



Connecticut | **Campus Compact**

Connecting for Good:
*How Colleges and Universities
Can Work Together to Improve
Connecticut's Civic & Economic Health*

Connecticut Campus Compact
Inaugural Presidents' Leadership Summit

September 13, 2013
Presidents Room, Woolsey Hall
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut



Sponsor of the Presidents' Leadership Summit



Welcome to the first Presidents' Leadership Summit sponsored by the Connecticut Campus Compact. We gather today to deliberate one of the most critical issues of our times: the civic mission of Connecticut's institutions of higher education. On the outer orbit of our discussion are major facts of life for us and for our students. The American labor market has been changed permanently, both by innovative technologies and by the competitive forces of worldwide trade. Climate is disrupted everywhere, creating havoc in communities large and small and costing billions of dollars in remediation. The communication of information is digital and immediate, simultaneously providing us with solutions while forming the basis for new problems.

Closer in, here in Connecticut, we have an economy that is recovering slower than in most other states. Energy is more expensive, our cost of living is higher, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor is nowhere more apparent than in our ranking as the state with the highest achievement gap in our public schools.

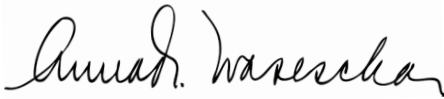
Colleges and universities are being called upon to help solve these problems. This is particularly true with reference to preparing a highly skilled workforce. It is also the case that there is widespread concern about the trajectory of college tuition, the concomitant rise in student loan debt, low graduation rates overall, and underemployment among recent college graduates.

As leaders of the intellectual community represented by our Connecticut colleges and universities, we respond in the affirmative, from our own bailiwicks, to the critics who ask whether college is still "worth" the investment. The benefits absolutely outweigh the costs, despite the enormity of these challenges. Still, we are called upon to demonstrate how and why that is true.

In today's colloquium, we are reaffirming our civic mission, our public purpose, as institutions of higher learning. Our focus will be on the transferability of civic skills to the workplace and the correlation between citizen participation and community resilience. Questions

arise about what this means to our students, to our institutions, and to the health of our state. How can we balance the scales, when the court of public opinion so heavily favors vocational preparation over equally important goals? What community partners can we tap to help lead the thinking on the broader, and interdependent, purposes of higher education? And what can we do collectively to have our voices heard?

I want to thank the members of the Presidents' Leadership Summit Planning Committee, Presidents Mary Papazian, Cathryn Addy, and Jeffrey von Arx, and Saul Petersen, Executive Director of Connecticut Campus Compact, for their significant contributions to planning this meeting. An inaugural event of this order begins as a big idea followed, inevitably, by a lot of detailed work. We are all collectively pleased to have you here among us to bring this big idea to fruition.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anna Wasescha". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'a' at the end.

Anna Wasescha, *Summit Chair*
President, Middlesex Community College

Agenda for Presidents' Leadership Summit

9:30 am **Arrival**

9:55 am **Opening remarks**

Peter Salovey, President of Yale University

10 am **Presentation and discussion**

Peter Levine (Yale '89) and Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg (Tufts and CIRCLE) will offer perspectives on the future role of higher education, then present an evidence-based analysis of institutional investment in civic engagement and education for citizenship. Among other outcomes, they will look at the possibilities for student success, social connectedness, and community prosperity and resilience to adversity.

10:30 am **Response panel and moderation**

Following the discussion, a representative and experienced panel of mayors, state government officials, and leaders from both socially responsible corporations and community-based organizations will respond to the presentation and issues raised by presidents, particularly as they relate to shared responsibility and opportunity.

11:30 am **Break**

11:45 am **Small-group roundtable engagement**

Following the break, we will reconvene for small-group deliberation on the issues raised.

12:45 pm **Lunch**

1:30 pm **Agreement and direction**

Representatives from each table will report on their discussions and offer direction and opportunities for collaboration.

