



## **Committing to the Common Good**

### **Connecting College Learning and Civic Vitality**

#### **A Position Statement**

SACSCOC supports and encourages the leadership role of its institutions in embracing, promoting, and advancing the importance of higher education's mission to educate students for informed, engaged citizenship. SACSCOC joins other higher education organizations, to commit as higher education entities at all levels to serving our nation by providing civic literacy and civic engagement as an essential outcome for every graduate. Evidence suggests that impactful civic learning and engagement leads to graduates who are more likely to understand public issues through multiple lenses, to view political action as a means to address community challenges; and participate in civic activities that refresh and renew our urban, rural, suburban, and virtual communities.

While our member institutions offer various approaches to civic engagement, SACSCOC encourages institutions to integrate these activities in an intentional manner that ensures students and the public recognize that its graduates are socially responsible citizens. Such academic endeavors may promote service learning, research, community engagement, civic problem-solving pedagogies, experiential summer programs, community case studies, and programming that promote critical thinking about complex issues of public consequence. Many of our SACSCOC institutions are addressing civic learning through aspects of the Quality Enhancement Plan, while others may require coursework and skill-building in their programs of study, and others assess these efforts through institutional research. Identifying ways to coordinate and advance civic learning will benefit the entire academic community, especially the students. Research findings suggest that students who participate in civic learning opportunities are more likely to persist in college and complete their degrees; obtain skills valued by employers; develop positive habits of social responsibility, civic participation, and efficacy; and possess a sense of social responsibility.

Through its own activities, SACSCOC plays a fundamental role to renew the nation's intellectual and civic capital by hosting workshops and discussion forums for member institutions to capture and discuss best practices and encourage thoughtful campus planning that promotes engaged citizenship. In doing so, SACSCOC seeks to champion the formation of educational practices that assist in developing a well-informed, substantially engaged, and responsible citizenry.

Through the collective power of our SACSCOC membership, supported by Commission staff, higher education can recognize and achieve transformative civic literacy and engagement that will serve our nation and our government “of the people and by the people” well.

**Document History**

*Endorsed: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, June 2023*