



**Our Compact Renewed
A Civic Action Plan
St. John Fisher College**



Introduction

Community service and civic engagement have been at the heart of St. John Fisher College since its founding by the Congregation of St. Basil in 1948. As noted in the College's mission statement,

"... The basic values we share as a community are a commitment to the life-long search for truth, a belief in the dignity of every individual, and an affirmation that service to others is a worthy expression of our humanity... By encouraging tolerance and appreciation of diversity, we help our students become useful citizens of a multi-cultural world." The Carnegie Foundation for Teaching recognized the College's high level of community engagement with the 2015 Community Engagement Classification; the Corporation for National and Community Service also has recognized the College repeatedly for its volunteer activities and engagement with the community. By signing the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement, St. John Fisher College publicly commits not only to uphold the principles espoused in our mission statement, but to boldly pursue them.

Our Vision for Civic and Community Engagement

St. John Fisher College will be among Rochester's higher education leaders in pursuing ways in which higher education can help address complex human and social problems. We will support the development of sustainable solutions to pressing social issues facing our community; set expectations and measurable outcomes for civic and community engagement across the institution; encourage all members of our campus community to volunteer (and recognize them when they do); responsibly leverage our institutional resources towards this work; partner with external constituents in ways that benefit students, faculty, and community-based organizations; and strengthen and nourish a culture of responsible citizenship and community-engaged teaching, learning, research, and scholarship. Members of our campus community and our graduates will have the motivation and capacity not only to contribute to, but to lead, the pursuit of the common good.



Our Approach

Current institutional assets

Though there are a variety of institutional activities that involve partnering with external agencies and constituents, three on-campus offices generally coordinate and support Fisher's civic and community engagement: the Center for Service-Learning, Community Service Office, and Center for Community Engagement, all housed in the Institute for Civic and Community Engagement.

The Center for Service-Learning is staffed by a full-time director who is responsible for encouraging the creation of service-learning courses and training faculty, students, and community partners in service-learning. This office also is responsible for coordinating, tracking, and interpreting service-learning assessment data and recognizing community engagement through campus-wide awards and celebrations.

The Community Service Office provides local, national, and international community service opportunities for all Fisher students and oversees the Service Scholar and First Generation Scholars Program. It is staffed by a full-time director, a civic engagement coordinator who shares time with the Center for Service-Learning, and an office manager. The Service Scholars program partners students with individuals in need who live in neighborhoods where resources are scarce. The First Generation Scholars program pairs first-generation college students with elementary and secondary school-age students who may not believe college is within their reach for mentoring and tutoring opportunities. The office also offers opportunities for national and international service and advises a student-led volunteering club.

The Center for Community Engagement focuses on nonprofit leadership development by offering Board leadership seminars as well as a certificate in Nonprofit Management. All programs are delivered by volunteers who are supported by a paid, part-time operations manager.

In addition to these coordinating offices, the School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education, Wegmans School of Nursing, and Wegmans School of Pharmacy offer service-learning courses; internships, preceptorships, and clinical placements; and community and global outreach to an array of nonprofit partners.

Following are some of the ways in which these three offices, the various Schools, and the Office of the President and his executive team are addressing Campus Compact's five Action Statement commitments:

1. Through service-learning courses, internships, clinical placements, and student exchange programs, our students and faculty are helping our community-based partners increase their organizational capacity to address pressing social issues. One-in-five full-time faculty teach one or more service-learning courses that enroll more than 700 students, 25 percent of the undergraduate population, who partner with more than 50 community organizations. Scores of other students are involved in internships or clinical placements where their disciplinary expertise and commitment to social justice help confront institutional racism, poverty, and disparities in education and health.

2. More than 90 percent of students taking service-learning courses reported that their cross-cultural awareness increased, as did their awareness of needs in Rochester.

3. In 2015-16, Fisher students and faculty partnered with more than 50 community-based nonprofits. Twelve small businesses in the City of Rochester also benefitted from service-learning and MBA capstone courses.

4. The Community Service Office estimates that, collectively, Fisher's undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students performed more than 393,000 hours of community service in 2015-16 alone.

