

Civic Learning & Engagement in Virginia Higher Education

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Academic Affairs Committee

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**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER
EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA**

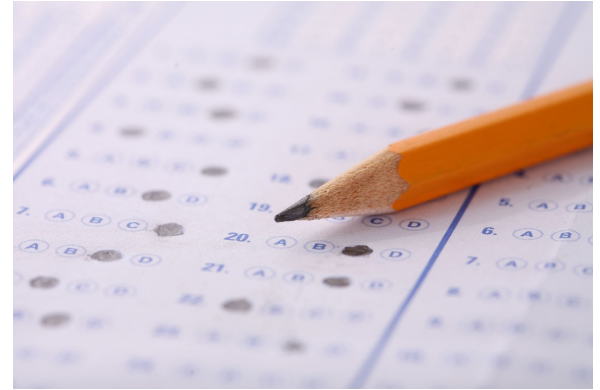
Code of Virginia § 23.1-203

“[The Council shall...] in cooperation with public institutions of higher education, develop guidelines for the assessment of student achievement. Each such institution shall use an approved program that complies with the guidelines of the Council and is consistent with the institution’s mission and educational objectives in the development of such assessment. The Council shall report each institution’s assessment of student achievement in the revisions to the Commonwealth’s statewide strategic plan for higher education.”

What do we mean by assessment?

Assessment is deciding what we want our students to learn and making sure they learn it.

~ Linda Suskie



Suskie, L. (2018). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide* (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Policy overview

A college education in Virginia—regardless of major or specialized field of study—ideally should emphasize:

- Broad learning
- Intellectual and practical skills
- Integrative and adaptive learning
- Personal and social responsibility

Assess student achievement in at least 6 areas (primarily using direct methods):

- Critical thinking
- Written communication
- Quantitative reasoning
- Civic engagement
- Institution-specific competencies (2 or more)

What is civic engagement?

“Civic engagement [is] an array of knowledge, abilities, values, attitudes, and behaviors that in combination allow individuals to contribute to the civic life of their communities.”

~ Policy on Student Learning Assessment and Quality in Undergraduate Education

Why assess civic engagement?

Civic Learning & Democracy Engagement (CLDE) Initiative

- www.collegeciviclearning.org
- AAC&U, SHEEO, CCA & College Promise, plus 50+ partner organizations
- **Goals:**
 - **Quality & Equity**
Make CLDE an expectation for all students
 - **Democracy Engagement**
Strengthen democracy in the U.S. and around the world
 - **Collaborative Problem Solving**
Prepare students to address public problems
 - **Policy Support**
Advocate for policies and resources that support CLDE

How does SCHEV support civic learning & engagement efforts?

Spotlight Series



- **Short videos**

<https://www.schev.edu/institutions/teaching-assessment-initiatives/student-learning-assessment>

- **Live Q&A**

- **Peer-to-peer learning**

Day of Dialogue: June 2, 2022

- Panels
- Facilitated breakout discussions
- Informal networking



Photo credit: JMU University Marketing & Branding

Preliminary Findings

- Break down silos – between institutions, within institutions, between higher ed & K12
- Embed civic learning/engagement into culture, curriculum & programs
- Develop skills among faculty/staff as well as students – people need models
- Provide resources & recognition



Photo credit: JMU University Marketing & Branding

Preliminary Findings

- **Need to build trust – with community partners; among students, faculty/staff and administrators**
- **Need clearer definitions**
- **Assessing impact is difficult**
- **Civic learning/engagement supports workforce success**



Photo credit: JMU University Marketing & Branding

Most employers are “more likely to consider hiring” a graduate with community-based experience.

