

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

CARNEGIE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLASSIFICATION
2026 APPLICATION



Provost & Executive Vice President
UtahStateUniversity

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Section I. APPLICANT'S CONTACT INFORMATION

No. 1. Institutional Information

Official Institution Name: Utah State University

Single/Multi-campus Institution Endorsement: Multi-campus institution

IPEDS Unit ID: 230728

Campuses Seeking Endorsement: All

Institutional Type: Land Grant, NASNTI, Four-Year Public, Urban, Suburban, Rural

No. 2. Application Contact

Name: David T. Anderson

Title: Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement

Email/Phone Number: david.anderson@usu.edu, 435-797-1984

No. 3. Official Institutional Mailing Contacts

Institutional Mailing Address: 1400 Old Main Hill, Logan, Utah 84322

Email/Phone: 435-797-1000

President's Name: Alan L. Smith

President's Email Address: al.smith@usu.edu

Chief Academic Officer's Name: Laurens H. Smith

Chief Academic Officer's Email Address: larry.smith@usu.edu

No. 4. Enrollment, Faculty, and Staff

Full-Time Undergraduate Equivalent Enrollment: 20,465

Full-Time Graduate Equivalent Enrollment: 1,935

of Full-Time Equivalent Staff: 3,824

of Full-Time Equivalent Faculty: 1,054

Section II. CAMPUS, COMMUNITY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONTEXT

No. 5. Institution and Community Context

Describe your institution in a way that will help provide a context to understand how community engagement is envisioned and enacted. Include descriptions of the institution and community. If your institution has multiple campuses, please describe each campus for which you are seeking an endorsement.

- a. Region; founding and history; current institutional mission; institutional culture; types of degree programs; and demographics of student, faculty, and staff populations*

Region

As Utah's land-grant university with a charge to "educate the state," Utah State University (USU) serves communities across Utah through its main campus, two additional residential campuses, a network of 27 regional campuses, and 39 Extension offices. USU's community-focused efforts are guided by the unique regional, demographic, economic, sociocultural, and health characteristics of the communities it engages with across the state.

Approximately two-thirds of Utah's land is managed by the federal government and serves as a vital resource for the region, supporting grazing, recreation, and tourism-related industries. The state includes five urban, 11 rural, and 13 frontier counties. USU's main campus is in Logan, an urban city in northern Utah with a population of 55,250. Located in Cache County, Logan is surrounded by small agricultural communities, bringing the area's total population to just over 140,000. USU also operates residential campuses in Price and Blanding. Price, a historic mining town in rural west-central Utah's Carbon County, is home to 8,261 residents. Blanding, located in southeastern Utah's frontier San Juan County near Native American reservations, has a population of 3,189.

Utah's population is predominantly White (78.6%), with a growing Hispanic or Latino community (16.0%). In San Juan County, 45.0% of the population is Native American. High school diploma attainment in Logan (91.0%), Carbon County (91.8%), and San Juan County (87.7%) falls below the state average of 93.3%. Logan exceeds the state average for residents with a bachelor's degree or higher (38.8% compared to 36.9%), while Carbon County (18.4%) and San Juan County (20.2%) have lower attainment levels. Median household incomes in Logan, Carbon County, and San Juan County range from \$53,673 to \$56,764, which is significantly lower than Utah's statewide median of \$91,750. Poverty rates in the rural and frontier counties USU serves range from 5.4% to 22.8%.

Founding, History, and Mission

USU was founded as the Agriculture College of Utah in 1888 and was renamed Utah State University in 1957. Community engagement is central to USU's mission "to be one of the nation's premier student-centered land-grant and space-grant universities by fostering the principle that academics come first, by cultivating diversity of thought and culture, and by serving the public through learning, discovery, and engagement." Recognized by the Carnegie Foundation as an R1 doctoral university with very high research activity, USU actively supports faculty and students in pursuing innovative research and creative work that addresses challenges and benefits communities across Utah and beyond. Guided by the USU Board of Trustees policy, which prioritizes student instruction as the university's foremost activity, USU is dedicated to graduating citizen scholars equipped to serve Utah, the nation, and the world. This dedication extends far beyond the classroom, integrating community engagement into the university experience and fostering a culture of impact and service.

Institutional Culture

The majority of communities USU serves are politically and religiously conservative. According to the 2023 Public Religion Research Institute American Values Atlas, 53.0% of Utah's population identify as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Additionally, Utah consistently ranks first in the nation for volunteerism, reflecting its strong culture of service and community engagement.

Pressing health and social issues affecting the communities USU serves include food insecurity, disability, mental health concerns, homelessness, substance use, and refugee integration. According to Feeding America, 12.3% of Utahns experience food insecurity, with a recent USU survey indicating that 62% of USU students experience low or very low food security. Disability is another significant concern, with one in four Utah adults reporting a disability in 2021. Mental health is a critical issue. Utah had the seventh-highest age-adjusted suicide rate in the U.S. in 2022, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Utahns aged 10–44. Housing instability continues to grow, with homelessness increasing by 10% from 2022 to 2024. Substance use is also a persistent public health issue, with Utah averaging 11 drug-related poisoning deaths per week. Additionally, Utah is home to nearly 70,000 refugees, many of whom face barriers to health and social integration.

Types of Degree Programs

The university offers 22 associate degrees, 121 bachelor's degrees, 134 graduate programs, and 91 certificate credentials.

Demographics of Student, Faculty, and Staff Populations

With an enrollment of 25,702 undergraduate students (17,875 at the Logan Campus; 6,471 at Statewide Campuses) and 3,198 graduate students (2,013 at the Logan Campus; 882 at Statewide Campuses), USU students hail from all 29 Utah counties, all 50 states, and 65 countries

USU's student population is 82% White, 7% Hispanic or Latino, 2% identifying as two or more races, 1% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1% Asian, 1% Black or African American, and 0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Additionally, 65% of USU students are enrolled full-time. Enrollment at USU continues to grow, with first-time and transfer student enrollment increasing by 27% across USU's 30 statewide education locations in Fall 2024. In 2024, 16% of undergraduate students were first-generation college students.

USU employs 2,921 benefitted staff members, with a demographic composition of 57% female and 43% male. Among staff, 85% identify as White, 5% as Latino, 3% as Asian, 2% as Multiracial, 1% as African American, and 1% as American Indian. The Logan Campus employs 2,279 staff members, while the Blanding and Price campuses employ 70 and 128 staff members, respectively.

USU's faculty includes 1,187 members, with 45% identifying as female and 55% as male. The faculty demographic breakdown includes 81% White, 8% Asian, 6% Latino, 2% Multiracial, 1% African American, and 1% American Indian. The Logan Campus employs 928 faculty members, while Blanding and Price have 32 and 66 faculty members, respectively.

b. Leadership priorities, vision, and strategic plan and initiatives and other features that shape and distinguish the institution, particularly as they relate to community engagement

As a land-grant institution, USU's mission prioritizes applying knowledge for public benefit, ensuring that community engagement is woven into the fabric of teaching, research, and service. The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification serves as the primary benchmark to measure "engagement" within USU's mission.

Since its first Carnegie Community Engagement Classification application in 2019, USU has experienced several leadership transitions, yet its commitment to community engagement has remained steadfast. President Noelle Cockett (2017–2023) advanced USU's land-grant mission by expanding community partnerships, supporting rural engagement initiatives, and strengthening institutional structures for engagement. Her legacy includes the establishment of Aggies Think, Care, Act, a campus-wide initiative fostering community engagement and responsibility, and the USU Principles of Community, which state: "We believe service and civic engagement elevate the academic experience. By putting classroom experience into practice through meaningful acts of service, students learn important lessons in civic responsibility while strengthening communities." President

Elizabeth Cantwell (2023–2025) built on these efforts by prioritizing community engagement as a core element in translating the land-grant mission for the 21st century, alongside innovation, sustainability, workforce development, ethical leadership, and social responsibility.

In February 2025, Al Smith, Dean of USU’s Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, was appointed interim president. Under his leadership, USU is developing its 2025–2030 Roadmap, which reinforces community engagement as a pillar of the university’s future. The draft of this roadmap states: “Guided by our mission to provide exceptional learning, discovery, and engagement, and grounded in our commitment to the State of Utah, this roadmap integrates the university’s aspirations to foster student success, drive research excellence, and expand its impact statewide and beyond. By 2030, USU will emerge as a national leader in academic innovation, research impact, and community engagement, advancing opportunities for students, faculty, and stakeholders.” USU views this strategic roadmap as an opportunity to further institutionalize and elevate community engagement across its campuses, ensuring long-term sustainability and integration into academic and administrative structures.

Established in 2013, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) serves as USU’s hub for community engagement, providing leadership, resources, and direct support for students, faculty, and community partners. The CCE facilitates a broad range of engagement opportunities, including six distinct community engagement programs and institutional leadership through the Faculty Fellows in Community Engagement program and Carnegie Community Engagement Classification efforts. The CCE aims to provide every USU student with opportunities to apply their education through curricular and co-curricular community engagement, fostering a culture of civic responsibility and public impact. The CCE reports to the Vice President of Student Affairs, who reports to the provost, reinforcing community engagement as a priority across both co-curricular and academic domains.

To support data-driven decision-making, the USU Office of Data and Analytics (ODA) tracks faculty engagement efforts through the Watermark online platform (formerly Digital Measures). The CCE Assistant Director of Community-Engaged Learning regularly collaborates with ODA to identify potential Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses, support faculty in the CEL course designation process, and strengthen institutional tracking and reporting of engagement efforts.

The Faculty Fellows in Community Engagement program strengthens faculty involvement in community engagement and the connection between student affairs (CCE) and academic affairs. In November 2023, the CCE and the Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President selected the inaugural cohort of Faculty Fellows, who serve two-year terms. The program focuses on advancing CEL course development, expanding the Community-Engaged Departments program, and mentoring and training faculty in CEL pedagogy. To ensure long-term growth and sustainability, the CCE is working to secure funding to expand

the program incrementally over the next three years, with a goal of placing a Faculty Fellow in each of USU's nine colleges by 2027.

Recognizing the need for institutional leadership in community engagement, USU created the Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement position in 2023. This role was established to oversee the Carnegie Community Engagement Reclassification process, lead the ongoing institutionalization of engagement efforts across USU, and chair the Provost's Advisory Committee on Community Engagement. This committee brings together engagement leaders representing community-engaged learning, research, and co-curricular engagement, ensuring a unified and strategic approach to advancing USU's engagement mission. The Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement reports directly to the provost, providing updates, tracking progress, and ensuring engagement remains a strategic priority in institutional decision-making.

Additionally, USU's Community-Engaged Department Designation aligns academic departments with the public purpose of higher education, ensuring that community engagement is deeply embedded in department missions, teaching, and research. Departments that receive this designation demonstrate a commitment to integrating community-based work into teaching and scholarship, making community-engaged experiences a standard expectation for students, and encouraging civic and community engagement at the departmental level. Since 2020, USU has designated four additional Community-Engaged Departments, and all six inaugural departments have successfully renewed their designation. This expansion reflects a broader, more embedded culture of engagement across the institution.

In 2024, USU further strengthened its support for community-engaged research by establishing the Community-Engaged Scholars Network (CESN). This initiative connects USU scholars with communities across Utah, fostering collaborative research that addresses community-identified needs and enhances publicly engaged scholarship.

USU's leadership, institutional structure, and strategic initiatives demonstrate a deep and sustained commitment to community engagement. The university ensures that community engagement remains a central pillar of its academic and institutional identity and is committed to further institutionalizing engagement and advancing its role as a national leader in community engagement and public impact.

- c. *Describe the communities to which the institution is accountable to, including community characteristics, community priorities, and the relationship of the community to the institution.*

As a land-grant university, USU is accountable to communities across the state of Utah through its responsibility to serve the public through its core mission of teaching, research, and extension. The university engages with a diverse range of communities, including rural, frontier, and urban populations; tribal nations; industry partners; agricultural stakeholders;

and historically underserved groups such as low-income families and first-generation students. Each of these communities has distinct characteristics, priorities, and challenges, shaping how USU fosters partnerships and responds to evolving needs.

Rural and frontier communities, which make up much of Utah's landscape, face persistent challenges related to economic development, healthcare access, workforce shortages, and educational attainment. In these regions, USU plays a critical role by providing accessible higher education opportunities through regional campuses, workforce development programs, and Extension outreach. Programs in Price and Moab offer technical degrees tailored to local industry needs, allowing individuals to gain relevant job skills while remaining in their communities. Additionally, USU collaborates with local health leaders and policymakers to address public health concerns, such as substance use and overdose prevention in rural areas. In 2024, USU Extension was named the Rural Education Partner of the Year by the Rural Health Association of Utah, recognizing its commitment to addressing healthcare and educational needs in rural communities.

Agricultural communities, a cornerstone of Utah's economic and cultural identity, rely on USU's expertise in land management, water conservation, and sustainable farming practices. Through Extension programs and applied research, USU supports farmers and ranchers in navigating the challenges of climate change, drought, and shifting market demands. To ensure that agricultural outreach remains responsive to evolving needs, USU Extension conducts annual needs assessments through surveys and stakeholder advisory groups, enabling community members to provide direct input on how Extension programs should adapt.

Extension programs and applied research at USU, however, go well beyond agricultural topics. Major Extension programs support local needs in natural resources, business and community, food, health and wellness, gardening, home, finance and relationships, as well as the longstanding support of youth and Utah 4-H.

USU also maintains longstanding partnerships with Utah's federally recognized tribal nations, including the Navajo Nation, Ute Tribe, and Northwestern Band of the Shoshone. In San Juan County, where nearly half of the population is Native American, USU Blanding provides culturally responsive educational pathways designed to support students who are members of federally recognized tribes. In addition to improving educational access and degree completion, USU partners with tribal communities on water access initiatives, food sovereignty programs, and economic development efforts, ensuring that solutions are co-created in alignment with community priorities.

USU's commitment to accountability is embedded in its approach to community engagement, ensuring that relationships with external partners are reciprocal, sustained, and impactful. The university has established multiple mechanisms to systematically assess community perceptions of its engagement. The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) surveys established community partners each year, gathering feedback on partnership

quality and effectiveness, followed by individual meetings to address concerns and suggestions. Additionally, CCE staff members actively contribute to and hold leadership roles in various community councils and committees, including the Cache Interagency Council and Cache Community Connections. These engagements allow them to regularly listen to and understand the successes and challenges of our local community partners. Furthermore, each semester, community partners present to students, staff, and faculty through the CCE Community Voices and Engagement workshop series, which is designed to ensure that community perspectives are deeply integrated into our engagement strategies.

USU's Regional Campus Advisory Councils also play a vital role in connecting local stakeholders with university leadership. Each regional campus convenes an advisory committee that meets monthly with campus directors to shape community-engaged research and teaching priorities, ensuring that university initiatives align with the needs of local communities.

By maintaining open dialogue, shared leadership, and a commitment to mutual benefit, USU strengthens its role as a trusted partner dedicated to co-developing solutions, expanding opportunities, and remaining accountable to the communities it serves.

No. 6. Definition of Community Engagement

Describe the institutionally sanctioned definition of community engagement and related terms. List the terms and definitions here that provide the institutional standards for community engagement. Provide context for the creation of the definition and standards of high-quality community engagement, including how it was determined and approved, how it is used, and any evidence of its effectiveness in guiding community engagement on campus in relation to your last classification. If the definition of community engagement has been refined/revised since the last classification, describe the rationale, process of change, and the extent to which the revision has had an impact. Additionally, upload the document or list the website link where the institution-wide definition of community engagement appears.

At USU, clearly defining high-quality, mutually beneficial community engagement is a priority. In 2017, a committee of institutional leaders announced the USU Civic Action Plan (CAP), a strategic roadmap for community engagement. The leadership committee included the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Vice President of Marketing and Communication, the Provost, the Assistant Director and Director of the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), the Community-Engaged Learning Coordinator, and the Director of the University Honors Program. As part of the CAP announcement, the university formally adopted the Carnegie Foundation's definition of community engagement, which emphasizes collaborative partnership and reciprocity over one-way service or outreach:

“Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.”

This definition appears on the [Center for Community Engagement website](#), the [Office of the Provost website](#), and in all syllabi for Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses. Additionally, when faculty identify their scholarly work as community-engaged in Watermark (formerly Digital Measures), they are required to review the Carnegie definition along with clearly defined categories for community-engaged teaching, research, and service. These definitions are accessible as hover-text prompts within the reporting system. Faculty must also respond to a community engagement question for each entry, which is essential for identifying CEL and community-engaged research and for measuring engagement quality across the institution.

To support shared understanding and strengthen practices of high-quality community engagement, the CCE has developed and distributed a guide to developing reciprocal partnerships for all faculty teaching CEL courses. This resource outlines the university’s adopted definition of community engagement, characteristics of high-quality reciprocal partnerships, and best practices for creating mutually beneficial collaborations.

Since adopting and promoting the Carnegie definition, which emphasizes reciprocity and mutual benefit, through Watermark, CEL designation, and the Community-Engaged Department program, faculty report feeling increasingly supported in recognizing community partners as co-educators and co-authors. A recent example of this was shared by Dr. Roslynn McCann in USU’s Quinney College of Natural Resources: “Our article ‘[Building relationships for meaningful co-created Indigenous climate education](#)’ is now published in Community Science. This article represents an equal split of Indigenous and non-Indigenous co-authors.”

No. 7. Equitable Access and Opportunity

Describe how the institution ensures that students, faculty, staff, and community partners have equitable access and opportunity to community engagement activities and partnerships. Equitable access and opportunity require focused efforts to address systems and structures that create barriers to participation. If the definition of community engagement has been refined/revised since the last classification, describe the rationale, process of change, and the extent to which the revision has had an impact. Additionally, upload the document or list the website link where the institution-wide definition of community engagement appears.

- a. *Describe the relevant contexts—both within the institution as well as beyond (local, regional, national)—that shape how equitable access and opportunity in community engagement is defined, discussed, planned, enacted, and held accountable on your campus.*

In 2024, the Utah Legislature passed and the governor signed [H.B. 261: Equal Opportunity Initiatives](#), which took effect July 1, 2024. In response to this legislation and its implementation guidance, USU has changed the structure and objectives of its inclusive excellence programs and education.

USU remains committed to its mission of excellence, access, and inclusion for all members of our communities across Utah and will work within the guardrails of state law to ensure our campuses are a place where everyone feels welcome.

USU strives to ensure that its students, faculty, staff, and community all have exceptional access to opportunities for community engagement, activities, and partnerships, regardless of their background or identity. USU develops community engagement opportunities that are equally accessible to all individuals regardless of gender, religion, race, or other such factors.

USU leverages its academic resources and personnel to ensure that Utahns from every walk of life can fully access and participate in USU's community engagement programming. As Utah's land grant institution, USU has residential campuses throughout the state and a presence in every county. USU leverages its statewide presence to bring access and opportunity to participate in its programs to Utahns wherever they are. The Center for Community Engagement's (CCE) student-driven co-curricular engagement programs have adopted Break Away's nine components of high-quality Alternative Breaks, including Full Participation. Full participation focuses on creating a sense of belonging and community where individuals from all backgrounds and abilities are actively engaged and equally valued in all aspects of a group, organization, or community. It emphasizes not just physical inclusion but also access to opportunities, decision-making processes, and meaningful contributions without fear of exclusion.

Another example is USU's commitment to the full participation of students with disabilities in university programs. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) helps individuals with disabilities overcome barriers that could otherwise limit their academic, professional, and personal potential. These barriers may be architectural, attitudinal, or related to university programs. The DRC provides direct services and coordinates with other state agencies and university programs to ensure equal access.

- b. *Describe institutional systems and structures that address equitable access and opportunity in community engagement for students, faculty, staff, and community partners. This may include infrastructure; program/initiative; policies, procedures and practices; staffing; office; finance; network or coalition of centers; campus climate survey; hiring/recruitment; etc.).*

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The [College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#), the Heravi Peace Institute, and the CCE remove financial barriers and provide greater access to high-impact experiential learning opportunities such as internships, community-engaged learning, conferences, and community-engaged study abroad programs through experiential learning scholarships. While transformative in nature, economic barriers can prevent or reduce participation for many students, and this financial assistance helps to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to participate. The CCE also has a participation fund developed to assist students who cannot pay the entire program fee to participate in Alternative Breaks.

c. Describe how the campus ensures that community partners have “significant voice” and input into institutional or departmental planning and collective goals.

In an effort to reduce survey fatigue and provide immediate follow-up at annual 1:1 partner meetings, the CCE partnership survey is now administered once a year, rather than 2-3 times per year, prior to the annual 1:1 meeting with CCE administrative staff (Director and Asst. Director). During the annual 1:1, survey findings are shared, and partners can provide specific recommendations to improve partnership quality, develop shared goals and co-plan events for the coming year.

The CCE annual surveys and 1:1 meetings revealed that paid parking on the USU campus creates a barrier for many community partners whose offices are located off campus. In response to this partner feedback about the challenges of accessing campus, CCE staff opted to take on leadership roles within the Cache Interagency Council (CIC), a coalition of local nonprofit leaders and service providers, rather than requiring partners attend additional meetings at the university. This community-based involvement allows CCE staff to engage with community partners at their monthly meeting instead of every six months.

The CIC convenes at various locations throughout the community, providing CCE with direct insight into partners' successes and challenges. Both the CCE Director and Assistant Director, both former nonprofit executive directors, have consistently served as chair and vice chair of CIC. Beyond monthly meetings, the CCE collaborates with local partners to organize regular presentations and mini conferences through the CIC, enabling university faculty and community partners to exchange information in a context that is community-based and community-driven.

In addition to CIC, Nelda Ault-Dyslin, CCE Assistant Director of Community-Engaged Learning, has been a consistent member of Cache Community Connections (CCC), a civic and interfaith coalition, for 14 years. Through her participation with CCC, various programs and initiatives (such as the Community Rakes & Shovels program that matches student volunteers with community members with disabilities and senior citizens in need of leaf raking and snow shoveling assistance and the “Pure Water” interfaith dialogue event co-sponsored with the Hyrum Museum) have come to fruition. By engaging with the community as equal partners and attending regular networking meetings alongside them, the CCE keeps a finger on the pulse of community organizations and gathers information for potential collaborative projects throughout the calendar year.

- d. *Describe the resources made available to community partners that support community engagement (e.g., professional development, compensation, materials, space, acknowledgement, awards).*

As described in C (above), the CCE collaborates with local partners to organize regular presentations and mini conferences through the CIC, enabling university faculty and community partners to exchange information in a context that is community-based and community-driven. Likewise, the USU Transforming Communities Institute (TCI) is hosting the statewide Utah Community Engagement Conference in May 2025 with an emphasis on community voice and increased community partner participation. Faculty presenters were encouraged to include community partners as co-presenters. The CCE recognizes community partners at the annual Community Engagement Awards with the Committed Community Partner Presidential Award and the [Ivory Prize for Excellence in Community Engagement](#) which includes a \$10,000 award for the community partner.

- e. *In what ways does the campus collect information from partners to ensure accountability to the community—in particular reciprocity, mutual benefit, and respect?*

As described in C (above), the CCE ensures reciprocity, mutual benefit and respect by participating in community building alongside our partners in places that are convenient and barrier free rather than requiring that they come to us. Opportunities to provide feedback on partnership quality and develop collaborative projects are offered through surveys and individual 1:1 meetings. In addition, the CCE hosts networking events, such as Speed Networking or Lightning Talks, every semester at an accessible public space. These events are designed to give community partners the opportunity to regularly present their

project ideas to faculty.

No. 8. Campus-Wide Coordinating Infrastructure

As evidence for your earlier classification, you provided a description of the campus-wide coordinating infrastructure (center, office, network or coalition of centers, etc.) to support and advance community engagement and you reported how it is staffed, how it is funded, and its reporting line.

- a. *For reclassification, describe what has changed, if anything, with this infrastructure, its mission, staffing, funding, and reporting since the last classification. If the campus has more than one center coordinating community engagement, describe each center, staffing, and purpose and indicate how the multiple centers interact with one another to advance institutional community engagement. Provide any relevant links that support the narrative.*

USU's Center for Community Engagement (CCE) serves as the university's hub for community engagement, providing a wide range of student opportunities through curricular and co-curricular engagement as well as institutional leadership through the Carnegie Community Engagement classification. Founded in 2013, the CCE brought together six established community engagement programs under a shared mission of developing active citizens through engagement and scholarship. The center is staffed by an executive director, director, assistant director of community-engaged learning, thirteen full-time program coordinators, a staff assistant, and several hourly employees. Its funding is provided primarily by USU Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, the Utah State Legislature, and AmeriCorps.

The CCE oversees the following programs and initiatives:

- **Community-Engaged Learning (CEL):** The CCE develops and manages CEL courses by supporting faculty development, overseeing designations, and administering the Community-Engaged Department designation. Since the last classification, a new Assistant Director of Community-Engaged Learning position and Faculty Fellowships in Community Engagement have been created. The assistant director works closely with Faculty Fellows to support mutually beneficial partnerships and community-engaged course and department development.
- **Community-Engaged Scholars (Christensen Community Scholars):** This transcript designation requires 200 hours of engagement, coursework, and a community action project. The CCE collaborates with the USU Honors Program to recruit students through the Community-Engaged Scholar Honors Track.
- **Christensen Office of Service & Sustainability (COSAS):** Formerly the Val R. Christensen Service Center, COSAS was formed by merging this center with the Student Sustainability Office. This unification increased impact and broadened student-driven community engagement reach.