2 pm **Close of summit**

Panelists

Richard Blumenthal, United States Senator for Connecticut

Chris Murphy, United States Senator for Connecticut

Denise Merrill, Connecticut Secretary of State

Patti Glassford, VP and CFO at GE Industrial

Stuart Parnes, Executive Director of Connecticut Humanities Council

Orlando Rodriguez, Senior Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children

Current Members of Connecticut Campus Compact

Asnuntuck Community College

Capital Community College

Central Connecticut State University

Connecticut College

Eastern Connecticut State University

Fairfield University*

Gateway Community College

Goodwin College*

Housatonic Community College

Manchester Community College

Middlesex Community College*

Mitchell College*

Naugatuck Valley Community College

Northwestern Connecticut

Community College

Norwalk Community College*

Quinebaug Valley Community College

Quinnipiac University

Sacred Heart University

Southern Connecticut State University

Three Rivers Community College

Trinity College

Tunxis Community College*

University of Bridgeport

University of Connecticut

University of Hartford

University of New Haven

University of Saint Joseph

Wesleyan University

Western Connecticut State University

Yale University

* denotes representation on the Board of Directors

Serving as Civic Anchors: Starting Points and Exemplars for Summit Discussion

There can arguably be a benefit to researching some tools to assist in the discussion of connecting campuses as civic anchors. This short list is aimed at providing such exemplars. Readers are encouraged to gather some information on each to assist in their discussions on the day of the summit.

I. Workplace Skills through Civic Life: Many of the skills that are developed through civic work, such as collaboration, perspective taking, deliberation, and broad-spectrum research, are all the things that employers are asking for; therefore, civic work, when done well, should develop workplace skills.

1. **Purdue University** <https://engineering.purdue.edu/EPICS/About>
Community service agencies need the help of people with strong technical backgrounds. Undergraduate students face a future in which they will need more than solid expertise in their discipline to succeed. They need educational experiences that can help them broaden their skills. The challenge is to bring these two groups together in a mutually beneficial way. EPICS is a unique program in which teams of undergraduates are designing, building, and deploying real systems to solve engineering-based problems for local community service and education organizations.

2. **Portland State University** <http://www.pdx.edu/unst/senior-capstone>
Capstone courses are designed by Portland State University's faculty to build cooperative learning communities by taking students out of the classroom and into the field. In Capstone courses, students bring together the knowledge, skills, and interests developed to this point through all aspects of their education, to work on a community project. Students from a variety of majors and backgrounds work as a team, pooling resources and collaborating with faculty and community leaders to understand and find solutions for issues that are important to them as literate and engaged citizens.

3. Augsburg College inside.augsburg.edu/publicachievement/background/core-elements

Through Public Achievement, people of all ages work with others to meet challenges and solve problems. They learn from each other the meaning of citizenship and democracy. Ordinary people do extraordinary things.

II. The College or University Web Portal: Enabling the broader community to connect appropriately and access resources.

1. Connecticut Campus Compact <http://blog.fairfield.edu/campuscompact/resources/ehub-resource-database>

The Campus Compact eHUB is a searchable online database of speakers, programs, and key literature that serves two important functions:

Builds the capacity of institutions to meet their civic engagement needs

Promotes the experts and expertise located right here in Connecticut, enabling professionals to highlight their work, practices, and initiatives

2. Kingsborough Community College <http://bkpublicscholars.org>

The Public Scholars project builds upon faculty members' own research projects and interests to develop strategic partnerships with community organizations for engaged scholarship.

3. Tufts University <http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/communitypartnerships>

Campus2Community (C2C) is a project site on TRUNK, a new online environment designed to facilitate teaching, learning, and assessment at Tufts. This Web resource was created to help develop and sustain connections between and among the Tufts campus and community partners. This site is designed for a wide variety of audiences, such as Tufts students (both undergraduate and graduate), Tufts faculty and staff, and community organizations and individuals. (<http://outreach.tufts.edu>)

III. Common Core Civic Competencies: Developing a set of civic competencies as a collective unit of higher education institutions.

1. Merrimack College <http://www.merrimack.edu/live/files/160-core-competencies-in-civic-engagement>

The policy paper provides a good review of civic competencies compartmentalized into Knowledge / Skills / Disposition / Action.

