

Civic Engagement in Virginia Higher Education

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**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER
EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA**

Presentation Outline

- **Foundation of SCHEV's civic engagement work**
- **“Days of Dialogue”**
- **Ongoing work**
- **Discussion**

Foundation of SCHEV's civic engagement work

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.”

Source: *Policy on Student Learning Assessment and Quality in Undergraduate Education*, p. 4 (SCHEV, 2017)

Framework for 21st Century Civic Learning & Democratic Engagement

Knowledge	Skills	Values	Collective Action
Key democratic texts & principles	Critical inquiry, analysis & reasoning	Respect for freedom & human dignity	Integration of knowledge, skills & values to inform actions taken with other people
Political systems & levers for influencing change	Seeking & being informed by multiple perspectives	Empathy	Navigation of political systems & processes
Cultures, histories & religious traditions that have shaped US society	Deliberation & bridge-building across differences	Open-mindedness	Public problem-solving with diverse partners
Sources of identity & their influence on civic values & responsibilities	Collaborative decision-making	Ethical integrity	Compromise, civility & mutual respect

Excerpted from: *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*, p. 4 (AAC&U, 2012)

Why civic engagement?

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.”

The Virginia Plan (2014)

Goal #2: Optimize Student Success for Work & Life

“Strengthen curricular options to ensure that graduates are prepared with the competencies necessary for employment and **civic engagement.**”

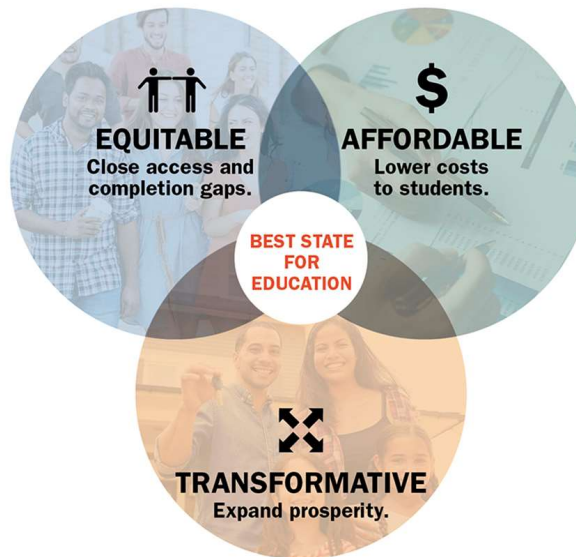
Priority initiative #4:

“Collaborate with institutions to measure the quality of undergraduate education, including **civic engagement** of graduates and relevance to demand occupations across regions of the state.”

The Virginia Plan (2020)

PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY: THE VIRGINIA PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Remove barriers to access and attainment, especially for Black, Hispanic, Native American and rural students; students learning English as a second language; students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds; and students with disabilities.



Invest in and support the development of initiatives that provide cost savings to students while maintaining the effectiveness of instruction.

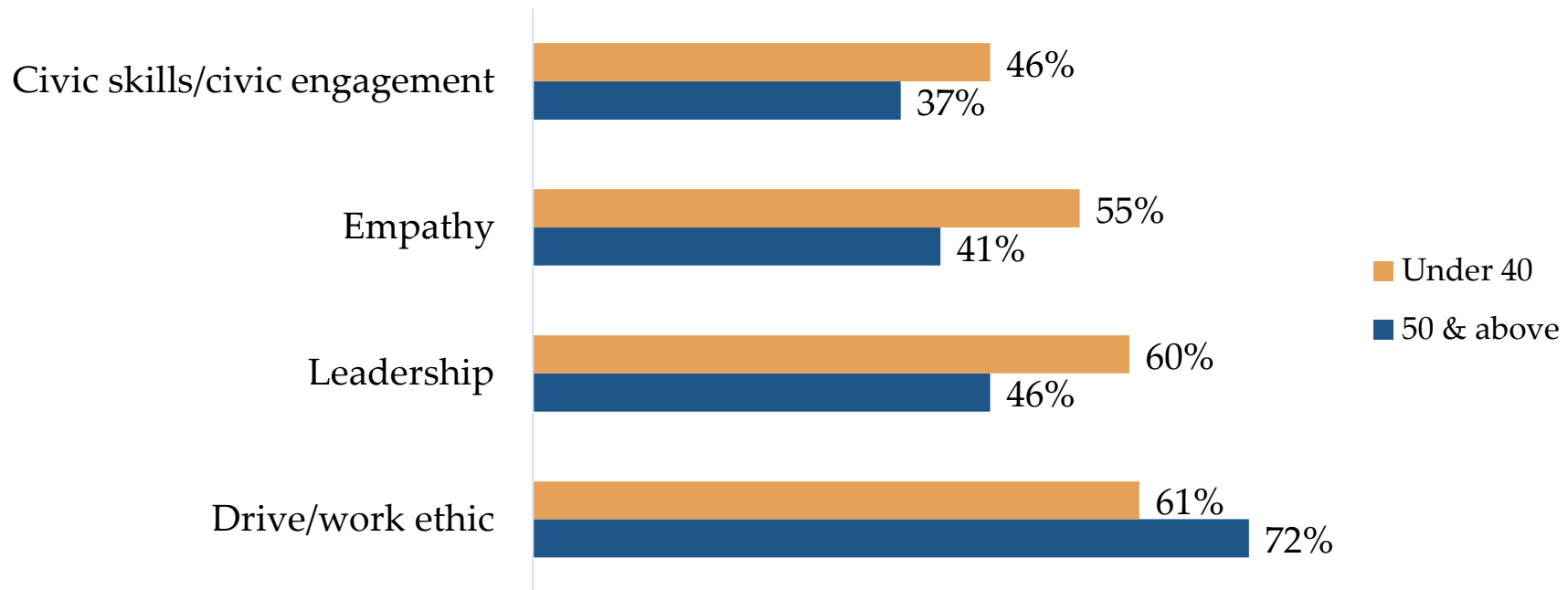
Increase the social, cultural and economic well-being of individuals and communities within the Commonwealth and its regions.

Most employers under the age of 40 are much more “likely to consider hiring a graduate” with community-based experience.

	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.

“Days of Dialogue”

Day of Dialogue 2022

- Panels
- Facilitated breakout discussions
- Informal networking



Photo credit: JMU University Marketing & Branding

General Findings (2022)

- Energy around debate → discussion → dialogue
- Need to break down silos within & among institutions
- Need to build trust
- Need to build and sustain capacity
- Desire for regular opportunities to talk & collaborate

Actions Taken

- **Convened working group to identify priorities**
- **Established partnership with the Constructive Dialogue Institute**
 - **12 institutions participating in 2023-24**
- **Drafted new guidance statement**

Day of Dialogue: June 5, 2023

- Update on past year's activity
- Begin mapping statewide approaches
- Ongoing sharing & informal networking



Photo credit: Sam Cahill, courtesy of University of Mary Washington

General Findings (2023)

- **Elements that support success**
 - Structure
 - Coalition building
 - Consistency
 - Assessment
- **Tips & strategies**
 - Institution-level
 - Program-level
 - “Learning space”-level

Analysis conducted by Heather Lettner-Rust and Pamela Tracy, Longwood University

Ongoing Work

Constructive Dialogue Initiative

- **Faculty/Staff training**
 - Reynolds Community College, August 18
 - UVA, October 19
 - Virginia Tech, November 10
- **Analysis of implementation data**
- **Possible extension and expansion**

SCHEV's goals:

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

Fill in the gaps where we can.

Questions/Discussion