

# Teaching Civic Engagement:

From Student to Active Citizen

**Alison Rios Millett McCartney**

**Elizabeth A. Bennion**

**Dick Simpson**

editors



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*For all teacher-scholars seeking to improve  
civic engagement education*



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## FOREWORD

The American Political Science Association (APSA) has had an interest in civic education from its founding, and attention to civic education has cycled in and out throughout the association's history. Association founders were motivated from its earliest days by a sense of purpose to improve the functional workings of government and strengthen the operation of democracy. Neglect of civic learning was thought to have weakened both.

This concern with civic health has stayed with us today with many new dimensions and nuances, but also with a nagging doubt. We know today that the benefits of civic learning extend beyond the effective and efficient workings of government institutions to private and quasi-public organizations as well. We know that the density and character of civil society has advantages that reach beyond individual civic behavior alone. We know that the practice of civic effort through service learning, simulations, and internships can bring lifelong benefits for the development of citizenry. There is broad agreement that civic engagement is a social responsibility, but it has become less certain whether it is a professional or disciplinary responsibility.

The work in this volume represents a rich collection of research and innovative pedagogy that helps reaffirm APSA's voice in civic engagement education and advances and reshapes the commitment with which the association began. This work does not stand alone. In the last 15 years, APSA has redoubled its commitment to civic education and engagement. This volume emerges in tandem with the intellectual laboratory of APSA's annual Teaching and Learning Conference, the work of its committees on teaching and learning and on civic education and engagement, the sponsorship of the Alma Ostrom and Leah Hopkins Awan Civic Education Fund of the APSA Centennial Center, and more. The appearance of this volume parallels other APSA work on the structural issues challenging civic life—major studies and task force reports on the ways in which institutional designs for public life and inequalities in social structures and opportunities can impede civic engagement regardless of how well-educated or informed citizens are.

The relation between public life and political science as a profession and scholarly pursuit is marked by many disputes and challenges. Early emphasis in the

discipline looked to a public connection in a variety of ways—whether focused on explicit training for government service or on community formation and neighborhood democracy. At various stages in its history the discipline has withdrawn from these emphases. Some would say that public service morphed into scholasticism, that a neighborhood and civic focus withdrew into academic and public institutionalism, and that learning about how to engage in society retracted into teaching about how to analyze society.

Political scientists have wrestled with the concerns that civic education and civic learning are distractions or digressions from our roles as scholars and teachers—as though being asked to be of service is to diminish scholarship. This is not the only topic on which we have this debate. We puzzle over whether it is warranted to focus scholarship on relevance of public policy or “national needs” rather than on knowing for its own sake. We question how, or even whether, the public sector should fund our work. We wonder whether science can meaningfully ground our scholarship, or whether we should turn as well to other, perhaps more-localized ways of knowing in the interpretation of knowledge. We ask whether scholarship can be, or ought to be, of use. The question of teaching civic engagement in the end is no different from questions of the relation of political or social science to public policy-making or national needs, and each effort to understand the role of the discipline can inform the other.

It is a mistake, however, to see attention to teaching civic engagement or to the scholarship of teaching and learning as being in opposition to academic scholarship or teaching or learning for its own sake. The teacher-scholar speaks with a special voice that is protected and shaped by the principles of academic freedom. This autonomy to speak truthfully comes with accountability to peers and through them to the integrity of research findings and scholarly thinking. Scholarship, teaching, and service strengthen each other. Together, they reinforce the principles that sustain academic freedom—principles that call for scholars to hold themselves accountable and carry out work that is in the end of good use. Teaching civic engagement, grounded in strong scholarship, thus provides full value both to society and to the discipline.

Themes addressed in this volume then are not just about civics and citizenship. They also amplify a rich debate about the character of the scholarly enterprise itself and its place in society and thus illuminate what the discipline of political science itself can become.

We owe a large debt of gratitude to the scholars who contributed to this book for their own acts of civic engagement in offering the time and thoughtfulness to produce this work. Their work revives an old tradition in political science. They put forward tested and principled strategies for civic engagement, and offer us a pathway for an engaged political science.

*Michael Brintnall*  
*January 2013*

## PREFACE

I am excited that APSA is publishing this book, as it marks the culmination of more than a decade of work by political scientists. While not directly sponsored by APSA, one of the initial volumes to be published in the American Association of Higher Education's Service-Learning in the Disciplines series was in political science.<sup>1</sup> In addition, in 2000, under the leadership of Sheilah Mann, APSA launched a "Service-Learning in Political Science" webpage, produced a special issue of *PS: Political Science & Politics* with the same title, and initiated a series of workshops and panels at its annual and regional meetings—part of an effort to involve disciplinary associations in service-learning and civic engagement funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and Campus Compact. Some of the faculty who participated in these initial activities have written chapters included in this volume.

Although this work is only 15 years old, the effort to link community-based experiences with academic learning has a long history. Political science internships and other experiences outside the classroom connected to the academic curriculum date back to the origins of the discipline more than a century ago. With roots that include thinkers like John Dewey and programs begun during the 1960s and 1970s, a concerted effort has been made by colleges and universities for almost 30 years to engage students in the larger community as part of their learning. In this Preface, I concentrate on this more recent history, dating back to the 1980s, which has been called different things at different times by different people: "community (or national) service," "service-learning" (with and without the hyphen), "community-based learning (or research)," and "civic (or political) engagement."

This movement was certainly aided by the formation of the Campus Outreach Opportunities League (COOL)—a student-run organization—in 1984 and Campus Compact—an organization of college and university presidents—in 1985. With the support of these two organizations, institutions of higher education began to explicitly link experiential pedagogies to the burgeoning student community service movement of the 1980s. Most programming during this period aimed simply to place undergraduate students in community-based service activities—many of these led by students themselves—in the hopes that such community service would stem

the documented tide in young people toward civic *disengagement* and what was perceived as an “excessive individualism.”<sup>2</sup> The primary language for these campus efforts was “community service,” and campus efforts ranged from providing more service opportunities to adopting service requirements for graduation.