- **America Reads:** This program provides opportunities for students to serve as mentors and tutors in local public schools, supported by work-study and AmeriCorps compensation.
- **Utah Conservation Corps:** Overseen by the CCE, this AmeriCorps program partners with land management agencies and nonprofits across Utah.
- **Aggie Blue Bikes:** This bike-share program leads a variety of community engagement efforts and events.
- **One Utah Service Fellowships:** These fellowships allow students to address critical needs across Utah through high-impact service, supported by AmeriCorps living allowances and education awards.

The CCE also manages AggiePulse, a campus-wide online platform that connects students and faculty to community-identified needs and opportunities. Community partners can post events, students can track engagement hours, and faculty can integrate engagement into teaching and research.

The CCE works directly with USU's regional, as well as main, campuses to ensure coordination of community engagement efforts across the state. CEL courses offered at regional campuses meet the same designation requirements. USU Eastern offers an Excellence in Community Engagement award for associate degrees, which is stackable toward the bachelor's-level Community-Engaged Scholar designation. USU Eastern also uses AggiePulse to track community engagement. A new Center for Community Engagement offering support for curricular as well as co-curricular community engagement is currently being proposed to expand the mission of USU Eastern's Serving Utah Network (SUN) Center.

In January 2024, the CCE and Transforming Communities Institute launched the Community-Engaged Scholars Network (CESN). This new institution-wide network enhances partnership development among USU scholars and community partners.

- b. Describe the most recent internal budgetary allocations dedicated to supporting institutional engagement with the community and what has changed, if anything, with the budgetary allocations since the last classification. Describe whether the sources of these funds are permanent or temporary. Describe how budget shortfalls may have impacted funding for community engagement.*

Since the initial classification, USU has made several key budgetary investments to support the expansion of community engagement infrastructure and leadership. In 2022, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) established a new Assistant Director for Community-Engaged Learning position. A key qualification for this role is extensive leadership experience within the local community, especially in non-profit development and building community partnerships. The following year, the Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President appointed a new Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement to oversee the reclassification process and advance institutional community

engagement. Simultaneously, the CCE and Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President launched the Faculty Fellowships in Community Engagement program to enhance faculty mentorship and support. While initially pilot programs, both the Associate Vice Provost role and Faculty Fellowships are now considered essential to the institutionalization of community engagement. Permanent funding is actively being pursued through the Office of Advancement, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and individual college units.

In 2020, the Division of Student Affairs invested in a three-year contract with GivePulse to launch AggiePulse, a comprehensive platform for managing, tracking, and assessing community engagement activities across the institution. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the CCE faced challenges in securing matching funds for its community-based programming, leading to a temporary reduction to a basic-level subscription for AggiePulse. However, USU is now on track to restore full functionality with platinum-level access in 2025, thanks to renewed funding efforts.

Budget sources for community engagement at USU include a mix of permanent and temporary funds. Core operational funding for the CCE comes from Academic and Student Affairs. Program-specific support, such as AmeriCorps stipends and Community-Engaged Learning, often comes from grants and state legislative appropriations. Some efforts, like the One Utah Service Fellowship and Utah Conservation Corps AmeriCorps placements, receive temporary or renewable funding based on annual AmeriCorps awards and matching institutional support.

Despite some pandemic-related shortfalls, institutional commitment has remained strong. Faculty participation in CEL and community-engaged scholarship has grown steadily, supported by internal investments in staffing, professional development, and systems infrastructure. The Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President continues to allocate resources toward capacity-building and strategic initiatives aligned with USU's mission to serve the state.

USU's integration of engagement into academic structures through tools like Watermark, the Community-Engaged Department designation, and the Faculty Fellows in Community Engagement program has helped demonstrate the value of sustained institutional investment. These systems have enabled stronger reporting, assessment, and recognition of community-engaged teaching and research, further justifying continued and expanded budget allocations.

Overall, while budget challenges have shaped the pace of some initiatives, USU continues to prioritize the financial sustainability of its community engagement infrastructure and is actively building partnerships across units to secure long-term funding and growth.

- c. *As evidence provided for your earlier classification, you described strategic fundraising efforts and/or external funding (grants) specifically undertaken to support community engagement. For reclassification, describe the most recent strategic fundraising efforts*

and/or external funding (grants) specifically undertaken to support community engagement and identify any specific endowments earmarked for community engagement.

USU continues to advance community engagement through a strategic blend of philanthropy, public funding, and external grants. As a land-grant institution, USU's commitment to serving Utah communities is reflected in its intentional development of programs and initiatives that rely on multi-source support to expand engagement and impact.

The USU Center for Community Engagement (CCE) has partnered with the Office of Advancement to initiate targeted fundraising efforts aimed at strengthening the infrastructure for community-engaged learning. This includes a feasibility study and the development of strategic goals to increase the number of CEL courses, expand community partnerships, and enhance the university's capacity for direct community impact. These efforts are designed to sustain and scale community engagement across campuses and communities statewide.

In recent years, USU has launched or grown several major interdisciplinary initiatives that exemplify the university's commitment to leveraging external support for community benefit. In 2021, the Utah Legislature and Governor's Office approved a \$7 million endowment to establish the Janet Quinney Lawson Institute for Land, Water, and Air. This institute addresses environmental challenges through research and community collaboration and produces an annual report to the Governor. It has become a hub for applied research, public scholarship, and cross-sector engagement with partners from across Utah.

Another key initiative, the Center for the School of the Future (CSF), was developed with state legislative support and philanthropic investment to lead education reform in Utah. CSF engages in strategic partnerships with school districts, university faculty, and legislators to co-develop innovative teacher preparation pathways and improve K-12 student outcomes across the state.

USU has also benefited from ongoing philanthropic support for student-driven community engagement. The Ivory Prize for Community Engagement, funded by the Clark and Christine Ivory Foundation, has been awarded annually for the past five years. The prize recognizes outstanding student leadership in community engagement and includes a \$2,000 scholarship along with \$10,000 in direct funding for the winner's community-based project, allowing students to continue or expand their community impact.

Colleges and statewide campuses have also secured private grants to support local engagement initiatives. The Growing Our Own initiative, supported by the Marc and Deborah Bingham Foundation, connects high school students in the Uintah Basin to research projects on air quality and natural resource management. The grant also funds a

USU College of Natural Resources student to collaborate with the Bureau of Land Management on critical wildlife surveys for the Pariette Wetlands.

These and other community-centered initiatives underscore USU's strategic approach to external fundraising. With the Office of Advancement's continued prioritization of community engagement as a fundraising focus, USU is well-positioned to grow external funding and deepen its statewide impact. The university's stakeholders and partners remain invested in expanding engagement efforts, and future development plans continue to center community engagement as a core area of investment and innovation.

No. 9. Impact of Recent Local, National, and Global Events

Describe how community engagement efforts have been impacted and shaped by recent local, national, and/or global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, greater attention to racial and social justice, the crisis of decreasing trust in democracy and institutions, and natural disasters.

The USU Center for Community Engagement (CCE) responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with creativity and adaptability, prioritizing its mission while ensuring the safety of students and community partners.

Traditional community-engaged learning programs were modified to address the food security needs of students and community members. In March 2020, as USU transitioned to online courses, many students lost their on-campus jobs and income. The Student Nutrition Access Center (SNAC) launched a fundraising campaign through the Office of Advancement, immediately raising \$15,000 from individual donors to purchase fresh produce and essential food items for students experiencing food insecurity. Additionally, the CCE secured \$200,000 in CARES Act funding through the Office of the President, enabling upgrades to the SNAC pantry, including an industrial sink, stainless steel tables, refrigerators, and hard flooring to improve food handling and storage. This funding also supported hiring a program coordinator to manage increased demand.

Beyond student food security, the CCE addressed broader community needs through [USU Gleaning](#), renamed Harvest Rescue. This program connects fruit tree owners with student volunteers who harvest excess produce and distribute it to local food pantries, including the Cache Community Food Pantry, Utah Families Feeding Families Porch Pantry, and Loaves and Fishes community meals. Students also volunteered with the [Farmers Feeding Families](#) program, supporting both the supply and demand sides of the local food chain. Harvest Rescue not only addressed food insecurity but also provided students with a safe way to continue volunteering. In many cases, elderly tree owners had limited social contact, and student gleaners were their only in-person visitors.

During the face mask shortage, CCE AmeriCorps members and Extension 4-H partnered with UServe and the Chamber of Commerce to develop a mask-making and distribution program. AmeriCorps members assembled kits, sewed masks, coordinated drop-off stations, and distributed

masks to organizations such as Centro de la Familia and Cache Refugee and Immigrant Connection, supporting workers in high-risk environments like meatpacking plants.

The USU Nursing Program mobilized students to create one of the region's largest and most efficient [COVID-19 testing](#) sites in the area.

Not all programs could adapt. Many Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses were reduced or suspended as faculty shifted focus to online teaching. Similarly, community-based programs like after-school clubs either paused or significantly scaled back operations.

Since 2020, USU's Utah Conservation Corps (UCC) has joined the AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team, training to respond rapidly to natural disasters. UCC crews have assisted in hurricane recovery in Louisiana, Florida, New Jersey, and North Carolina, supporting damage assessments, debris removal, and donations management. In 2021, they also delivered public health information to underserved communities in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In response to rising political polarization, CCE and Aggies Think, Care, Act launched [Aggie Talks](#), facilitating student dialogue. CCE and the Heravi Peace Institute hosted a civil discourse workshop featuring Utah State Representative Dan Johnson and Democratic candidate Patrick Belmont, followed by a Utah Public Radio feature. In March 2025, the USU Office of the President hosted a university-wide forum, "[Navigating Political Polarization: A Call to Constitutional Action](#)."

No. 10. Tracking and Assessing Engagement

Describe how the institution tracks and assesses engagement with communities. Be sure to describe:

- a. How the institution maintains systematic campus-wide tracking of engagement with the community, including the purpose for tracking, what data is collected, what systems are used to track data, who is responsible for collected data, how often data is collected, and how data is used.*

USU systematically tracks and assesses community engagement through multiple platforms and reporting mechanisms that support institutional reporting, assessment, and continuous improvement.

AggiePulse (GivePulse) serves as USU's centralized platform for tracking engagement activities across the institution. Since its adoption in 2020, AggiePulse has enabled real-time documentation of student, faculty, and staff involvement with community organizations. The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) oversees the platform and uses it to log and verify service hours, collect post-event feedback from students and community partners, and support co-created projects between faculty and community organizations with trackable milestones and outcomes. Data collected in AggiePulse is

compiled and included in the CCE's annual report, which is distributed across the institution and shared with community partners, public officials, and potential donors.

Faculty engagement with communities is also tracked through Watermark Faculty Success (formerly Digital Measures), USU's primary tool for documenting teaching, research, and service. Faculty are required to report their community engagement activities annually, with this data informing promotion and tenure processes, performance reviews, and institutional assessments of engagement trends and impact. Additionally, the Community Engagement Impact Assessment (CEIA), an institution-wide survey conducted by the Provost's Advisory Committee on Community Engagement, provides broader insights into faculty engagement and helps identify opportunities for strengthening community partnerships.

Together, AggiePulse, Watermark, and CEIA enable USU to collect and utilize data to 1) measure participation in community engagement initiatives across USU, 2) assess the impact of engagement efforts on students, faculty, and community partners, 3) inform institutional reporting processes, 4) support faculty recognition and promotion by documenting engagement activities, and 5) strengthen partnerships by aligning university resources with community-identified needs. By systematically tracking engagement through these tools, USU ensures that community engagement is well-documented, data-driven, and increasingly integrated into the institution's culture and operations.

- b. Any campus-wide assessments or self-studies of community engagement (not including this application) that have taken place in the last five years, including the purpose for the assessment or self-study, what data were collected, who was responsible for conducting the assessment or self-study, and how the assessments or self-studies were used.*

The Provost's Advisory Committee on Community Engagement oversees the administration of the Community Engagement Impact Assessment (CEIA), a university-wide evaluation conducted to assess the scope and quality of community engagement at USU. The CEIA collects data on faculty and staff involvement in community engagement, focusing on their roles, perceptions of reciprocity and mutual benefit, the university's engagement climate, institutional support structures, leadership visibility, integration of engagement into promotion and tenure, and the impact of Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses.

The inaugural CEIA survey was conducted in 2018, with the second iteration completed in 2024. While the original plan was to administer the survey every three years, the 2021 assessment was postponed due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moving forward, USU has aligned the CEIA with the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement cycle, scheduling the next survey for Fall 2027 to ensure timely and consistent data collection and strategic planning.

As noted in the previous response, CEIA data enhances understanding of community engagement activities and their impact while helping to identify areas for improvement. Findings from the survey have led to targeted efforts to support faculty engagement, such as the development of the Community Engaged Scholars Network. The survey results have also informed formal documentation of CEL-related teaching, research, service, and awards for promotion and tenure dossiers through the Center for Community Engagement (CCE). Additionally, the CEIA findings were used to guide the Vice Provost for Community Engagement's presentations at the annual Department Heads Retreat, specifically discussing the inclusion of community engagement in faculty promotion and tenure (P&T) policies and encouraging department heads to support community engagement within annual faculty review processes.

Through the CEIA, USU has and continues to assess and strengthen the university's community engagement, using data-driven insights to improve faculty support, reinforce engagement in academic policies, and cultivate meaningful partnerships with communities.

Section III. INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURE

No. 11. Executive Leadership Changes and Implications

Specify changes in executive leadership since your last classification and the implications of those changes for community engagement.

USU has experienced some key leadership transitions in recent years, yet its commitment to community engagement has remained a defining institutional priority. These leadership changes have provided valuable opportunities to further embed engagement into the university's strategic vision and operations.

In February 2025, Al Smith, Dean of the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, was appointed interim president following the conclusion of Elizabeth Cantwell's presidency, who served from August 2023 to February 2025. Cantwell succeeded Noelle Cockett, who led USU from January 2017 to July 2023 and was a strong advocate for USU's land-grant mission and statewide engagement.

In addition, Laurens Smith, who served on the 2017 Civic Action Plan advisory committee and played a key role in preparing the institution for the first-time Carnegie classification, became Provost and Chief Academic Officer in July 2022, following the retirement of Francis Galey. A long-time faculty member at USU, Laurens Smith has held a variety of administrative roles since joining the university in 2003, including Interim Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, Interim Vice President for Research, Senior Vice Provost, and Interim Provost. In July 2024, USU implemented a strategic academic restructuring to enhance leadership effectiveness and institutional alignment, appointing Smith as Provost and Executive Vice President to provide stronger oversight of academic and university-wide priorities.

Amid these transitions, USU has not only sustained but actively reinforced its commitment to community engagement. A major milestone came in February 2024 with the creation of the Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement position, a new leadership role housed within the Office of the Provost. This role provides high-level, strategic leadership to advance community-engaged teaching, research, and service across all USU campuses. The creation of this position represents a deepening institutional investment, reinforcing community engagement as a core value backed by structural and administrative leadership.

Recently, Vice President for USU Extension, Ken White was appointed Senior Vice President of Statewide Enterprise, bringing Extension and Statewide Campuses under one umbrella. Commenting on this change, Vice President White said: "We are shaping a future where connection drives impact—where our communities and students have greater access to transformative learning opportunities and resources." Commenting further, he said: "This structural leadership change has allowed more alignment. It provides more leverage and effective

use of that tool to identify emerging needs and issues. It will make us more responsive and nimbler to community needs.”

Despite ongoing leadership transitions, USU’s approach to community engagement remains resilient, intentional, and increasingly embedded in institutional strategy. These new leadership structures are enhancing the visibility, coordination, and long-term sustainability of community engagement across the university. These developments underscore USU’s commitment to evolving as a community-engaged institution while fostering meaningful partnerships and impactful connections with communities across Utah and beyond. By leveraging leadership transitions as opportunities for growth and alignment, USU continues to integrate engagement into its academic identity and uphold its land-grant mission to serve the public.

No. 12. President’s Letter

Provide a letter from the president/chancellor or provost (vice president for Academic Affairs) that includes the following:

- *Their perception of where community engagement fits into their leadership of the institution*
- *Community engagement’s relationship to the institution’s core academic identity, strategic direction, and practices*
- *How community engagement is institutionalized for sustainability in the institution*

March 4, 2025

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
51 Vista Lane
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Carnegie Classification Review Committee:

I am pleased to convey Utah State University's sound commitment to community engagement as we submit the application for the Elective Community Engagement reclassification. Since USU first received this classification in 2020, many exciting and strengthening developments have occurred, which I will briefly highlight below.

As the state's land-grant institution, community engagement is a core element of USU's mission and identity. We are dedicated to and take responsibility for connecting our research, teaching, service, and Extension to address the needs of communities throughout Utah, the nation, and the world. USU enthusiastically embraces its role as a collaborative community partner, committed to building and stewarding long-term relationships and co-creating solutions that address community-identified challenges.

The President's Office and the Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President actively champion community engagement as a strategic priority. Initiatives such as the Presidential Awards for Community Engagement celebrate faculty, staff, and students who demonstrate a commitment to public service. We have also dedicated resources to support community-engaged work, including the establishment of an Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement and the Faculty Fellows in Community Engagement program.

Our institutional framework ensures the sustainability and growth of community engagement at USU. The Center for Community Engagement is a hub for coordinating engagement initiatives across the university and includes Community-Engaged Learning programs and courses that offer students opportunities to integrate academic learning with real-world problem-solving. The establishment of the Faculty Fellowships in Community Engagement has increased awareness of community-engaged course and department designations, fostering greater consistency and recognition of community engagement across disciplines. Additionally, our promotion and tenure policies recognize and reward community-engaged scholarship, and faculty role statements clearly define expectations for community engagement, reinforcing the value and prominence of community engagement within the university's culture and formal processes.

The impact of USU's engagement efforts is evident in many different mutually beneficial partnerships that span diverse fields and sectors. Last academic year, there were over 2,300 community-engaged projects among our faculty and staff and 4 out of 5 faculty (n=523) reported community-engaged research, teaching and/or service efforts that reflect reciprocity and mutual benefit. Furthermore, an overwhelming portion of our USU community indicated they are proud of USU's community engagement, see clear and visible leadership in community engagement,

and believe that USU is fulfilling its land-grant, community-engaged mission. For example, the *Utah Wellbeing Project*, conducted in partnership with municipalities statewide, has helped inform local policy decisions, promoting community well-being and resilience. Similarly, USU's Janet Quinney Lawson Institute for Land, Water, and Air, a collaboration with state agencies, community organizations, and local policymakers, has enhanced evidence-based decision-making and policy outcomes for Utah's natural resources while providing students with hands-on research and applied learning experience.

Since our initial classification, we have strengthened institutional supports for community-engaged research through the Community-Engaged Scholars Network which is dedicated to connecting USU scholars with communities throughout Utah to build knowledge and create solutions to community-identified needs. This growing network is engaged in scholarship that is action-oriented, strengths-based, solution focused, and responsive to needs and views expressed by the community. As we continue to advance and foster our community engagement initiatives, we remain committed to continuous assessment and improvement. We recognize that meaningful engagement requires listening, adapting, and evolving to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve. Through ongoing evaluation and reflection, we aim to enhance the quality, impact, and sustainability of our partnerships and community engagement efforts.

Thank you for considering our application. Since our initial classification, USU has worked diligently to further institutionalize community engagement. We look forward to the opportunity to renew our Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and to continuing our commitment to fostering meaningful, sustainable partnerships that benefit the communities we serve and the institution.

Sincerely,



Alan L. Smith, Ph.D.
Interim President
Utah State University

No. 13. Statements of Community Engagement Affirmation

In addition to the letter, provide evidence of recent statements of affirmation of community engagement. In the grid below, provide two excerpts from the relevant documents and up to two web links to the full document if it exists.

Document Excerpt	Web Link (if available)
<i>Annual Addresses/Speeches</i> Excerpt 1: 2024 Commencement Ceremony President Remarks “A college student’s experience...is filled with a variety of experiences and milestones that contribute to both your personal growth, your academic growth, and frankly the growth of those around you...from freshman orientation to club sports or community service events, study abroad experiences, internships, research activities, which I hope many of you engaged in, individual and team projects, to delivering real world solutions to real problems. Finally, from volunteering, thinking, adapting, creating, and celebrating, I hope you felt and now know that you have and always will belong at USU. You make us proud. You have created value for others, in addition to creating value for yourself. And as you go into the world to serve, to teach, to explore, to create, to grow, your contributions will continue to create value for you, for your families, for your community, for this state, and for the entire nation...Aggies transform lives, their own and their families and others around them. We hope that USU has helped you prepare to do that transformation as you proceed through your life with excellence. You have received a high-quality education that has prepared you not just for the job market but for life. And I hope that your life is that of a learner, of an informed and engaged citizen...To the USU graduating class of 2024, our newest Aggies, each one of you, has played a crucial role in moving forward our university’s mission as a beacon of public service.” Excerpt 2: 2023 Commencement Ceremony President Remarks “Earlier this year, USU was ranked the eighth best public university in the nation by Washington Monthly. One of the key indicators that pushed us to the top was our community service score. This was made possible due to the percentage of USU graduates who study service-oriented majors and also our prestigious Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. So please raise your hands if you volunteered to serve others in a meaningful way. I hope to	https://mpvideo.usu.edu/media/2024+Utah+State+University+Commencement+Ceremony/1_6klw5tji/343719282 https://mpvideo.usu.edu/media/2023+Commencement+Ceremony/1_hkpor8lz/300713132

Document Excerpt	Web Link (if available)
see all your hands. We applaud you. Your commitment to others made the world a better place.”	
<i>Published Editorials</i> Excerpt 1: “Elizabeth Cantwell: My Vision for a Land-grant University in the 21st Century” Salt Lake Tribune Opinion Piece “Emphasizing community engagement and collaboration: Reflecting Utah’s keen sense of community, the land-grant mission emphasizes meaningful engagement and collaboration with local, regional and statewide communities. By forging strong partnerships, the mission aims to address societal challenges, facilitate economic development and promote the well-being of all Utahns. There is so much more to do, but today, USU embodies this mission in our multifaceted Statewide Campuses, or Cooperative Extension offices, our community-focused health research in areas like Alzheimer’s and opioid addiction, and in our graduates who participated in Community-Engaged Learning Programs.” Excerpt 2: “Communication From Cantwell: In Pursuit of a Better Tomorrow,” Utah State Magazine “It is no secret that I’m a big believer in cultivating a sense of engagement, of civic duty, and of encouraging real-world, community service — it’s truly the reason I am here, serving as president of USU, today...There are many different avenues we can take to create a better future, in and out of the university. From expanding course and degree offerings and creating research opportunities to fostering a sense of belonging and cultivating the mindset of civic engagement, we are setting up our graduates for a brighter tomorrow.”	https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2023/09/30/elizabeth-cantwell-my-vision-land/ https://utahstatemagazine.usu.edu/presidents-column/communication-from-cantwell-in-pursuit-of-a-better-tomorrow/
<i>Campus Publications</i> Excerpt 1: Utah State 5-Year Roadmap (Draft) 2025-2030 “Utah State University (USU) is poised to shape the future of higher education and society through a bold strategic vision grounded in its core values of Excellence, Ambition, Collaboration, Courage, Innovation, and Respect. Guided by our mission to provide exceptional learning, discovery, and engagement, and grounded in our commitment to the State of Utah, this roadmap integrates the university’s aspirations to foster student success, drive research excellence, and expand its impact statewide and beyond. By 2030, USU will emerge as a national leader in academic innovation, research impact, and community engagement, advancing opportunities for students, faculty, and stakeholders. At Utah State	https://www.usu.edu/strategic-plan/

Document Excerpt	Web Link (if available)
University, we are designing our future together – one built on student success, transformative learning, impactful research, and public service. We do so by defining a clear vision and mission, setting strategic priorities, and establishing measurable goals. This plan guides our resource allocation, fosters innovation, and engages stakeholders in the process along the way. Our strategic framework and plan are built on 5 core pillars, serving as a roadmap for proactive development and informed decision-making, enabling the university to shape its destiny rather than simply reacting to external pressures.” Excerpt 2: Message from the President, 2024 Report to the Governor and Legislature on Utah’s Land, Water, and Air “As Utah’s land-grant institution, Utah State University (USU) carries a profound responsibility to serve the people and communities of Utah through research, teaching, and engagement. It is central to our mission to drive innovation, solve critical problems, and strengthen the resilience of our state. At USU, we are proud of our role as a catalyst for positive change, leveraging our diverse expertise across disciplines and colleges to meet Utah’s evolving needs. Through the Janet Quinney Lawson Institute for Land, Water, and Air, USU embodies the ideals of our land-grant mission. The institute draws upon the knowledge and skills of our faculty, researchers, and students from across every academic college—integrating science, technology, and the humanities—to address the complex challenges associated with Utah’s natural resources. Whether tackling the future of our water resources, improving air quality, or advancing sustainable land practices, USU is at the forefront of creating solutions for the state. Our work extends beyond the campus. We are committed to serving the public, building stronger communities, and driving innovation that will benefit generations to come. We form partnerships with state agencies, corporate entities, non-profits, and communities across Utah to ensure that our research is actionable and has a tangible, lasting impact. Through this collective effort, USU not only advances the prosperity and well-being of Utah today but also ensures a vibrant and sustainable future for the state.	https://www.usu.edu/ilwa/reports/2024/messages/president

Document Excerpt	Web Link (if available)
As we present this year’s report to the Governor and Legislature, I am filled with optimism about the path ahead. USU will continue to be a force for innovation, collaboration, and service. Together, we are creating a more prosperous Utah—one that is built on the pillars of research, education, and community engagement.”	
<i>Other</i> Excerpt 1: President Cantwell’s 2024-2025 Key Performance Indicator Report for the Utah Systems of Higher Education “Key Performance Indicator 5: Support and enliven USU Community Engagement through service learning, community-based teaching and research, student community service clubs and programs, and volunteerism. Support and collaborate with local organizations through joint programming, the establishment of a USU Community Council advisory board with routine programs to support their ongoing engagement and sharing USU facilities, as appropriate, to strengthen ties within all the communities USU serves, contribute to local economic development, and fulfill USU’s public service mission.” Excerpt 2: “David Anderson Named Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement” Utah State Today “Utah State University Provost Laurens H. Smith has announced that David Anderson has been named associate vice provost for Community Engagement. In this assignment, Anderson will serve as the lead writer in the university’s preparation and submission of the Carnegie Community Engagement reclassification application. Anderson was a part of the task force when the university received its initial classification in 2020...I am thrilled to name David Anderson as the associate vice provost for Community Engagement,” Smith wrote in a statement. “David has been a strong advocate and ambassador for community engagement in his time at Utah State University and was a key contributor in USU earning its Carnegie Community Engagement Classification in 2020. I am confident he will excel in this appointment...The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification is the highest recognition for community engagement. As Utah’s land-grant institution, USU places community engagement at the center of its mission to serve the public through learning, discovery and engagement...”“The Carnegie Community Engagement classification signifies that Utah State is invested in supporting and strengthening Utah’s communities,” Anderson said.... As a land-grant institution, community engagement is central to USU’s mission to serve the	https://www.usu.edu/today/story/david-anderson-named-associate-vice-provost-for-community-engagement

Document Excerpt	Web Link (if available)
public through learning, discovery, and engagement. USU upholds its mission by responding specifically and concretely to community-identified needs throughout the state, both on its main Logan campus and on the 32 other statewide campuses across the state. All 33 of USU's campuses are deeply rooted in their local communities and responsive to the needs of those communities, offering an unprecedented opportunity for community engagement."	