2. Association of American Colleges and Universities <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/civicengagement.pdf>

The utility of the Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialogue and understanding of student success.

3. Wagner College <http://wagner.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/campus-life/files/2013/01/CE.pdf>

Participation in the Co-Curricular Competency Program requires a long-term commitment from the participant, including attendance at monthly development sessions and meeting with a coach once a month. Successful students will complete two of the designated competencies in their first three years in the program, and then serve as peer reviewers for future members of the program. (<http://wagner.edu/campus-life/cccp>)

College Education at Crossroads: Why Connecticut Colleges and Universities Should Collaborate

by Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg and Peter Levine, CIRCLE at Tufts University, June 2013

The American public is putting the value of college education under increasing scrutiny. With a recent economic downturn, rising college costs, and high youth unemployment in the background, people are asking “is college worth it?” In a recent book by that title, one of the authors, a former secretary of education, concluded that college is *not* “worth it,” at least in financial terms for most people.¹

In this brief, we show that students are unsure whether their own college educations have given them individual economic advantage worth the cost of tuition. In today’s difficult economic circumstances, many graduates are not obtaining the jobs they had hoped for. Further, they rate civic learning and engagement far below job preparation as the goals of their own education. Indeed, for many Americans (including parents, and some elected leaders), the paramount purpose of college is to enhance the individual job prospects of students.

That goal may seem to conflict with the *civic* purposes of college, which are: (1) to prepare students to be active and responsible citizens, and (2) as institutions, to engage local people and to collaborate with other organizations to address public problems. We present some evidence here that communities perform much better economically when they have stronger civil societies. We suggest that colleges and universities benefit the economy most when they honor their civic purposes. We end by asking whether more ambitious and collaborative civic work would pay off even more in economic terms.

Does College Pay off Economically for Individual Graduates?

Recent college graduates question the value of their own college educations. A May 2013 study of college graduates by McKinsey & Company showed that college graduates feel underprepared for the jobs they desire but are holding jobs for which they are overqualified.² More than half say that they would have picked a different major or different school, knowing what they know now.

Importantly, after graduating from college, about half of college graduates haven't been able to find a job in the field that they hoped to enter – and this is true for 41% of graduates of the nation's top 100 colleges. Looking back at their career preparation in college, 18% wished they had more real experience, and 13% wished they had more practical skills development. In 2009, just 34.6% of graduating seniors either had a job or were considering a job offer. In 2011, relatively more, but a still low 45.2%, were in the same situation as they graduated from college.³

College presidents are somewhat skeptical of the direction that higher education is taking, and they are split in what they believe to be the primary role of higher education (Figure 1). Of the 1,055 college presidents who were surveyed by the Pew Research Center in 2011,⁴ 38% believed that higher education was going in the wrong direction, and fewer than half of the presidents believed that a college education was affordable.

College presidents are charged with an arduous task of allocating limited resources so that students who graduate from their institutions are able to reach their full economic and civic potentials. In this trying economic climate, the pressure on colleges and universities to produce a capable and prepared workforce is paramount.

Is Civic Engagement an Important Goal?

At the same time, colleges and universities have a larger role in educating students to become active promoters of democracy through high-quality civic learning, based not only in civic knowledge, but

