

Illinois State University NASPA Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Lead Advisory Institution 2019 – 2020 Report

Illinois State University (ISU) is proud to have been involved with the NASPA Lead Initiative since its inception. This initiative is led on campus by staff in the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning (CESL).

Civic Engagement Ambassadors

This year the campus CLDE workgroup was dissolved and transitioned into a new initiative – Civic Engagement Ambassadors. The purpose of the Civic Engagement Ambassadors program is to advance civic engagement at Illinois State University through department-level conversations and information sharing. Ambassadors represent all academic departments/schools, select administrative units in Academic Affairs (Graduate School, Honors Programs, etc.), and key Student Affairs units. This initiative creates greater cohesion in the messaging across divisions about civic engagement at ISU. It also allows ambassadors to learn about civic engagement occurring in various curricular and co-curricular experiences to create a better understanding of how civic engagement is present throughout the student's collegiate life.

Civic Engagement Ambassador role:

- Advocate for civic engagement, in all its forms, within their department
- Increase awareness of civic engagement efforts by sharing information (both information received from CESL as well as other information from across campus) with colleagues and students
- Keep CESL staff informed of the great civic engagement activities within their department (individual faculty, staff, students, courses, RSO's, etc.)

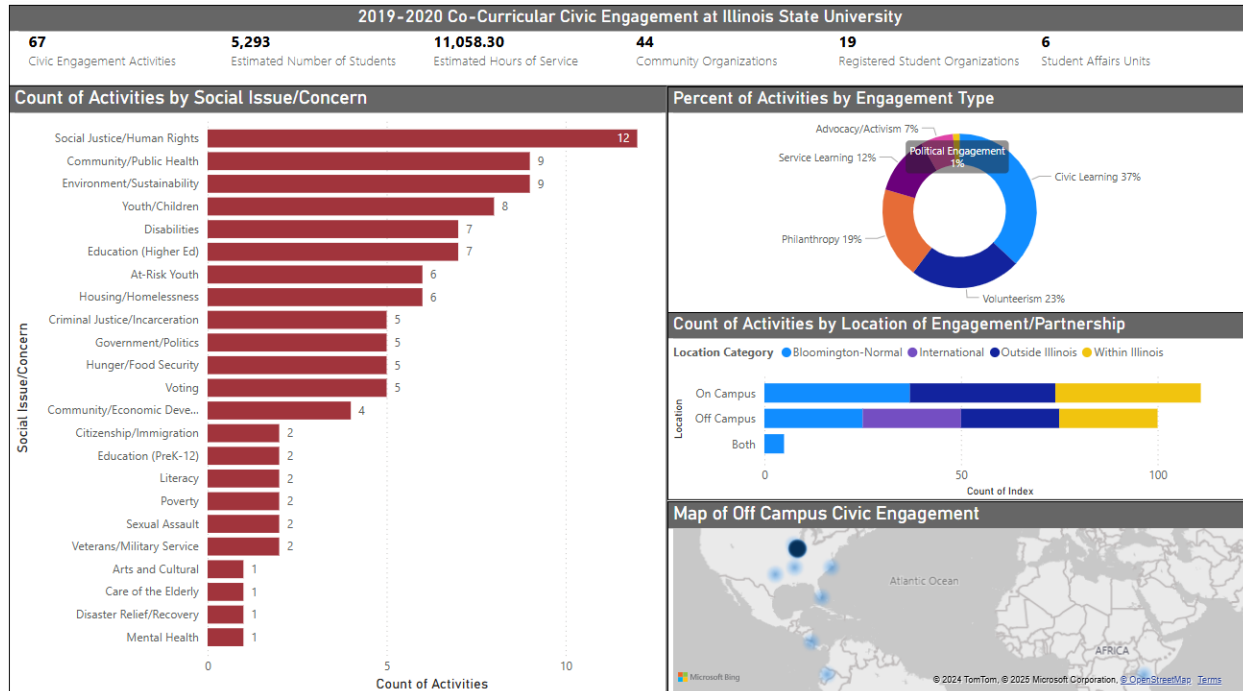
Civic Engagement Ambassador responsibilities:

- Attend one meeting each semester that will last up to two hours
- Read and respond to occasional emails from CESL staff
- Share information with colleagues and students as applicable
- Share information with CESL

Student Affairs ambassadors represent the following departments: Dean of Students Office; University Police Department; Career Services; Campus Recreation; Event Management, Dining, and Hospitality; Student Access and Accommodation Services; University Housing Services; and Health Promotion and Wellness.