By the end of the 1980s, campuses had become more aware of service-learning as a pedagogy linking service with academic study and the formal curriculum. With a 1989 Wingspread conference sponsored by the Johnson Foundation and the National Society for Experiential Education’s subsequent three-volume publication, *Combining Service and Learning*,<sup>3</sup> awareness of service-learning both as a pedagogy and a means of civic education began to spread through both the higher education and K-12 educational communities. By 1992, the federal government’s Learn and Serve America program—which lost its funding as part of the 2011 congressional budget deal—was providing funding resources for service-learning initiatives in higher education. Then in 1993, the Corporation for National Service’s definition of service-learning was revised to include the goal of “foster[ing] civic responsibility.”

Thus began a period of “institutionalization” of service-learning, whereby colleges and universities pumped resources into their service-learning infrastructure, supporting campus-based service or community engagement centers, providing faculty development for the growth of this new pedagogy, and cultivating community partnerships that could sustain growing efforts to link campus and neighborhood resources. Although there was criticism of this institutionalization, both in terms of the reduction of student leadership and the limited impact on communities,<sup>4</sup> the growth of service-learning was spectacular: Campus Compact went from an organization of five presidents in 1985 to more than 900 by the end of the century. By this point, the primary language used to describe this work had shifted from “community service” to “service-learning.”

By the end of the 20th century, however, the leaders of this movement to connect campus with community began to call for another change in emphasis. A number of studies in the late 1990s showed that there was a huge disconnect between students actively involved in community service and indicators of political and civic engagement. Data were beginning to suggest that while more and more college-age youth were volunteering, fewer and fewer were voting or getting involved in politics or political issues. In fact, many studies suggested that students were consciously choosing community service *over* political engagement, as volunteering became an alternative to involvement in politics. One study, sponsored by the Kettering Foundation, charged that higher education “appears to leave students without concepts or language to explore what is political about their lives.”<sup>5</sup> Harry Boyte concluded that “community service is not a cure for young people’s political apathy” because “it teaches little about the arts of participation in public life.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1999, Campus Compact issued a document coauthored by Boyte and Elizabeth Hollander. The *Presidents’ Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education* called on colleges and universities “to renew our role as agents of our democracy, [to] catalyze and lead a national movement to reinvigorate the public purposes and civic mission of higher education.”<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, the language used

to describe this work shifted again, from “service-learning” to “civic engagement.” The new focus was to use service-learning and other community-based experiences to strengthen the civic learning of students and the public problem-solving capacities of institutions of higher education.<sup>8</sup>

There have been problems, however, with this approach. First, the term “civic engagement” is fairly amorphous and has been used to mean many different things. That is one of the reasons why it has been so popular, as it can be used to describe different kinds of activities and can be incorporated into the conceptual framework of most disciplines. Another problem has been that campuses have not changed their practices to align with the concept of civic engagement, as opposed to service-learning or community service. Service-learning most often means limited volunteer work, such as distributing meals at a soup kitchen, whereas civic engagement usually means a longer-term involvement and, often, an attempt to solve the problems that a community faces. Finally, and most importantly for this volume, the language of civic engagement often was used to avoid delving directly into politics, public policy, and political engagement. Political engagement requires involvement in political campaigns or government policy making.

To address this last issue, in 2003 Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, and their colleagues at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching launched an effort to bridge the “serious gap” between college civic engagement efforts and education for political engagement in a democracy. The Political Engagement Project, discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, brought together practitioners representing 21 different higher education programs aimed at developing the political knowledge, skills, motivation, and identity of college students. Emerging from this initiative were new conceptual frameworks and ongoing projects for thinking about political education, experiential learning, and the role of colleges and universities in developing the political capacities of democratic citizens.<sup>9</sup> One of the projects developed at this time was the American Democracy Project of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU).

This volume, which has been a long time coming, owes its existence to a long line of efforts to educate for political engagement. It contains an impressive array of contributors from a discipline that should have, but has not always had, its central focus on the civic and political learning of students. The chapters range from theoretical treatises on the connections between political science as a discipline and civic, or political, engagement as a goal of higher education, to more practical narratives of how to incorporate political engagement into courses from all the sub-fields of the discipline. The book also includes an assessment toolkit, which provides practical suggestions to assess the outcomes of the efforts to engage students in the political process. Through assessment, teaching and service can be incorporated into a research enterprise that expands the collective knowledge about the best ways to engage students and strengthen democracy.

All of this leaves me quite hopeful. Hopeful that members of the American Political Science Association will read this volume and develop a new understanding

of their own work and its connection to the crucial goal of citizen engagement. Hopeful that APSA will continue to see the development of engaged citizens as one of its central missions. And hopeful that political science as a discipline will lead the way in reinvigorating the active participation of American citizens, and with it, the revival of American democracy itself.

*Richard Battistoni*  
*Providence College*  
*2013*



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## SECTION |

# HIGHER EDUCATION, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PEDAGOGY, AND POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION





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## INTRODUCTION TO SECTION



### HIGHER EDUCATION, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PEDAGOGY, AND POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

This section explores civic and political engagement pedagogy for colleges and universities as a whole and for political science as an academic discipline. Each chapter provides a unique link in this chain, moving from theoretical debates to societal actors to roles of teacher-scholars. Overall, the authors argue in favor of a more prominent place for civic engagement education in higher education and demonstrate why political scientists should be more active in fostering students' abilities to be civically engaged citizens.

Alison McCartney reminds political scientists that the debates over the role of higher education institutions and the political science discipline in civic engagement are hardly new. Twenty-first-century education standards, however, and societal expectations have changed. She argues that political scientists should now act upon our pedagogical interest in fostering civically engaged citizens. This goal is described in the report issued in January 2012 by the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, a joint project of the US Department of Education and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU). In *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*, the AACU argues that higher education institutions must take the following "essential actions":

1. Reclaim and reinvest in the fundamental civic and democratic mission of schools and of all sectors within higher education.
2. Enlarge the current national narrative that erases civic aims and civic literacy as educational priorities contributing to social, intellectual, and economic capital.