	Much more likely	Somewhat more likely
Internship or apprenticeship	49%	41%
Working in community settings with people from diverse backgrounds or cultures	47%	40%
Community-based or service-learning project	41%	43%

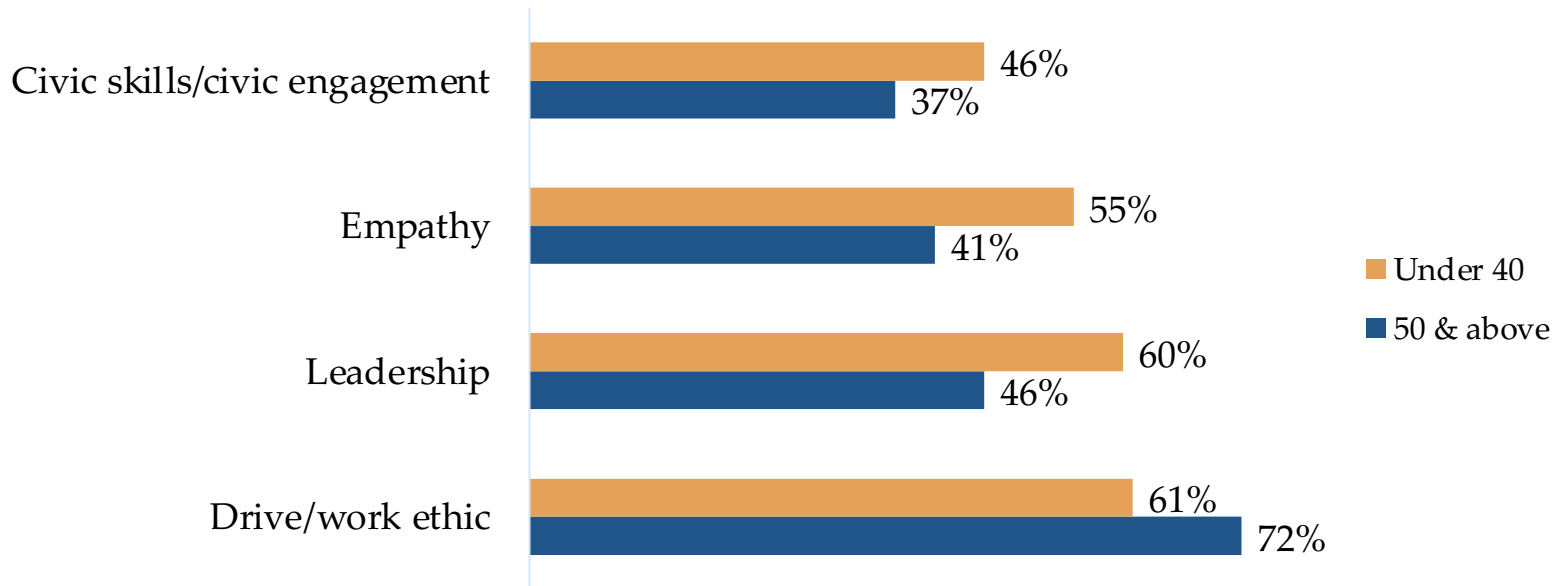
Source: Finley, A. (2021). *How college contributes to workforce success: Employer views on what matters most*. AAC&U.

This is especially true for employers under the age of 40.

	Much more likely		
	All employers	Employers under 40	Employers 50 & up
Internship or apprenticeship	49%	51%	43%
Working in community settings with people from diverse backgrounds or cultures	47%	53%	34%
Community-based or service-learning project	41%	54%	20%

Source: Finley, A. (2021). *How college contributes to workforce success: Employer views on what matters most*. AAC&U.

Younger employers consider different skills and mindsets to be “very important” for college graduates.



Source: Finley, A. (2021). *How college contributes to workforce success: Employer views on what matters most*. AAC&U.

Possible Next Steps

- **Additional "days of dialogue"**
- **Regional working groups**
- **Student case study competition: propose solutions to real-world problems**
- **Investigate potential overlap/ coordination with VTOP activities (workforce preparation)**

Possible Next Steps (cont.)

- **Civic Health Index (Virginia Service Commission)**
- **Civic Evidence Project (AAC&U)**
 - Assessment using student work
 - \$6,000 per participating institution
 - Possible funding support from Lumina Foundation

Possible Next Steps (cont.)

Identify, support and leverage work being done by others at national, state and institution levels.

Fill in the gaps where we can.

Questions/Discussion