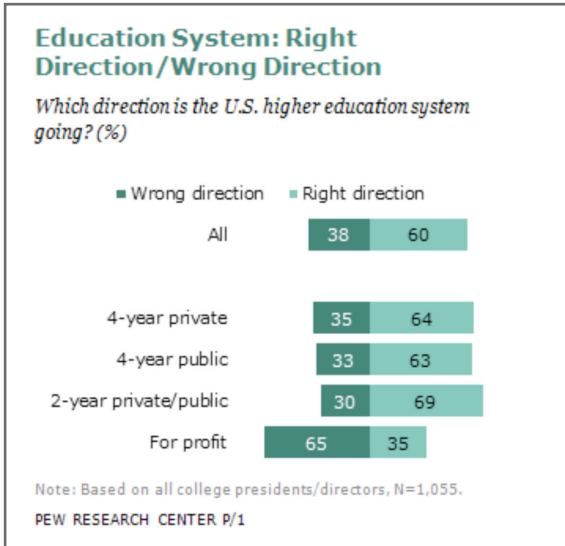


Figure 1

also in civic skills, values, and collective action.⁵ Most college presidents agree that civic learning is an important priority in higher education, but they disagree as to what extent civic learning should be prioritized. Overall, preparing young people to become responsible citizens is considered a “very important” role of colleges by three-quarters of college presidents (Figure 2).