3. Advance a contemporary, comprehensive framework for civic learning—embracing US and global interdependence—that includes historic and modern understandings of democratic values, capacities to engage diverse perspectives and people, and commitment to collective civic problem solving.
4. Capitalize upon the interdependent responsibilities of K-12 and higher education to foster progressively higher levels of civic knowledge, skills, examined values, and action as expectations for every student.
5. Expand the number of robust, generative civic partnerships and alliances, locally, nationally, and globally to address common problems, empower people to act, strengthen communities and nations, and generate new frontiers of knowledge.

These actions dovetail with the arguments, evidence, and examples presented in this book and align with its primary goals of fostering civically engaged citizens and providing quality political science instruction.

Support from societal and governmental actors is crucial to the ability of colleges and universities to achieve these goals. However, challenges remain. McCartney argues that to really move civic engagement education forward, the reward and incentive structures in higher education must be changed, starting with the current systems of promotion, tenure, and merit. These systems currently are dominated by a view that traditional scholarship of discovery in a particular subfield is the standard of measurement for one's value to academia, rather than one's understanding of, innovations in, and research on quality teaching. While traditional scholarship should not be displaced in favor of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), this book seeks a more prominent place for SoTL research as an equally important part of academic inquiry.

To advance SoTL's place in academia, political scientists need to take responsibility for demonstrating what exactly we are doing, how we are doing it, and the outcomes that follow. In Chapter 2, Brian Harward and Dan Shea explain that political scientists need to create learning opportunities that move students beyond what the authors refer to as “drive-by” participation in their communities and the polity. These quick-and-easy forms of participation, such as signing petitions or posting online, are useful, but they are not enough to keep democracy alive and thriving. They do not entail much risk of encountering major disagreement, disappointment, or failure, but the democratic system of the United States was not built upon quick answers, easy debates, and episodic work. It was created with checks on popular passions, balances against tyranny, and hard-won compromise. Harward and Shea propose that political scientists must prepare students for the complicated system of democracy and focus civic engagement education on developing a deeper sense of commitment among students, one that can withstand an election loss or a bill's veto. They provide examples of how to reach this goal by making students take responsibility for their own development through more

engaged learning rather than allowing them to pass by on surface knowledge that creates drive-by citizens.

Elizabeth Beaumont continues this theme through her discussion of the Carnegie Foundation's Political Engagement Project (PEP). This project found that some approaches to civic engagement pedagogy increase political understanding, civic engagement skills, and civic and political involvement without politically indoctrinating students to their instructors' political views. This last point is crucial in advancing this pedagogy. The intention is not to brainwash students with any one party's view of what government should or should not do; rather, it is to show them why their diverse voices are necessary in a well-functioning democracy. Political science educators can help students to learn how they can affect change when they do not agree with what their government is doing.

In the Carnegie Foundation study of about 1,000 undergraduates in 21 different political courses and programs, the researchers began with a presurvey of participants so that a baseline was established. This survey explored students' levels of political understanding, including foundational political knowledge and current events knowledge; political motivation, including political interest, political media attention, political identity, political values, and sense of personal and institutional political efficacy; civic and political skills for political influence, action, collaboration, analysis, leadership, and communication; and civic and political involvement. At the end of the courses and programs, the study found in the postsurvey that students made significant gains in knowledge, skills, and sense of political efficacy and exhibited an increased interest in politics. Yet, students did not make major changes in their political ideologies or affiliations as a group. This evidence is important because civic engagement pedagogy does not support any particular political party, although it is certainly in favor of democracy writ large.

Beaumont also addresses how political scientists can most effectively teach civic and political engagement. She discusses how to increase a sense of efficacy—the necessary attribute of civically engaged citizens. The Carnegie Foundation proposes four learning mechanisms to achieve this goal: experiencing a politically active community, acquiring political action skills, engaging in political discourse in an open and respectful atmosphere, and participating in pluralist collaborative contexts. The first mechanism can actually fix the disadvantages experienced by students who were not raised in politically active or aware families and communities by providing an alternative, supportive, and politically active community.

The Carnegie Foundation also found that teaching political action skills was “the single most important factor for shaping development of political efficacy.” By learning and practicing how to put their ideas into action, students gained the necessary confidence to become civically engaged. Moreover, political discussions in open and respectful communities not only increased political knowledge, they also taught students how politics is relevant to their lives and how their political opinions and judgments matter in actual political decisions. This component of political socialization is particularly significant in youth development as political discussion and engagement becomes normalized within their communities.

Finally, the Carnegie Foundation found that students in collaborative and racially pluralist contexts learned how to navigate their differences, overcome anxieties and negative predispositions, and thus feel more able to find ways to bring change and solve problems. Overall, the foundation demonstrated that civic engagement education, properly designed and executed, can reduce inequalities in family and community backgrounds that may hinder a student's ability to become an effectively engaged citizen and thus reduce the "democratic achievement gap."

Beaumont's work connects directly to Bobbi Gentry's exploration of youth political identity. Gentry explains how understanding of the self in the political realm, or political ego identity, leads to civic engagement. Steeped in political socialization literature, this discussion of how and why one internalizes identity as a civically engaged person can help political scientists work toward fostering a civic engagement identity among those students still in the identity development stage of life. Gentry argues that once this identity is developed and takes root through experience, knowledge, and practice, students are more likely to engage in behaviors that continually reconfirm that identity. Since the college years are when this political ego identity is most likely to be consolidated within an individual's overall identity, it is also the period when instructors have an opportunity to work within the developmental processes to secure political ego identity. These processes are, according to Gentry, socialization, exploration, judgment of others, self-questioning, and coherence. By considering these processes from a psychological development perspective, she offers an additional dimension of understanding how socialization and identity processes work so that a better understanding of why students do or do not become civically engaged citizens after graduation can be achieved. She invites the use of this information to construct more effective civic engagement pedagogy during students' formative years to help to establish a firm foundation for lifelong democratic engagement.