The College just finalized a five-year strategic plan in which civic and community engagement is a major focus. This Civic Action Plan mirrors that plan by articulating the expanded institutional leadership role we plan to assume in local initiatives and the ways we will strengthen our infrastructure to support our civic and community engagement work.

Current community assets

Rochester, New York long has been recognized for the strength of its philanthropic/nonprofit sector and the network of collaborative relationships between public and private partners.

Three years ago, the City of Rochester, County of Monroe, and United Way -- with the strong endorsement of Governor Andrew Cuomo and financial and technical support from the State of New York -- launched the Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI), a collective impact effort to reduce poverty by aligning resources, policies, and practices.

This unprecedented community-wide initiative is a collaboration of more than 100 corporate, health care, and higher education leaders; local and state government officials; service providers; funders; faith community leaders; volunteers; and people impacted by poverty. The goal is to make system-wide changes to reduce poverty in Rochester and Monroe County by 50 percent over the next 15 years (by 2033).

The following shared values, developed with and by hundreds of people across this community, serve as the foundation of RMAPI's work.

1. Build and support community by helping rebuild struggling neighborhoods with quality support services (businesses, health care, and community schools) to make them safe, healthy, and livable.
2. Address structural racism by ending the activities and actions that continue racial inequality in public policies, institutional practices, and other cultural norms.
3. Address trauma in individuals and neighborhoods by providing support and services that are sensitive to traumatic experiences like racism, abuse, addiction, and violence.

St. John Fisher College is represented at several RMAPI tables. The Provost serves on the Board of the Mayor's "OWN Rochester," the goal of which is to launch, grow, and support neighborhood-based, worker-owned cooperative businesses in order to create living wage jobs and wealth-building opportunities for residents of high poverty neighborhoods.

The dean of the School of Nursing, who also serves as associate vice president for community engagement, serves on RMAPI's community health and nutrition committee and is participating with others from Fisher, including the Director of the First Generation Scholars program and the associate provost, in a two-year community forum to address issues of structural racism. Through service-learning courses and service opportunities, our students are involved with many of RMAPI's nonprofit partners that directly serve those impacted by poverty including the Rochester City School District, Children's Agenda, Children's Institute, Catholic Family Center, and St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center - organizations with which we have long-standing partnerships.

We likewise are one of the "conveners" for ROC the Future, a collective impact initiative to improve the academic achievement of children in the City of Rochester. ROC the Future is part of StriveTogether, a national network of communities supporting the success of every child from cradle-to-career by focusing on a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities. Working through collaborative action networks that develop appropriate measurements, goals, and detailed action plans to improve outcomes, ROC the Future is committed to engaging parents, students, and the community in its efforts to ensure that every child is school-ready, supported, successful, and college- and career-ready.

Our School of Nursing, in partnership with Children's Institute and ROC the Future, recently convened a group of nonprofits to discuss what would be required to bring an evidence-based parent engagement program to Rochester; the School also is partnering with ROC the Future on a school-readiness screening initiative for three- and four-year olds enrolled in early and universal pre-kindergarten.

We believe our Campus Compact Civic Action Plan will enable us to make even greater contributions to the RMAPI and ROC the Future collective impact initiatives.



The Path Forward: Our Civic Action Plan

Within this context, and in support of Campus Compact's 30th Anniversary Action Statement, St. John Fisher College commits to:

- 1. Create a "platform partnership" with Connected Communities.** For more than a year, we have been in discussions with Connected Communities, a nonprofit agency formed to guide the transformation of Rochester's EMMA and Beechwood neighborhoods using the Purpose Built Community model of holistic revitalization to break the cycle of poverty. That model includes a cradle-to-college-to-career educational pipeline (which is at the core of ROC the Future's work), a mixed-income housing strategy, and community wellness through a network of support services.

Working with RMAPI and the Mayor's Office of Innovation and Strategic Initiatives, Connected Communities is leading a public/private partnership that includes the Beechwood Neighborhood Coalition, EMMA Business and Neighborhood Association, Northeast Area Development (NEAD), Home Leasing, Hillside Family of Agencies, Farash Foundation, and the University of Rochester.

