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**SMSU Civic Engagement 2004-2014: Insights from Multiple Data Sources**  
**STUDENT, STUDENT SERVICES and ATHLETICS PERSPECTIVE**

October 15, 2014

Draft#1 – Submitted by Christine Olson for HLC Review

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Question	Campus-wide Surveys of Civic Engagement: 2004 and 2009	NSSE 2008, 2011, 2013	SMSU Survey of Civic Engagement: Civic Minded Graduate Scale (administered annually to graduating seniors 2008-2014)	Service-Learning Course Outcomes (2010-2012)  AND Meaning of Civic Engagement ? (2013-2014)  AND Outcomes from 2008 <i>Making a Difference</i> courses
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**STUDENTS**

<p><b>In what ways are SMSU students civically engaged?</b></p> <p>(See chart below for specific example forms of service/volunteerism in community/region.)</p>	<p>Comparison <b>2004 with 2009 Student Survey of Civic Engagement:</b></p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">2004</th> <th style="text-align: center;">2009</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>-Voting.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">40%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-Awareness of current events.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">41%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">58%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-Active member grp/org.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-Reading newspaper as “text”.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">15%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">in course</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-Volunteering.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">33%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-Student club initiation of service project.....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">16%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">26%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-Taking part in protest or demonstration .....</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2004	2009	-Voting.....	40%	75%	-Awareness of current events.....	41%	58%	-Active member grp/org.....	20%	50%	-Reading newspaper as “text”.....	15%	42%	in course			-Volunteering.....	33%	40%	-Student club initiation of service project.....	16%	26%	-Taking part in protest or demonstration .....	5%	4%	<p>NSSE 2013</p> <p>-58% of Seniors believed that SMSU “very much or quite a bit” <b>helped them to become an informed and active citizen</b>; 60% felt SMSU <b>enhanced their ability to solve complex, real-world problems</b> (NSSE 2013)</p>	<p>SURVEY OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT(Seniors-2009-2014)</p> <p>Civic engagement through <b>STUDENT CLUB/ORGS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Frequent (1 or more/month) ~15%</li> <li>-Infrequent (less than 1/month) ~85%</li> </ul> <p>(about 40% students note they became involved with community through student clubs/orgs)</p> <p>Civic engagement through <b>ORGANIZATION NOT CONNECTED TO SMSU:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Frequent ~ 15%</li> <li>-Infrequent ~ 85%</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>In what ways are SMSU students civically engaged? (cont.)</b></p>	<p><b>Checklist for Civic Engagement</b> (“Please check ways in which you have been civically engaged in the last year?”2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Voting..... 74%</li> <li>-Talked about current events .....57%</li> <li>-Became aware of current events.....58%</li> <li>-Became active member of group or organization.....50%</li> <li>-Volunteered.....40%</li> <li>-Participated in fund raising run, walk, etc.....36%</li> <li>-Knowledgeable of electoral processes.....29%</li> <li>-Followed govt affairs.....26%</li> <li>-Displaying political button, sign.....19%</li> <li>-Volunteering for political candidate... 6%</li> </ul>		<p><b>Students more ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN IN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES more likely to VOLUNTEER and more likely to participate in campus events.</b></p>	
<p><b>To what extent are SMSU students enrolling in service-learning classes?</b></p>	<p>- <b>Approximately 14% of student respondents</b> (including Fresh, Soph, Jrs, &amp; Seniors) had taken a service-learning course in 2009 (Note: SL more narrowly defined in this survey vs. NSSE and CMG)</p>	<p>NSSE 2013 – Students are enrolling to the same extent as Carnegie Institutions (<b>about 2/3ds or 64% of students have had SL course by time he/she is Senior</b>) which is slightly higher than NSSE institutions (60%) and lower than Minnesota institutions as a whole (71%).</p>	<p><b>Approximately 53% of Seniors note that they have had at least 1 service learning course</b>, with about 1 in 5 students noting that they have taken three or more service learning classes</p>	

