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CARNEGIE SELECTS COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES FOR 2015 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLASSIFICATION

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has selected 240 U.S. colleges and universities to receive its 2015 Community Engagement Classification. Of this number, 83 institutions are receiving the classification for the first time, while 157 are now re-classified, after being classified originally in 2006 or 2008. These 240 institutions join the 121 institutions that earned the classification during the 2010 selection process. The Foundation congratulates all 361 campuses on gaining this important designation.

Colleges and universities with an institutional focus on community engagement were invited to apply for the classification, first offered in 2006 as part of an extensive restructuring of The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Unlike the Foundation's other classifications that rely on national data, this is an "elective" classification—institutions participated voluntarily by submitting required materials describing the nature and extent of their engagement with the community, be it local or beyond. This approach enabled the Foundation to

address elements of institutional mission and distinctiveness that are not represented in the national data on colleges and universities.

“The importance of this elective classification is borne out by the response of so many campuses that have demonstrated their deep engagement with local, regional, national, and global communities,” said John Saltmarsh, Director of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education. “These are campuses that are improving teaching and learning, producing research that makes a difference in communities, and revitalizing their civic and academic missions.”

“This is the first time that there has been a re-classification process,” noted Amy Driscoll, Consulting Scholar for the Community Engagement Classification, “and we are seeing renewed institutional commitment, advanced curricular and assessment practices, and deeper community partnerships, all sustained through changes in campus leadership, and within the context of a devastating economic recession.”

Central to the classification process is a “documentation framework” developed by a team of advisors to help applicants (and reviewers) assess the nature of an institution’s community engagement commitments. This year, 241 first-time applicants registered to receive the application, 133 institutions submitted applications, and 83 were successfully classified as community engaged institutions. Similarly, 188 campuses were eligible for re-classification, 162 submitted an application, and 157 were successfully re-classified.

Among first-time recipients of the classification, 47 are public institutions and 36 are private. In terms of Carnegie’s Basic Classification, 28 are classified as research universities, 28 are master’s colleges and universities, 17 are baccalaureate colleges, four are community colleges, and five institutions have a specialized focus—arts, medicine, and other health

professions. They represent campuses in 33 states and U.S. territories. In order to be selected, institutions had to provide descriptions and examples of institutionalized practices of community engagement that showed alignment among mission, culture, leadership, resources and practices.

The Foundation, through the work of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, developed the first typology of American colleges and universities in 1970 as a research tool to describe and represent the diversity of U.S. higher education. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (now housed at Indiana University Bloomington's Center for Postsecondary Research) continues to be used for a wide range of purposes by academic researchers, institutional personnel, policymakers and others.

A listing of the institutions that hold the Community Engagement Classification can be found on NERCHE's website.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is committed to developing networks of ideas, individuals, and institutions to advance teaching and learning. We join together scholars, practitioners, and designers in new ways to solve problems of educational practice. Toward this end, we work to integrate the discipline of improvement science into education with the goal of building the field's capacity to improve.