No. 14. Brand Message

Describe how community engagement is emphasized as part of the institution's brand message identity or framework.

The USU brand emphasizes the central role of community engagement and public impact in our goals, aspirations, and the experiences we provide to students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders. Guided by [six defining characteristics](#) of the USU brand persona, our marketing efforts highlight our institutional commitment to both our campuses and meaningful engagement with the broader community. Rooted in USU's land-grant philosophy, brand messaging underscores the transformative power of USU to inspire students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders to become positive agents of change in their local and global communities. In 2019, USU hired its first Vice President of Marketing and Communications, William Plate, who continues to serve in this position today, leading efforts to brand community engagement as a defining characteristic of USU's identity and land-grant philosophy.

USU places a deliberate focus on the university's engagement with, service to, and impact on the communities it serves through much of its brand messaging. The intentionality of this emphasis is reflected in examples such as:

1. [Aggie Impact](#) is a marketing campaign showcasing commercials and web-based stories that highlight how USU research and creativity among students and faculty foster reciprocal partnerships and drive positive change in communities. Launched in 2019, the campaign continues to amplify the university's commitment to community engagement and innovation.
2. Utah State Magazine is a quarterly publication that highlights the significance of USU's research, teaching, and service in addressing real-world challenges. The magazine consistently showcases the university's engagement with and impact on communities through meaningful service and collaboration. For example, the [Winter 2025 edition](#) spotlighted undergraduate research, illustrating how USU prioritizes research that directly benefits communities while creating transformative learning opportunities for students.
3. USU Cooperative Extension utilizes the tagline "Building Knowledge, Improving Lives," reflecting its mission to enhance the well-being of communities across Utah. Through its

[quarterly impact reports](#), Extension highlights the meaningful contributions of its programs and faculty that embody this tagline.

4. USU's annual Year in Review publication intentionally highlights the university's achievements in research, education, and community service. It brands USU's identity as a public service university dedicated to its communities and as a transformative place fostering involvement, innovation, and impact.
5. Utah State Today regularly features stories showcasing USU's active engagement with community partners. For instance, the article "[USU Uintah Basin Supports Local Science Fair for Grades 6-8](#)" highlighted a collaboration between USU and the Uintah School district, reinforcing USU's reputation as an institution that creates positive impacts on both communities and students through meaningful engagement.
6. The "[Utah State Greats](#)" series is an annual publication that showcases great students, faculty, and staff who are leading the world to a better future. Featured greats often highlight community-engaged work. The 2024 edition included a section dedicated to community engagement, as well as an introductory letter from President Elizabeth Cantwell that brands the university's identity as a community-engaged institution.

Section IV. QUALITY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RELATIONSHIPS AND ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

No. 15. Academic-Community Partnerships Examples

Describe at least five but no more than eight representative examples of academic-community partnerships (i.e., institutional, centers, departmental, and faculty/staff) that are connected to the academic core of the campus—which includes teaching, learning, and research, and illustrate both the breadth and depth of community engagement during the most recent academic year.

Example 1

1. **Project/Collaboration Title:** Utah Wellbeing Project
2. **Name of Community Organization/Group:** Nephi City
3. **Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.):** Dr. Courtney Flint, (Department of Environment and Society, Ecology Center), Dr. Erik Reinbergs (Department of Psychology), Dr. Sarah Grajdura (Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering), Dr. Brian Higgenbotham and Dr. Kay Bradford (Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Extension), Dr. Ty Aller and Dr. Heather Kelley (Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice)
4. **Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership:** The Utah Wellbeing Project is a collaboration between USU faculty and municipalities across Utah, aimed at surveying residents about their well-being and local concerns. The data collected support municipal planning, help leaders monitor resident needs, and enable comparative research across the rural-urban gradient. The Utah League of Cities and Towns partially subsidizes the project to support community access to this opportunity. Additional partnerships with local health departments help to integrate survey results into community health assessments, while also supporting fundraising efforts to sustain the project.
5. **Provide One Example as to How Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit are Enacted Through the Partnership:** The success of the Utah Wellbeing Project depends on active partnerships with city and town leaders. Local governments lead in promoting the survey and recruiting respondents through their own channels (e.g., social media, newsletters, websites). The USU team designs the survey, coordinates implementation, analyzes responses, and creates publicly available reports for city officials. Dr. Flint regularly presents findings to city councils, staff, and other stakeholders. From year to year, city leaders help to develop the survey and keep it relevant and fresh with new elements, while maintaining the core questions to track wellbeing and perspectives over time.
6. **Length of Partnership:** 6 years
7. **Number of Faculty Involved:** 7
8. **Number of Staff Involved:** 3
9. **Number Of Students Involved Annually:** 5-15

10. **Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership:** ENVS 4030/6030: Building Community Environmental Resilience
11. **Grant Funding, if Relevant:** The following grants/funders are associated with this partnership:
 - a. Funder: Utah League of Cities and Towns; Amount Awarded: \$45,000
 - b. Funder: Wasatch Front Regional Council; Amount Awarded: \$2,500
 - c. Funder: Utah State University Extension; Amount Awarded: \$30,000
 - d. Funder: Utah State University Janet Quinney Institute for Land, Water, and Air; Amount Awarded: \$15,000
 - e. Funder: Various cities; Amount Awarded: \$500-\$1,250 each
12. **Research Projects Linked to Partnership, if Relevant:** The [Utah Wellbeing Project](#) is a research project itself and tracks local perspectives on well-being around the state.
13. **Impact on the Community:** The Utah Wellbeing Project is a manifestation of USU's land-grant mission and its commitment to serve the people of the state. Since 2019, 65 cities and towns have partnered with the project and benefitted from the data and reporting process. Cities and towns are also able to include a few of their own city-specific questions. Over 45,000 people have taken the online survey annually since 2020, giving them a chance to share their perspectives with community leaders. The survey findings support city and town budget decisions about community programming, planning processes, and inform city leaders and staff. The 2020 data were collected before the COVID-19 pandemic, establishing baseline data. Subsequent surveys in 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 allowed tracking of wellbeing and experiences through and beyond the pandemic across many communities. The data revealed significant differences in community experiences and perspectives. Numerous health departments have utilized the data to support their community needs assessments. In 2024, the Utah Department of Transportation added questions to the survey to inform their TravelWise program. Reports have been shared publicly each year. Dr. Flint has given many invited presentations at conferences and workshops on a variety of topics—from city governance and rural wellness to suicide, substance misuse, and business wellness—extending the project's impact well beyond the participating cities and towns.
14. **Impact on the Campus:** The Utah Wellbeing Project has provided learning and work opportunities for over 25 students since it began, giving them direct experience with community engagement, data collection, data analysis, and communication. Many of these students have provided tremendous leadership on various aspects of the project. Furthermore, USU faculty members have benefitted from access to the data to support their publication efforts. The data have been the basis for a number of conference presentations and manuscripts.

Example 2

1. **Project/Collaboration Title:** Heritage, Healing, & Growth: Developing Urban Programs for Equine Therapy, 4-H Livestock, and Community Garden Initiatives at a Historical Farm in Cache Valley, Utah
2. **Name of Community Organization/Group:** Nibley Morgan Farm Corporation

3. **Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.):** JayDee Gunnell (USU Extension, Cache County), Jake Powell (Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning, USU Extension Specialist), David Anderson (Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning)
4. **Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership:** The purpose of this project is to assist with the rehabilitation, visioning, master planning, design, advancement, and implementation of the Morgan Farm property.
5. **Provide One Example as to How Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit are Enacted Through the Partnership:** The Morgan Farm is a small 9-acre farm located in a rapidly suburbanizing area of Cache Valley, Utah. Owned by Nibley City, parts of the farm remain undeveloped, while other sections are in need of revitalization. Its proximity to two elementary schools, a charter school, a high school, a successful nature center, and two city parks creates a unique opportunity for programming that includes equine therapy (targeted toward veterans and at-risk individuals), a 4-H learning center, a community garden, a farmer's market, a cut flower farm, and a range of educational and recreational activities. In early 2023, the farm manager reached out to the USU Extension Director for Cache County to request assistance in improving the small community garden. This initial contact led to involvement from the USU Extension Landscape Architecture Specialist, who then collaborated with a faculty member to incorporate a master planning project into an academic design studio. In Fall 2023, a five-week studio project was launched, involving 70 students, community leaders, the farm manager, and other stakeholders. The project was integrated into LAEP 2700 Analysis and Design I, a 5-credit immersive studio course for sophomore landscape architecture students and first-year graduate students. Through this partnership, students engaged in on-site fieldwork, received critiques from visiting reviewers, interacted with stakeholders one-on-one, and presented final designs to community leaders. The students produced 14 comprehensive design concepts based on the partner's requested programmatic needs. These concepts were then refined into a preferred alternative for future implementation. USU Extension Landscape Architecture involved several student interns in this next phase, and faculty and Extension staff continue to collaborate with the community partner to implement elements of the master plan. Reciprocity is embedded throughout this project. The community partner has used student design work in presentations, funding proposals, and public meetings. Students helped the partner broaden her vision for what the farm could become. In return, students—many early in their academic careers—gained valuable real-world experience working with a client on a relevant, buildable project. This kind of community-engaged learning is particularly impactful for students in landscape architecture.
6. **Length of Partnership:** 2 years
7. **Number of faculty Involved:** 3
8. **Number of Staff Involved:** 2
9. **Number of Students Involved Annually:** 1-70
10. **Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership:** LAEP 2700/6270: Analysis and Design I
11. **Grant Funding, if Relevant:** N/A
12. **Research Projects Linked to Partnership, if Relevant:** N/A

13. **Impact on the Community:** Community awareness and support have grown significantly with USU student involvement. Community leaders, both elected and staff, have embraced the project and committed additional in-kind and financial support.
14. **Impact on the Campus:** The Morgan Farm project has illustrated the opportunity to weave student coursework of various kinds with traditional Extension efforts. The result is a strengthening of the ability to deliver tangible, useful products to stakeholders.

Example 3

1. **Project/Collaboration Title:** America Reads After School Clubs
2. **Name of Community Organization/Group:** Logan City School District and Cache County School District
3. **Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.):** Center for Community Engagement, Department of Sociology, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Department of Social Work, Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences
4. **Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership:** The goal of this long-standing partnership is to support K–12 students in developing the academic and social skills needed for success in school. After-School Club mentors enrich students’ learning experiences through targeted academic support while helping schools meet federal, state, and district-level requirements for student achievement.
5. **Provide One Example as to How Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit are Enacted Through the Partnership:** USU students meet practicum, coursework, and programmatic requirements through their participation, including those in Peace Corps Prep and the Community-Engaged Scholars programs, while local schools benefit from having USU mentors work directly with underserved K–12 students. This mutually beneficial structure supports both university and community goals by addressing educational equity and enhancing student development on both sides.
6. **Length of Partnership:** 30 years
7. **Number of Faculty Involved:** 3
8. **Number of Staff Involved:** 3
9. **Number of Students Involved Annually:** 120+
10. **Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership:** SOC 3010: Social Inequality, HDFS 4980: Practicum in Human Development and Family Studies, SW 4870: Beginning Field Practicum Social Work Practicum, SW 5870: Advanced Field Practicum Social Work Practicum, NDFS 5750: Advanced Dietetics Practicum
11. **Grant Funding, if Relevant:** The following grants/funders are associated with this partnership:
 - a. Funder: AmeriCorps State Grant
 - b. Funder: Federal Work Study
12. **Research Projects Linked to Partnership, if Relevant:** N/A
13. **Impact on the Community:** The USU America Reads program supports 24 public schools across Cache Valley and benefits over 2,000 children and youth daily. In elementary and middle schools, after-school programming offers tutoring, homework help, and enrichment activities. In high schools, students at risk of not graduating receive targeted support during

the school day and after school. These efforts help build academic skills while supporting students' social and emotional development.

14. **Impact on the Campus:** Though open to all majors, most participating USU students come from Education, Social Work, Human Development and Family Studies, and Dietetics majors. These students gain valuable experience by applying classroom knowledge in real-world school settings. Students in Human Development and Family Studies, Social Work, and Dietetics can fulfill practicum requirements through the program, and Education majors gain early classroom experience prior to student teaching. The unique work-study model provides a paid opportunity for students who may otherwise struggle to afford unpaid placements. In addition to fulfilling academic requirements, USU students, many of whom may not be able to volunteer for free, can earn work-study wages and AmeriCorps education awards while mentoring local youth. The program not only benefits USU students by offering practical, paid experiences but also inspires K–12 students to consider pursuing higher education by building meaningful relationships with USU student mentors.

Example 4

1. **Project/Collaboration Title:** Addressing Homelessness and Housing Challenges in the Bear River Region
2. **Name of Community Organization/Group:** Bear River Region Local Homeless Council
3. **Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.):** Dr. Jayme Walters (Department of Social Work, Transforming Communities Institute) Dr. Jess Lucero (Department of Social Work, Transforming Communities Institute), Dr. Vonda Jump Norman (Department of Social Work, Transforming Communities Institute), Dr. Maureen Boyle Assistant (Department of Social Work, Transforming Communities Institute), Dr. Sydney O'Shay (Department of Communications Studies)
4. **Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership:** This partnership supports the Bear River Region (Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties) in addressing homelessness and housing insecurity through community-engaged research, policy advocacy, and collaborative solution-building.
5. **Provide One Example as to How Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit are Enacted Through the Partnership:** Reciprocity and mutual benefit are found in the integration of undergraduate and graduate social work courses with ongoing, community-driven work to address homelessness. Between 2020 and 2022, students and faculty collaborated with the Local Homeless Council (LHC) to pursue a responsive learning model. Each summer, faculty met with community partners to define project goals, assign roles, and embed the work into upcoming coursework. Throughout the academic year, students helped co-design projects aligned with community priorities. Partners engaged in the educational process by participating in panels, discussions, and storytelling, providing rich lived-experience perspectives. One major project focused on improving landlord engagement in housing solutions amid rising rental costs. The resulting mixed-methods research led to a grant-funded pilot program for landlord education. Students gained hands-on experience in applied research, social service evaluation, and policy engagement, while community partners received strategic data and increased capacity to address housing challenges.

6. **Length of Partnership:** 8 years
7. **Number of Faculty Involved:** 6
8. **Number of Staff Involved:** 3
9. **Number of Students Involved Annually:** 90-125
10. **Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership:** SW 4100: Social Work Research, SW 4160: Community & Organizational Practice, SW 6150: Community & Organizational Practice
11. **Grant Funding, if Relevant:** The following grants are associated with this partnership:
 - a. Funder: Cache County; Assessment Grant (2024): Public Perceptions of Housing Issues in the Bear River Area; Amount Awarded: \$7,200 (Lucero, PI)
 - b. Funder: Utah Department of Workforce Services; Program Grant (2023); Homeless Services FY25-FY27 for Street Outreach & Emergency Shelter at William A. Burnard Warming Center; Amount Awarded to William A. Burnard Warming Center: \$229,000, expected annually for three years (Walters, Co-PI)
 - c. Funder: Utah Department of Workforce Services, Program Grant (2023); Emergency Food Assistance for William A. Burnard Warming Center; Amount Awarded to William A. Burnard Warming Center: \$54,432 (Walters, Co-PI)
 - d. Funder: Utah Department of Workforce Services; Program Grant (2023); Homeless Services for Winter Overflow Shelter at William A. Burnard Warming Center; Amount Awarded to William A. Burnard Warming Center: \$54,432 (Walters, PI)
 - e. Funder: UServeUtah; Program Grant (2023); Community Engagement Pathways for William A. Burnard Warming Center; Amount Awarded to William A. Burnard Warming Center: \$23,500 (Walters, PI)
 - f. Funder: Masonic Foundation of Utah; Program Grant (2023); Community Outreach for William A. Burnard Warming Center; Amount Awarded to William A. Burnard Warming Center: \$3,500 (Walters, PI)
 - g. Funder: Utah Realtors Association & Cache Valley Association of Realtors; Program Grants (2023); Case Management for William A. Burnard Warming Center; Amount Awarded to William A. Burnard Warming Center: \$15,000 (Walters, PI)
 - h. Funder: Utah State University, College of Humanities & Social Sciences Creative Activity and Research Enhancement Award (2022); Community Assessment for Cache County Warming Center; Amount Awarded: \$2,000 (Walters & Lucero, Co-PIs)
 - i. Funder: Union Pacific Foundation Grant (2021); Key Partner Program: Training to Prevent Homelessness & Promote Housing Solutions; Amount Awarded: \$7,500 (Walters & Lucero, Co-PIs)
 - j. Funder: Utah State University, College of Humanities & Social Sciences; Creative Activity and Research Enhancement Award (2021); Key Partner Program: Training to Prevent Homelessness and Promote Housing Solutions; Amount Awarded: \$2,000 (Walters & Lucero, Co-PIs)
 - k. Funder: Utah State University, College of Humanities & Social Sciences; Creative Activity and Research Enhancement Award (2020); Landlord Engagement in Homelessness & Housing Issues in the Bear River Region; Amount Awarded: \$2,000 (Walters & Lucero, Co-PIs)

- l. Funder: City of Logan; Program Grant (2020); Housing Advocacy Program; Amount Awarded to Cache Refugee & Immigrant Connection (partner): \$42,310 (Lucero, PI)
 - m. Funder: Utah Department of Heritage & Arts + Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs; Program Grant (2020); Racial Equity & Inclusion Grant: Direct Housing Assistance for Cache Valley New Americans; Amount Awarded to Cache Refugee & Immigrant Connection (partner): \$50,000 (Lucero, PI)
 - n. Funder: Utah State University, Center for Women and Gender; Research Grant (2017); An Examination of Housing Discrimination Against LGBTQ Renters in Utah's Rental Market; Amount Awarded: \$5,175 (Lucero, PI)
12. **Research Projects Linked to Partnership, if Relevant:** The following research projects are associated with this partnership:
- a. PI: Wallis, D. (2025). Understanding Perspectives and Needs of People Experiencing Homelessness in Cache County
 - b. PI: Lucero, J. (2024). Public Perceptions of Housing Issues in the Bear River Area
 - c. PI: Wallis, D. (2024). Assessing Attitudes and Beliefs Towards Homelessness and Homeless Services Throughout Utah
 - d. PI: Wallis, D. (2023). Homelessness in Cache Valley: Changing Attitudes and Changing Lives Through Education and Volunteering
 - e. PI: Walters, J. (2022). Community Assessment for the W.A.B. Warming Center
 - f. PI: Walters, J. (2021). Tenant Education & Advocacy Program Development Study
 - g. PI: Walters, J. (2021). Landlord Engagement Program Development Study
 - h. PI: Walters, J. (2020). Landlord Engagement in Homelessness and Housing Issues in the Bear River Region
 - i. PI: Lucero, J. (2020). Housing Advocacy Program for Cache Refugee & Immigrant Connection
 - j. PI: Lucero, J. (2017). An Examination of Housing Discrimination against LGBTQ Renters in Utah's Rental Market
13. **Impact on the Community:** The impact of this partnership has been exponential. Over nearly a decade, a wealth of high-quality knowledge has been generated through community-engaged research initiatives. While some of the tangible outputs are listed above, the data and findings have informed numerous local grant proposals, governmental and agency decisions, and program development processes. Notably, this body of knowledge directly contributed to the development and implementation of new solutions, most significantly, the William A. Burnard Warming Center, which filled a critical gap in the homeless services continuum across the three-county area. Now in its third season, the center serves 30 to 40 people each night and has supported nearly 200 unique individuals in recent months.
14. **Impact on the Campus:** This collaboration has had a profound and lasting impact on the campus community. Over the course of nearly a decade, the partnership has offered many USU faculty and staff, along with hundreds of students, meaningful opportunities to engage in applied research, policy advocacy, and community-based solutions to homelessness and housing insecurity. The integration of community-engaged learning into both undergraduate and graduate social work curricula has significantly enriched student education by linking academic coursework to real-world problem-solving. Students have

gained invaluable hands-on experience in mixed-methods research, program evaluation, and community engagement strategies, all while addressing a critical social issue in their own community. This ongoing partnership continues to serve as a key mechanism for developing students' professional competencies, civic responsibility, and a deeper understanding of systemic housing challenges.

Example 5

1. **Project/Collaboration Title:** Restoring and Preserving Land, Language, and Culture with the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation
2. **Name of Community Organization/Group:** Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, a federally recognized tribe.
3. **Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.):** Daniel Piper (Department of Psychology), Dr. Eric LaMalfa (Department of Wildland Resources), Sean Damitz (Center for Community Engagement & Utah Conservation Corps), Dr. Kelly Bradbury (Department of Geosciences)
4. **Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership:** The purpose of this partnership is to teach USU students how to work ethically with Native nations and Indigenous communities represented within federally recognized tribes, while providing requested services and resources to preserve and restore the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation's land, language, and culture at the Wuda Ogwa (Bear River) massacre site near Preston, Idaho – just 35 miles north of USU's main campus in Logan, Utah. As part of this project, PSY 4940 students develop Shoshone language learning materials (e.g., games, cards) to be used at language learning camps and by Utah Conservation Corps field restoration crews. Students enrolled in GEO 3800 and GEO 3400 collect rock and water data and collaborate with the Tribe to design place-based educational materials, such as trail signs and interactive geoscience displays for the proposed interpretive center. For WILD 2400, students directly engage in ecological restoration projects, planting native trees and shrubs.
5. **Provide One Example as to How Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit are Enacted Through the Partnership:** In 2024, students in GEO 3400 created a Hot Spring Sensorium exhibit for the Department of Geosciences' annual Rock and Fossil Day, a free public outreach event that typically draws around 1,000 attendees. The sensorium highlighted the geology, ecosystems, and cultural significance of the Wuda Ogwa (Bear River) site in southeastern Idaho. Five student teams collaborated to create exhibit materials that integrated natural systems with Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation history, language, and cultural knowledge. Students benefited from direct engagement with Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation representatives, meeting multiple times to share ideas and gather materials for the display. In return, the students helped promote awareness of the Wuda Ogwa restoration project and Shoshone culture through a variety of interactive and accessible media and educational displays. These included: rock and water samples from the site with accompanying infographics; a QR code linking to the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation website; a student-produced tuba performance of traditional Shoshone songs; recordings of soundscapes and local wildlife; distribution of over 100 coloring books created by Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation members; and audio

recordings of more than 30 geological and ecological features at the site, translated into the Shoshone language by Rios Pacheco, the tribe's spiritual leader.