<p><b>In what ways do students say they benefit from service-learning and other forms of civic engagement?</b></p>			<p>Survey of Civic Engagement (Seniors) Civic Minded Graduate Scale – 2013:</p> <p>(1 = strongly disagree, 6 strongly agree)</p> <p><b>Civic Mindedness-KNOWLEDGE</b>          -Volunteer Opportunities (3.58 on 6.00 scale)          - Academic Knowledge and Technical Skills (3.77)          -Contemporary Social Issues (3.75)</p> <p><b>Civic Mindedness-SKILLS</b>          -Listening (3.91)          -Diversity (3.64)          -Consensus Building (3.50)</p> <p><b>Civic Mindedness – DISPOSITIONS</b>          -Value Community Engagement (3.80)          -Efficacy (3.75)          -Social Trustee of Knowledge(3.92)</p> <p><b>Civic Mindedness – INTENTIONS</b>          -My exp at SMSU have increased my motivation to participate in advocacy or political action groups when I graduate (3.61)          -Because of SMSU exp, I plan to stay current with local/national news after I graduate (3.97)          -Because of my exp at SMSU, I intend to be involved in volunteer service after I graduate (3.90)</p>	<p><b>SL Outcomes 2010-2012:</b></p> <p>-Avg # of hrs served: 15-20</p> <p>-About half had not had any previous volunteer exp</p> <p><b>-2/3 note substantial increase in self-confidence and desire to stay in college</b></p> <p><b>-3/ 4 noted significant increase in:</b></p> <p><b>-awareness of strengths and limitations;</b></p> <p><b>- ability to work independently;</b></p> <p><b>-enhanced classroom learning;</b></p> <p><b>-and sense of having made a useful contribution</b></p>
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<p><b>In what ways do they benefit from service-learning? (continued)</b></p>				<p><b>Post-test Results from IDST <i>Making a Difference</i> courses (2008):</b></p> <p><b>Scores <u>higher at post-test than pre-test</u> on <b>responsibility and motivation for the following</b></b></p> <p>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- volunteering and helping with social problems</li> <li>- helping w/ solving environ problems</li> <li>- influencing political structures</li> <li>-being aware of current events</li> <li>-assuming leadership role</li> <li>-voting</li> <li>-promoting racial understanding</li> </ul> <hr/>
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<p><b>In what ways do they benefit from service-learning? (continued)</b></p>				<p><b>Preliminary Post-test Results on Qualitative Measure: What does civic engagement mean to you?</b></p> <p><b>-LEP 400 Self-as-Citizen course (2013):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increase in differentiated/multi-faceted view of civic engagement</li> <li>-Increased ability to identify variety of concrete forms of civic engagement</li> <li>-Increased in sense of efficacy for civic engagement</li> </ul>
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<p><b>To what extent are SMSU students interested in taking service-learning courses?</b></p>	<p>Student Survey of Civic Engagement (2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-14% had taken service-learning course (SL defined narrowly)</li> <li>- 50% interested in taking service-learning course</li> <li>- 40% interested in taking community-based research course</li> </ul>		<p>Survey of CE (Seniors) 2009-2013</p> <p><b>-Approximately 53% of Seniors note that they have had at least 1 service learning course, with about 1 in 5 students noting that they have taken three or more service learning classes</b></p>	<p>-SL Outcome Data: <b>Close to 90% of SL students indicate an interest in taking another SL course</b></p>
<p><b>What keeps students from being involved with service and other forms of civic engagement?</b></p>	<p><b>Barriers to service/civic engagement (2009):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Time constraints (77%)</li> <li>-Lack of information (51%)</li> <li>-Live off campus (36%)</li> <li>-Course related commitments (35%)</li> <li>-Do not like to be alone when attending or participating in service event (26%)</li> <li>-Family commitments (24%)</li> <li>-Athletic commitments (21%)</li> <li>-Work commitments (9%)</li> <li>-Just not interested (9%)</li> </ul>		<p>Survey of CE (Seniors) 2009-2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited knowledge of volunteer opportunities (3.58 on 6 pt. scale)</li> <li>- Have adequate academic knowledge and skills to address community issues (3.76 on 6 pt scale)</li> <li>- Knowledge of community issues (3.66 on 6 pt scale)</li> </ul>	