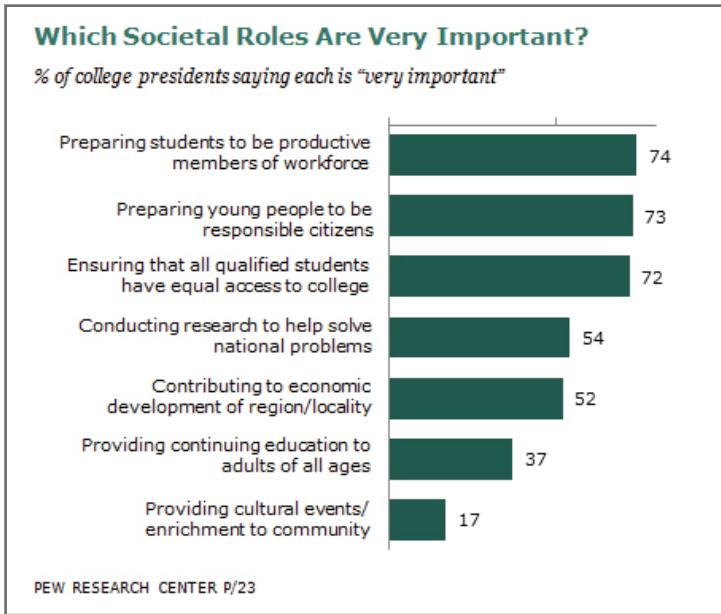


Figure 2

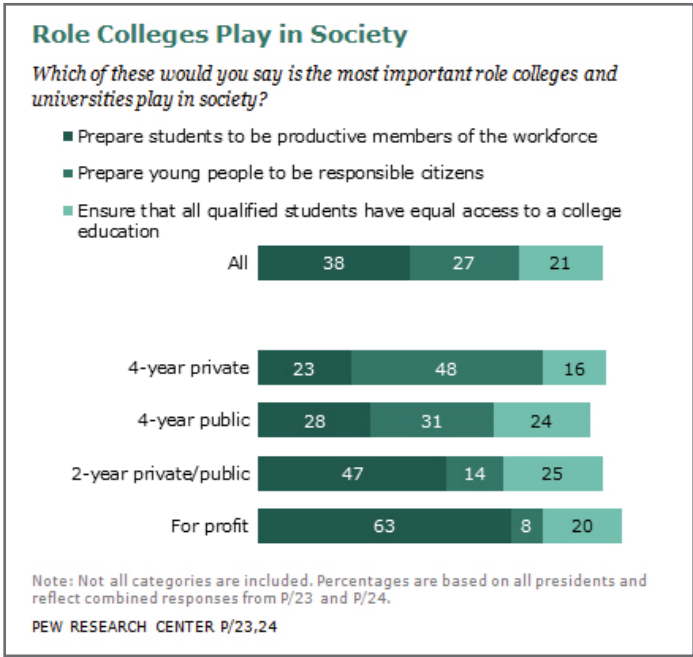


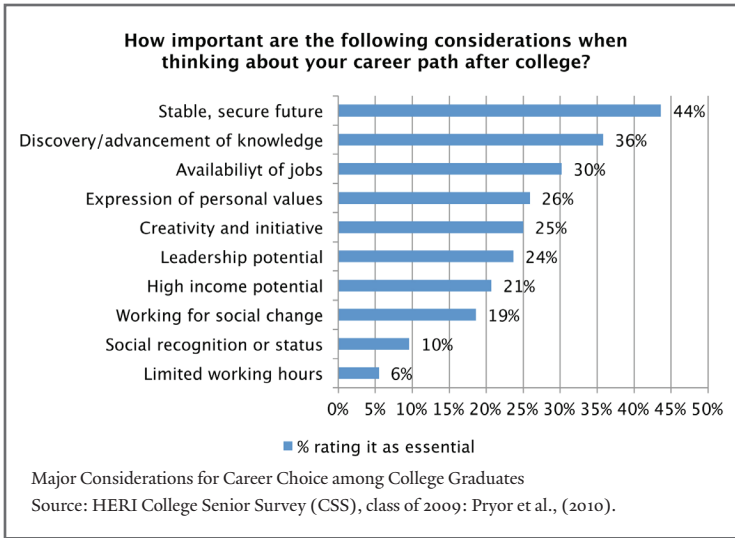
Figure 3

However, college presidents are split when asked how they would rank these priorities. Private 4-year college presidents are far more likely to think of preparation for responsible citizens as the top priority (48%) than the presidents of 2-year colleges (14%)(Figure 3).

Perhaps the disparity is related to how much resources presidents have to spend on each priority and what they feel their students must learn in order to be competitive in the tough labor market.

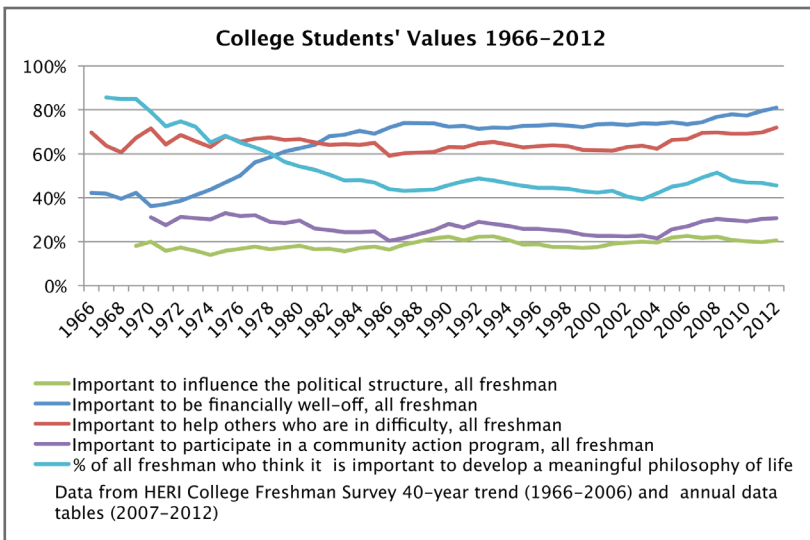
Finally, it's not entirely clear whether colleges and universities really are currently producing graduates who are civically prepared. On one hand, college seniors report engaging in a wide range of civic activities while in college, such as volunteering (71.4%) and discussing political issues (83.7%).⁶ On the other hand, job security and simple availability of jobs were far more important to them than most other criteria, including the possibility of working for social change, expression of creativity and initiative, and leadership potential (Figure 4).

Figure 4



Longitudinal trends indicate that college students are more likely to begin college with stronger emphasis on earning higher income, and less likely to want to develop a meaningful philosophy of life than college freshman of the past did. However, college students today are more likely to value helping others and participating in community action programs than they did a few decades ago, which means that college students do want to get involved in civic opportunities (Figure 5).

Figure 5



The Economic Benefits when Colleges and Universities Serve as Civic Anchors

Despite skepticism from students and policy makers, colleges and universities can have economic benefits. Their graduates can gain “human capital” (skills, knowledge, and habits that increase their value on the job market). In addition, institutions of higher education employ people directly, and they stimulate economic activity through their research and technology spin-offs, cultural programming, sports, tourism, and many other activities that have positive economic consequences.

