

Date: February 28, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Donna Aguiniga, Interim Director of the Center for Community Engagement & Learning

Cc: Jeff Jessee, Dean of the College of Health and Vice Provost of Health Programs
Tracey Burke, Professor of Social Work

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review: Optional Program Response to Dean's Recommendation

Program/s in this review: Civic Engagement Undergraduate Certificate

Program response to dean's findings:

Dean Jessee's review findings of the Civic Engagement Undergraduate Certificate highlighted the important role that the program plays in supporting UAA's designation as a community-engaged university and the recognition the university has received for its community-engaged efforts. The program incorporates a variety of high-impact practices into its curriculum that promote student success and helps them find meaning in their college career. The certificate serves as an academic pathway for students to demonstrate their community engagement and become active, ethical citizens. The benefit of participation in civic engagement courses that require students to both think critically about their role as members of their community and to demonstrate their application of skills and knowledge in community-based settings benefits students' personal lives and professional careers.

The program recognizes the need to rethink the 30-credit certificate mechanism in order to eliminate barriers (e.g., concerns regarding the number of required credit hours, separate admission application) that inhibit student participation in the certificate program. The Center for Community Engagement & Learning's (CCEL) goal is to reimagine the certificate into a new Minor in Civic Engagement. A Civic Engagement minor would capitalize on both the strengths of the current Civic Engagement & Learning (CEL) courses and the myriad interdisciplinary courses that promote civic knowledge, community engagement, and service-learning. There would be no additional costs to developing a minor, and it provides a recognized way for students to denote their civic engagement studies. While details have not been fleshed out, it is anticipated that the minor would be 18 hours. The 12-credit hour reduction will ease student concerns about the feasibility of the program and allow it to be more easily incorporated into a student's plan of study. In addition, a minor does not require separate application for admission, reducing confusion and eliminating any financial barrier caused by the application fee.

While still under development, the minor is likely to require students to earn 9 credits of CEL credit and 9 credits of interdisciplinary courses that meet program specifications of incorporating community engagement, service-learning, and/or civic knowledge. The minor would include the CEL A292 Introduction to Civic Engagement course (a Social Sciences GER and planned Diversity & Inclusion GER) and the CEL A395 Civic Engagement Internship. A wide range of courses is offered across the university that would meet the requirements for the minor and allow maximum flexibility for students.

Dean Jessee stated that "if the program is deleted, the university should consider alternative options for promoting civic engagement." Eliminating the option of a transcribed academic pathway to demonstrate commitment to civic engagement theory, skills, and experiences will weaken outside perception that the university cares about community engagement and will likely have a negative impact on the next application to retain UAA's status as a Carnegie Foundation designated Community Engaged University. Supporting the transition from a Civic Engagement Certificate to a Minor in Civic Engagement reinforces the importance UAA places on civic education and facilitates student engagement with the program. Based upon the stated goal of transitioning to a minor, we request that the Civic Engagement Certificate status be changed to Revision.