<p><b>To what extent are SMSU students involved with service/volunteerism?</b></p>	<p>Comparison from <b>2004- 2009 Student Survey of Civic Engagement:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">2004</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-Volunteering.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">33%</td> <td style="text-align: right;">40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>-Student club initiation of service project.....</td> <td style="text-align: right;">16%</td> <td style="text-align: right;">26%</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Checklist for Civic Engagement</b> (“Please check ways in which you have been civically engaged in the last year?”2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Volunteer.....40%</li> <li>-Participate in fund raising run, walk, etc.....36%</li> <li>-Volunteer for political candidate..... 6%</li> </ul>		2004	2009	-Volunteering.....	33%	40%	-Student club initiation of service project.....	16%	26%	<p>NSSE 2013– SMSU Students reported significantly higher level of satisfaction with student-faculty interactions than comparable campuses (including, for example, working with faculty on activities other than coursework such as involvement with student groups, service-learning (45% indicated “very often or often”—12+% pts higher than MN, Carnegie, and NSSE 2013 campuses)</p>	<p><b>SURVEY OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT</b>(Seniors-2009-2014)</p> <p>Civic engagement through <b>STUDENT CLUB/ORGs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Frequent (1 or more/month) ~15%</li> <li>-Infrequent (less than 1/month) ~85%</li> </ul> <p>(about 40% students note they became involved with community through student clubs/orgs)</p> <p>Civic engagement through <b>ORGANIZATION NOT CONNECTED TO SMSU:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Frequent ~ 15%</li> <li>-Infrequent ~ 85%</li> </ul> <p><b>Students more ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN IN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES more likely to VOLUNTEER and MORE LIKELY to participate in campus events.</b></p>	
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## Forms of Service/Service Sites: Examples taken from Service-Learning, Student Clubs, Residential Life, and Athletics 2012-2014

Service-Learning Courses (n = 6 courses 2012-2014)		Student Clubs (This represents approximately 25% of clubs who have reported group activities 2013-14 using new online reporting process at CCE.)		Residential Life Halls	Athletics
A.H. Brown Elementary School	Lynd Public School	Food drive for Western Community Action	UNICEF Fund Raiser	Special Olympics	SMSU student-athletes correspond with more than 600 local elementary students as part of "Mustang Mail" -- a pen-pal program  Work-a-Thon -- Raking leaves for elderly individuals in the community  Host the annual "Smokefest" -- Regional cooking competition  Host the annual "AgBowl" -- Celebrating Minnesota agriculture  Host the annual "Mustang Shootout" -- Shooting clays competition  Host the annual "Drown SMSU Golf Classic"  Host the annual "Mustang Stampede" -- 5 & 10K walk/run
Achievement Learning Center	MACCRAY Elementary School	Jobs for Inmates (ed/advocacy for inmates preparing to make transition to work world)	Coats for Kids Drive	Bingo with Nursing Home Residents	
Coordinated Anti-Bullying Event	Marshall Area Special Olympics	Greenhouse project to help provide food for people who need healthier food (expanding to Pine Ridge Reservation)	FreeRICE Hunger Alleviation event	Helping elderly in community decorate for Christmas	
Anytime Fitness Avera	Marshall Area YMCA	Schwan's Fitness Program (assisted with developing wellness plans and measuring progress)	Thanksgiving Give Back Event – Initiated for Western Community Action (free Thanksgiving meals for WCA clients)	Preparing for and serving food at food shelf	
Bert Raney Elementary	Marshall Food Shelf		ResHALLoween (help with community trick or treating event)	Helping clean up Holy Redeemer School	
Block Nursing Program	Marshall Learning Alternatives			ResHalloween Volunteer	
Boulder Estates	Marshall Middle School			Reading Wednesdays	
Bowling Alley	MECLA			Eggstravagant Event	
Esther's Kitchen	Parkside Elementary School	Kick Out Homelessness – Kickball Tournament to initiate Homelessness Awareness/Advocacy Event	Relay for Life – Colleges Against Cancer event	Played games with kids at Western Community Action	
Gilmore Manor Nursing Home	Prairie Home Hospice			Raised money for Big Buddies	
Habitat for Humanity	Redwood River Cleanup			Made cards/posters for sick kids	
Headstart				Made tie blankets for New Horizons	
SMSU Health and	Restorative Justice Circles		Food Support Backpack Delivery		