Most colleges and universities claim a commitment to students' development as citizens, but as Jean Harris shows, they do not always follow through on these declarations. Harris explores how colleges and universities have not always fulfilled their obligations under federal legislation, such as the 1998 Higher Education Act and the 2002 Help Americans Vote Act college program. These federal mandates suggest significant government concern about low voter registration, especially among youth. As political scientists, Harris argues, we should work to dismantle such institutional barriers as voting registration rules, processes, and staff that may prevent or discourage students from becoming registered voters—a basic form of civic engagement.

Paul Frank examines the potential for college instructors to affect their students' civic engagement, first, as role models who practice what they preach and second, as insiders with unique knowledge about political participation to deliver to students. He argues that, overall, instructors should not shy away from being politically engaged themselves or bringing that experience into the classroom. He explores four hypotheses about which factors lead political science instructors to model political engagement for their students. Through survey research, Frank





presents evidence that political science instructors are more likely to be politically engaged than other segments of the population, that political science instructors' beliefs in modeling political participation correlate with their actions, and that politically engaged political science instructors are more likely to bring their political actions into the classroom. He also found differences in the prevalence of these modeling practices between faculty at two-year and those at four-year colleges and between new and experienced teachers. Instructors who are themselves politically engaged are most likely to support modeling behavior and incorporate civic engagement exercises, including community-based hands-on learning experiences, into their classes.

Like others in this volume, Frank argues that civic and political engagement activities should be educational options at higher education institutions, both in and outside the classroom. Rather than conceiving of civic or political engagement as a form of volunteerism or limiting it to the realm of internships, civic engagement

education can be most effective in creating engaged citizens when combined with properly structured classroom instruction, deliberation, and reflection. Civic and political engagement education also must be more than a one-time event or an unintegrated add-on to existing course material. Only then can it become part of deep or vertical learning and, thus, part of student identities. It cannot be mandated that all students take advantage of these opportunities, but instructors can present well-designed courses and assignments that encourage citizen development.

The chapters that follow present key concepts, challenges, and benefits of pursuing civic engagement pedagogy in political science education. The authors place these issues and debates in the context of contemporary discussions about the role of higher education and political science curriculum. Although political scientists may have different partisan views, we all agree that the development of this generation's skills and interest in civic engagement is crucial to the success of democracy in the United States in the 21st century.

# TEACHING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: DEBATES, DEFINITIONS, BENEFITS, AND CHALLENGES

# 1

BY ALISON RIOS MILLETT MCCARTNEY

*This chapter sets the foundation for this volume by establishing basic definitions and parameters of the civic engagement education debate. It explores the benefits and best practices of the service-learning method and the challenges faced by those teaching students to be civically and politically engaged. These challenges include a perceived liberal bias, outdated reward and incentive structures, miscategorization of this pedagogy as “mere” service, instructors’ limited resources and time, and incomplete institutional support. Despite these challenges, I argue that political scientists can heed the call of key government and societal actors and help direct the evolution of civic engagement pedagogy and research. Otherwise, we will be followers, not leaders, in the development of priorities and goals in political science education and the country’s future citizens.*



Almost 100 years ago, John Dewey started his landmark *Democracy and Education* with a chapter entitled “Education as a Necessity of Life.” In this chapter, he argued that just as humans must physiologically reproduce to survive, we must also reproduce our social structures through communication and education. He wrote that for a democratic society to survive, “[S]uch a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder.”<sup>1</sup> In this and other works, Dewey proposed to secure democratic society through an educational system that develops democratic citizens. This system should include programs that teach such citizenship skills as free deliberation, openness to alternative viewpoints, and critical thinking and should allow a wide variety of ideas to emerge from a diverse group of people. With such a system, democracy continually renews and sustains itself.

Others, including Robert Maynard Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago in the mid-20th century and an ardent advocate of quality higher education, preferred to preserve democracy in an educational environment unfettered by political conflicts and disagreements. Hutchins argued that education should be centered instead on individual intellectual development through immersion in Western literature and philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

While fully agreeing that the nuts and bolts of political ideas, theories, processes, and structures must be taught and individual contemplation fostered, the authors in this volume clearly side with Dewey. We see teaching students the skills and values of civic and political engagement,<sup>3</sup> in addition to foundational knowledge, as central to the survival and vitality of democracy and the educational mission of colleges and universities in the 21st century.

Powerful national voices concur with this perspective. Commended with a White House reception in January 2012, the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, a joint project of US Department of Education and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU), published a report exhorting that,

[a]s a democracy, the United States depends on a knowledgeable, public-spirited, and engaged population. Education plays a fundamental role in building civic vitality, and in the twenty-first century, higher education has a distinctive role to play in the renewal of US democracy.

Referring to colleges and universities as among the country's "most valuable laboratories for civic learning and democratic engagement," the report recommends civic engagement pedagogy as "an undisputed educational priority for all of higher education, public and private, two-year and four-year." This type of education, it concludes, is central to local, national, and global economic prosperity, the social and political well-being of all people, and citizens' ability to take collective action to address public issues at all political levels.<sup>4</sup>

These statements by the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement build upon earlier conclusions of the AACU. Its 2004 report, *Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree*, states that a widespread consensus had been reached among higher education institutions that "civic, social, and personal responsibility" was an accepted and desired learning outcome of a college education.<sup>5</sup>

Since then-president Elinor Ostrom's call to action in 1996, the American Political Science Association (APSA) has renewed its commitment to and search for ways to reinvigorate democracy in the United States through innovative political science education. As Ostrom advocated, "Learning effective skills of citizen involvement and responsibility are critical to a fully representative democracy."<sup>6</sup> She created the APSA Task Force on Civic Education, which noted in 1998 that "current levels of political knowledge, political engagement, and political enthusiasm are so low as to threaten the vitality and stability of democratic politics in the United States." The report continued by positing that it is our responsibility as political science educators to help address this problem.<sup>7</sup>

Many contemporary works agree with this goal of strengthening democracy through political science education.<sup>8</sup> Civic engagement education pioneer Richard Battistoni exhorted in an introduction to a 2000 teaching symposium in the journal *PS: Political Science & Politics* that political science as a discipline has been and should remain at the forefront of the development of effective civic engagement education.