6. **Length of Partnership:** 5 years
7. **Number of Faculty Involved:** 5
8. **Number of Staff Involved:** 11
9. **Number of Students Involved Annually:** 75-100
10. **Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership:** PSY 4940: Indigenous Community Engagement, GEO 3800: Applied Geoscience Techniques, GEO 3400: Communicating Geoscience, WILD 2400: Wildland Resources Techniques
11. **Grant Funding, if Relevant:** The following grants/funders are associated with this partnership:
 - a. Work funded by the Tribe has been supported by various state, federal, and foundation grants.
 - b. AmeriCorps State grant funds USU Utah Conservation Corps restoration crews.
12. **Research Projects Linked to Partnership, if Relevant:** Wildland Resources research projects include camera trapping, herpetology monitoring, bat monitoring, and vegetation surveys.
13. **Impact on the Community:** This project has had a profound impact on the community and campus through multiple [USU courses and research projects](#) and several hundred volunteers from across Utah and Idaho participating in tree planting days at Wuda Ogwa – the site of one of the deadliest massacres of Native Americans in US history. The geology project provides geoscience knowledge and fosters societal awareness about Wuda Ogwa, a culturally and scientifically significant local site. The work enhances both the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation and public understanding of dynamic earth processes, including natural hazards, groundwater and surface water flow, mineral deposition, and geochemical changes across time and space. Additionally, the project fosters collaborations between USU, the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, local and regional organizations, and the general public, with the goal of inspiring curiosity and wonder through connection to local land and waterscapes. In psychology, requested resources are provided to the Tribal community, including Shoshone language learning materials for use at language camps. In Wildland Resources, students learn about the history of the Bear River Massacre while contributing to the social and ecological restoration of the site in Preston, Idaho. Positive relationships and opportunities to learn about the culture of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation continue beyond the events. Participants leave with a heightened awareness of a tragic event in US history as well as water conservation and restoration issues in the Upper Bear River Watershed.
14. **Impact on the Campus:** Psychology students have the opportunity to visit the tribal office, attend community events, and gain direct, hands-on experience working with and learning from tribal staff and community members throughout the course. In Geology, the partnership has expanded interdisciplinary collaborations and educational opportunities for faculty, students, and staff across the USU campus community. For example, as a result of the active partnership with the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, USU staff were invited to lead the site geology workshop for the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation Indigenous Youth Internship Program—a week-long, field-based environmental stewardship education and training workshop organized by Dr. Sarah Klain (USU

Department of Environment and Society) and held at the Wuda Ogwa site in Summer 2023. These experiences promote continued interdisciplinary collaborations, strengthen community partnerships, and foster learning across all levels, while increasing awareness of the wide range of research fields, place-based education opportunities, and community-engaged learning activities connected to Wuda Ogwa. For Wildland Resources students, the experience deepens appreciation for community-engaged work. Many students have become more involved in Undergraduate Research (URCO), seeking support to continue projects aligned with the goals of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation.

Example 6

1. **Project/Collaboration Title:** Stokes Nature Center Green Stormwater Infrastructure Project
2. **Name of Community Organization/Group:** Stokes Nature Center
3. **Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.):** Dr. Ryan Dupont (Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering)
4. **Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership:** The purpose of the partnership was to evaluate sustainable stormwater practices planned for the new Nibley Park and Outdoor Classroom and to make recommendations for improvements to these practices, as well as for optimal maintenance and monitoring of system performance.
5. **Provide One Example as to How Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit are Enacted Through the Partnership:** This partnership provided students with real-world project experience, allowing them to apply the technical skills they developed in their Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) course. Students engaged directly with a community partner at an actual site seeking to implement GSI solutions for sustainability and educational purposes. In return, Stokes Nature Center received a comprehensive review of their engineering plans and additional feedback and recommendations from the student team and their faculty mentor. This third-party review reinforced the organization's commitment to sustainability while offering expanded options for GSI implementation beyond the original engineering scope.
6. **Length of Partnership:** 4 months
7. **Number of Faculty Involved:** 1
8. **Number of Staff Involved:** 2
9. **Number of Students Involved Annually:** 35
10. **Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership:** CEE 5650/6650: Green Stormwater Infrastructure. In addition to the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Project, Stokes Nature Center partners with ENVS 5000: Environmental Nonprofit and Volunteer Management, MATH/BIOL 3150: Quantitative Modeling of Life, and HDFS 6980: Human Development and Family Studies.
11. **Grant Funding, if Relevant:** As a result of this collaboration, proposals were submitted in 2024 to federal agencies that require active community engagement in environmental health and safety initiatives.
12. **Research Projects Linked to Partnership, if Relevant:** N/A
13. **Impact on the Community:** Improvements in sustainable stormwater management and education will be incorporated into the Outdoor Nature Park and Classroom, whose mission is to support environmental and sustainability education for children and families

throughout Cache Valley. In 2024, Stokes Nature Center reported serving 16,421 individuals through 224 programs, totaling 20,514 contact hours. The addition of the Nibley Outdoor Nature Park and Classroom is expected to significantly expand this community outreach.

14. **Impact on the Campus:** This project fostered new connections between the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) and a community-based environmental education non-profit organization. The partnership is expected to continue into the future.

Example 7

1. **Project/Collaboration Title:** Mental Health & Wellbeing in Utah's Coal Country
2. **Name of Community Organization/Group:** Four Corners Community Behavioral Health, Inc.
3. **Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.):** Community and Natural Resources Institute (CANRI), USU Extension (specifically the Health Extension: Advocacy, Research, and Teaching Initiative), the Utah Wellbeing Project
4. **Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership:** This partnership was formed to address the interrelated economic, environmental, and social challenges faced by rural Utah communities, particularly in areas dependent on natural resource industries. These communities are undergoing significant transitions, including declining coal production, and are simultaneously experiencing increasing rates of poor mental health and suicide. Community resilience refers to the ability of communities to use both local and external resources to thrive amid change and uncertainty. To support resilience, the USU project team has collected and analyzed data and developed resources to aid communities in adapting to change. The specific information gathered was co-developed with stakeholders, including local public health and mental health officials, local and state policymakers, and USU Extension. The resulting data informs community-based plans, programs, and policies that address pressing mental health challenges in Utah.
5. **Provide One Example as to How Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit are Enacted Through the Partnership:** The partnership is grounded in mutual exchange, with both university and community partners contributing essential assets. While faculty, students, and Extension professionals provide research, evaluation, and educational support, community partners offer local expertise, connections, and feedback that shape each stage of the work. For example, at the 2024 "Coal Miners and Mental Health" event, a USU Ph.D. student, now an Extension faculty member, shared interview findings on mental health experiences in coal communities. The event, co-designed with local partners and county Extension, included a resource fair and brought together local service providers and community members. The collaboration successfully advanced public awareness, outreach, and connection to local services. Since the event, the partnership has continued to grow, expanding into new areas of research, training, and public engagement, supported by external grant funding.
6. **Length of Partnership:** 1.5 years
7. **Number of Faculty Involved:** 8
8. **Number of Staff Involved:** 2
9. **Number of Students Involved Annually:** 2-4
10. **Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership:** SOC 6630: Social & Community Dimensions of Natural Resources, ENVS 4030: Building Community Environmental Resilience

11. **Grant Funding, if Relevant:** The following grants/funders were associated with this partnership:
 - a. Funder: Common Ground Consortium -Energy Policy Institute (2024-2025); Engagement, Consent & Community Wellbeing in Transitioning Coal Communities; Amount Awarded: \$79,289
 - b. Funder: Utah State University, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station Seed Grant Program (2021-2023); Building Community Resilience to Address Mental Health and Suicide in Rural Natural Resource Dependent Places in Utah; Amount Awarded: \$50,000
12. **Research Projects Linked to Partnership, if Relevant:**
 - a. PI: Ryder, S., CoPIs: Schad, J., McLennan, C., Yaugher, A., Weeks, D. (2024), Engagement, Consent & Community Wellbeing in Transitioning Coal Communities
13. **Impact on the Community:** The 2024 Coal Miners and Mental Health event laid the groundwork for securing external funding to sustain ongoing research, strengthen the partnership, and support critical local programming, including the 2025 Elevating Hope Summit. This summit exemplified the power of collaboration, bringing together health and well-being professionals, law enforcement, first responders, and community members to confront the urgent challenges of substance use disorder (SUD) and suicide prevention in Utah. With the theme “Taking Substance Use Disorder and Suicide Prevention to New Altitudes,” the event created space for meaningful discussions around innovative strategies, best practices, networking, and community-driven solutions. The summit featured 19 expert presenters, welcomed over 265 attendees, and included 16 community partner resource booths to foster engagement and support. Thanks to generous contributions from more than 10 sponsors and individuals, over 50 scholarships were awarded, ensuring access for participants with financial need. Additionally, over 30 volunteers, along with critical support from the USU Eastern team, played a key role in executing a seamless and impactful event. The summit ultimately reinforced the region’s collective commitment to addressing SUD and suicide through education, partnership, and coordinated action.
14. **Impact on the Campus:** This collaboration has created valuable learning and research opportunities for the USU academic community. It supports a postdoctoral researcher, an undergraduate intern based in Price, and several early career faculty, all of whom are engaged in research that is deeply grounded in community partnerships. These efforts not only advance scholarship in energy transitions and rural resilience but also demonstrate how university research can be responsive to real-world challenges. Additionally, the project has fostered cross-campus collaboration among departments and centers, elevating USU’s visibility as a leader in consent-based, community-engaged research. By integrating local perspectives and well-being into research and planning, the initiative enriches campus teaching, mentoring, and research infrastructure while reinforcing USU’s land-grant mission to serve the state through impactful, community-centered work.

Example 8

1. **Project/Collaboration Title:** Athletics United: Empowering Youth and Building Community
2. **Name of Community Organization/Group:** Athletics United

3. **Campus Partner (person, program, department, center, etc.):** Christensen Office of Social Action and Sustainability, Department of Teacher Education and Leadership, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice, Department of English, Department of Social Work, Department of Product Design and Development, Department of Psychology, Department of Kinesiology and Health Science, Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences, Huntsman Scholar Program, University Honors Program, Youth Conservatory, Aggie Blue Bikes, Athletics
4. **Purpose of the Community-Campus Partnership:** This partnership aims to strengthen Athletics United's organizational capacity to deliver programs that support the health, well-being, social development, educational achievement, and community connectedness of local youth in Cache Valley. Many Athletics United participants come from low-income families and greatly benefit from these opportunities and resources.
5. **Provide One Example as to How Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit are Enacted Through the Partnership:** Reciprocity and mutual benefit are central to USU's partnership with Athletics United in that community-identified needs drive student learning experiences across disciplines and are purposefully aligned to advance Athletics United's mission and community impact. Students in education and peacebuilding internship courses collaborate with Athletics United throughout the year by serving as tutors. In doing so, they help local youth excel academically, develop meaningful mentoring relationships, and gain confidence and encouragement to pursue education beyond high school—while simultaneously applying and deepening their own university learning experience. Public health and nutrition students work directly with Athletics United directors to assess health-related needs among Athletics United participants. These students develop and implement targeted programs in collaboration with Athletics United leadership that address these needs in areas such as mental health, emergency first aid, oral health, and nutrition. Students in technical communication courses provide grant writing support in direct response to needs identified by Athletics United, strengthening the organization's ability to secure funding and expand programming. Music students, through teaching lab courses, deliver piano lessons to Athletics United youth, offering creative outlets and building community through the arts. Athletics United benefits from the knowledge, time, and skills of USU students, staff, and faculty across disciplines who bring innovative and relevant support to help the organization meet its mission and deliver high-impact programming for local youth. In return, USU students gain hands-on, real-world experience in areas such as program evaluation, mentoring, teaching, technical communication, and public service—while also building meaningful relationships and a deeper understanding of their local community.
6. **Length of Partnership:** 5 years
7. **Number of Faculty Involved:** 13
8. **Number of Staff Involved:** 10
9. **Number of Students Involved Annually:** 140-150
10. **Titles of Courses Linked to Partnership:** ELED 4150, Assessment & Differentiation Across the Curriculum, TCR 3230, Community Grant Writing, SOC 3010: Social Inequality, PI 4940: Peace Building Internship, HEP/RAM 4200: Program Planning for Health Education, HEP/RAM 4205: Program Management and Evaluation for Health, Education, NDFS 6850:

Applied Practice Experience in Public Health Nutrition, MUSC 1430/1440: Pedagogy I/II, MUSC 1450: Pedagogy Practicum

11. **Grant Funding, if Relevant:** N/A
12. **Research projects linked to partnership, if relevant:** N/A
13. **Impact on the Community:** The partnership between USU and Athletics United has had a meaningful and growing impact on the local community. Through consistent and responsive programming, Athletics United participants have shown increased confidence, academic progress, and a stronger sense of belonging in their schools and neighborhoods. Parents have expressed greater trust in community resources, and local public spaces have become more accessible and welcoming due to the presence and support of tutors and mentors. Youth participants gain academic and social-emotional support and build relationships with college students who serve as role models—encouraging aspirations for higher education and personal growth. By addressing barriers to educational success and promoting youth development and health through a network of university and community collaboration, this partnership is helping to build a more connected, resilient, and empowered community.
14. **Impact on the Campus:** USU's partnership with Athletics United has created meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities for students across a variety of disciplines. By engaging directly with local youth and their families, students develop critical professional competencies such as cultural humility, communication, adaptability, and community-based problem-solving. These experiences deepen students' understanding of social and economic determinants of health and wellbeing, community belonging, and real-world application of their academic training. Many students who participate in Athletics United through course-based experiences choose to continue volunteering with the organization beyond their academic requirements. Faculty benefit from the opportunity to integrate community-engaged learning into their courses, enriching the curriculum while contributing to impactful public service. The partnership also fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and reinforces USU's commitment to community engagement as a core element of its land-grant mission. Overall, the partnership strengthens the university's connection to the broader community and helps students see themselves as agents of change in the places they live and learn.

No. 16. Academic-Community Partnerships Reflection

In comparing the partnership responses from your previous classification with the responses above, please reflect on what has changed in the quality, quantity, and impact of your academic community partnership activity.

Prior to receiving Carnegie Classification in 2020, USU had already established a strong foundation for community engagement as the state's land-grant institution. Over the past five years, the institution and its scholars have deepened their investment in the principle that meaningful community engagement requires more than outreach—it demands a commitment to prioritizing community-identified needs, elevating community strengths and assets, and fostering shared ownership of solutions. By emphasizing reciprocal partnerships, USU is moving from transactional

interactions to transformative collaborations with communities to create lasting impact across the state of Utah.

This shift is also reflected in the growing integration between USU's flagship campus in Logan and its 30 statewide locations, enhancing opportunities to connect and collaborate with a deep variety of community partners in a variety of settings. These impacts are reflected in reports from multiple USU units ([see USU Extension example report](#)). Moreover, the Fall 2024 Community Engagement Impact Assessment (CEIA) survey, found that over 75% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were proud of USU's community engagement, and more than 70% believed USU was fulfilling its community engagement mission.

Data from the Fall 2024 CEIA survey and AggiePulse (GivePulse) indicate increases in all categories of community engagement since the last classification:

- **Teaching:** Faculty and staff reported 633 (27%) community-engaged teaching projects, the highest among all project categories. These projects were represented in every college and many other units across campus.
- **Research:** CEIA respondents reported 402 (17%) community-engaged research projects, with contributions from all colleges.
- **Service:** A total of 546 (24%) CEIA respondents reported projects were service-driven, again spanning all colleges and units.
- **Co-Curricular:** CEIA respondents identified 319 (14%) community-engaged co-curricular projects across every college. From Summer 2023 to Spring 2024, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) supported 245 students participating in service-learning projects, internships, student organizations, and leadership programs.

This data demonstrates that faculty, staff, and students are increasingly engaging with community partners in ways that promote sustained, long-term impact since USU's last classification. In addition to these measurable increases, anecdotal evidence shared by community engagement leaders suggests that many active partnerships are not yet formally captured in university systems. As such, areas for growth exist around strengthening mechanisms and processes to track, measure, and evaluate partnerships are needed, which will require investment from the university, financial and otherwise.

No. 17. Actions, Strategies, and Assessments for Partnership Building

Describe specific systematic actions, strategies and assessments that are used to ensure the institution, academic units (colleges, departments), and faculty and staff are building partnerships that center mutual benefit, reciprocity, and asset-based partnerships. Be sure to describe: 1) Activities and strategies used to include community partners reciprocally for mutual benefit and collective action; 2) How these activities and practices encourage authentic collaboration and reciprocity with community partners; and 3) How the institution collects and shares feedback and

assessment of academic community partnerships and shared goals to deepen, understand, and improve reciprocity, mutual benefit, and asset-based engagement

Information for this section was gathered from Watermark (faculty database for output tracking), general university documentation, the Fall 2024 Community Engagement Impact Assessment (CEIA) survey, and a follow-up survey in February 2025 with USU personnel (N=127) who self-identified as leading or participating in community-engaged scholarship.

Most survey participants were faculty, followed by staff, administrators, Extension-only personnel, and others. Nearly all academic units were represented, with the Colleges of Humanities & Social Sciences, Extension, Education & Human Services, Business, and Agriculture & Applied Sciences showing the highest participation. About two-thirds of respondents reported engaging with community partners monthly or more frequently, while others indicated engagement a few times annually. Community-engaged practices are integrated across institutional roles: 72% in service, 60% in teaching, 50% in research, 27% in Extension, and 20% in co-curricular activities.

USU scholars pursue mutual benefit and collective action through needs assessments, collaborative frameworks, and long-term relationships with community partners. Nearly all follow-up survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that community partners are valued and respected (96%). Respondents also reported that they:

- Prioritize mutual benefits in community-engaged scholarship (94%)
- Work on projects identified by community partners as priorities (80%)
- Share leadership roles (88%)
- Ensure co-ownership of projects (78%)
- Are actively involved in project planning (75%) and implementation (90%)
- Recognize and celebrate community partner contributions in public forums or publications (85%)

As a land-grant institution, USU embraces its responsibility to engage with and contribute meaningfully to communities throughout the state. As evidenced by the data above, USU fosters a wide range of partnerships across nonprofit, government, and business sectors, spanning hundreds of projects. In 2024, faculty also reported 130 community-engaged courses, 261 creative works and performances, and 1,567 professional or public service commitments.

Community-engaged scholars recognize the importance of sustained investment in communities before, during, and beyond individual projects. In the follow-up survey, participants agreed or strongly agreed that they:

- Value community strengths when building partnerships (77%)
- Take time to understand and incorporate community history, context, and norms (83%)
- Prioritize equitable decision-making processes (85%)
- Ensure partners have the necessary resources and capacity (80%)

- Support project sustainability by connecting partners to networks, funding, and resources (75%)

Collaboration and reciprocity are advanced through [MOUs](#), [advisory boards](#), [publications](#), [grant proposals](#), [events](#), [leadership](#), [internships](#), and [trainings](#).

USU scholars use a range of methods to assess partnerships. Survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they:

- Are flexible and adapt as needed (94%)
- Maintain open and consistent communication (93%)
- Share project outcomes, lessons learned, and future opportunities (91%)
- Reflect on long-term community benefits (90%)
- Collect feedback at least once during (75%) and at the end (81%) of projects

While these data are encouraging, a noted area for growth is providing more consistent guidance on partnership evaluation. Only 45% of respondents evaluate partnership quality annually; others do so every few years (26%) or rarely (19%). Most common evaluation methods include informal conversations or regular check-ins (56%), collaborative reflection sessions (32%), and surveys (30%).

No. 18. Improving Partnership Practices and Relationships

What actions have you taken since the last classification to deepen and improve partnership practices and relationships—in initiating, sustaining, and assessing partnerships? How did these practices encourage authentic collaboration and reciprocity with community partners?

USU has continued to bolster community engagement as an institutional pillar through investments at all levels. Building ethical and sustainable relationships with community partners requires intentional strategies that prioritize mutual benefit and reciprocity. At the university level, efforts to institutionalize community engagement over the past five years are evident in the appointment of an Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement, the launch of the Faculty Fellows in Community Engagement program, and the formal recognition of community-engaged scholarship in tenure and promotion. Additional developments include designation processes for community-engaged departments, courses, and student scholars, as well as systems to support engagement, such as Aggie GivePulse and community-engaged output tracking in Watermark.

Recently, USU launched the [Community-Engaged Scholar Network \(CESN\)](#) to serve as a coordinated entry point for connecting community partners with USU scholars and to track relationships to reduce duplication, maximize resources, and better understand collective outcomes. CESN is still in the early stages and seeking funding, though it has already begun hosting events (e.g., speed networking) and connecting partners with scholars. A major goal is to expand AggiePulse capabilities to allow for greater partner entry, connection, and tracking—especially in

the area of community-engaged research. Currently, the university does not collect data on community-engaged research outputs or track collective investment and impact, which remains a significant area for growth. A follow-up survey from the Fall 2024 Community Engagement Impact Assessment (CEIA) survey indicated that USU centers and institutes provide the most support in helping scholars form community partnerships. Many collaborations begin with formal agreements, such as MOUs, to establish shared goals, responsibilities, and deliverables.

Professional development opportunities related to community engagement are increasing across campus. These opportunities are essential to building the skills of scholars and helping them—and their community partners—feel confident in investing time and energy into what is often intensive work. For example, the Center for Empowering Teaching Excellence now offers a certificate in community-engaged teaching.

As noted in No. 15, USU maintains many long-term community partnerships. Sustaining these partnerships requires scholars to build relationships that extend beyond project timelines. Faculty and staff serve on nonprofit boards, participate in summits, and engage in philanthropic initiatives that reinforce USU's commitment to community well-being. Others bring community partners into classrooms as guest speakers to promote reciprocal learning between students and practitioners.

Reciprocity is further supported through co-developed programs, internships, workshops, trainings, and technical assistance. USU opens campus spaces for community use, elevates community voices through co-presentations and co-authored publications, and includes consulting funds in grants to compensate partners for their contributions. Students also play a key role in partnerships, such as through the [BUILD Dairy Initiative](#), which connects students with industry for experiential learning and knowledge exchange.

In terms of evaluation, follow-up survey participants reported using check-ins, interviews, surveys, and post-project debriefs to assess satisfaction and identify improvements. However, USU currently lacks consistent institutional-level guidance for evaluating community-engaged scholarship, making this a clear area for growth.

Section V. FACULTY AND STAFF

No. 19. Resources and Support Services

As evidence provided for your earlier classification, you described the ways the institution offers resources and support services for faculty in any employment status (tenured/tenure track, adjunct/clinical/non-tenure track, and part/full time) and/or staff who seek to develop or deepen community engaged approaches and methods. For reclassification, describe what currently is in place and what has changed, if anything, with resources and support services for community engagement. Include which offices and/or unit(s) assume responsibility for these services, how often programs are offered, and how many faculty and staff participate. How have the content, program, approaches, or audience for professional development changed since the last classification? What have been the results?

Since its last classification, USU has deepened its commitment to community engagement through expanded leadership, faculty development, and institutional investments. Key advancements include the establishment of an Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement, the Faculty Fellows in Community Engagement program, and enhanced community engagement support from the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), Transforming Communities Institute (TCI), Community Engaged Scholars Network (CESN), Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice (IDRPP), Community & Natural Resources Institute (CANRI), and Empowering Teaching Excellence (ETE).

In 2024, USU appointed David Anderson as its first Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement, institutionalizing support for community-engaged teaching, research, and service. USU's expanding engagement efforts now benefit from centralized leadership within the highest levels of the academic enterprise. The CCE continues to serve as USU's hub for faculty and staff support in community-engaged teaching and co-curricular activities, including overseeing the Faculty Fellows in Community Engagement program in collaboration with the Office of the Provost. This program mentors and funds faculty who integrate community engagement into their teaching and research. Each fellow undertakes a project that deepens the institutionalization of community engagement.

The CCE has also partnered with ETE to bolster professional development opportunities for faculty in community-engaged learning. Since 2020, ETE has offered semesterly workshops, learning circles, and professional development sessions related to community engagement. ETE offers two [Master Teacher Certificates](#) in Community Engagement and Sustainable Teaching that provide community-engaged teaching support. These certificates enhance community-engaged teaching quality through high-impact professional development, deepen networks of community-engaged instructors that strengthen community and resources, and increase the number of instructors participating in high-quality community-engaged teaching and learning.

Another significant advancement has been the launch of the CESN, a collaborative effort developed by TCI alongside CCE. This multidisciplinary network connects USU faculty, staff, and students with Utah communities to address community-identified needs. CESN serves as a coordinated entry point for community engagement, directing users to relevant campus resources. CESN was created to address the dispersion of projects, courses, and partnerships across campus, often siloed by specializations and interests. It has improved coordinated communication on community engagement and is working to enhance cross-disciplinary collaboration, resource efficiency, and tracking of outputs and outcomes.

The IDRPP and CANRI have also strengthened USU's capacity to implement high-quality community engagement. IDRPP provides multiple annual training programs for institute staff and faculty on community engagement and collaborative program development. IDRPP's work is supported by a Community Advisory Council that includes individuals with disabilities, families, and agency representatives across Utah. CANRI supports a cross-campus community of researchers interested in meaningful dialogue, cultivating academic and community collaborations, and sharing data and resources on interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and community engagement focused on natural resource issues in the Intermountain West and beyond.

These efforts have increased faculty and staff participation in community-engaged teaching, research, and service. More than 500 faculty engage in high-impact, community-driven scholarship, strengthening reciprocal university-community partnerships. Through leadership, faculty development, and strategic investment, USU has enhanced its institutional capacity for community engagement, ensuring long-term sustainability and impact.

No. 20. Faculty and Staff Professional Development Programs

Check all of the community engaged professional development programs faculty and staff are provided. These programs provide educational training to improve community engagement across faculty and staff roles.

