

Raising the Bar:

The Florida College System and the Civics Literacy Gap

Oct. 29-30, 2015

One-Page Summary

Key Takeaways:

- **Session 1: [Building Community Coalitions](#)**
 - City-county/college coalitions benefit all constituents
 - Coalitions are vital because Florida is in civic catch-up
 - There is a strong commitment to civics in K-12; to community service by colleges, by business community for economic aims; need for sustained collaboration between organizations.
 - Florida Civics Advance, coalition of 30 organizations, seeks to close the gap.
 - Long list of ways for colleges to connect with community from League of Cities
 - Reach out to churches, join civic organizations, get active in neighborhood assns.
- **Session 2: [Measuring Up: Employing Civics Ed to Fulfill State Performance Standards](#)**
 - FCS not only Florida system facing performance standards; State University System also does.
 - Outcome-Based Funding (OBF) is a national trend – 35 states have or are developing OBF standards.
 - Five common metrics: student progression, underserved students, completion rate, efficiency/productivity, workforce development/employment.
 - There is, at least conceptually, space for direct ties to OBF from civic education
 - Almost every element of desired qualities cited by hiring managers in AACU survey is fulfilled in service learning.
 - All Florida colleges will be required to have Carnegie Classification by 2025.
 - Data is key. So is buy-in by leadership – with actual funding commitment.
 - Partner with Institutional Research to develop assessment methods.
 - Advocate for more nuanced metrics, such as Washington Monthly rankings.
 - Satisfaction with life is No. 1 goal, and student satisfaction depends on faculty. Faculty makes the difference in student success.
 - Offer service-learning projects that take a semester or more to complete.
 - Make internships relevant to what is learned in the classroom.
 - Reflection is key – get students to think about what this means to them.



- Qualitative measurements are as important as quantitative. The numbers tell you one thing, the stories tell you another.
- Don't just offer metrics – take your students to visit legislators to prove engagement.
- Look up book “Rising Strong: The Reckoning, the rumble, the revolution” by Brene Brown of U of Houston.
- There are tons of data out there we don't even know about. If we don't intentionally create our data someone else is going to monetize it, i.e., data-mining by smart phone service providers.
- **Session Three: [Election 2016 as a Resource for Student Civics Engagement](#)**
 - Voting rate for millennials is lowest in decades, just 19%, down from 55.9% in 2012.
 - At highly-involved colleges, there is a strong sense of shared responsibility between student and instructor.
 - Leadership training is important
 - Employ embedded political discourse, using society as a text.
 - Physical spaces are important.
 - Also important is to create and maintain a buzz about civic engagement.
 - Try non-traditional methods, such as involving students in tutoring immigrants taking the citizenship test, working at homeless shelter, promoting art in public spaces, mentoring public school students.
 - Pay it forward
- **Session Four: [Virtual Civics Engagement](#)**
 - 2.6 million post-secondary students take all of their courses on-line.
 - Rethink on-line instruction in context of citizenship. Require levels of challenge in outside projects that involve getting out in the community to attend public meetings.
 - Make internships project-based, on-site for at least one week. Make them relevant to the coursework.
 - Set up discussion boards and require students to post and respond to other postings. Have Watch Parties where students meet one another, bring friends or significant others.
- **[Keynote speeches:](#)**
 - **Dr. Madeline Pumariega**
 - Civic education is a value action, not an add-on. It changes the life of students.
 - **Dr. Nancy Thomas**
 - Academic freedom is under attack, from legislatures defunding research to political groups acting as rapid-response teams to controversial incidents to students objecting to expressions that “violate my deeply-held beliefs.
 - The aims of civics education are not different from those of a college education.
 - Our nation is deeply divided, even polarized, all the way to the Supreme Court.
 - The Four Foundations of Democracy are what every college student should know.



- [Sen. Bob Graham](#)
 - SPC and FCS are models of civic education for rest of country.
 - Instead of “civics,” think “citizenship”.
 - The primaries are a great vehicle to learn about citizenship
 - Civic engagement faces three challenges:
 - Difficulty of engaging millennials.
 - Lack of a sense of urgency about state of civics
 - Accountability, which promotes competition for funding for higher ed.
- Raising the Bar Conference [Best Practices](#)

For more resources from the 2015 Civics Literacy Conference, please click [HERE](#).