This pedagogy becomes even more important and possible as hundreds of public and private colleges and universities add the goal of increasing students' civic engagement to their mission statements. Many have taken the additional steps of creating offices or centers of civic engagement, starting fellowships for faculty to create civic engagement courses, and creating special award categories for faculty civic engagement.<sup>9</sup> In addition, peer-reviewed publishing venues for articles on civic engagement pedagogy, such as the *Journal of Political Science Education*, are proliferating, and the APSA's own *PS: Political Science & Politics* has regularly included articles in the past 10 years about civic engagement pedagogy.

Responding to increased interest in fostering better teaching in the discipline as a whole, the APSA has created a yearly Teaching and Learning Conference, which has had to add a second civic engagement pedagogy track to accommodate burgeoning interest. Prominent research institutes such as the Carnegie Endowment have created programs to foster quality civic engagement pedagogy. National interdisciplinary organizations such as AACU and Campus Compact have ardently pursued this agenda. In short, academic society and the discipline of political science have begun to incorporate the development of civically engaged citizens as an accepted goal of their programs and course offerings.

One may wonder why, despite past failures, higher education is finally listening to Dewey and other Progressives. I posit four reasons why civic engagement pedagogy is becoming an accepted practice. First, community service is a regular activity for today's college students. For example, the annual freshmen survey conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles's Higher Education Research Institute determined in 2011 that 87.9% of college freshmen had frequently or occasionally participated in community service in the year before entering college, with 57.4% reporting participating as part of a class. This number represents a large increase since volunteerism hit a low of 66% among college freshmen in 1989. A large majority, 69.7%, of the students in the 2011 survey also stated that they considered "helping others in difficulty" as an "essential" or "very important" objective in their lives, and this objective was ranked third behind raising a family and being financially comfortable. This concern for others has been on a steady rise, from 66.7% in 2006 and 61.4% in 2001.<sup>10</sup> Such a snapshot of college freshmen suggests that the rising calls for civic engagement education at the collegiate level are connected to changes in social and personal values among undergraduates and thus may have a stronger foundation upon which political scientists can build.

Second, the student population has changed. No longer are universities and colleges home to only white, mostly upper-middle-class, males between the ages of 18 and 24. More women, more ethnic and racial minorities, and more older students who have started or restarted their studies after age 25 are now entering institutions of higher learning.<sup>11</sup> This expanding student population comes from a wider variety of social and economic backgrounds and educational experiences and thus needs different types of instruction beyond the traditional lecture model. As William Newell writes, this diversity means that multiple tools of communication

are needed as a “powerful complement” to traditional educational methods.<sup>12</sup> Older students may be accustomed to more hands-on applications of knowledge because of workplace experience, and many students respond positively to the type of problem-based projects inherent to much civic engagement pedagogy.<sup>13</sup>

This changing population raises a third reason why the incorporation of civic engagement education is more likely to work this time. While the rising rate of student applications for financial aid certainly correlates to rising college costs and declining economic conditions, it also is due to an increase in options in financing a college education for the lower and middle classes. In his 2012 State of the Union address in which he called for increased government aid options, President Barack Obama stated, “Higher education can’t be a luxury—it is an economic imperative that every family in America should be able to afford.”<sup>14</sup> Yet as the federal government has gotten more involved in financing options for higher education, now ranging in the billions of dollars, it increasingly scrutinizes how that money is spent. Colleges and universities that receive government money—which means almost all of them—have been asked to account for the success of their programs in creating productive citizens.<sup>15</sup> Thus, as Fear and Sandmann predicted in 1995,<sup>16</sup> instructors can only expect more calls to demonstrate how courses and programs are strengthening the American citizenry. Our success now rests not on just teaching specific job skills, but also on American citizens’ abilities to maintain a democratic system.

Finally, evidence that a primary method of civic engagement pedagogy—that is, service-learning<sup>17</sup>—works is an additional reason why civic engagement pedagogy can find a place in higher education at this time. Ample assessment evidence now exists to show that well-organized and well-planned service-learning courses can enhance student subject-area learning and move beyond volunteering.<sup>18</sup> Beginning with Battistoni and Hudson’s path-breaking volume in 1997,<sup>19</sup> political science educators have begun to demonstrate and research effective service-learning practices in the discipline. Since their volume was released, service-learning and other active-learning approaches have been expanded to all disciplinary subfields, all levels of instruction, and all types of higher education institutions. The selections in this book demonstrate the variety of success.

As noted earlier, a more diverse student population also means that more pedagogical options must be provided. Many more structural and evidentiary foundations support the work of political science instructors than in the past, so our efforts no longer wallow in wishful thinking and result in, as Stephen Leonard suggests, “Pure Futility and Waste.”<sup>20</sup> Further, Ehrlich (2000), Dalton (2009), and others cited throughout this book note that concern for one’s community has now become a norm among college students, and like the students in the 2011 UCLA survey, most have some significant precollegiate exposure to community-based work. In sum, rising societal and governmental support for student work in communities and innovative teaching approaches has helped political scientists pursue effective civic engagement pedagogy and achieve the goals Ostrom and others have set for us, thereby creating an engaged citizenry.

But what is meant by “engaged citizenship”? How do we reach that goal through our teaching? To answer these and other questions, this discussion now moves to defining the key terms involved in achieving this goal and distinguishing among community service, civic engagement, and political engagement.

