



**Campus Compact**  
Mid-Atlantic



**Campus Compact**  
New York & Pennsylvania



**Campus Compact**  
New Jersey



## **Guided Conversations: Accreditation Standards and Civic and Community Engagement**

### **Webinar #4: Community and Civic Engagement through the Lens of Accreditation Standards VI & VII**

#### **Summary Notes**

##### **Presenters**

Dr. Paul Starkey, Vice President, Institutional Field Relations, Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Havidán Rodríguez, President, University at Albany

Dr. Merydawilda Colón, Executive Director, Center for Civic Engagement & Service Learning, Stockton University

Dr. Michelle McDonald, CAO of the Atlantic City Campus & Associate VP for Academic Affairs, Stockton University

Dr. Roger Ward, Interim Provost, Executive VP, & Dean of the Graduate School, University of Maryland, Baltimore

Dr. Saul Petersen, Executive Director, New Jersey Campus Compact

Host: Ms. Madeline Yates, Executive Director, Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic

#### [Video of Webinar #4 \(60 min\)](#)

##### **Standard VI – Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

This standard examines how the institution’s planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and whether they are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals to continuously assess and improve its programs and services while responding effectively to opportunities and challenges. Questions that speak to this standard include:

- Does the institution clearly make civic and community engagement a key part of what it does at the strategic level and align these values with its mission?
- Does the institution allocate appropriate resources to achieve these goals? These could be physical, fiscal, human infrastructure, and technology resources.

##### **Standard VII – Governance, Leadership, and Administration**

This standard examines whether an institution is governed and administered in a manner that allow it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Senior leadership must understand, support, and champion these efforts. Questions used to examine this standard include:

- Does the administration regularly engage with faculty and students in advancing institutional goals and objectives?
- Do the actions of the institution support its stated dedication to civic and community engagement?
- Do governing bodies endorse engagement as a strategic level of initiative? Is it legitimized within and across the entire institution?

##### **University of Albany**

President Rodríguez serves as a commissioner for the MSCHÉ. The University at Albany received Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement in 2020, meeting one of the institution’s key engagement and service goals.

How can institutions demonstrate their adherence to Standards VI and VII?

- Document records to demonstrate clear and effective strategies and concrete evidence that you have invested actual resources to support community engagement.
- Effective assessment is vital. Ask how you have changed or improved your approaches over time.
- Demonstrate that you are actively considering future strategies and plans that build on current initiatives.

In its latest MSCHE reassessment, the University at Albany set out to *demonstrate* that it has intentionally created and continuously reinforced university-wide priorities, including engagement and service. The University at Albany also:

- expects all schools, colleges, and administrative divisions to develop action plans that address its priorities, including engagement and service;
- allocates resources for projects committed to engagement and service, including a dedicated infrastructure for community engagement led by the Office of Public Engagement, and over \$3 million in new funding for initiatives related to strategic priorities, which include community engagement initiatives; and
- collaborates with local, state, and global partners to provide support on various humanitarian issues.

*What matters most is showing what you are doing, not merely talking or writing about it.*

*“How do you show it? You document, document, document!”*

- *Invest actual resources,*
- *Engage in consequential assessment activity, and*
- *Focus on what you have done, not what you plan to do.*

### **Stockton University**

In 2017, Stockton released a new mission statement that emphasizes community engagement as a critical value.

Stockton has repeatedly received Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. In its mission, Stockton seeks:

- to develop engaged and effective citizens with a commitment to lifelong learning and a capacity to change in a multicultural and interdependent world; and
- to develop community engagement, civic responsibility, and a commitment to positive development in southern New Jersey through research, teaching, partnerships, and economic investment.

Stockton has introduced a number of programs and initiatives aimed at serving its students and the greater community that specifically speak to Standards VI and VII. Examples include:

- provides dedicated spaces for off-campus instruction, classroom spaces, office spaces, storage spaces, naturalization classes, parking spaces, etc. for the community; and
- situates its social work clinic within the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City. The Club provides space and clinical placements while Stockton provides personnel and students. These reciprocal relationships have a collective impact by fostering sustainable programs and delivering social services to the community.

Institutions and programs should consider the future and what happens if funding is lost by asking themselves:

- Do you have resources to bridge the gap if external funding for engagement and service learning is lost?
- Do you have board of trustees' support to provide additional funding if needed?

### **University of Maryland, Baltimore**

UMB hosts professional and graduate schools in west Baltimore, including its medical school, law school, etc. and provides clinical care, counseling, legal advice, and other services to the community as an anchor institution. The campus has committed itself to the community. Community engagement and service are strategic priorities.

As much as an institution may be committed to improving the human condition in its strategic plan, that mission is lip service without reallocated resources or new funding. Over the last decade, UMB has strategically examined funding allocation. Some questions to consider regarding financing strategic goals:

- What are your priorities when you make your budget?
- What do you decide to cut out?
- What do you decide to continue to fund?

UMB has been able to sustain robust resource support for community engagement. Within the last year, the institution opened the (20,000-square-foot) [Community Engagement Center](#) in West Baltimore with expanded capacity and staff, thanks in part to its strategic priorities and resource allocation defined in UMB's strategic plan. As it writes a new strategic plan, UMB has found support from the community to articulate social and community impact as core institutional values.

### **Panel Q&A**

*Q: Have you learned anything from the data that you have gathered about how to allocate resources to reflect your civic and community engagement goals?*

- The University at Albany established a committee that reviews and assesses its progress towards the five institutional priorities. It instituted an accelerated grant program that allocates funding to specific departments on campus that facilitate programs related to the institution's priorities. If projects are successful, they are built into the permanent budget.
- Regardless of an institution's financial situation, there should always be ways to effectively provide resources for important work and programs related to civic and community engagement, diversity, and inclusion.
- Access to institutional information is important, too. Dr. Colón sits on the provost's council and the president's leadership council at Stockton. In this arrangement, she regularly receives information about budgets and strategic planning and the provost and president are aware of her initiatives and work, as well.

*Q: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your institutions' budget for civic and community engagement?*

- The financial constraints caused by the pandemic and changes in state allocations have necessitated that UMB and Stockton reassess funding for their institutional priorities and programs. UMB has retained base funding for its Community Engagement Center because the institution's leaders view this as a chief priority. Similarly, Stockton will reinstitute pre-pandemic funding to many of its engagement and service-learning programs in the upcoming academic year.

*Q: How do university leaders evaluate civic and community engagement, diversity, and inclusion as institutional priorities and what role does the community play in their evaluation and prioritization?*

- These priorities should show up in a president's goals, and they should be held accountable for promoting, resourcing, and realizing these goals. Campus partners can refer to these goals in leader evaluations and feedback.
- Community voice is an important way to provide clarity and a different metric for giving a sense of how the university is responding to these priorities. Governance can be socialized in the community through inviting the community to provide feedback on existing programs and new plans and initiatives.
- The University at Albany annually recognizes community/campus projects engaged in community and civic engagement.

*Q: What can Campus Compacts do to support institutions as they conduct self-studies and seek MSCHE reaccreditation?*

- Request, catalogue, and distribute different practices from member institutions that enhance the institutional self-study process as related to the standards and civic and community engagement.
- Provide information about how the work of Campus Compact interweaves with the MSCHE's standards and how institutions can become more involved in this work.