- ✓ *Syllabus development and implementation planning*
- ✓ *Partnership initiation, development, management, assessment planning*
- ✓ *Remote/online community engagement (curricular or co-curricular)*
- ✓ *Inclusion of community engagement in evaluation criteria of student learning outcomes*
- ✓ *Participation on learning communities, writing retreats, engaged learning institutes related to community engagement*
- ✓ *Training to understand ethical engagement practices that ensure equitable access and opportunity related to community engagement*
- ✓ *Documenting and evaluating promotion, tenure, and/or reappointment dossiers for faculty candidates and reviewers*
- ✓ *Global and intercultural community engagement*
- ✓ *Climate and Sustainable Development Goals connected to community engagement*
- ✓ *Social innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic engagement*

- ✓ Engaged learning webinars and workshops
- ✓ Other

Describe three of the topics that have been checked off above in the text box underneath the selected topic and include the purpose, audience, activities, and results. Include which offices and/or unit(s) assume responsibility for these services, how often programs are offered and how many faculty and staff participate.

Inclusion of Community Engagement in Evaluation Criteria of Student Learning Outcomes

Since its last classification, USU has strengthened and further institutionalized the assessment of student learning outcomes in Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses. The university utilizes the IDEA student evaluation system to assess educational outcomes. Administered to nearly all students at the end of each semester, IDEA surveys ask students to evaluate their instructor, the course, and the extent to which the course achieved specific learning objectives.

Previously, the only community engagement-related question on IDEA surveys asked students to rate the extent to which the course helped them “apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the public good.” In 2024, with support from the Vice Provost for Community Engagement, USU implemented a specialized version of the IDEA survey for formally designated CEL courses. This updated version includes three additional questions aligned with best practices in community engagement. Students are asked to rate the extent to which the course helped them:

1. Gain an ability and commitment to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim (from the American Association of Colleges and Universities [AAC&U] Values Rubric).
2. Clarify sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action (from the AAC&U Values Rubric).
3. Gain insight and awareness of the needs and strengths of my community (adapted from Center for Community Engagement’s standard Community-Engaged Learning Course Student Survey).

Although this expanded survey has only been in use for one semester, its widespread institutional adoption presents significant opportunities to support faculty improvement and deepen the integration of community engagement into USU’s central academic mission of teaching and learning. Faculty use IDEA data in promotion and tenure dossiers and annual performance evaluations. The Office of Data & Analytics (ODA), which administers IDEA surveys, provides a suite of resources to departments and faculty, helping them use this data to demonstrate teaching effectiveness.

The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) plays a critical role in supporting faculty with the evaluation of student learning outcomes in CEL courses. The CCE offers one-on-one consultations to help faculty incorporate student learning results into future course iterations. These consultations ensure that faculty are embedding meaningful reflection activities into their courses

and guiding students in critically analyzing their experiences in ways that enhance civic learning and professional development. Together with Empowering Teaching Excellence (ETE), the CCE helps faculty design assessment tools that measure not only content knowledge but also students' abilities to work collaboratively in community settings, articulate civic identity, and engage in ethical partnerships.

ETE provides additional training on effective course design to help faculty align learning objectives, course assignments, and community engagement components. Through ETE workshops, learning circles, and teaching certifications, faculty gain strategies to structure assignments—such as reflective writing, ePortfolios, and project-based evaluations—that align with course learning goals. This alignment allows faculty to track student growth in civic competencies, critical thinking, and collaboration skills over time.

A sampling of professional development workshops and learning circles offered by ETE related to CEL and student learning outcomes includes:

- "The Craft of Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning: A Guide for Faculty Development" by Marshall Welch and Star Plaxton-Moore (Spring 2025) – Learning Circle
- "Building the Collaborative Learning Community in the Critical Skills Classroom" by Patrice McDonough and Wendy McGrath (Fall 2024) – Learning Circle
- "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants" by Robin Wall Kimmerer (Spring 2024) – Learning Circle
- "Best Practices in Community-Engaged Teaching" (Fall 2023) – ETE Conference Presentation
- "Creating Wicked Students: Designing Courses for a Complex World" by Paul Hanstedt (Fall 2023) – Learning Circle
- "Best Practices in Community-Engaged Teaching" (Spring 2023) – Seminar
- "Storytelling for Social Justice (Teaching/Learning Social Justice)" by Lee Anne Bell (Spring 2023) – Learning Circle
- "Getting Started with Community-Engaged Learning" (Fall 2022) – Sparkshop
- "Community-Engaged Learning" (Fall 2020) – ETE Conference Presentation

Together, the efforts of ODA, CCE, and ETE foster faculty responsiveness to student learning data and intentional course design. These collaborations ensure that CEL courses are rigorously structured to support deep student learning, civic reflection, and skill development. By embedding community engagement into formal assessment practices, USU faculty are better equipped to demonstrate the impact of CEL courses not only on student outcomes but also on the communities they serve. These efforts reinforce USU's commitment to student success, faculty excellence, and public impact as a core component of its institutional identity.

Climate and Sustainable Development Goals Connected to Community Engagement

USU is deeply committed to accomplishing the climate and sustainable development goals through robust community engagement efforts that integrate education, research, and professional development. Multiple offices, institutes, and initiatives across USU work collaboratively to foster sustainability, support faculty and staff training, and engage local, regional, and global partners in addressing pressing environmental challenges.

Janet Quinney Lawson Institute for Land, Water, and Air

The Institute for Land, Water, and Air (ILWA) is a major interdisciplinary initiative which focuses on convening the right stakeholders to research, study, and better understand the daunting challenges facing Utah. ILWA connects USU researchers with government agencies, private sector partners, nonprofits, and elected officials to inform sustainable decision-making. ILWA produces an annual report for the Utah Governor and Legislature, bringing research to Utah policymakers and leaders and addressing issues such as climate resilience, land conservation, and water security. The institute also funds and facilitates community-engaged research on projects like Bear Lake, the Great Salt Lake, and the Colorado River, directly influencing policy discussions and environmental stewardship. Nearly 200 faculty are actively engaged in land, water, and air projects or otherwise affiliated with ILWA.

Community and Natural Resources Institute

Reframed in 2021, the Community and Natural Resources Institute (CANRI) fosters interdisciplinary community engagement on environmental sustainability. CANRI serves as a hub where faculty, students, and community partners address challenges such as climate change resilience, sustainable growth, and resource conservation. Through public forums, research partnerships, and educational programming, CANRI promotes action-oriented solutions in the Intermountain West and beyond. Thirty-nine faculty and fourteen graduate students are affiliated with CANRI and committed to its community-engaged mission.

Spring Runoff Conference

Since 2004, the Spring Runoff Conference has convened faculty, students, agency representatives, and stakeholders to exchange knowledge on water security, climate-water dynamics, and water quality management. More than 250 university and community partners attend the conference each year, spurring new partnerships and sustaining existing ones.

USU Sustainability

Since 2007, USU Sustainability has collaborated with students, faculty, staff, and community partners to advance sustainability initiatives statewide. USU has earned recognition from Bicycle Friendly Universities, Tree Campus, Bee Campus USA, Campus Race to Zero Waste, STARS (Silver), 24 LEED buildings (silver or higher), and Carbon Commitment.

The USU Sustainability Council, composed of 9 faculty and 11 staff members, leads efforts across 30 statewide campuses through six major working groups, including:

- Academics
- Air Quality and Transportation
- Energy and the Built Environment
- Engagement
- Food and Dining
- Waste and Recycling

The Council works directly with the Center for Community Engagement's Christensen Office of Service and Sustainability (COSAS) to offer programming that integrates sustainability and community engagement. Examples include Student Sustainability Grants, USU Farmers Market, Harvest Rescue, Earth Week, and True Blue Reuse & Repair.

Faculty and Staff Training for Climate and Sustainability Engagement

USU offers professional development opportunities to help faculty and staff integrate sustainability into teaching, research, and service:

- **Green Office Program:** Promotes sustainable office practices; includes 23 representatives across 14 offices
- **Aggie Commuter Club:** Encourages alternative transportation
- **Energy Wars:** Campus-wide conservation competition
- **Planetary Thinking in the Curriculum:** A training initiative involving 75 faculty and reaching over 8,250 students since 2016
- **Sustainability Awards:** Includes a faculty category
- **Clean-Air Poster Contest:** CEL faculty engage with youth across the state

Empowering Teaching Excellence Sustainability Teaching Certificate

Similar to the Community-Engaged Teaching Master Teaching Certificate, USU offers an Empowering Teaching Excellence (ETE) Sustainable Teaching Master Teaching Certificate, a cross-disciplinary professional development program that supports faculty in integrating sustainability literacy into their courses. Faculty learn to align curriculum with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and incorporate critical problem-solving approaches to economic, social, and environmental challenges. The program includes:

- A two-day Planetary Thinking in the Curriculum Workshop
- Group Learning Circles (6-10 one-hour meetings per semester)
- Sparkshops on sustainability teaching strategies

External and Online Sustainability Resources

USU is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), offering faculty and staff access to exclusive professional development resources. Additionally, the USU Sustainability [Helpful Reference Resources webpage](#) provides:

- Sustainability-focused course materials

- Interactive data and visualization tools
- Educational training modules for faculty and staff

USU's commitment to Climate and Sustainable Development Goals is embedded in community engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration, and professional development. By offering training, research opportunities, and sustainability-focused education, USU empowers its academic community to tackle global sustainability challenges. These efforts align with the university's land-grant mission, reinforcing its role as a leader in sustainability and community engagement.

Other

Other

In January 2024, the Community-Engaged Scholars Network (CESN) was launched as a central mechanism for enhancing faculty and staff capacity for community engagement. Designed in partnership by the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) and the Transforming Communities Institute (TCI), CESN serves as a coordinated entry point to help faculty and staff enhance community engagement work. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, sharing best practices, and offering structured professional development, CESN helps integrate community engagement into teaching and research at USU while bridging gaps and building partnerships between USU experts and community organizations to address the state's most pressing challenges.

Through CESN, learning communities have been established to facilitate ongoing dialogue and knowledge exchange among faculty and staff engaged in community-based work. These learning communities are structured around an adapted version of the [Healthy People 2023 Social Determinants of Health](#) framework, tailored to fit the context of USU, Utah communities, and local assets and needs. Faculty and staff are organized into specific topic areas based on their professional interests, experience, and expertise. These areas are intentionally broad to provide structure to promote communication and collaboration across USU and throughout Utah. Faculty and staff with interests and expertise spanning multiple topic areas may join more than one learning community.

CESN learning communities provide a structured space to discuss effective community engagement strategies, ethical considerations, and assessment and evaluation, allowing CESN members to refine their approaches and maximize USU's collective impact. Faculty involved in these communities, report increased confidence in implementing community-engaged learning approaches and greater success in establishing and sustaining meaningful partnerships with local organizations. CESN also fosters cross-disciplinary collaborations that lead to new research initiatives and external funding opportunities.

The interdisciplinary focus of CESN complements the wide range of professional development experiences offered by community-engaged units at USU that guide faculty and staff in embedding community engagement within their courses and research. CESN helps coordinate and amplify professional development experiences that were previously fragmented across units. In partnership with the CCE, CESN also offers expert speaker sessions, hands-on workshops, and

collaborative learning opportunities that equip participants with practical tools for enhancing community engagement experiences across USU's academic enterprise. For example, CESN has amplified multiple Empowering Teaching Excellence (ETE) Learning Circles (similar to book clubs) based on texts that are connected to community engagement each semester. Faculty ranging from community engagement experts all the way to new faculty with a curiosity about community-engaged teaching have participated in these circles. Recently, the CCE has worked with CESN to host 1) faculty workshops that share best practices for designing and facilitating hybrid community events, 2) community-engaged speed networking events designed for faculty and community partners to explore collaborations, and 3) faculty workshops exploring statewide campus community engagement case studies that feature co-created experiences tailored to community partner needs. Since CESN was launched, it has sponsored or shared more than eight events and professional development opportunities through its network.

CESN promotes professional development opportunities, such as those described above, through its network. Faculty participating in these opportunities have successfully developed new community-engaged learning (CEL) courses, refined their community partnership strategies, and integrated engagement components into their scholarship and grant funding. The valuable networking and mentorship opportunities offered through CESN further embed an institutional culture of community engagement at USU. Since its launch, CESN has engaged over 100 faculty and staff in its initiatives, enhancing USU's community engagement efforts. By providing essential training, fostering collaboration, and supporting engaged scholarship, CESN is working to ensure that faculty and staff have the resources and infrastructure necessary to build meaningful, ethical, and impactful partnerships with the community.

No. 21. Awards

Describe the formal recognitions provided by your institution through campus-wide awards and/or celebrations for faculty/staff that partake in academic community engagement.

USU demonstrates a strong and sustained commitment to academic community engagement by formally recognizing faculty and staff whose work exemplifies excellence in teaching, research, and service that benefits the public. Through a variety of institutional awards and designations, USU celebrates individual contributions and collective departmental efforts that align with the university's land-grant mission and amplify its impact in local, state, and global communities.

USU recognizes faculty/staff excellence in academic community engagement through the following awards:

- **USU Presidential Award for Community Engagement:** Presented annually by the Utah State's President, this award recognizes one faculty member and one staff member who demonstrate exemplary leadership in building mutually beneficial university-community partnerships. It is the highest institutional recognition for community engagement at USU and honors contributions across teaching, research, and service. In addition to faculty and

staff, students, community partners, and alumni are also recognized through the Presidential Awards for Community Engagement.

- **E. G. Peterson Extension Award:** As USU's most distinguished Extension award, this honor goes to a faculty member who has provided exceptional service to Utah communities through engagement and outreach. It reflects the university's land-grant mission and includes a \$2,000 honorarium.
- **Spirit of Extension Award:** This award celebrates a USU Extension employee who has shown exceptional dedication, collaboration, and perseverance in enhancing the lives of individuals and families through education, applied research, and outreach.
- **Spirit of Service Awards:** Presented by the Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice (IDRPP), this award recognizes one outstanding staff member from each of the IDRPP's divisions for excellence in community service related to disability research, policy, and outreach.

In addition to individual accolades, USU institutionalizes community engagement at the academic unit level through the following designations:

- **Community-Engaged Departments and Programs:** Departments and programs can apply to be formally designated as a Community-Engaged Department or program by meeting criteria that include 1) embedding community-based teaching, research, and service in their mission, 2) integrating community engagement into student learning experiences, and 3) demonstrating ongoing collaboration with community partners. Departments that receive this designation are awarded a digital badge for display on departmental webpages and promotional materials, providing a visible and institutionally supported endorsement of their engagement efforts.
- **Community-Engaged Colleges:** The Quinney College of Natural Resources and the Caine College of the Arts are currently working toward becoming USU's first Community-Engaged Colleges. Following a model pioneered by Cornell University, both colleges will begin by designating each of their departments as Community-Engaged. They will also establish college-wide committees to coordinate and promote community engagement efforts. These colleges are aiming to achieve official designation by the next Carnegie Reclassification.

USU's awards, designations, and recognitions reflect the university's strong commitment to academic community engagement as a pillar of faculty and staff excellence. By celebrating individual contributions and collective departmental efforts, these initiatives reinforce USU's land-grant mission and commitment to public service.

No. 22. Staff Scholarship Examples

Provide five to 10 examples of staff scholarship (conference presentation, publication, consulting, awards, etc.) that have taken place since your last classification. A title may not convey how the example is about community engagement, so please provide a short description of how the activity

is related to community engagement.

USU staff play a vital role in advancing community-engaged scholarship through research, curriculum development, public programming, and policy initiatives. The following examples highlight staff-led work that demonstrates scholarly engagement with communities, including conference presentations, curriculum design, media initiatives, and public events. These efforts emphasize reciprocity and mutual benefit between USU and the broader community, ensuring that academic knowledge is accessible, impactful, and action oriented. From leading statewide food security summits to developing justice-oriented training programs, USU staff serve as key contributors to knowledge creation and community-driven solution-building. These examples reflect the diverse ways in which USU staff engage with communities to address pressing social issues, amplify local voices, and drive meaningful change:

1. **Conference Presentations on Intercultural Competency:** Kate Stephens, Director of USU's Center for Community Engagement (CCE), presented "Intercultural Competency Starts at Home: Leveraging Local Community Engagement as Training for International Service" at the Peace Corps Prep Conference for Higher Education (September 2023) and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Conference on Global Learning (October 2024).
2. **Civil Discourse Series and Workshops:** The CCE staff regularly host events promoting civil discourse, including a discussion series modeled after the film *Divided We Fall: Unity without Tragedy*. The series featured three sessions facilitated by a Communication Studies graduate student, bringing together students from across the political spectrum to move beyond divisive headlines and discover common ground. CCE staff also facilitated a workshop titled "Is There a Future for Civil Discourse in Politics?" featuring Utah State Representative Dan Johnson (Republican) and Patrick Belmont (Democratic candidate in 2022 and 2024), who shared experiences with respectful political dialogue to foster mutual understanding and informed decision-making.
3. **Photovoice and Disability:** Rachel Byers, project coordinator at the Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice, used photovoice to engage individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in exploring their mental health experiences. Participants co-analyzed data, co-authored findings, and contributed to community outreach. A case study was published with *Sage Research Methods*, and a manuscript is currently under review.
4. **Utah Higher Education Food Summit:** The CCE staff organized the annual Utah Higher Education Food Summit, convening peer institutions and community organizations to address food insecurity. Forums, roundtables, and demonstrations were guided by input from students and campus voices throughout the state, emphasizing the importance of community-driven program development.
5. **Community Justice Advocate Program Curriculum Development:** Jaxon Didericksen, a staff member at the Transforming Communities Institute (TCI), developed a curriculum for the

Community Justice Advocate Certificate Program using community-engaged research methods. In partnership with Nonprofit Legal Services of Utah and others, this initiative aims to train social workers and other helping professionals to provide limited legal assistance through a formalized university certificate. If approved by the Utah Supreme Court, the program will expand legal access for underserved populations statewide.

6. **Utah Conference on Community Engagement:** TCI staff member Erin Jensen served as the lead coordinator for the Utah Conference on Community Engagement, which brings together nonprofit leaders, government agencies, grassroots organizations, and higher education professionals to strengthen community engagement across sectors. The conference promotes best practices, builds sustainable partnerships, and supports collective action to address social, environmental, and economic challenges.
7. **Hunger Solutions in Utah Podcast:** Brittney Johnson, policy, systems, and environment coordinator for USU Create Better Health, hosts the Hunger Solutions in Utah podcast, which highlights statewide efforts to address hunger. The podcast features local leaders and frontline workers, elevating community-driven strategies and offering listeners practical ways to support hunger reduction efforts through volunteering, advocacy, or resource-sharing.
8. **Cropping Up Media Initiative on Utah Specialty Crops:** Kerry Bringhurst, a staff member of Utah Public Radio's leadership team, managed a grant-funded media campaign to promote Utah specialty crops. Funded by the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food and the USDA, this three-year, \$35,000 initiative included radio stories, podcasts, and outreach at farmers' markets. The 13-part series, developed with USU Create Better Health and student interns, was recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists. The project emphasized public engagement by highlighting local food systems, sustainable agriculture, and community nutrition.

No. 23. Faculty Scholarship Examples

Provide five to 10 examples of faculty scholarship from as many different disciplines as possible that have taken place since your last classification. A title may not convey how the example is about community engagement, so please provide a short description of how the activity is related to community engagement.

USU faculty produce community-engaged scholarship that addresses real-world challenges. Across disciplines, faculty partner with communities, policymakers, nonprofit organizations, and industry stakeholders to co-create knowledge and inform public decision-making. These efforts span environmental sustainability, public health, geology, social justice, education, and more. Through innovative, engaged research, USU faculty bridge academia and community needs, ensuring that knowledge is co-created, accessible, and impactful. The following examples reflect how faculty 1) advance environmental conservation (e.g., wetland restoration, water policy, air quality, climate

resilience), 2) support a variety of groups (e.g., collaboration with federally recognized tribes), and 3) expand public understanding of history, science, and policy (e.g., open-access publishing, military oral histories, civic engagement). Together, they reflect USU's institutional commitment to community partnerships that are ethical, collaborative, and solutions-focused—building knowledge that benefits both the university and the broader society.

1. Dr. Jessica Ulrich-Schad – Soil Health and Community-Based Conservation

Dr. Ulrich-Schad, Associate Professor in Rural & Natural Resource Sociology and Director of the Community and Natural Resources Institute (CANRI), collaborates with 16 farms across Utah to investigate soil health practices. Through interviews with farmers and landowners, she identifies motivations and barriers to sustainable land management. She also leads the Utah People and Environment Poll, engaging the public in environmental policy and sharing results with policymakers and media.

Utah Producers and Soil Health: Digging Deeper (2025) – [Agriculture & Human Values](#) Crop Advisors in the Intermountain West and the Challenges of Soil Health (2024) – [Agricultural & Environmental Letters](#)

2. Dr. Seth Lyman – Community-Based Air Quality Research

Dr. Lyman, Director of USU's Bingham Research Center, works with oil and gas companies, regulators, the Ute Tribe, and environmental organizations to address air pollution in the Uintah Basin. His research on wintertime ozone levels informs emission reduction strategies and public policy. Recognized as UCAIR Person of the Year, his work fosters cross-sector collaboration for healthier air and more sustainable energy.

Low NOx and High Organic Compound Emissions from Oilfield Pumpjack Engines (2022) – [Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene](#)

3. Dr. Daniella Hirschfeld – Climate Adaptation in Communities

Dr. Hirschfeld, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, directs the Resilience Hub Lab, partnering with land agencies, local governments, and nonprofits to support climate adaptation. She collaborated with Tree Utah and students to plant trees in South Salt Lake, conducted NASA-funded research on climate science needs, and led a NOAA-funded citizen science project on urban heat mapping.

Practitioners' Needs for Addressing the Challenges of Sea-Level Rise (2024) – [Earth's Future](#) Global Survey Shows Planners Use Widely Varying Sea-Level Rise Projections (2023) – [Communications Earth & Environment](#)

4. Dr. Jayme Walters – Transforming Communities through Open-Access Research

Dr. Walters co-founded Transforming Communities, a peer-reviewed, open-access journal that publishes community-based research and practice knowledge. The journal is designed for use by researchers, practitioners, and community members, with an editorial board that includes academics and community practitioners.

Transforming Communities

5. **Dr. David Tarboton – Water Management for the Great Salt Lake**

Dr. Tarboton, Director of the Utah Water Research Laboratory, collaborates with the Great Salt Lake Strike Team, state agencies, and policymakers to provide hydrologic models for water conservation strategies. His work directly informs state-level decisions on restoring the Great Salt Lake and translating science into policy.

Great Salt Lake Strike Team Report (2024) – [USU Report](#)

6. **Dr. Shireen Keyl – Community-Led Education for Refugees in Jordan**

Dr. Keyl, Associate Professor in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership, developed a grassroots education model in Amman, Jordan, which trains refugee educators to teach English within their own communities. Based on Freirean and culturally responsive pedagogy, the program has reached over 200 refugee students and centers local knowledge in education.

Culturally Relevant and Black-Centered Pedagogy in Community Education (2022) – [AERA Presentation](#)

7. **Dr. Molly Cannon and Dr. Susan Grayzel – Documenting Military Histories with Communities**

Dr. Cannon, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Dr. Grayzel, Professor of History, co-lead the Bringing War Home project, a community-driven digital archive of military and veteran experiences. Funded by the NEH, the project gathered 200 object stories and 84 oral histories across nine Utah communities, training students in public history and collaborating with 17 partner organizations.

[Bringing War Home](#)

8. **Dr. Mehmet Soyer – Community-Engaged Learning for Sustainability**

Dr. Soyer, Assistant Professor in Sociology, incorporates community-engaged learning in his sustainability-focused research methods course, where students partner with USU sustainability programs to design and conduct research. Students gain real-world skills while contributing to environmental solutions.

Using Community-Engaged Learning in Research Methods Classes for Sustainability (2023) – [Teaching Sociology](#)

9. **Dr. Kelly Bradbury – Indigenous Collaboration in Science Education**

Dr. Bradbury, Professional Practice Associate Professor in Geosciences, led students in GEO 3400: Communicating Geoscience to co-create the Hot Springs Sensorium, an interactive exhibit developed with the Northwest Band Shoshone Nation, a federally recognized tribe. Presented at USU's Rock and Fossil Day, this project engaged hundreds of attendees in sensory-based geoscience learning while honoring Indigenous knowledge systems.

10. Dr. Karin Kettenring – Wetland Restoration through Community Partnerships

Dr. Kettenring, Professor of Wetland Ecology, partners with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and state land managers to restore wetland habitats around the Great Salt Lake. Her research guides strategies for planting native species and managing invasive plants.

Tipping the Balance: The Role of Seed Density in Wetland Restoration (2022) – [Ecological Applications](#) Lay of the (Wet)land: Manager Practices in Wetland Revegetation (2024) – [Restoration Ecology](#)

No. 24. Student Scholarship Examples

Provide five to 10 examples of student scholarship from as many different disciplines as possible. A title may not convey how the example is about community engagement, so please provide a short description of how the activity is related to community engagement.

USU students engage in community-based scholarship that integrates academic learning with meaningful public impact. Across disciplines, students partner with nonprofits, educators, public agencies, and community organizations to co-create knowledge and develop solutions to local challenges.