## DEFINITIONS AND PARAMETERS IN CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT PEDAGOGY

One reason the push for civic engagement education failed to bear fruit in the past may be due to a lack of understanding of goals, terms, and effective methods. Clear definitions of the terms involved, such as the distinctions between volunteering and service-learning and among civic, political, and community engagement suggest that political scientists often are arguing very different points. Without recognized theoretical parameters and the linkage of these ideas and theories with pedagogical practices, we will continue to muddle through these debates. The following is not meant to suggest definite resolution can be provided to address all concerns, but only to set a baseline for discussion.

### *1) Why is civic engagement education **not** the same as volunteering?*

Volunteering has an important place in the building of all types of communities. However, the emphasis is on activity that benefits a recipient, client, or partner. The benefit to the volunteers lies in building this community of which they may be a part or the sense of emotional well-being that comes from knowing that others were helped. A connection to academic learning is not required, though it may help in citizens’ personal growth as they become aware of the problems, situations, and difficulties faced by others. It also does not require any examination of political structures, power relationships, or ideas that may be contributing to or preventing resolution of the issue for which one is volunteering. In addition, reflection is not necessarily part of the activity—volunteering can be a one-time event unconnected to the rest of a citizen’s life.<sup>21</sup>

### *2) How is civic engagement education different from an internship?*

Internships are now more commonly seen as a way to advance students’ career development. A benefit to the community from the work done while a student is engaged in an internship is not required, nor is reflection on how that type of career may benefit the community. The internship should be connected to traditional academic learning, but it need not always have a direct connection to classes taken. While models are presented in this book that bridge this gap, internships do not necessarily entail gaining any knowledge of or connection to the community nor do they necessarily add to one’s understanding of the political system or political issues. It is hoped that many internships do more than provide job training, but again, additional educational or community value and connections are not consistently required.

### 3) *What is the difference between civic engagement and political engagement?*

Civic engagement can be seen as a larger, more encompassing term, whereas political engagement grows out of civic engagement either directly or indirectly. In essence, civic engagement is a catch-all term that refers to an individual's activities, alone or as part of a group, that focus on developing knowledge about the community and its political system, identifying or seeking solutions to community problems, pursuing goals to benefit the community, and participating in constructive deliberation among community members about the community's political system and community issues, problems, or solutions. It means actively participating in and seeking to influence the life of the community, whether motivations emanate from self-interested reasons, moral principles, altruistic concerns, political viewpoints, or any combination thereof. Civic engagement includes a wide range of activities, such as collecting and disseminating information; voting; working voter registration drives; designing, distributing, or signing petitions; participating in civic and political associations; attending public meetings, rallies, or protests; and entering into public or private discussions of community and political issues via various formats.<sup>22</sup> It also may include coproduction actions, wherein community members collectively deliver services that the political system lacks sufficient will or capacity to provide,<sup>23</sup> or it may become political engagement.

Political engagement refers to explicitly politically oriented activities that seek a direct impact on political issues, systems, relationships, and structures. For example, participating in a community recycling program or working with a local youth group may not necessarily have an explicit political goal, though these may have a community goal and indirect political implications. On the other hand, working to enact community laws regarding recycling or gain government aid for low-income school districts are actions directly connected to changing political structures or decisions.<sup>24</sup> These are examples of *political* engagement. However, voting is an activity that may be included in both the broader civic engagement category and the narrower political engagement category, exemplifying that there can be significant overlap between these two categories.

Regardless of which type of engagement is sought, both civic and political engagement activities are distinct from volunteering in several ways. Civic and political engagement include connection to the political and community components involved and reflection upon the consequences of one's actions. These activities also empower participants to find common means to address common concerns. Third, both require active rather than passive participants; that is, individuals who do more than just watch community or political developments. Democracy cannot thrive as a mere spectator system.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the ultimate goal of this volume is to encourage the development of capable citizens who have the confidence, knowledge, skills, and motivations to maintain a dynamic, vibrant democracy. Political scientists need to advance in this direction now, lest we lose existing momentum much as political scientists in the 1920s and 1930s did.<sup>26</sup> The next section explores proven pedagogical methods to reach this goal.



## PEDAGOGICAL METHODS: FROM ACTIVE AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING TO SERVICE-LEARNING

Returning to Dewey, who argued that people learn best when they join their knowledge with actions, many teacher-scholars have been moving beyond traditional lecture formats<sup>27</sup> to increase student understanding of political theories, ideas, processes, relationships, systems, and structures. Their methods center around the concept of “active learning,” in which “learners participate genuinely and meaningfully in the learning process [because it] enables them to modify their prior knowledge and construct their own understanding.”<sup>28</sup> In this process, educators replace a single-exchange type of teaching, wherein instructors impart knowledge to students and students return that knowledge in exams and papers, with a multidirectional exchange of knowledge between students, between students and teachers, and, potentially, but not necessarily, between students and community members. These active learning exchanges broaden student learning beyond facts and theories. Students are empowered to engage in and find solutions to problems students see as relevant to their lives. Evidence has shown that when teachers provide information in an active environment, students gain deeper levels of insights into the material because they advance their critical thinking and analytical skills and learn how to connect ideas with consequences (see Chapters 11 and 12). In essence, they learn better and retain the information longer.<sup>29</sup> There are many varieties of active-learning pedagogy, including experiential education options such as internships (Chapters 14 and 18), simulations and problem-based learning (Chapters 7 and 9), and service-learning (Chapters 8, 10, 15–17, and 19).

Several examples presented in this book are best characterized as service-learning pedagogy. While there are many definitions of this term, the authors in this volume defer to Bringle and Hatcher’s version:

a credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.<sup>30</sup>

As the authors go on to explain, service-learning is distinct from volunteering because the service activities are directly related to course material and integrated within course learning goals, oral and written reflection activities, and graded assignments.<sup>31</sup> As Dicklitch (2003) explains, “Service learning, when done properly, weds academic rigor with real civic engagement.”<sup>32</sup> Its ultimate goals are to advance students’ understanding of course materials through hands-on use of course knowledge as well as to provide a positive experience of connecting subject interests with civic participation, inculcating the value of civic participation, and teaching skills for productive civic participation.<sup>33</sup> In short, service-learning seeks to empower students through building the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences to become capable, effective, and successful citizens.