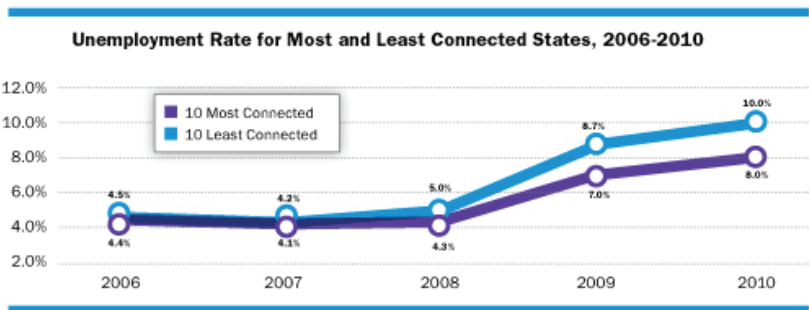
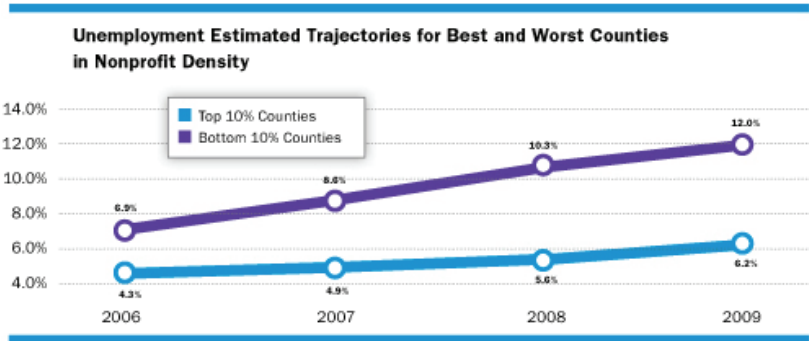
In this paper, we leave those benefits to the side because others have explored them and also because they do not provide arguments for *civic engagement* in higher education. A university that does nothing to engage with civil society might still create jobs by, for example, launching high-tech enterprises or attracting wealthy individuals to live nearby. The question we pose is whether a college or university can enhance the local economy by being a good citizen. That would mean:

1. Teaching and encouraging its own students and faculty to be active and constructive participants in the local community, both while they are at the institution and later in their lives; and
2. Playing a constructive role in local civil society by, for example, providing information for citizens, convening discussions, or forming partnerships with local governments and nonprofits in the public interest.

The specific economic benefits of these forms of engagement have not been extensively studied, but suggestive evidence is accumulating. First, CIRCLE researchers, with colleagues at the National Conference on Citizenship and University of Wisconsin professor Chaeyoon Lim, have found that communities (states, cities, and counties) that have more nonprofits per capita, and communities in which residents report a strong sense of social cohesion, trust, and pride for each other and the town, are more resilient to the negative effects of a recession,

even after considering the economic and demographic characteristics of the area prior to the recession. Communities with more “civic health” lose fewer jobs than otherwise similar communities with weaker civil societies.

We hypothesized several explanatory mechanisms for the relationship between civic infrastructure and employment. By engaging in civil society, citizens obtain marketable skills and network contacts and increase the likelihood of employment; civic engagement may nurture a sense of community pride, which causes people to invest locally; and a strong civic infrastructure may make local governments more responsive to the citizens’ collective needs and improve their performance, cutting waste and corruption.



Figures 6 and 7

Robert Sampson (a Sociology professor at Harvard) concluded from his twenty-year research of Chicago neighborhoods that the civic fabric of the neighborhood is one of the most important factors in predicting a wide range of outcomes for individuals.⁷ Sampson observes, “It is the totality of the institutional infrastructure [referring to nonprofit organizations and their connections] that seems to matter in promoting civic health and extending to unexpected economic vitality, whether in the form of rebuilding New Orleans or in rehabilitating vacant houses in economically depressed neighborhoods in cities around the country.”⁸