With support from faculty mentors, students apply research, creative work, and service to address food insecurity, youth development, sustainability, housing access, and health equity. Whether designing nonprofit systems, expanding gardens, mentoring youth, or conducting ecological fieldwork, students enhance their learning while advancing community goals.

The following ten examples illustrate the range and significance of student-led community-engaged scholarship at USU.

1. Alyssa Taylor (Undergraduate) – Building Community Through Athletic Activities

Alyssa researched how athletic programs foster social cohesion and well-being in a variety of communities to support Athletics United, a nonprofit focused on building community through sports. Using interviews, surveys, and case studies, she examined the role of organized sports in strengthening relationships, promoting mental health, and encouraging inclusivity. Her work offers insights into using athletics as a vehicle for community building.

[Building Community Through Athletic Activities](#) (2024)

2. Landon Corbett (Undergraduate) – Managing Donations for the William A. Burnard Warming Center

Landon developed an efficient donation processing system for the William A. Burnard Warming Center, which serves unhoused individuals. His project improved inventory tracking and resource distribution, enhancing the center's capacity to deliver essential services to vulnerable populations.

[Managing Donations for the William A. Burnard Warming Center](#) (2024)

3. **Nicole Burnard (Graduate) – William A. Burnard Warming Center**

Nicole played a leading role in the creation of the William A. Burnard Warming Center. During her practicum with a local community action agency, she identified the need for winter shelter, conducted street outreach, and documented the conditions of unhoused individuals. With faculty mentorship, Nicole conducted a community assessment on attitudes toward homelessness, which informed local planning. Her efforts catalyzed the creation of a new nonprofit and the launch of the warming center, now in its third year of operation and a vital part of the regional homeless services system.

[William A. Burnard Warming Center](#) (2022)

4. **Sydney Fisk (Undergraduate) – USU Permaculture Garden**

Sydney secured Ivory Prize funding to expand the USU's Permaculture Garden's accessibility and educational capacity. Her project introduced new infrastructure, including a permanent seating area, arch trellis, and educational signage. She also led community workshops and summer camps, ensuring that the garden continues to serve as a space for learning, sustainability, and community building.

[Permaculture Garden](#) (2024)

5. **Danielle Berger (Undergraduate) – Hope Community Garden & Porch Pantry**

Danielle founded the Hope Community Garden & Porch Pantry to improve food access and promote urban agriculture. Supported by Ivory Prize funding, she installed 50 raised garden beds with drip irrigation and distributed over 6,000 pounds of food to families in need. The initiative has grown into a community hub, offering education, food aid, and local partnerships for long-term food sustainability.

[Hope Community Garden & Porch Pantry](#) (2020)

6. **Cassandra G. Ivie (Undergraduate) – Fostering Futures: Collegiate Mentorship in Utah 4-H STEM and Agriscience Ambassadors**

Cassandra collaborated with the Utah 4-H STEM and Agriscience Ambassadors program to co-develop mentorship initiatives aimed at enhancing youth engagement in science and agriculture. Working alongside 4-H staff and ambassadors, she facilitated training sessions, co-created educational resources, and supported the implementation of community projects. This partnership fostered a supportive environment for young participants to explore STEM and agriscience fields, emphasizing the value of mentorship and community involvement in youth development.

[Fostering Futures](#) (2024)

7. **Gracie Shippen (Undergraduate) – Enhancing Nonprofit Impact through Collaborative Data Management**

In partnership with the Malouf Foundation, Gracie developed a comprehensive donor data management system to support the foundation's mission against sexual exploitation and abuse. Working alongside foundation staff, she consolidated data from over 52 disparate sources into a centralized platform, improving donor communication and resource allocation. Additionally, Gracie collaborated with stakeholders to design a participant feedback survey for the Smart Defense program and identified male survivor speakers for the Malouf Summit, amplifying diverse voices in the foundation's initiatives.

[Optimizing Nonprofit Impact](#) (2024)

8. **Kallen Brunson (Undergraduate) – Between Two Borders: Language, Identity, and Belonging through Poetry**

Through a series of co-created poetry workshops, Kallen collaborated with immigrants and refugees in Cache Valley to explore language, identity, and belonging. The project centered community voices, inviting participants to write and share poems in their native languages and on their own terms. Together, they produced a multilingual poetry collection that challenged dominant narratives and affirmed the cultural and linguistic richness of the community.

9. **Kara Bachman & Amria Farnsworth (Undergraduate) – USU Gleaning (Now USU Harvest Rescue)**

Kara and Amria co-founded the USU Gleaning Team to address food waste and food insecurity in Cache Valley. In its first year, they organized over 300 volunteers who gleaned and donated nearly 15,550 pounds of fresh produce. Their collaboration with USU Extension and the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences led to the creation of preserved fruit products and a sustainable, ongoing gleaning initiative now known as USU Harvest Rescue.

[USU Gleaning Team](#) (2020)

10. **USU Eastern Students – Kit Fox Habitat Study in Emery County**

Students from USU Eastern's Wildland Resource Techniques course collaborated with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) to study kit fox habitats in Emery County. Utilizing motion-activated night-vision cameras and various baiting techniques, they documented kit fox presence and other nocturnal wildlife. Their findings, presented to the BLM and DWR, contribute to understanding and protecting kit fox habitats amid land use planning.

[Kit Fox Habitat Study in Emery County](#) (2024)

No. 25. Faculty Measurement and Assessment

Describe how the institution regularly measures and assesses faculty community engagement, particularly as it relates to outputs and outcomes relative to teaching, research/creative activity, and/or service. How is data used to improve programs and outcomes? How have the results changed since your last classification? Provide relevant links.

USU employs multiple systematic mechanisms to measure and assess faculty community engagement across teaching, research, and service. Watermark (formerly Digital Measures) serves as the primary tracking tool, ensuring that faculty at all ranks and across all campuses report community-engaged work. Since 2018, significant improvements have been made, including mandatory annual faculty reporting on community engagement activities and the addition of community engagement questions in semesterly IDEA survey evaluations.

In addition to Watermark and IDEA survey evaluation data, USU conducts the Community Engagement Impact Assessment (CEIA) survey to deepen understanding of faculty community engagement activities and their impact. The 2024 CEIA survey revealed substantial increases in faculty engagement, with 80% of faculty reporting participation in community engagement projects—a rise from 70% at the time of USU’s initial classification. Faculty and staff together reported 58% more community engagement projects compared to the previous classification, with strong contributions across research (n=402), teaching (n=633), service (n=546), and extension (n=397). At the time of the last classification, there were 1,465 community engagement projects compared to 2,311 today. This growth reflects a robust and expanding culture of community engagement at USU.

One of the most notable improvements is the growing recognition of community engagement in promotion and tenure (P&T). In 2018, only 44% of faculty cited P&T as a reason for engagement, whereas in 2024, only 19% of faculty disagreed that community engagement is a valued component of the P&T process at USU. Additionally, 84% of faculty completing community engagement scholarship agreed their work was characterized by mutual benefit, demonstrating strengthened reciprocity and collaboration in community partnerships.

Overall, the data from the 2024 CEIA survey demonstrates substantial progress in institutionalizing community engagement, improving faculty recognition, and increasing the volume of community-engaged work while also identifying areas where further institutional investment can enhance faculty support and visibility.

Findings from Watermark, IDEA, and CEIA have directly shaped targeted faculty development initiatives, including expanded training opportunities through the Community Engaged Scholars Network (CESN) and data-driven efforts to institutionalize community engagement (CE) further. For example, CESN has used CEIA survey data to broaden its professional development offerings, focusing on a diverse range of community engagement topics relevant to faculty across disciplines. Additionally, in response to earlier survey findings regarding the perception of CE within P&T processes, 1) the Vice Provost for Community Engagement presented at the Department Heads

Retreat to advocate for the inclusion of community engagement in faculty code and annual review processes; 2) the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) launched a new initiative to provide faculty with formal documentation of their CEL-related teaching, research, service, and awards for inclusion in their P&T dossiers; and 3) Provost Laurens Smith hosted an informational session emphasizing the value of community engagement in faculty evaluation and advancement.

Together, these systematic assessment efforts have deepened institutional understanding of faculty community engagement and led to meaningful improvements in policy, practice, and faculty support.

No. 26. Promotion and Tenure Approach

Indicate the campus approach to faculty tenure and/or promotion (check all that apply):

- *My campus has a contract or tenure track structure rather than a tenure and promotions structure.*
- *My campus has a tenure and promotion structure defined at the department level.*
- *My campus has a tenure and promotion structure defined at the school level.*
- ✓ *My campus has a tenure and promotion structure defined at the institutional level.*

No. 27. Supporting Faculty Practices and Policies

Describe policies and practices that support faculty community engagement for faculty at your institution such as search and recruitment, annual review, reappointment, promotion, bonuses, and/or merit pay. Do not include promotion and/or tenure policies in this response. Specify if these policies are different for faculty of different employment statuses (tenured/tenure track, adjunct/clinical/full time non-tenure track, and part/full time).

USU has implemented several policies and practices to support faculty community engagement across all employment categories, including tenured, tenure-track, non-tenure-track, adjunct, and clinical faculty. These efforts span search and recruitment, annual reviews, reappointment, and merit-based compensation. Collectively, they underscore USU's commitment to embedding community engagement within its institutional framework, in alignment with its land-grant mission to serve the public good.

Community engagement is emphasized early in the faculty recruitment process. All faculty searches and appointments require review and prior approval from the Provost and Executive Vice President to ensure alignment with university values. Position announcements and job descriptions are crafted to attract candidates who demonstrate a strong commitment to community-engaged teaching, research, and service. Each faculty job posting includes the following language:

"Founded in 1888, Utah State University is Utah's premier land-grant, public service university. As an R1 research institution, Utah State is dedicated to advancing knowledge

and serving the public good through innovative research and scholarly activities that are grounded in reciprocal engagement with local, regional, and global communities. USU prepares students to be active, civically engaged leaders who are prepared to address critical societal challenges. Dedicated to providing a high-quality and affordable education, USU remains a leader in research, discovery, and public impact.”

Since USU’s initial Carnegie classification, numerous department heads have reported to the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) that the classification has become a valuable recruitment tool—attracting dynamic scholars committed to community engagement. The designation helps USU appeal to faculty seeking to build their academic careers at an institution that meaningfully integrates engagement across teaching, research, and service.

USU also incorporates community engagement into faculty performance standards for annual reviews and reappointments. Policy 4004 outlines that merit salary increases are based on annual performance evaluations conducted by department administrators, who assess the full scope of responsibilities listed in a faculty member’s role statement. Because community engagement is explicitly included within these metrics, faculty contributions in this area are formally recognized and rewarded.

For example, in teaching, role statements include “leading students in service learning and community engagement activities” as an evaluative measure. In research, faculty are assessed on “evidence of community engagement in achieving the goals of your research or creative endeavors.” In service, performance is measured by “professional involvement with community-based agencies and organizations.” In Extension, faculty are evaluated on their ability to partner with “advisory groups, related agencies and organizations, Extension personnel, and other relevant groups and entities to identify and meet the needs of the local community they have engaged.”

By embedding community engagement into these key performance areas, USU reinforces its institutional support for community-engaged scholarship and ensures that faculty contributions are recognized across all academic roles and appointment types.

No. 28. Promotion and Tenure Policies

Describe the policies for faculty promotion (at tenure-granting campuses) from all levels of the institution (campus, college or school, department) that specifically reward faculty community-engaged scholarship. If there are separate policies for tenured/tenure track, full time non-tenure track, part time, research, and/or clinical faculty, please describe those as well. Describe the pervasiveness of the policies outlined in question. For example, are they practiced across the institution? By most departments? By a few?

USU has systematically integrated community-engaged scholarship into its promotion and tenure (P&T) policies, reflecting a strong institutional commitment to recognizing community engagement across all faculty types and role statement areas. This integration occurs at the

university level and is reinforced within colleges and departments, ensuring that community engagement is valued in faculty evaluations for P&T.

In 2018, USU faculty proposed significant revisions to P&T policies through the Faculty Senate to better incorporate community engagement. These changes were driven by findings from the 2018 Community Engagement Impact Assessment (CEIA), which showed that fewer than half of faculty viewed P&T as a motivating factor for engaging in community work. Prior to this, faculty code and the master role statement template acknowledged community engagement primarily in the context of service, without clear references in teaching and research. With strong faculty support, the revised policies were officially adopted in 2019, marking a major shift toward recognizing community engagement across all areas of faculty responsibility.

The inclusion of community engagement in P&T policies is widespread due to USU's centralized process, which applies to all academic units. The university's faculty code and role statement templates now explicitly recognize community-engaged scholarship across teaching, research, service, and Extension activities. These policies apply to tenure-track, tenured, and term faculty, providing a consistent and equitable foundation for evaluating faculty engagement. The Community-Engaged Department Certification program reinforces this culture at the departmental level by encouraging units to align their internal criteria with institutional policies that support engaged scholarship.

In a recent faculty forum on community engagement, USU Provost Larry Smith underscored this institutional commitment, stating:

"There's language in all the major sections that reflect faculty responsibilities—teaching, research, and service—that makes it clear that you will get credit and it will carry tenure and promotion weight if you choose to do this. And so, I'm here to make sure you understand that kind of effort is taken seriously. It will be taken seriously. It will count. The days of the perceptions that maybe this is just bells and whistles and fluff or an add-on or whatever—those days are gone. If you're going to commit your time and effort and be serious about this, it's now going to matter absolutely."

The clarity and commitment expressed by the university's chief academic officer reinforce a culture in which faculty contributions to community-engaged scholarship are not only valued but systematically recognized and rewarded.

Additionally, USU's Community-Engaged Department Designation encourages departments to develop cultures that reward and promote community-engaged scholarship. Departments pursuing this designation must demonstrate that their evaluation processes explicitly support community-engaged teaching, research, and service.

Together, these efforts ensure that community-engaged scholarship is not peripheral but fully embedded in USU's P&T landscape, reinforcing its value as a central component of faculty excellence and institutional identity.

No. 29. Promotion and Tenure Revisions

In the period since your last classification, if you made revisions to faculty community engagement reward policies to promotion and tenure (at tenure granting campuses), please address the following where applicable.

N/A

Section VI. CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT

No. 30. Curricular Engagement Changes

Provide a summary narrative describing overall changes and trends that have taken place related to curricular engagement on campus since the last classification. In your narrative, address the trajectory of curricular engagement on your campus. Where have you been? Where are you now? Where are you strategically planning on going?

Since 2003, USU has identified and designated Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses through a centralized process that has become increasingly efficient and pervasive over time. In 2013, the university began recognizing the Service-Learning (SL) course designation in Banner (USU's student records system) and on student transcripts, enabling students to easily identify SL courses during registration and highlight SL coursework on their transcripts. In 2017, the SL course designation was officially changed to CEL to emphasize the value of mutually beneficial partnerships over unidirectional service. In 2020, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) developed a more efficient and user-friendly CEL course designation approval process in ServiceNow, a platform that manages workflows and processes across departments. Previously, the Community-Engaged Faculty Advisory Committee (now the Provost's Advisory Committee on Community Engagement) met in person every semester to review and approve CEL course applications stored in a shared Box folder. The transition to ServiceNow introduced rolling approvals, allowing faculty to receive immediate feedback and making the process more streamlined and accessible.

In the fall of 2023, USU selected its inaugural Faculty Fellows in Community Engagement (CE) from the Caine College of the Arts and the Quinney College of Natural Resources. Fellows receive one course buyout per year and serve a two-year term. The Faculty Fellows in CE have become an essential component of the CCE Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) program, enhancing the CCE's ability to offer comprehensive resources and support to faculty for developing CEL courses. Fellows provide valuable insights and firsthand experience with faculty culture, including faculty governance and the tenure and promotion process. Working alongside the CCE Director and the Assistant Director of CEL, who bring deep community connections and nonprofit leadership experience, the fellows help bridge the gap between academia and community engagement.

To further support CEL course development, the Faculty Fellows have established a new tradition of going "on tour" at the start of each semester. These tours include presentations to individual faculty members, department heads, and key faculty bodies, such as the Deans Council and Faculty Senate, to promote the CEL course designation process as part of the broader Community-Engaged Department (CED) designation. Together, the streamlined CEL course designation process in ServiceNow and regular engagement with academic leadership through the Faculty Fellows program have increased awareness and understanding of the CEL course development process across the institution. In the 2024–25 academic year, faculty fellows played a direct role in securing the official CEL course designation for 51 new courses.

Faculty Fellows have also been instrumental in expanding the existing CED designation and are currently working to raise the designation to the college level by getting every department within their respective colleges designated as a CED.

To advance the institutionalization of community engagement, the CCE is currently working to secure funding to expand the Faculty Fellows program. The goal is to have a Faculty Fellow in Community Engagement for each of USU's nine colleges, further embedding and strengthening community engagement across the institution.

No. 31. Community Engaged Courses

Provide As evidence provided for your earlier classification, you described an institution-wide definition of community engaged courses used on campus. For reclassification, describe the institution-wide definition and standards used for community engaged courses and provide examples of:

- a. Institutional, departmental, and/or programmatic definitions, learning outcomes, standards, and/or required components.*

Designated Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses at USU must include the following:

- Learning outcomes designed to increase students' civic awareness, civic skills, and civic commitment.
- A community engagement component that directly connects to course material and accounts for at least 10% of the overall course grade.
- A mutually beneficial project with an identified community partner who has or is willing to complete the CCE Letter of Agreement.
- A significant reflection component that provides structured time for students to recount their experiences and knowledge gained in the community setting.
- Agreement for students to participate in an end-of-semester survey to assess shared learning outcomes for community engagement in the areas of civic awareness, civic knowledge & skills, and civic action.
- Agreement to include the definition of Community-Engaged Learning in the course syllabus.

- b. Processes for ensuring that the standards for community engagement are part of the course design (e.g., course designation, curriculum review).*

The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) offers faculty a range of resources to support their understanding of Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) standards and best practices. First, the primary resource is the CCE staff, whose extensive experience in local nonprofit and civic leadership enables them to represent the perspectives of community partners. Having served as community partners themselves, they bring valuable insights and have

built long-standing relationships with community partners based on trust. Faculty can work with the Assistant Director for CEL to receive guidance on aligning their learning outcomes with community-identified projects. Second, faculty can participate in community-engaged focused Learning Circles and workshops facilitated by CCE staff through the Center for Empowering Teaching Excellence. Recent learning circles have focused on topics such as “Building the Collaborative Learning Community in the Critical Skills Classroom” and “The Craft of Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning.” Third, the CCE hosts the annual Engaged Faculty Retreat, in collaboration with higher education community engagement leaders from across the state. Finally, faculty use AggiePulse to identify potential projects and connect with community partners. Canvas courses can be linked to course-specific AggiePulse pages, streamlining communication and coordination.

Once faculty understand best practices in CEL course design, they are encouraged to submit a CEL course designation form. Requests are reviewed and approved by the Director of the Center for Community Engagement, Assistant Director of CEL, and Faculty Fellows in Community Engagement. This review team ensures that all CEL course requirements described above in 6.2A are met and community partners are included in the development of shared learning outcomes. If an application does not meet these requirements, the committee provides feedback to help faculty align their courses with CEL standards.

- c. How student learning outcomes are assessed. Explain any changes to coursework that occurred as a result of assessment activities since your last classification.*

Student learning outcomes are assessed in CEL-designated courses through an end-of-semester survey to evaluate shared learning outcomes for community engagement in the areas of civic awareness, civic knowledge & skills, and civic action.

In 2023, a new community grant writing course was developed after survey feedback revealed students wanted additional opportunities to design and implement solutions to community-identified challenges. In this course, students are matched with a community partner to write grant proposals based on the community partner-voiced priorities. The course generates 20+ grant proposals co-written by students and community partners each semester.

No. 32. Integration into Traditional Curricular Structures

Describe how community engagement is integrated into traditional curricular structures. These may include core courses, capstone/senior-level projects, first-year course/sequence, general education, majors/departments, minors, and graduate courses or medical education, training, or residencies. Provide at least two but not more than three examples.

Community Engagement is woven into traditional curricular structures through multidisciplinary programs such as the Connections course, University Honors Program (UHP), and a range of required, credit-bearing practicum experiences. These opportunities are integral to degree

programs in fields like Dietetics, Education, Social Work, Human Development & Family Studies, Special Education & Rehabilitation Counseling, Nursing, Public Health, Psychology, and Recreation Resource Management. For students who may be unable to afford an unpaid practicum, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) provides opportunities to fulfill these academic requirements while addressing critical public needs and receiving AmeriCorps and federal work-study compensation.

Connections Courses

Approximately 75% of incoming freshmen students (3,100 on the Logan campus) are introduced to community engagement through the USU 1010: *Connections* course. Taken during their first semester, this course helps prepare students for college by teaching them how to explore big questions and make a positive impact in their communities. The “Community Connections” program discussed in the first-time application is a 2-day pre-Connections experience that is structured like a local alternative break. The program was successful but had to be discontinued during the COVID-19 pandemic; it is scheduled to return in August 2025. Many students who participate in Community Connections go on to become student leaders in community engagement. In addition to Community Connections, the CCE has developed a video that can be shown in all Connections classes, highlighting the value of reciprocity in community engagement and making students aware of both co-curricular and curricular community engagement opportunities at USU. CCE staff and student leaders are also involved in presenting to individual Connections classes about CEL courses, Christensen Community Scholars (formerly Community-Engaged Scholars), Alternative Breaks, and co-curricular Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) programs. These presentations culminate with the development of a personal action plan for community engagement.

University Honors Program (UHP)

Designated as a Community-Engaged program since 2019, the UHP offers students the opportunity to ground their Honors work in CEL in collaboration with the Christensen Community Scholars program (formerly Community-Engaged Scholars). Honors students pursuing the Community-Engaged Scholar (CES) transcript designation can fulfill many of the requirements for this designation by completing Honors Mentoring Agreements, Honors CEL courses, Honors community engagement projects, and community-based Honors Capstone Project work. The UHP provides financial support for many of these activities, offering up to \$5,000 per student. Since 2018, 13 Honors students have completed all requirements for the CES transcript designation.

The UHP also offers CEL-designated Honors courses taught annually on two- to three-year cycles. These courses enroll up to 30 Honors students per course each semester. A recent CEL Honors course example is HONR 3010/3030: Food Matters: Global Complexities of Agriculture. While learning about food security challenges in the classroom, student teams in this course collaborated with various community partner organizations. Each team conducted interviews and SWOT analyses related to food security, culminating in an end-of-class symposium where they presented their findings to an audience that included their community partners.

The UHP is currently recruiting a cohort of 20-30 Honors Faculty Fellows for a semester-long Honors Experiential Learning Collaborative designed to cultivate a network of outstanding USU teachers and mentors who share a deep and sustained commitment to high-impact applied learning, including community engagement. Through this fellowship, the UHP aims to recognize the accomplishments of imaginative faculty, create space for cross-disciplinary pedagogical conversation and collaboration, and empower faculty to bring these conversations back to their departments and colleges. Over the coming three years, the UHP will provide funding to support the implementation of up to 10 proposals for experiential-learning curricular activities (e.g., courses, seminars, faculty-led study abroad, community engagement projects, and workshops), many of which are expected to involve community-engaged learning.

Community-Engaged Practicums and Internships

Housed within the CCE, USU America Reads provides tutoring and mentoring programs to 24 public schools across Cache Valley, benefiting over 2,000 local children and youth each day. In elementary and middle schools, after-school programs offer homework assistance, tutoring, and enrichment activities. At the high school level, students at risk of not graduating receive targeted support through daytime tutoring and after-school mentoring, focusing on both academic and social development.

Each year, over 120 USU students serve as America Reads mentors and tutors through the federal work-study program. While the program is open to all majors, most participants come from education, social work, and human development & family studies majors. These students gain practical experience by applying classroom concepts in real-world settings. Social work and human development & family studies students can fulfill their practicum requirements by working as America Reads tutors, and education students benefit from hands-on classroom experience before student teaching. This unique work-study model provides a paid opportunity for students required to complete practicums who might otherwise be unable to afford an unpaid placement.

In addition to America Reads, the CCE also houses the [One Utah Service Fellowship](#) (OUSF) program, formerly Utah Higher Ed AmeriCorps Network (UHEAN). This unique AmeriCorps program provides a living allowance and Segal education award for students across the state completing required practicums for the public good in degrees such as nutrition, teacher education, and nursing. The OUSF provides opportunities for students to participate in sustainable and high-impact community engagement that addresses critical priorities and needs in Utah while supporting debt-free pathways to higher education

No. 33. Integration into For Credit/Required Activities

Describe how community engagement is integrated into the following academic activities offered for credit and/or required by a curricular program. These may include but are not limited to: Student Research, Student Leadership, Internships, Co-Ops, Career exploration, Study Abroad/Study Away,

Alternative Break tied to a course, or a Campus Scholarship Program. Provide one but not more than two examples.