As many of the contributors to this volume explain, creating a workable civic engagement class involves finding a community partner appropriate to course learning objectives, regardless of which active-learning method the course employs. Lisman explains that one must establish these partnerships based on mutual goals, benefits, and values in a long-term, sustained commitment to achieve concrete successes in the community and the classroom.<sup>34</sup> Sometimes these courses include solving problems or addressing needs identified by the community partner (Chapters 9, 10, 14, and 17); other times, students identify community problems or hindrances, such as power relationships, that must be dealt with before solutions can be enacted (Chapters 7–8, 11–12, 15–16). Either way, the gains and advances in knowledge should be reciprocal and collaborative to empower both students and the community to find resolutions and for educators to successfully teach course material and foster civic engagement values.

If instructors and community partners have communicated goals, needs, and values well beforehand, instructors can properly prepare students for their civic and political engagement activities. As Colby et al. note, lack of student preparation can be disastrous and undermine the entire enterprise. Instructors also must clearly communicate to students how the civic engagement activities advance the academic learning goals of a course. This connection will be lost, however, without structured reflection that pushes students to analyze the substantive political issues, causes, and systemic components of the need or problem encountered in the activity as well as to evaluate personal assumptions, beliefs, values, and identities and how these were affected by the activities. Finally, Colby et al. and Lisman remind us that, as instructors, we must return to the community partner after the activity has occurred to close the communication loop and discuss how and where the students' ideas and actions were most or least helpful to the community partner, both to learn how we can better prepare students and structure assignments and to ensure the continued compatibility of course, institutional, and community partners' goals.<sup>35</sup>

The successes of these pedagogical methods are now being recognized, and instructors are getting better at discerning exactly what is needed for this success to occur. The selections provided in Section Two of this book<sup>36</sup> provide examples in all subfields in political science, Section Three explains curricular and extracurricular issues and options, and Section Four explores best practices in assessment of this pedagogy so that instructors can gather further quality evidence of its effects. Nevertheless, many challenges still await political scientists as we try to advance civic engagement pedagogy.

## **CHALLENGES TO PRACTICING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PEDAGOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

As Macedo et al. stated, “[S]chools have played and will continue to play an essential role in promoting civic education and engagement in the United States.”<sup>37</sup> That said, instructors face many challenges in actually implementing civic engagement

education, including concerns over political indoctrination, the academy's overly rigid and outdated reward structures, and lack of investment and training in effective civic engagement pedagogy. While simple inertia may partially encompass the two latter concerns, faculty, administrators, and government and societal actors continue to misunderstand the nature and requirements of effective civic engagement pedagogy. This fundamental problem underlies all three concerns. Let's take a moment to explore each concern and how it might be overcome.

First, the academy is regularly blamed for a perceived liberal political bias. This claim is particularly relevant for political science, but a required partisan viewpoint is not part of proper civic engagement pedagogy. The value of participating in a democratic society does not solely or even mostly exist in just a left- or right-wing political agenda. It is a value of democracy as a whole and is inherent to the fundamental freedoms upon which democracies are created. Political scientists can respond to these claims when they arise by demonstrating how we encourage and allow students to express and question different political viewpoints, as Beaumont evidences in Chapter 3. This does not mean we will avoid political conflicts. But as Donahue reminds us, conflict can be instructive in itself, and civic engagement and "[s]ervice-learning instructors are at an advantage in creating environments for worthwhile learning because the pedagogy demands reflections from students."<sup>38</sup> The reflective tools and examples provided in this book can be used for both classroom- and nonclassroom-based pedagogical activities and, as Donahue suggests, to model appropriate, civil responses to facilitate negotiation, transformation, and growth in examined political views without preferential treatment to specific political party ideologies.<sup>39</sup> Instructors also can point to evidence, such as that provided by Beaumont et al., that civic engagement courses do not significantly alter political viewpoints, but they can enhance or deepen the politically neutral value of being civically engaged. It is thus more a quest to increase political motivation than to induce political indoctrination.<sup>40</sup>

Second, changes in academic reward structures must be promoted. A somewhat sympathetic Stephen Leonard argued that recent efforts to promote civic engagement in higher education, like those of political scientists for the past century,<sup>41</sup> were bound to fail due to significant structural obstacles to their success. The biggest obstacle was the need for "a monumental reconstruction of American academic culture" away from a model in which only a large volume of publications meaningfully contributed to an academic's success. In essence, he suggested, as long as the academy was apathetic about valuing civic engagement in its teaching professionals, it could not genuinely promote civic engagement in its students.<sup>42</sup> It is well known that publishing the traditional scholarship of discovery guarantees tenure and promotion at most higher education institutions, whereas teaching and service run a distant second and third, respectively. Academics need to heed Boyer's call, however, and move beyond this single vision of scholarship and definitions of valuable contributions to academic institutions. There needs to be an acceptance that the scholarship of teaching (SoTL) is fundamental to the purpose of academic institutions because SoTL requires academics to critically examine what we do, how

we do it, and whether or not we are really contributing to the collegiate mission of educating students.<sup>43</sup> SoTL skeptics need to consider how intellectually rigorous this scholarship is, and newcomers need to be taught proper techniques of SoTL. The advent of several peer-reviewed interdisciplinary SoTL journals since the 1990s and the creation in 2005 of one in political science, the *Journal of Political Science Education*, demonstrate that sufficient quality scholarship exists and can find critical and rigorous outlets.

Yet political scientists also need to reconsider the place of civic engagement pedagogy in scholarship, teaching, and service and the relative weight of these categories for a higher education institution in the 21st century. Part of this challenge includes advancing the understanding that civic engagement can rightly belong in all three categories, rather than being pigeonholed under service. The recommended changes will differ depending upon the type of institution and the size of its student body, but those in academics can no longer remain wedded to the supremacy of one type of scholarship so high above all else and a rigid division and outdated hierarchy among these three potentially comingling cores of our jobs. Otherwise, we will become trapped in our own inertia (an outcome Leonard suggests is a real possibility)<sup>44</sup> and lose the opportunity to make civic engagement pedagogy an integral part of 21st-century higher education.

