty and scholars from across the university. The seminar format also provides students with opportunities to learn and practice the conversational skills that make civil discourse possible.

"A beautiful thing about community-based change is that it's just a lot of people doing little things, and that has ripple effects that are incredibly powerful."

Samantha Palermo, *Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellow*;
Class of 2024, Dartmouth College

Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a private, technology- and science-focused university, is a global leader in project-based learning. [Collaborative, interdisciplinary, community-based projects are featured throughout the curriculum](#), creating a first-to-final-year pathway for civic learning experiences. Robust engagement with local and global partners allows students to see the connections among the collaboration and communication skills they are developing, the STEM careers they hope to build, and their ability to contribute to society.