Community Engagement is embedded into numerous academic activities offered for credit and/or required by a curricular program, including institution-wide programs like the University Honors Program (UHP), Study Abroad, Undergraduate Research, Transforming Communities Institute (TCI), and the Community and Natural Resources Institute (CANRI). As described in the previous question, the UHP works in tandem with the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) to help Honors students complete Honors work that meets the requirements for both the Community-Engaged Scholar and Honors transcript designations. Likewise, Undergraduate Research works closely with the TCI to place students who are interested in research with faculty conducting community-engaged research. TCI also facilitates large-scale, course-based, community-engaged research and solution projects with undergraduate social work students and community partners that have [shown positive outcomes](#). CANRI is also committed to interdisciplinary research and community engagement centered on natural resource issues and environmental problems in the Intermountain West and supports five micro-credential certificates (9 credits) that include CEL courses, focusing on areas such as climate change solutions and environmental justice.

As mentioned in the previous question, practicums that integrate community engagement are required for students completing degrees in Dietetics, Education, Social Work, Human Development & Family Studies, Special Education & Rehabilitation Counseling, Nursing, Public Health, and Psychology. These practicums foster mutually beneficial collaborations, with partners receiving highly trained, motivated students and students gaining valuable hands-on work experience to start their careers.

Peace Corps Prep

[USU Peace Corps Prep](#) (PCP), a CCE program developed in collaboration with USU Study Abroad and the Heravi Peace Institute, is deeply embedded in community engagement and includes one of USU's eight CEL Study Abroad courses. Launched in 2022, this U.S. Peace Corps certificate program was created to prepare undergraduate students for international community engagement and potential Peace Corps service. Through coursework (24 credits), significant community engagement, and leadership development, USU PCP enables students to develop core competencies critical to working collaboratively as Peace Corps or international volunteers.

USU PCP is recognized as a unique and innovative national model due to its strategic partnerships with the Heravi Peace Institute and Study Abroad and its integration within the CCE. This structure directly connects PCP students to meaningful CEL coursework and community engagement programs. A prime example of this integration is the 2-4 credit Domestic and International Peacebuilding Internship program that offers students valuable experiential learning opportunities. The Domestic Peacebuilding Internship, offered during fall semester, provides USU PCP students with the opportunity to complete at least 50 hours with local non-profits that focus on refugee resettlement, English language acquisition, and meeting needs of migrant and seasonal farm workers. The International Peacebuilding Internship is offered during summer semester through

Study Abroad. This year, students will travel to Cambodia, where they will meet with Peace Corps volunteers and staff and collaborate with Sustainable Cambodia on a community-driven project aligned with local priorities. In both the Domestic and International Peacebuilding Internships, students actively engage with local communities, listening to their needs and co-creating projects that address priorities identified by the community. This collaborative project development process ensures that initiatives are community-driven and culturally sensitive, key principles that define the Peace Corps' approach.

No. 34. Curricular Engagement Tracking, Assessment, and Access

Describe how your campus tracks and assesses curricular engagement and how students gain access to and participate in courses, including:

- a. How is community-engaged course data gathered, by whom, with what frequency, and for what purpose? How is it shared/reported, particularly in student transcripts?*

Each year, CCE staff identify potential Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses using Watermark (Digital Measures) and course catalog keyword searches. Faculty indicate CEL courses in Watermark by checking a box. After compiling a list of potential CEL courses, faculty are invited via email to engage in CEL development opportunities and submit a designation form through ServiceNow, outlining required criteria (see No. 31). Once approved, CEL courses are searchable in Banner and marked on student transcripts with a course attribute. Completing CEL-designated courses counts toward the Excellence in Community Engagement Award and the Community-Engaged Scholars transcript designation—one of only three at USU.

- b. Since your last application, describe how your campus has designed new curricular programs and initiatives or re-designed existing ones to both increase students' access to and participation in community engaged activities (particularly students who are not currently engaged) so that a relatively larger portion of students have the opportunity for developing the cultural competencies, asset-based approaches, and values of reciprocity for engaging with communities.*

In 2020, USU transitioned from OrgSync (AggieSync) to GivePulse (AggiePulse), increasing access to and participation in community engagement across the institution. Despite the challenges of launching during a pandemic, this timing allowed the CCE to focus on platform development, developing training and marketing materials, and conducting workshops for faculty, students, and community partners. Additionally, USU IT integrated the platform with Banner and implemented Single Sign-On (SSO), providing quick access for new users and automating the creation of AggiePulse groups for CEL-designated courses. This increased access to participation by streamlining entry for students, staff, faculty, and partners.

Since launching AggiePulse, the CCE and its campus and community partners have posted hundreds of opportunities on the platform. Students, staff, and faculty have registered for these opportunities over 8,800 times and have recorded almost 93,600 hours of engagement through 7,800 impact entries.

USU has used and is using several AggiePulse features to enhance the ability to monitor curricular data effectively. Native assessment tools are used to efficiently capture both responses and community partner data. Post-event surveys allow USU to gather feedback from students and partners, helping assess the quality of engagement and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, community-engaged faculty can link their Canvas courses directly to their course-specific AggiePulse group pages for streamlined coordination. AggiePulse also simplifies the process of logging "impact" hours, allowing groups to easily track total contributions made. Faculty can explore high-priority, community-identified projects posted on AggiePulse, aligning them with course learning outcomes and research interests. Moreover, the platform supports faculty in co-creating projects with community partners, incorporating milestones to track progress and ensure effective collaboration.

During the pandemic, the CCE was unable to secure matching funds for the platinum-level AggiePulse subscription and negotiated a reduced, custom subscription with plans to return to platinum as community partnerships recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Since downgrading, the CCE has implemented temporary solutions, such as using Qualtrics surveys for assessment. The Transforming Communities Institute and CCE are working to secure funding to reinstate the platinum-level AggiePulse subscription.

In addition to the expanded community engagement platform, [Community-Engaged Scholars Network](#) and [Faculty Fellowships in CE](#) have been established since the first-time classification to increase access to and participation in CE across the institution. Furthermore, Exploratory Advising now directly connects undeclared majors to CCE as a pathway to discovering their passions and academic interests.

- c. [Reflect on how the data indicates the levels of pervasiveness and depth infused in the curriculum and traditional curricular structures.](#)

The larger number of courses reported in the 2020 first-time application for the 2018-19 year includes over 80 sections of USU 1010: *Connections*, a two-credit course designed to ease the transition to USU and help students understand the purpose of higher education and how to maximize their college experience. The new ServiceNow CEL course designation form no longer includes "CEL (optional)" courses, and thus, USU 1010 was not officially designated in the 2023-24 academic year and not included in the reported numbers. The CCE is partnering with USU Connections to designate more course sections as CEL and strengthen community engagement across the program. Alongside the rapid growth of CEL designations through the Faculty Fellows program, this effort is projected to bring the total to over 300 officially designated CEL courses in the upcoming academic year.

Additionally, both the 2020 first-time application and the 2026 reclassification application include all courses that faculty marked as CEL in Digital Measures (now Watermark) plus officially designated CEL courses. While faculty may have reported courses in Watermark as community-engaged, they were not required to go through the formal CEL course designation process, indicating that they met the specific criteria outlined in No. 31. Moving forward, Watermark will be used exclusively as a tool to identify potential CEL courses, with only official CEL-designated courses being counted.

No. 35. Community Engaged Course Data

Complete the table below. Data should be drawn from undergraduate and graduate for-credit courses and be indicated accordingly. Please also indicate what academic year the data represents.

Academic Year: 2023 – 2024; Please see No. 46 for additional details regarding this table.

Number of For-Credit Community Engaged Courses	Change in Number of For-Credit Courses Since Last Application	Percentage of Total Courses	Percent Change in Courses Since Last Application
128 undergraduate, 69 graduate	-40 This number reflects the change across all CEL courses (both undergraduate and graduate) as the initial classification reported a combined total for courses at both levels.	1.3% This percentage is based on all CEL courses relative to the total number of courses at USU, without separating undergraduate and graduate levels.	-4.3% This percentage is based on all CEL courses relative to the total number of courses at USU, without separating undergraduate and graduate levels.

Number of Departments Represented by Community Engaged Courses	Change in Number of Departments Since Last Application	Percentage of Total Departments	Percent Change in Departments Since Last Application
32	+1	53%	-17.5% Many new departments have been created since

			the last application.
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Number of Faculty Who Taught For-Credit Community Engaged Courses	Change in Number of Faculty Since the Last Application	Percentage of Total Faculty	Percent Change in Number of Faculty Since Last Application
86	-49	3.9%	-13%

Number of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Who Taught For-Credit Community Engaged Courses	Change in Number of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Since the Last Application	Percentage of Total Faculty	Percent Change in Number of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Since Last Application
29 tenured, 19 tenure track	-22 tenured, +3 tenure track	34% tenured, 22% tenure track These percentages are based on the total number of faculty teaching CEL courses.	-3.8% tenured, +10.1% tenure track These percent changes are based on the total number of faculty teaching CEL courses.

Number of Full-Time, Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Who Taught For-Credit Community Engaged Courses	Change in Number of Full-Time, Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Since the Last Application	Percentage of Total Faculty	Percent Change in Number of Full-Time, Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Since Last Application
20	-31	23% This percentage is based on the total number of faculty teaching CEL courses.	-14.8% This percent change is based on the total number of faculty teaching CEL courses.

Number of Part-Time Faculty Who Taught For-Credit Community Engaged Courses	Change on Number of Part-Time Faculty Since the Last Application	Percentage of Total Faculty	Percent Change in Number of Part-Time Faculty Since Last Application
1	-16	1.2% This percentage is based on the total number of faculty teaching CEL courses.	-11.4% This percent change is based on the total number of faculty teaching CEL courses.

Number of Students Participating in For-Credit Community Engaged Courses	Change in Number of Students Since Last Application	Percentage of Total Students	Percent Change Since Last Application
2,872 This number is the total number students enrolled, including undergraduate and graduate students combined.	-5,675 This number is the total number students enrolled, including undergraduate and graduate students combined.	8.8% This percentage is based on the total number students enrolled, including undergraduate and graduate students combined.	-22.2% This percentage change is based on the total number students enrolled, including undergraduate and graduate students combined.

Section VII. CO-CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT

No. 35. Co-curricular Practice Integration

Describe how community engagement is integrated into institutional co-curricular practices by providing at least two but not more than four examples from the following categories. For each example, describe what has changed since the last classification.

- *Social innovation/entrepreneurship*
- *Civic engagement/ electoral engagement*
- *Dialogues*
- *Community service projects - outside of the campus*
- *Community service projects - within the campus*
- *Alternative break - domestic*
- *Alternative break - international*
- *Study abroad/away*
- *Student leadership*
- *Student internships/co-ops/career exploration*
- *Student research*
- *Work-study placements*
- *Opportunities to meet with employers who demonstrate Corporate Social Responsibility*
- *Living-learning communities/residence hall/floor*
- *Student teaching assistants (provided the TAs are not receiving credit)*
- *Campus scholarship program*
- *Athletics*
- *Greek life*
- *Other: (please describe)*

Social Innovation/Entrepreneurship

The Hunger Solutions Institute's (HSI) NourishTank competition allows students to pitch innovative and sustainable solutions to combat hunger, which are often centered on community engagement. Winners receive a cash prize and support to implement their ideas.

The Utah Assistive Technology Program enhances independence for individuals with disabilities by providing assistive devices, collaborating with community organizations, and engaging students in hands-on community service experiences.

Civic Engagement/Electoral Engagement

The Institute of Government & Politics (IOGP) organizes student internships, voter registration drives, and educational events connecting practical skills with academics.

The Community & Natural Resources Institute (CANRI) hosts the Growth & Balance Panel Series each semester, bringing together experts from various fields to discuss environmental and social issues.

Dialogues

In 2022, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) hosted a [discussion series](#) where students from various political leanings engaged in facilitated conversations led by a Communication Studies graduate instructor to move beyond divisive headlines and find common ground. In 2023, the CCE and Heravi Peace Institute (HPI) hosted Utah State Representative Dan Johnson (R) and Democratic candidate Patrick Belmont, who discussed fostering respectful political dialogue for better understanding and decision-making.

Off-campus Service Projects

In 2020, the Val R. Christensen Service Center and the Student Sustainability Office merged to form the Christensen Office of Service and Sustainability (COSAS). Led by student directors, COSAS runs the following service and sustainability programs:

- Aggies Building Community connects students with community volunteer opportunities.
- Youth Engagement provides resources for underserved youth, including tutoring at the local library.
- Community Rakes & Shovels offers leaf raking and snow removal for seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- True Blue Reuse & Repair extends the life of clothing and household items through redistribution to students and nonprofits and provides education on sustainable fashion.
- USU Harvest Rescue combats food waste and insecurity by harvesting surplus produce for local food pantries.
- Sustainability Engagement promotes eco-conscious initiatives, encouraging student participation in grants, the Campus Farmers Market, and Earth Week.

On-campus Service Projects

The Student Nutrition Access Center (SNAC), USU's on-campus food pantry, offers accessible volunteer opportunities for students. In 2023, oversight shifted from the CCE to the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences.

This year, True Blue Reuse & Repair (TBR&R) introduced free thrift lockers in the student center. TBR&R replenishes items through a campus-wide collection during move-out.

Domestic Alternative Breaks

The CCE started offering Alternative Breaks over 3-day holiday weekends to reach more students. This year, students worked with community partners in Salt Lake City to address recidivism and chronic homelessness.

The traditional Alternative Spring Breaks continue to offer full-week immersion experiences focusing on topics such as immigration, homelessness, food security, sustainability, and animal welfare.

International Alternative Breaks

International Alternative Breaks are conducted as credit-bearing Peacebuilding Internships and offered through the USU Peace Corps Prep program in collaboration with Study Abroad and the HPI (see No. 33).

Study Abroad

USU Study Abroad programs are offered as for-credit courses. Eight of these courses either have or are in the process of acquiring the Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) course designation.

Student Leadership

Since the last application, the Service Vice President position in the USU Student Association (USUSA) was replaced by seven AmeriCorps student leaders who are advised by the CCE. These leaders connect students with opportunities to engage in the community through direct service, community organizing, activism, philanthropy, public policy, and social entrepreneurship. The USUSA elects student leaders to continue to work closely with the CCE on collaborative community projects, such as the Utah Intercollegiate Day of Service.

Student Internships

The CCE houses two statewide AmeriCorps programs: One Utah Service Fellowship (OUSF) and Utah Conservation Corps (UCC). OUSF gives students an opportunity to serve their communities while earning awards for higher education. Enrolling 500 fellows, the program is the first in the nation to combine state, private, and federal funding to support an AmeriCorps program. UCC places 80 individual AmeriCorps members in nonprofit and government internships across the state.

Work-Study Placements

Housed within the CCE, USU's Education Outreach work-study program partners with Logan Parks and Recreation and local school districts to provide safe spaces, mentoring, and tutoring through after-school club programs.

Meeting with Socially Responsible Corporate Employers

The Huntsman School of Business hosts weekly leadership forums that include presentations from alumni who represent socially and environmentally responsible corporations, including Certified B Corporations.

Living-Learning Communities

Since the last classification, USU's EcoHouse in the Living and Learning Community has been renamed the Sustainability & Service House, reflecting an expanded focus on sustainability and community engagement. Residents explore sustainability and societal issues directly connected to COSAS programming.

Student Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Undergraduate Teaching Fellows continue to assist community-engaged faculty. The CCE is working to create more TA positions for CEL courses.

Campus Scholarship Program

The Christensen Service Award is offered annually to a student involved in campus and community service. The Crista Sorenson Award for Outstanding Civic & Community Engagement is also awarded annually and can be used to match the Segal Education Award earned by AmeriCorps alumni.

The Ivory Prize for Excellence in Community Engagement recognizes extraordinary student leadership in community engagement, awarding a \$2,000 scholarship and \$10,000 investment in their community project.

Athletics

USU student athletes engage in community service at local schools and nonprofit organizations, tracking their participation through Helper Helper, an app used by athletic departments nationwide that logs hours and encourages friendly competition between institutions.

Greek Life

Community service is foundational to fraternities and sororities, and each chapter provides support to community nonprofits throughout the year. USU fraternity and sorority members regularly use AggiePulse and the COSAS to connect with community partner-requested projects.

Other

In addition to CEL coursework, Christensen Community Scholars are required to complete 200 community engagement hours, plan a Community Action Project to present at the annual community engagement poster session, and participate in two Legacy of Val Service Days each year.

No. 36. Co-Curricular Engagement Tracking

Describe any co-curricular engagement tracking system used by your institution that can provide a co-curricular transcript or record of community engagement.

Following the discontinuation of USU's contract with the AggieSync (OrgSync) tracking system, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) collaborated with various campus programs to launch AggiePulse (GivePulse) as the university's primary platform for tracking both curricular and co-curricular engagement.

Since its adoption, the CCE and its campus and community partners have posted hundreds of engagement opportunities on AggiePulse. Students, staff, and faculty have registered for these opportunities more than 8,800 times and have collectively logged nearly 93,600 hours of community engagement through over 7,800 impact entries. AggiePulse subgroups use the platform to recruit and manage volunteers, with features that allow users to receive automated prompts to log their hours after an event or manually submit engagement details for verification by a designated contact.

AggiePulse users can download a personalized "transcript" or summary of their engagement at any time, documenting their verified impacts and the organizations they have supported. This feature allows students to track their involvement, reflect on their experiences, and share their engagement history with future employers, graduate schools, or scholarship committees.

In the 2023–24 academic year, USU Athletics began piloting the Helper Helper app to track the community engagement of student-athletes. Helper Helper administrators curate service opportunities from AggiePulse that comply with NCAA regulations and make them available within the app. Its team-based interface encourages participation through friendly competition among athletic teams and peer institutions, further enhancing student-athlete involvement in community service.

No. 37. Assessing Student Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes

Provide an example of a systematic, campus-wide mechanism for assessing student achievement of community engagement learning outcomes for students who participate in co-curricular experiences that are community engaged and describe one key finding. What has changed in the results of student achievement of co-curricular community engagement outcomes since your last

classification? Describe how the institution uses and disseminates data from the mechanisms described.

At the end of each academic year, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) conducts a Qualtrics survey of 300–400 students and USU-based AmeriCorps members who are actively involved (50+ hours) in CCE community engagement programs. Survey participants include student leaders from the Christensen Office of Service and Sustainability (formerly the Val R. Christensen Service Center and the Student Sustainability Office), AmeriCorps members and America Reads work-study recipients who serve in local schools through the Education Outreach program, and AmeriCorps members serving in the Utah Conservation Corps and Aggie Blue Bikes. The survey assesses students' co-curricular engagement experiences by asking them to rate the following statements on a five-point Likert scale:

1. My involvement in a CCE program encouraged me to explore ways in which I can make a contribution to the public good.
2. Because of the work that I did in a CCE program, I am aware of the societal issues, root causes, and community contexts relevant to my community engagement.
3. The work that I did in a CCE program prepared me to listen to the perspectives of people from different backgrounds in an effort to understand and collaborate.
4. The work that I did in a CCE program helped me understand how my coursework or degree can be applied to the greater good.
5. After my involvement in a CCE program, I understand how to work with community partners to identify community assets, opportunities, and challenges.
6. The CCE program enabled me to work with the community to create measurable positive impact.

Survey responses from 2020 to 2024 show consistently high ratings for each statement: Statement #1 has remained above 90%, Statement #2 above 88%, Statement #3 above 85%, Statement #4 above 87%, Statement #5 above 86%, and Statement #6 above 85%. Notably, Statement #1, which addresses exploring ways to contribute to the public good, has consistently received the highest ratings, with 94% in 2019-2020 and 93% in 2023-2024.

In 2022, when the Christensen Office of Service and Sustainability identified a slight decline in awareness of societal issues and root causes (91% in 2020 and 88% in 2022), staff responded by creating a Canvas-based training course for student leader development. The course uses a badge incentive system, where student leaders earn badges (represented by root vegetable stickers) as they complete tasks to deepen their understanding of the root causes of the issues they address and demonstrate their knowledge through peer presentations.

The 2023 and 2024 survey results showed improvement, with 94% of students in 2023 and 98% in 2024 agreeing with Statement #2—highlighting increased awareness of societal issues and root causes related to community engagement projects.

The data collected from the CCE's annual survey is shared in the [CCE annual report](#), which is distributed to USU administration, advancement teams, community partners, public officials, and community-engaged faculty, students, and staff across USU colleges and campuses.

Section VIII. CIVIC LEARNING AND LIFE

No. 38. Practical Experience Examples

According to the Carnegie definition of community engagement, one of the purposes of community engagement is to prepare educated, engaged citizens and strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility. Describe at least two examples of practical experiences in the table below, of how your campus prepares students, faculty, staff, and community to understand and engage in ways that address critical community issues and contribute to community/public good by providing practical experience with community. Be sure to share how these activities are community engaged. Examples of practical experience may include activities such as the following but not limited to:

- *Electoral education and participation (such as voter information, education, registration, polling site(s); meetings with elected officials; Constitution Day)*
- *Meetings with community members, elders, and community leaders to learn about community issues; land-based learning*
- *Issue awareness and advocacy training (such as Advocacy Days)*
- *Civic focused student organizations (voter engagement, Model UN, Model OAS, Peace Corps Prep, or similar programs)*
- *Civic fellows/scholars*
- *Debate team*
- *Civic awards to students, faculty and staff, or the community*

Question	Disability Advocacy Day	Peace Corps Prep
Civic Engagement Experience Overview and Purpose	Disability Advocacy Day is an annual event hosted by the Institute for Disability Research, Policy, and Practice (IDRPP) during the Utah legislative session. The purpose of the event is to raise awareness of disability issues, empower individuals with disabilities, educate legislators and the public, and promote inclusive policy and practices.	The Peace Corps Prep (PCP) program at USU, established in 2021, prepares students for Peace Corps service by providing practical experience in public service, leadership, and global and local civic engagement through coursework and community-based projects.
Campus Partner(s) That Provide Support	Institute for Disability Research, Policy, and Practice (IDRPP)	Center for Community Engagement (CCE)
Example of Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit	The event facilitates reciprocal learning as individuals with	Students complete 50-hour service projects based on

	disabilities and community advocates share lived experiences and research, while students, faculty, and policymakers gain knowledge that strengthens inclusive practices and advocacy.	requests from community partners, providing meaningful contributions to local needs while gaining valuable experience in intercultural communication, leadership, and civic engagement.
Number of Faculty Involved	5	6
Number of Staff Involved	23	2
Number of Students Involved	Twelve students participate each year in organizing, presenting, or supporting the event.	Thirty-one students are actively enrolled in the program, including two Peace Corps Ambassadors.
Community Partners Involved	Utah Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, Utah Disability Law Center	Athletics United, Cache Refugee and Immigrant Connection, Centro de la Familia, and others
Grant Funding	The event is partially funded by the IDRPP's federal Core Grant, which supports its community engagement activities.	Two Peace Corps Ambassadors receive stipends each semester from the U.S. Peace Corps.
Research Projects Linked to Partnership	Yes, students showcase disability-related research that aligns with community needs and is presented during the event.	No specific research projects are currently linked to the Peace Corps Prep program.
Impact on the Campus	The event enriches campus life by increasing awareness of disability rights, inspiring new research, and promoting student leadership and advocacy across disciplines.	The program strengthens a culture of civic engagement on campus, builds student leadership, and creates new pathways for students to serve both locally and internationally.

Impact on the Community	The event builds stronger connections between the university and local disability organizations, increases public awareness of disability issues, and empowers community members to advocate for change.	The program delivers tangible benefits to community partners through student-led projects focused on education, food security, and support for New Americans, while fostering mutual trust and sustainable partnerships.
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At USU, civic learning and community engagement are integral to our mission of developing informed, engaged citizens. Two initiatives, Disability Advocacy Day and the Peace Corps Prep (PCP) program, illustrate how USU prepares students, faculty, staff, and community members to collaboratively address critical public issues. Both initiatives provide meaningful, community-engaged experiences that promote civic and social responsibility while reinforcing reciprocal relationships between the campus and the broader community.

Disability Advocacy Day

Disability Advocacy Day is an annual event hosted by the Institute for Disability Research, Policy, and Practice (IDRPP) during the Utah legislative session. As Utah's federally designated University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, the IDRPP serves as a hub for research, policy, and community collaboration on disability-related issues. The event provides a platform for education, awareness, and empowerment by bringing together students, faculty, individuals with disabilities, advocates, legislators, and community organizations. The purpose of the event is to raise awareness about disability issues and rights; educate legislators and the public on disability access, and policy; empower individuals with disabilities to advocate for change; and showcase work being done by the IDRPP and other disability-focused organizations.

This event is community-engaged in multiple ways. It bridges the university and the broader community to address critical issues while fostering reciprocal learning. Presenters, including individuals with disabilities, advocates, and experts, share lived experiences, research, and policy recommendations. Attendees, including students, faculty, policymakers, and community members, gain insights that inform inclusive practices, advocacy, and civic participation. This reciprocal process ensures mutual benefit: presenters amplify their voices and influence policy, while attendees gain knowledge that shapes professional behaviors and fosters more inclusive communities. The event is partially funded by IDRPP's federal Core Grant and often features student-led research aligned with disability topics and community priorities.

Disability Advocacy Day has far-reaching impacts on both campus and community. On campus, it increases the visibility of disability issues, deepens understanding of diverse lived experiences, and provides students with meaningful opportunities to develop leadership and advocacy skills. Discussions and insights from the event extend into classrooms, influence curriculum development, and inspire new research. In the community, the event strengthens relationships

between USU and local disability organizations, service providers, and advocates. It also shifts community attitudes and empowers individuals with disabilities to become more engaged citizens.