We are choosing to support Connected Communities and partner with the EMMA and Beechwood residents because of the neighborhoods' distinct strengths and unique challenges. The EMMA and Beechwood neighborhoods are home to nearly 8,100 residents in 2,700 households, only a third of which are owner-occupied. More than half of the households have combined incomes of \$25,000 or less; 10 percent of the residents are under the age of 5; 30 percent are under the age of 17. Fifty-eight percent of the residents are African-American and 24 percent Caucasian. These neighborhoods have concentrated poverty, struggling schools, low graduation rates, and lack of service coordination.

Since its inception, Connected Communities has been community-driven rather than volunteer-driven and community-led rather than volunteer-led; it exists to support neighborhood residents and community stakeholders as they lead their own neighborhood change.

Our partnership with Connected Communities will involve applying and leveraging our institutional resources in a focused, intentional, and sustainable way to help address the expressed needs of residents, as well as respond to requests for support from Connected Communities' leadership. We will begin by extending our service-learning and community service in this area in response to resident-identified issues; over time, as our relationship with residents and neighborhood leaders develops, we expect that our work with the EMMA and Beechwood neighborhoods will lead to increased opportunities for experiential learning for our students, as well as resident-endorsed opportunities for faculty to research and validate best practices and high-impact programs.



- 2. Participate in a collective impact network.** St. John Fisher College already serves as a convener institution for ROC the Future and, through its Schools of Education and Nursing, has relationships with several local efforts to improve educational outcomes for urban youth. We will increase these efforts by expanding the ways in which we can serve more broadly as a resource for urban teachers and urban education. Further, we commit to partnering with any and all schools to provide training around trauma-informed teaching and trauma-informed care and to partner with under-achieving schools to achieve better outcomes for students through the use of best practices.

- 3. Develop a signature model.** Our signature model will follow the efforts of various schools around the country as we commit to provide every student who attends St. John Fisher College with the opportunity for a community engagement experience. This renewed commitment and expansion of opportunities will be coordinated and managed by a new Institute for Civic and Community Engagement that is being established to ensure that the College's physical, fiscal, and human resources are aligned with our civic and community engagement strategies.

To help accomplish these objectives, we commit to:

- **Increase our capacity** to support civic and community engagement by developing a college-wide system for training and engaging faculty, students, and staff in the ways in which these commitments can manifest themselves in a variety of ways all across the campus, in both classrooms and offices.
- **Increase our capacity** to strengthen classroom and experiential learning around responsible citizenship, explore the various means available to assess student learning in this area, and implement a process suitable for the plans we develop.
- **Further strengthen and nourish our culture** of engagement by enhancing the campus community's understanding of what it means to be an anchor institution. We also will explore how civic and community engagement can be incorporated further into the college-wide learning goals and core curriculum and how more faculty might become involved in community-based teaching and research. Additionally, we will continue to recognize and celebrate publicly, on campus and beyond, the contributions that our faculty, staff, students, and alumni make to the betterment of the Rochester community.
- **Align current service-learning and volunteer activities** and, when necessary, develop new service-learning courses and volunteer opportunities to help address community issues in partnership with those community-based organizations involved with RMAPI, the Connected Communities and EMMA/Beechwood initiative, and other community collaborations.
- **Document and assess the impact** of our civic and community activities at the institutional level.

The Planning Team

To deliver on these commitments, the College's work will be coordinated by a Planning Team and an Advisory Group composed of campus and community thought leaders.

Members of the Planning Team will include:

1. Provost
2. Dean of the Wegmans School of Nursing and Associate Vice President for Community Engagement
3. Director of the Institute for Civic and Community Engagement
4. Assistant Director of the Institute for Civic and Community Engagement
5. Director of the Center for Community Engagement
6. Director of Campus Ministry
7. Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Programs
8. Two faculty liaisons

In addition, the Advisory Group will inform the work of the Planning Team. Members of that group will include:

1. Executive Director, Connected Communities
2. Executive Director, Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI)
3. President and CEO, Farash Foundation
4. Executive Director, ESL Foundation
5. Director, Roc the Future