Wellness Center Hill Street Place Somalian Family (tutoring) House of Hope Jen's Gems Johnson Memorial Kilowatt Community Center Kitchen Table Food Shelf Lee Mar Ranch Lincoln Public School Little Panthers Preschool	Rusty Bucket Safe Driving Advocacy (advocate for safe driving legislation) SMSU Fitness Center West Food Shelf Western Community Action Willmar Area Food Shelf Women's Rural Advocacy Center Heart to Heart (Mustang Mentor working with LEP 100 course)	Homelessness Sleep Out (homelessness advocacy)  Volunteer with SMSU Alcohol, Anxiety, and Depression Screening Days	(stuff backpacks delivered to elementary schools so kids have healthy treats during the weekend—Kids take home backpacks Fri, then return Mon to repeat next weekend)	Made tie blankets for Avera Hospital's blankets to babies program  Made Valentines, cookies, and tray favors for for nursing home residents  Decorated flower pots for nursing home residents  Made cards/wrote letters for solders overseas	Educated student residents about fair trade practices  Redwood River Cleanup  Promoting voting and provided information about where to go to vote/polling times  Assisted with Election Year Get out the Vote at SMSU	Host the annual "Mustang Gold Rush" raffle  Adopt-a-Highway program  Teams read to elementary schools in Marshall and surrounding communities  Numerous Mustang Booster Club events
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## CONCLUSIONS: Student, Student Services, Athletics and Civic Engagement

- Students at SMSU are involved with a variety of forms of civic engagement, with voting, awareness of current events, being a member/leader of a group or organization, and volunteering being the most frequent types reported. Among those who volunteer, a substantial amount of volunteering happens within group settings (e.g., student clubs/organizations, residential halls, and athletic teams).
- If considering whether students volunteer “at least one time” every year, a large majority of SMSU students indicate that they have engaged in service of some kind (~85%). However, if considered with respect to “frequent or regular volunteering”, the percentage of students who indicate volunteering at least one time per month or weekly drops to 15%. This could be improved.
- With lower division students enrolled in First Year Experience *Making a Difference* courses (2008) and, more recently, upper division students enrolled in LEP 400 courses, it seems most students have a global and general knowledge of the nature of civic engagement versus having a differentiated view (see *What does civic engagement mean to you?* Pre vs. Post-test from sample LEP 400 course). However, it is clear that after an intentional focus on forms, dispositions, etc. of civic engagement within the classroom context (often coupled with applied service/community-based learning experiences) students appear to readily grasp the multi-faceted nature of civic engagement. This suggests that critical reflection and intentional, explicit discussion of what it means to be an “engaged citizen” is important.
  - Along these lines, this awareness that students may not be able to spontaneously describe the notion of civic engagement may help explain the gap between senior responses in the Civic Engagement survey suggesting relatively low levels of civic engagement, while frequency data from residential life, student clubs, and athletics suggesting substantially larger numbers of students are civically engaged. In other words, students may be asked to help with a Saturday city-wide leaf raking day or they may agree to assume a leadership role in a club/organization, yet not consider both of those activities as forms of civic engagement. This indicates a need for the campus—both in academic and student services spheres—to be more intentional about explicitly discussing what it means to be an engaged citizen. For example, training could be done with RAs, student club leaders and Asst Coaches to help prepare them for facilitating reflection discussions after a civic engagement activity has occurred.
- SMSU student involvement with service-learning is on par with comparable NSSE and Carnegie institutions, though lower than Minnesota campuses as a whole. Both students and faculty place a high value on service-learning as pedagogy, with approximately 90% of students who have taken a service-learning course expressing enthusiasm about taking another course that includes service/community engagement. A key challenge to increasing the number of service-learning courses offered remains the time-intensive nature of setting up, tracking, and evaluating these experiences. SMSU is one of few MnSCU campuses that does not have a dedicated staff position—half time or full time- to assist with coordinating civic engagement efforts, which means both campus and community members are not able to benefit from the continuity and logistical assistance that comes with that. This is a loss for the campus and community, especially given the high level of intrinsic motivation on the part of students, staff and faculty.
- There is a need for making adjustments to selected measures, such as the Survey of Civic Engagement. This is currently in the works. Specifically, planned revisions of the Civic Engagement Survey include: 1) removal of items that are duplicated on other surveys as part of an effort to streamline the entire collection of surveys to be taken by graduating seniors, 2) update of the list of First Year Experience events that appear on the survey, and 3) other minor improvements in wording and formatting.
- This first round of evaluating service-learning has been provided useful data. Going forward, it will be important to establish an annual evaluation process that would involve evaluation of learning outcomes for all service learning courses taught in a given year. There is also a need for more systematic evaluation of what students are gaining from civic experiences done outside the classroom setting. While substantially improved, there is a continuing need for coordinating evaluation efforts across student activities, residential life, athletics and academic affairs. There is also a need for more regular and formal assessment of community sites and their experience with SMSU students, faculty and staff.
- Finally, the Engaged Citizen LEP AHA Report is in the process of being completed and will be added to this HLC 10-year summary upon completion in October 2014.