2019-2020 Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Activities

The following is a summary of civic learning and democratic engagement activities that occurred throughout the Division of Student Affairs this academic year. Note that many spring 2020 activities were not held due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



2019 – 2020 Accomplishments

Based on the goals set forth in the CLDE 2018 – 2019 report, the following is a summary of key accomplishments.

- Through the financial support of Student Affairs, Alternative Breaks implemented a new fee structure for student participants. Students pay within a four-tier system based on their Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) as reported through their FAFSA. This change provides lower-income students better access to a transformational civic engagement experience. All students, regardless of EFC level, are eligible to apply for additional financial support through fee waivers made possible through donor contributions.
- To stimulate more positive and engaging discourse on challenging topics, CESL hosted a Braver Angels' Red/Blue Workshop and piloted course-based deliberative dialogues using the NIFI model. CESL received grant funding to train faculty, staff, and students to be dialogue facilitators in order to expand curricular and co-curricular deliberative dialogue offerings in 2020-2021.
- ISU received the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Community Engagement Classification. The feedback from the self-study and the Carnegie Foundation Team has been shared throughout campus and incorporated in the future planning of CESL.

- CESL developed the aforementioned Civic Engagement Ambassadors program and a campus advisory board. The advisory board will tackle broad civic engagement topics that span multiple division and work to advance civic engagement across campus. Advisory board members represent:
 - Each of the seven academic colleges
 - National Center for Urban Education
 - Planning, Research, and Policy Analysis
 - Center for Math, Science, and Technology
 - Office of Sustainability
 - Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development
 - Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology
 - Division of Student Affairs
 - Alumni Engagement
 - University Assessment Services
 - Center for the Study of Education Policy
 - Provost's Office/Academic Administration
 - Council for General Education
 - University Curriculum Committee
 - Community Consulting Board
 - Student Government Association
 - Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion, ex-officio
- CESL staff spent most of the academic year going through a detailed strategic planning process which included input from stakeholders at the beginning of the process and feedback of the draft plan via focused discussions and a survey. The five-year plan includes four strategies to advance civic engagement at ISU: Embrace our Redbird Impact, Transform the Student Experience, Foster Faculty/Staff Engagement, and Strengthen Infrastructure.

Goals for 2020 – 2021

Drawing from the newly created strategic plan, CESL staff will focus on the following civic learning and democratic engagement strategies for the upcoming school year.

- Collaborate within Illinois State University, across local higher education institutions, and throughout the community to explore solutions that honor community strengths while addressing needs.
- Create and sustain campus-community partnerships that are focused on mutual benefit, reciprocity, and co-production of knowledge.

- Acknowledge and celebrate campus-community partnerships.
- Elevate political conversations and engagement across campus.
- Educate students about the various forms of ethical civic engagement by increasing its systemic integration within curricula and co-curricula.
- Explore opportunities, partnerships, and needs for co-curricular civic engagement programming.
- Participate in the development and integration of civic engagement courses and designations.
- Support, cultivate, and recognize engaged research/creative activity.
- Encourage civic engagement among faculty and staff throughout all four divisions of the University.
- Evaluate center staffing structure and physical space to ensure adequate capacity for center and institutional civic engagement endeavors.
- Integrate the American Democracy Project/Political Engagement Project and the Civic Engagement and Responsibility Minor into center operations.
- Explore external funding to support civic engagement initiatives.
- Elevate campus civic engagement initiatives through strategic marketing and communication.
- Enhance the assessment of civic engagement and its impact on students, faculty/staff, the institution, and the community.

Specific actions/initiatives to support the above strategies are:

- Revisions to the Civic Engagement and Responsibility Minor
- Embracing sustainable office practices
- Exploring digital tools for data tracking and community engagement
- Development of community-based graduate assistantships
- Focusing on challenging conversations through course based and co-curricular deliberative dialogues
- Supporting a community-based research initiative
- Implementing a comprehensive voter engagement plan for Fall 2020 general election and Spring 2021 municipal election
- Increased collaboration with neighboring colleges (Heartland Community College, Illinois Wesleyan University)