Research by Sean Safford (of Sciences Po’s Centre de sociologie des organisations) and others has shown that cities where leaders of different types of organizations can congregate and socialize, and importantly, make decisions together, are more likely to thrive economically than cities that cannot do so. Safford, for example, documented that the economic trajectories of two similar towns (Allentown, Pa., and Youngstown, Ohio) diverged significantly after the crises of global competition and automation hit them both. Allentown, which had a robust and inter-sectorial civic network that provided a place for corporate, nonprofit, and university leaders to get to know each other, deliberate, and make decisions together, beat the economic challenges by innovation and collaboration. On the other hand, Youngstown, which had a less robust civic network, did not provide a place for leaders from different sectors to meet and work together. By the 1990s, Allentown and Youngstown were starkly different in every way, ranging from median income to murder rates.

In Safford’s careful network analysis of the two cities, Lehigh University emerges as an important hub. Lehigh’s board included representatives of diverse local industries and unions, and the fact that board members knew each other allowed them to collaborate and develop a joint strategy when Allentown lost its traditional steel jobs.⁹

Implications for Higher Education in Connecticut

These studies do not focus on Connecticut, and they do not treat colleges and universities separately, but only as components of civil society. Nevertheless, they have suggestive implications for higher education in the state.

The studies suggest, first of all, that Connecticut's colleges and universities probably benefit the state's economy already through their civic engagement (and not merely through their purchasing and hiring). The research also reinforces the importance of collaboration and implies that higher education could expand its economic impact by networking and collaborating more.

Connecticut is home to some of the wealthiest towns in the nation, and also to some of the poorest, and the colleges and universities of Connecticut are civic assets.¹⁰ The multi-sectorial Connecticut Civic Health Advisory group made the following recommendations to the Connecticut colleges and universities (selected):

- Give students experiential opportunities in public engagement and problem-solving. Support service learning that is connected to systemic social, political, and economic change.
- Serve as sites for community and state-wide conversations and problem-solving on public issues and local challenges.
- Create opportunities for reciprocal learning and mentoring, so that students and local citizens learn together.

These are easier said than done without intercollegiate cooperation and collaboration. But as Sampson, Safford, and CIRCLE's research shows, strong social capital brings a sense of belonging, pride, and economic resiliency. It is critical that universities and colleges of Connecticut work together to improve student outcomes and Connecticut's economic and social well-being, and to increase equity.

Notes

- 1 William J. Bennett with David Wilezol, *Is College Worth It? A Former United States Secretary of Education and a Liberal Arts Graduate Expose the Broken Promise of Higher Education* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2013). In response to a criticism like this and others, the Obama administration created College Scorecard (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card>) to provide information to the parents and students who need to choose the best college for themselves, based on a wide range of criteria, including the predicted financial return on investment.
- 2 McKinsey & Company, *Voice of the Graduate* (May 2013), online at <http://mckinseysociety.com/voice-of-the-graduate>.
- 3 Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, "Class of 2011: Findings from the College Senior Survey," *HERI Research Brief* (May 2012), online at <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/briefs/CSS11-Brief.pdf>; and Ray Franke et al., *Findings from the 2009 Administration of the College Senior Survey (CSS): National Aggregates* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, 2010), online at http://www.heri.ucla.edu/PDFs/pubs/Reports/2009_CSS_Report.pdf.
- 4 Paul Taylor et al., *Is College Worth It? College Presidents, Public Assess Value, Quality and Mission of Higher Education* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2011), online at <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/05/15/is-college-worth-it/5/#fn-7679-10>.
- 5 The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2012). Accessed May 28, 2013, at http://www.aacu.org/civic_learning/crucible/documents/crucible_508f.pdf.
- 6 Franke et al. (see n. 3).
- 7 Robert J. Sampson, *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
- 8 *Ibid.*, 372.
- 9 Sean Safford, *Why the Garden Club Couldn't Save Youngstown: The Transformation of the Rust Belt* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).
- 10 Valeriano Ramos and Nancy Thomas, *2011 Connecticut Civic Health Index* (Washington, DC: National Conference on Citizenship, 2011), online at <http://ncoc.net/CTCHI>.