Peace Corps Prep

The Peace Corps Prep (PCP) program at USU was established in 2021 and offers a certificate program that prepares students for Peace Corps service and other public service opportunities. The program provides students with practical experiences in public service and global engagement, preparing them to address critical issues both locally and internationally. PCP students complete 24 credits of coursework, engage in significant community service within a Peace Corps sector (e.g., education, health, environment, agriculture, youth development), and gain leadership experience. Unlike most PCP programs, which are housed in academic departments, USU's program is based in the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), reinforcing the theme that "Peace Corps Service Starts at Home." Through CCE's established partnerships, students participate in community-identified projects such as organizing a mentoring program for local underserved youth or leading a fruit tree-gleaning initiative to support food pantries.

This program is rooted in reciprocal learning and mutual benefit. Students complete 50-hour sector-specific projects based on requests from local organizations, most frequently with community partners such as Athletics United, Cache Refugee and Immigrant Connection, and Centro de la Familia. While applying their academic knowledge and language skills, students gain real-world experience working across cultures and addressing community needs. In return, community organizations benefit from meaningful support that enhances their programs and expands their capacity. Many PCP students are also Christensen Community-Engaged Scholars, take Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses, or complete an AmeriCorps term as part of their program requirements. The program also hosts guest speakers, including Peace Corps Country Directors, the Senior Advisor to the Peace Corps Director, and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

The impact of PCP extends beyond the individual student experience. On campus, it fosters a culture of civic engagement and global awareness while creating pathways for public service careers. It strengthens USU's connections with local organizations and enhances student readiness for working in diverse communities. In the community, PCP students support programs that help immigrants adjust to life in the United States, including language acquisition, youth mentorship, and food security initiatives. These projects offer immediate, tangible benefits while building trust and sustainable partnerships between the university and community organizations.

No. 39. Civic Skills Examples

Are civic skills incorporated into curricular and/or co-curricular community-engaged activities? If so, describe how civic skills are integrated and how student learning outcomes are applied and assessed. Examples of civic skills may include the following but are not limited to:

- *Critical thinking and evidence-based reasoning*
- *Development of digital data and media literacy*

- *Conveys ideas across difference - orally and in writing*
- *Seek out and engage with multiple perspectives*
- *Listen attentively and with patience*
- *Reflexive thinking*
- *Understanding of intersectionality, privilege, and bias*
- *Development of cultural humility, empathy, compassion, and courage to act in service of the greater good*
- *Opportunity to collaborate and participate with multiple forms of culturally based leadership models prevalent in communities of color*

As described in No. 31, learning outcomes related to civic awareness, civic skills, and civic action have been developed and are assessed for all students engaged in Center for Community Engagement (CCE) co-curricular programming and students completing Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) coursework. Faculty who designate a course as CEL indicate in their proposal how these institutional civic learning outcomes are addressed in the course. Likewise, students who complete AmeriCorps terms of service through the CCE or participate in CCE programs such as Alternative Breaks or Harvest Rescue for more than 50 hours also complete the civic learning outcomes survey. Survey results are used to inform and improve professional development and training opportunities for students and faculty, ensuring meaningful integration of civic skill-building into community-engaged work.

USU's Heravi Peace Institute (HPI) also plays a vital role in cultivating civic skills across academic and co-curricular contexts. Established in 2022 by Dr. Mehdi Heravi—who survived imprisonment and torture following the Iranian Revolution and has since advocated for peace and human solidarity—through a major donation, the HPI empowers students, faculty, and staff with the knowledge and character to transform conflict and foster peace

The HPI integrates five interdisciplinary certificates, including Conflict Management, Global Peacebuilding, Interfaith Leadership, Leadership and Diplomacy, and Social Entrepreneurship, under a single administrative unit to allow for greater coordination and impact. Civic skill development is embedded throughout HPI's four cornerstones: experiential learning, research, praxis, and public engagement. These include funded internships, study abroad opportunities, faculty research in peace and conflict, training in interpersonal and systemic conflict resolution, and public events and seminars that equip participants with tools for civic leadership, dialogue across differences, and community-based change.

Additionally, during the 2025 Utah legislative session, USU worked with lawmakers on S.B. 334, which will establish a Center for Civic Excellence at USU. This new center will house a reformed general education program that emphasizes civic knowledge and skill development for all students. Faculty will develop the curriculum over the coming year, with new courses launching in fall 2026. This initiative represents one of the most ambitious civic education efforts in the country, integrating civic learning at scale into general education.

The new general education program will promote thoughtful citizenship by deepening students' understanding of U.S. history, founding principles, and enduring questions of justice and equality. Learning outcomes will include knowledge of American government and economic systems, ethical reasoning, written and oral communication, and respectful engagement with opposing viewpoints. This will all occur within a context of ensuring students understand opposing points of view and can contribute to the public square in civil and productive ways, working across differences to be prepared for citizenship in a pluralistic society.

No. 40. Civic Identity Development Pathways

Civic identity involves the formation and negotiation of personal and group identities as they relate to presence, role, and participation in public life. Civic identity is particularly important and a factor in civic engagement and participation. What are the pathways and opportunities available to students at your institution to develop their civic identity? How are community partnerships incorporated into these pathways? What kind of institutional support is in place to encourage civic identity development? Examples of civic identity formation may include the following but are not limited to:

- *Understanding the variety of ways to make change within a community (community organizing, going to the media, activism, etc.)*
- *Coalition building to engage in relationships where trust is formed while recognizing barriers*
- *Examining one's positionality in relation to self and society*
- *Articulating a vision of a just and equitable society*
- *Leveraging passion for social change into actions that benefit the community*
- *Understanding the power of voice to make change and what limits voice for many*
- *Creating a sense of belonging to community and responsibility for the greater good*

Each semester, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) offers a three-part workshop series titled Community Voices & Engagement, which is open to both the university and the broader community. Christensen Community-Engaged Scholars and CCE Student Leaders are required to attend the first workshop and may choose two additional workshops during the year to complete the series. The first session, Intro to Community Engagement, begins with an overview of the Pathways to Public Service and Civic Engagement, developed by Stanford's Haas Center for Public Service. These pathways outline various avenues through which students, staff, and faculty can engage with communities, including direct service, philanthropy, community-engaged learning and research, community organizing and activism, policy and governance, and social entrepreneurship and corporate responsibility.

After being introduced to the pathways model, students complete the Pathways to Public Service & Civic Engagement Survey, reflect on their results, and create an action plan. By incorporating this framework into workshops and leadership training, CCE student leaders are better equipped to approach community-based projects with a clear understanding of their own strengths, interests,

and skills. This structure supports civic identity development by helping students recognize the many forms of civic participation and reflect on their roles within their communities.

In addition to workshops and student leadership training, the Pathways to Public Service and Civic Engagement is also introduced to Community-Engaged Faculty through the Empowering Teaching Excellence (ETE) program. This helps faculty explore new ways to engage students and connect course learning outcomes to the greater good in ways they may not have previously considered. For example, faculty often associate Community-Engaged Learning with direct service, but they may not realize that writing a letter to a senator or representative can also be an effective way for students to apply their classroom learning, critically analyze an issue, and take action. By raising awareness of the pathways model, more opportunities for developing Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses become available.

No. 41. Civic Knowledge Development in Student Learning Outcomes

Civic Indicate where civic knowledge development for a diverse democracy is part of the community engaged student learning outcomes inside and outside of the curriculum. Examples of civic knowledge may include the following but are not limited to:

- *Community-based participatory research on democracy and civic engagement*
- *Collaborative problem solving*
- *Knowledge of systems (governance and community networks)*
- *Ethical reasoning and critical inquiry*
- *Information literacy and empathy*
- *How to use policy for social change*
- *Compassion and communicating across differences*

USU fosters civic knowledge development for a democracy of diverse viewpoints and ideas through both curricular and co-curricular experiences that equip students with the skills and understanding necessary to engage meaningfully in public life. The Institute of Government and Politics (IOGP) plays a key role in this effort by organizing campus-wide events that explore public policy issues and careers in public service. These events cover topics such as campaigns, agriculture, business, the arts, criminal justice, the judicial system, and transportation, offering students opportunities to engage with practitioners and academic experts. Through these discussions, students gain insight into governance systems, policymaking, and civic engagement while developing skills in ethical reasoning, critical inquiry, and collaborative problem-solving.

Beyond these events, the IOGP connects students to internship opportunities in state, local, and federal government agencies and nonprofit organizations. These internships allow students to apply their civic knowledge in real-world settings while earning academic credit. IOGP interns develop essential communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills that enable them to navigate a variety of perspectives and engage effectively in democratic processes. Students interning at the Utah State Legislature, for example, gain firsthand experience with the legislative process, branches of government, stakeholder engagement, and constituent services.

The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) also advances civic knowledge development through programs that foster dialogue, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving. In spring 2022, the CCE hosted a discussion series inspired by *Divided We Fall: Unity Without Tragedy*, where students from different political perspectives engaged in structured conversations aimed at moving beyond divisive headlines to find shared understanding. These facilitated discussions provided students with an opportunity to practice civil discourse, develop information literacy, and explore ethical reasoning in relation to contemporary political issues.

USU's Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) designated courses further integrate civic knowledge into the curriculum. For example, in ENVS 1350, students research environmental policy issues and write letters to public officials. This assignment deepens their understanding of governance systems and their ability to participate in civic life. The course explicitly supports this goal with the following learning outcome: "Become an engaged citizen through effective dialogue on issues presented as part of the course."

Civic learning at USU extends beyond structured programs, as the university actively promotes student participation in democratic processes. In the fall of 2024, the IOGP collaborated with the USU Student Association on a statewide student voter registration initiative as part of Utah's Lt. Governor's Office higher education voter registration campaign. This effort resulted in 678 USU students registering to vote, which was a 1,256% increase from 2022 and placed USU third among eleven competing Utah colleges.

No. 42. Free Speech

How is free speech showing up on your campus? What is your institutional policy on free speech and free expression? What kind of programming, partnerships, and policies for staff, faculty, students and/or community do you offer or participate in that foster critical thinking, space to engage in deliberative dialogue, civil discourse and communication across differences, and exchange of ideas around contentious issues? Is there training offered to faculty, staff, and/or the community to incorporate these skills into courses and programming?

USU is committed to free speech and expression, as outlined in [Interim Policy 541](#), which was last revised in May 2024. The policy states: "USU is committed to freedom of expression and assembly as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and the Utah Constitution. USU welcomes a robust exchange of ideas and seeks to foster an environment where all members of our campus community can gather, associate, and express themselves freely."

While certain limitations on free speech exist under the U.S. and Utah Constitutions that are [outlined by the university](#), USU upholds its role as a catalyst for discourse and engagement, fostering a space for open dialogue while maintaining [institutional neutrality](#). This neutrality ensures that faculty and students are free to explore diverse perspectives while engaging in meaningful discussions. In compliance with [the Utah System of Higher Education's Institutional](#)

[Neutrality and Free Speech Guidance](#), USU does not take official positions on topics such as anti-racism, bias, critical race theory, implicit bias, intersectionality, or racial privilege. However, academic freedom remains fully protected, allowing faculty, staff, and students to explore these topics within curriculum and research.

To support free speech and civil discourse, USU implemented the Freedom of Expression and Political Activity training in 2024. Required for all employees, this training helps ensure compliance with Utah Code 53B-1-117 while also safeguarding the university's commitment to free speech and expression. USU also invests in faculty development to integrate civic engagement and deliberative dialogue into coursework. For example, the 2024 Empowering Teaching Excellence Conference featured a lightning talk titled "[Developing a Learning Community to Promote and Encourage Critical Thinking and Constructive Discourse in the Classroom](#)" and a session titled "[Having the Difficult Conversations: Tiptoeing around Eggshells.](#)"

Beyond policy and training, USU actively promotes the development of critical thinking, civic skills, and respectful discourse on complex issues through various programs and initiatives, including:

- **President's Forum on Conflict and Conflict Transformation:** A recently launched initiative, this forum brings civic leaders to campus to explore constructive conversations around contentious issues. In 2024, the forum hosted Governor Spencer Cox and Irshad Manji, founder of Moral Courage College, which teaches people how to transform contentious issues into constructive conversations and healthy teamwork. In 2025, Judge Thomas Griffith, retired U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, was the featured speaker.
- **Institute of Government and Politics (IOGP):** Dedicated to enhancing students' understanding of government and political processes, the IOGP provides opportunities such as internships, book clubs, speaker events, and forums to foster informed civic engagement and respectful discourse on complex issues.
- **Community and Natural Resources Institute (CANRI):** CANRI hosts a variety of events that offer space for dialogue on public lands, climate change, and environmental policy, encouraging constructive discussions on often contentious issues.
- **Heravi Peace Institute (HPI):** Through five certificate programs and frequent co-curricular events, HPI equips students with skills in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and civil discourse. Events such as the "Bridging Religious Differences" series help participants develop interfaith communication skills and navigate religious diversity through curiosity, self-awareness, and mutual respect.

No. 43. Civic Engagement Tracking and Assessment

Describe how your campus tracks and assesses civic engagement. Explain how your campus uses the data to inform programming and enhance student learning.

While USU does not currently track or assess civic engagement related to civic learning, political involvement, or voter participation, the new Center for Civic Excellence will focus on evaluating

learning outcomes in areas such as civil communication and understanding civic contexts. As stated on their [website](#), “The Center for Civic Excellence is explicitly committed to viewpoint diversity, helping students rise above ideological lenses, immediate reactions, and echo chambers, with a focus on teaching them how to think rather than what to think.”

Additionally, the Center for Community Engagement has committed to collaborating with USU Student Government and the Student Involvement and Leadership Center to actively participate in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. By joining the ALL IN Challenge, USU is making the following commitments:

- Increasing student voting rates by fostering the habits of active and informed citizenship and making nonpartisan democratic participation a core value on our campus.
- Convening a nonpartisan, campus-wide working group that will include members from academic affairs, student affairs, the student body, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Participating in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to measure our student voting rates.
- Developing and implementing a nonpartisan, data-driven action plan aimed at enhancing civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation.
- Sharing our campus’s action plan and NSLVE results with ALL IN to be eligible for a recognition seal and/or awards.

USU is excited to actively engage with the ALL IN Challenge and looks forward to sharing our action plan and NSLVE results as part of our next Carnegie Community Engagement reclassification application.

Section IX. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OTHER INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

No. 44. Alignment with Institutional Priorities

Indicate if community engagement is intentionally and explicitly aligned with or directly contributes to any of the following additional institutional priorities: (In Table- Check all that apply and describe two of the checked examples.

Campus diversity, inclusion, and equity goals (for students and faculty)

- ✓ *Efforts aimed at student retention and success*
- ✓ *Encouraging and measuring student voter registration and voting*
- ✓ *Development of skills and competencies to engage in dialogue about controversial social, political, or ethical issues across the curriculum and in co-curricular programming*
- ✓ *Social innovation or social entrepreneurship that reflects the principles and practices of community engagement*
- ✓ *The campus institutional review board (IRB) provides specific guidance for researchers regarding human subject protections for community engaged research*
- ✓ *Efforts that support federally funded grants for Broader Impacts of Research activities of faculty and students*
- ✓ *Outreach activities*
- ✓ *Community and economic development*
- ✓ *Lifelong learning (non-credit)*
- ✓ *Campus food security programs (internal and external)*

No. 45. Examples of Alignment with Institutional Priorities

Describe at least two examples from question 1, including (how the priority is aligned with community engagement; where you have been; where you are now, where you are strategically planning on going; and lessons learned over the past two years).

Outreach Activities

The Youth Conservatory (YC) within the Caine College of the Arts intentionally connects community engagement to USU outreach activities by fostering experiential learning and public service. Through the YC, undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in piano performance and pedagogy engage directly with the local community by teaching weekly piano lessons to local youth. This creates a mutually beneficial exchange—USU students gain hands-on teaching experience while community families access quality, affordable music education.

Founded in 1978, the YC has long served as a teaching laboratory for USU piano majors, enhancing student learning in courses such as MUSC 1430/1440: Pedagogy I/II and MUSC 1450: Pedagogy Practicum. The YC offers community youth the opportunity to come to campus for private lessons,

group classes, and public performances. This ongoing connection between coursework and community teaching has been a hallmark of the YC's outreach efforts and demonstrates a strong, intentional link between university learning and public engagement.

YC initiatives like the annual Monster Concert and the Achievement in Music (AIM) program further illustrate the intentional integration of outreach, community engagement, and experiential learning. For the Monster Concert, the YC invites piano teachers from across the community to register their students to perform alongside YC students. The concert brings together hundreds of youth for a collaborative, large-scale performance. Additionally, the AIM program, held in partnership with the Utah Music Teachers Association, extends the YC's engagement further. AIM provides structured evaluations involving USU students, youth, parents, and local educators in the learning process, with recitals offering regular opportunities for youth to share their work with the public.

The YC continues to grow as a hub for community engagement through collaboration with local organizations. While initially focused on traditional music instruction, the YC is increasingly adapting its programming to address gaps in educational access, particularly for low-income families. In recent years, the YC has expanded outreach efforts and offered scholarship opportunities. Strategically, the YC aims to strengthen existing partnerships and explore new ways to meet the needs of diverse communities. For example, in 2023, the YC partnered with Athletics United, a nonprofit offering sports and enrichment programs for local youth. Through this collaboration, YC practicum students provide piano lessons and group music experiences to youth who would otherwise lack access to formal music instruction, fostering both social inclusion and cultural exchange.

The YC demonstrates a clear connection between community engagement and institutional outreach activities, enriching student education while addressing community needs. The YC has learned that flexibility and responsiveness are essential for building strong community partnerships. Its ongoing adaptability helps ensure that educational opportunities for students align with evolving community needs, creating lasting, mutual benefits.

Campus Food Security Programs

USU demonstrates a strong commitment to food security through community engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration, and academic integration. These efforts empower students, strengthen partnerships, and drive practical solutions to food insecurity.

A cornerstone of USU's approach is the Student Nutrition Access Center (SNAC), a campus food pantry operating on the Logan, Blanding, and Eastern campuses. Since 2010, SNAC has provided food assistance to students, faculty, and staff while fostering volunteerism and collaboration. SNAC partners with 14 courses across two colleges to integrate instruction on health, nutrition, and food preparation. The center also supports food insecurity research, conducts risk assessments, and develops innovative hunger solutions. Collaborations with external community organizations, including the Cache Community Food Pantry and Kneaders Bakery & Café, enhance SNAC's reach

and impact. Impact assessments show SNAC's effectiveness: 83% of users report reduced food anxiety, and 68% report consuming more balanced meals. With 62% of USU students experiencing food insecurity, SNAC's role remains vital.

USU demonstrates an intentional, strategic commitment to food security by integrating academics, promoting innovation, and building partnerships. These efforts provide immediate support while equipping students and faculty to create sustainable, long-term solutions.

USU integrates food security efforts into academic programs, ensuring hands-on learning while addressing critical issues. Dietetics students teach Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) education classes, providing guidance on nutrition, food preparation, and budgeting. Social Work students conduct research on food security; Journalism and Communications students create outreach materials; and students in the Anticipatory Intelligence program (linked to national security strategy) work with food security organizations to identify system threats and resiliencies to improve food access, availability, and utilization. These experiences position students as change agents while deepening their understanding of food security challenges.

In April 2025, USU will host its third annual Food Security and Solutions Symposium, fostering collaboration between academic and community stakeholders. Sponsors include USU Extension, the College of Agriculture & Applied Sciences, the Center for Anticipatory Intelligence, the Heravi Peace Institute, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Utah Food Security Council. Key features of the symposium include the NourishTank Competition, a "Shark Tank"-style event where students pitch innovative solutions to combat food insecurity. The event encourages creative problem-solving and connects students to support from the Hunger Solutions Institute and industry professionals. Another symposium highlight is the student research presentations and poster session, which provide a platform for sharing applied research and service-learning outcomes. Last year, the symposium drew over 150 faculty, students, and community members.

USU's commitment to food security also extends globally through its partnership with Roots of Peace. In 2023, the university hosted founder Heidi Kühn, World Food Prize Laureate and Nobel Prize nominee, who inspired students to explore agricultural restoration in conflict zones.

Another key initiative is USU's participation in the Presidents United to Solve Hunger (PUSH) initiative. By reaffirming this pledge in 2024, President Elizabeth Cantwell underscored USU's dedication to collective action in addressing hunger.

Section X. REFLECTION AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

No. 46. Elaborations

(Optional) Use this space to elaborate on any question(s) for which you need more space. Please specify the corresponding section and item number(s).

In No. 35, while the reported number of CEL courses is lower than in the 2020 application, the redesignation of USU 1010: *Connections* and the rapid growth of designations through the Faculty Fellows program are expected to push the total to over 300 CEL courses in the upcoming year. Additionally, inconsistencies between the 2020 and 2026 requested application data make direct comparisons difficult. For example, the 2020 application reported total CEL courses without distinguishing between undergraduate and graduate levels and requested faculty percentages based on CE faculty, not the entire faculty body. Thus, the 2026 application questions that asked for percentage changes did not have comparable baseline data.

In regard to No. 26, USU employs faculty in two primary categories: core academic faculty, which includes tenure-track and tenured positions, and term appointment faculty, which encompasses a range of non-tenured roles. University policies establish distinct promotion and tenure guidelines for each group. Regardless of category, all faculty members operate under role statements that define their professional responsibilities from the outset of their employment. These role statements specify the percentage allocation of faculty work across key areas—teaching, research, service, and, where applicable, librarianship or Extension. Promotion and tenure (P&T) evaluations at USU hinge on how well faculty fulfill the obligations outlined in their individualized role statements. These statements explicitly acknowledge the significance of community engagement in teaching, research, and service, allowing faculty to demonstrate their contributions in these areas as part of their case for advancement. The merit of community-engaged activities is assessed through annual performance reviews and P&T evaluations, with faculty rewarded based on both the quality and impact of their contributions aligned with their role statements.

Beyond role statements, USU's promotion and tenure policy, revised in 2019, formally recognizes community-engaged work as a valid and valued form of academic contribution across all faculty ranks. For example, Section 4004.2 of the Faculty Code, which defines promotion and tenure criteria for core faculty, highlights that teaching effectiveness can be demonstrated through "high-impact practices such as community-engaged teaching." Likewise, faculty are encouraged to document "community-engaged scholarship" as a valid measure of excellence in research and creative endeavors. Community engagement also serves as a recognized avenue for demonstrating contributions in both service and extension roles.

Over the past five years, USU has taken deliberate steps to support and reward faculty who integrate community engagement into their academic work. Increasing numbers of community-engaged faculty have successfully advanced to the ranks of tenured associate professor and full

professor. These faculty now provide formal and informal mentorship for community-engaged faculty navigating the tenure and promotion process. Additionally, the Vice Provost for Community Engagement has actively advocated for the inclusion of community engagement in promotion and tenure criteria, presenting to department heads at their annual retreat. Finally, the Provost continues to speak passionately and clearly about the value of community engagement in the promotion and tenure process at USU.

No. 47. Other Significant Evidence

(Optional) Is there any information that was not requested that you consider significant evidence of your institution's community engagement? If so, please provide the information in this space.

No

No. 48. Report Preparation

(Optional) Reflect on who was around the table, who was missing, representation of the community members, and how these voices might have improved this report.

While the majority of our committee members are active members of non-profit boards and community councils as well as USU faculty and staff, we feel it would be beneficial to include one to two non-profit executive directors and an elected official on the writing team.

No. 49. Other Questions

(Optional) What is a question you would like us to ask that was not included in the application?

What is the role of Extension in the institutionalization of community engagement at land-grant institutions?

No. 50. Research Consent

In order to better understand the institutionalization of community engagement in higher education, we would like to make the responses in the applications available for research purposes for the Carnegie Foundation, its administrative partners, and other higher education researchers. Only applications from campuses that agree to the use of their application data will be made available for research purposes. No identifiable application information related to campuses that are unsuccessful in the application process will be released. We encourage you to indicate your consent below to advance research on community engagement. Please respond with A, B, or C below:

- a. I consent to having the information provided in the application used for the purposes of research. In providing this consent, the identity of my campus will not be disclosed.*
- b. I CONSENT TO HAVING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE APPLICATION USED FOR*

THE PURPOSES OF RESEARCH. IN PROVIDING THIS CONSENT, I ALSO AGREE THAT THE IDENTITY OF MY CAMPUS MAY BE REVEALED.

- c. *I do not consent to having the information provided in the application used for research purposes.*

No. 51. Community Partner Survey

Before you submit your final application, please provide a list of community partners that should receive the partnership survey. Include the partners described in No. 15, but you may include additional partners up to a total of 15 (see guide for partnership survey information).

The list of community partners that should receive the partnership survey includes:

1. Nephi City, Utah
2. Nibley Morgan Farm Corporation
3. Logan City and Cache County School Districts
4. Bear River Region Local Homeless Council
5. Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation
6. Allen and Alice Stokes Nature Center
7. Athletics United
8. Four Corners Community Behavioral Health
9. The Nature Conservancy
10. Cache Humane Society
11. Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
12. Healthy Environmental Alliance of Utah (HEAL)
13. Flores Family Community Garden
14. Cache Community Food Pantry
15. Jump the Moon Art Studio and Gallery

For more information concerning this application, please contact:

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