Finally, political scientists must work to adapt support structures at our colleges and universities to foster investment in the unique necessities of effective civic engagement pedagogy. Untenured faculty need to have the additional work and time investment inherent to these courses and activities valued for promotion and tenure. All faculty need additional conference and fellowship support to develop their civic engagement pedagogy, test ideas, and get crucial feedback on preliminary drafts of publishable work. Creating, enhancing, and continuing civic engagement courses and activities are more time- and energy-intensive than most other courses in part because few faculty have been trained in how to appropriately choose and use active-learning and service-learning methods to achieve civic engagement outcomes. This type of pedagogy simply was not taught as part of graduate training in the past and in most cases still is not taught.<sup>45</sup> It is also more time-consuming due to the nature of these courses, which require organizing and managing many groups both within and outside the university community at multiple times, a difficult and constant juggling act that is not part of normal course workloads. Further, an educator's continual quest to find resources to support the associated activities siphons off even more time and energy and, again, is not part of traditional course preparation and instruction.

Therefore, the authors in this volume advocate not only for systematically including civic engagement pedagogy in the promotion, merit, and tenure system, but also for colleges and universities to devote significant, reliable resources to faculty as they investigate, develop, implement, and maintain civic engagement pedagogy. These resources must encompass support at all stages of program and course development. Funds are required for conference attendance, research support, service-learning activities, and administrative assistance, possibly through

graduate or undergraduate student workers, in addition to reconsidering time and workload allocations.

All of these challenges require political scientists to better inform coworkers, administrators, and key societal and governmental players about exactly what is being done, how it is effective, and why civic engagement education is vital to the country's future. Without a doubt, we do face limitations in addressing these challenges. Among these is that we cannot overstate our claims. As Rimmerman reminds political scientists and McHugh and Mayer (Chapter 22) agree, no one course or activity can create a democratically engaged citizen.<sup>46</sup> Instead, civic engagement pedagogy needs to be part of the larger revision of the mission and corresponding actions of colleges and universities to give students opportunities to go beyond what Harward and Shea in Chapter 2 call horizontal, or episodic, participation. They need to be exposed to these opportunities early, such as in first-year experiences and freshmen seminars, and exposed often through multiple types of engagement networks, including extracurricular activities (see Strachan and Senter, Chapter 24) and construction of formal academic plans of study (see Meinke, Chapter 20).<sup>47</sup> Service-learning and other active-learning methods can advance the goal of creating effective, capable, and engaged citizens, but only if they are a part of larger institutional plans and if faculty and staff continue to receive support from government and societal actors.

A second limitation is that this is a time of stretched resources. Both public and private colleges and universities must do more with less financial support. As such, it is even more imperative that rigorous research on the benefits and limitations of civic engagement pedagogy be developed, as discussed in Section Four of this book. Without demonstrable results in teaching, research, and service, there will be difficulty in getting and maintaining sufficient resources to capitalize on the gains that civic engagement pedagogy has made thus far.

In addition, not every educator and not every student is well-suited to the service-learning method prominent in several chapters in Section Two, and not everyone should be asked to try to adapt to just this one method of active learning. A variety of options are needed to develop civically engaged citizens, including adapting foundational teaching methods, increasing collegiate extracurricular activities that involve civic engagement, and adding web-based learning (See VanVechten and Chadha, Chapter 11). All options should be equally respected, assessed, and rewarded by the academy as they help students become capable and effective citizens by advancing their knowledge and their critical thinking, research, oral presentation, and writing skills. Further, some students work full-time and may not be able to devote the extra time that service-learning courses often require. Political scientists should be wary of mandating only the service-learning method and remember that other activities outside of the classroom may have more flexible scheduling (see Chapters 5 and 24) and can also be part of an active-learning approach. As educators develop both course- and noncourse-based options, we need to ensure that we are creating worthwhile, meaningful, and valuable civic engagement experiences, lest civic engagement become a distasteful chore.<sup>48</sup>

Lastly, political scientists need to remember that we are not alone in this endeavor, and we cannot achieve our goals by operating at the collegiate level only. As Colby et al. remind us, we can look to primary and secondary schools as partners. K-12 education can and should provide youth with a foundation for citizenship by teaching students their fundamental civic and political rights and responsibilities and the basic workings of the American political system. In addition, life experiences, or one's "informal education[,] is critical for an informed and thoughtful electorate." However, Colby et al. also argue that relying on life experiences is inadequate and incomplete and that current evidence suggests that most high school civics programs do not fully achieve their goals.<sup>49</sup> O'Shaughnessy (Chapter 19) and Owen (Chapter 20) explore civic engagement options for high school students, and political scientists must reach out more to K-12 educators as partners in the quest to advance civic engagement education for all the country's youth. We are limited in the extent to which we can impact K-12 education. Nonetheless, we should use our resources and our research capabilities to help educators at these levels and bring them into this conversation.

## CONCLUSION

The structure of the student body at institutions of higher learning has changed. The federal government now asks faculty to be more accountable for our work both financially and in terms of developing citizens capable of fulfilling the country's needs. Communities increasingly look to our institutions as partners in common missions. Given these 21st-century realities, higher education institutions cannot be expected to look as they did in the last century. As understanding politics is our discipline, we are in a unique position to be at the center of these developments on our campuses and in our national and local communities. Political scientists can heed the call of the *Crucible Moment* and help direct the evolution of civic engagement pedagogy and research, or we can be spectators at a game on our own playing field. The following chapters show that political scientists have developed many models for how to pursue this goal and are accumulating the evidence to show what the best teaching practices are and why. Now is the time to capitalize on our achievements and build upon these authors' ideas and examples to assist in the fruitful evolution of our students' education and the country's future.