CCSU General Education Assessment Retreat

January 2023

Civic Engagement Learning Outcome Results

Artifacts from Spring 2021 & Spring 2022

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Central Connecticut State University

Introduction

As part of our Davis Educational Foundation (DEF) grant, Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) faculty participated in assignment alignment workshops for the Civic Engagement general education learning outcome (General Education Objective 10). This rubric, created by Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), and adopted for use by CCSU faculty in 2014 was used for the alignment of these assignments. (Rubric attached.).

The rubric features six dimensions on a rating scale of 1 to 4, where 1 represents the lowest assessable performance and 4 represents the highest performance. A score of zero is awarded in cases where a student failed to address the dimension. The rubric is grounded in the following definition:

> Civic engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes."

The six dimensions of the rubric include:

- Diversity of Communities and Cultures
- Analysis of Knowledge
- Civic Identity and Commitment
- Civic Communication
- Civic Action and Reflection
- Civic Contexts/Structures

In Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, nine faculty participated in DEF workshops to align existing assignments to this rubric. Working in teams, faculty helped each other align their respective assignments to ensure that each dimension of the rubric was evident in the assignment. Those assignments were then given to students; upon completion, the assignments were submitted to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment for scoring by faculty at the annual winter assessment retreat.

In January 2023, a team of four CCSU faculty scored 100 student artifacts using the Civic Engagement (CE) rubric. The artifacts were contributed from the faculty participating in the DEF workshops and represented student work throughout the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters. For this particular rubric, students from all four undergraduate levels were scored at the retreat. This was done to mirror the scoring of these artifacts by the AAC&U VALUE Collaborative in Summer 2022. Having our artifacts scored at the national level allowed us to see how our students compared to those at other universities and colleges; it also allowed us to see how our scorers compared to the national certified AAC&U VALUE scorers.

For this report, we will focus on the results from the first-year and senior students to maintain consistency in reporting for all GenEd rubrics. The CE artifacts scored at this retreat represented 20 first-year students and 36 senior-level students from ten courses representing two of our four colleges/schools on campus: College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and School of Education and Professional Studies. Each artifact was scored by two different faculty and the scores were averaged.

It is important to note that our general education learning outcome assessment model measures student learning on skills and knowledge that are gained across their courses and academic career. As such, this assessment is not reflective of a single instructor nor a single course, but rather a reflection of where students are in their academic journey.

The results presented on the following pages are from our January 2023 assessment retreat, with comparisons between academic groups and demographic data.

Overall Results

As seen in Figure 1, the overall score for first-year students evaluated on their Civic Engagement artifacts was 2.0 and represents low-level performance. The score for each individual dimension fluctuated between 1.7 and 2.4, with the dimension *Civic Identity and Commitment* having the highest score. The area needing greatest attention is *Analysis of Knowledge* with a score of 1.7.

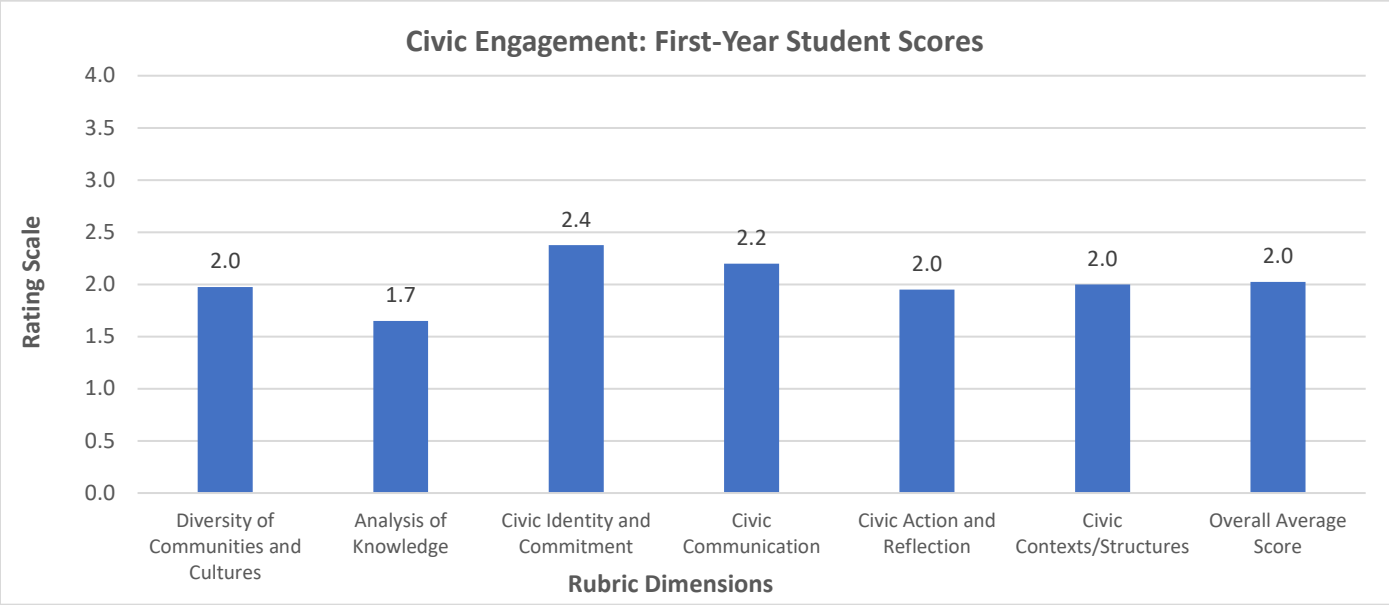

Figure 1. Overall scores of first-year students for Civic Engagement Rubric, n=20

Results of our senior-level students are shown in Figure 2. Seniors had an overall score of 1.9, which is 0.1 point lower than first-year students. With the exception of *Analysis of Knowledge*, seniors scored lower on all dimensions compared to first-year students, with the greatest differential of 0.6 points on *Diversity of Communities and Cultures*. Overall, the low scores on this rubric may be attributed, at least in part, to the fact this rubric is solely focused on civic engagement while our high-impact opportunities at CCSU are more aligned with community engagement.

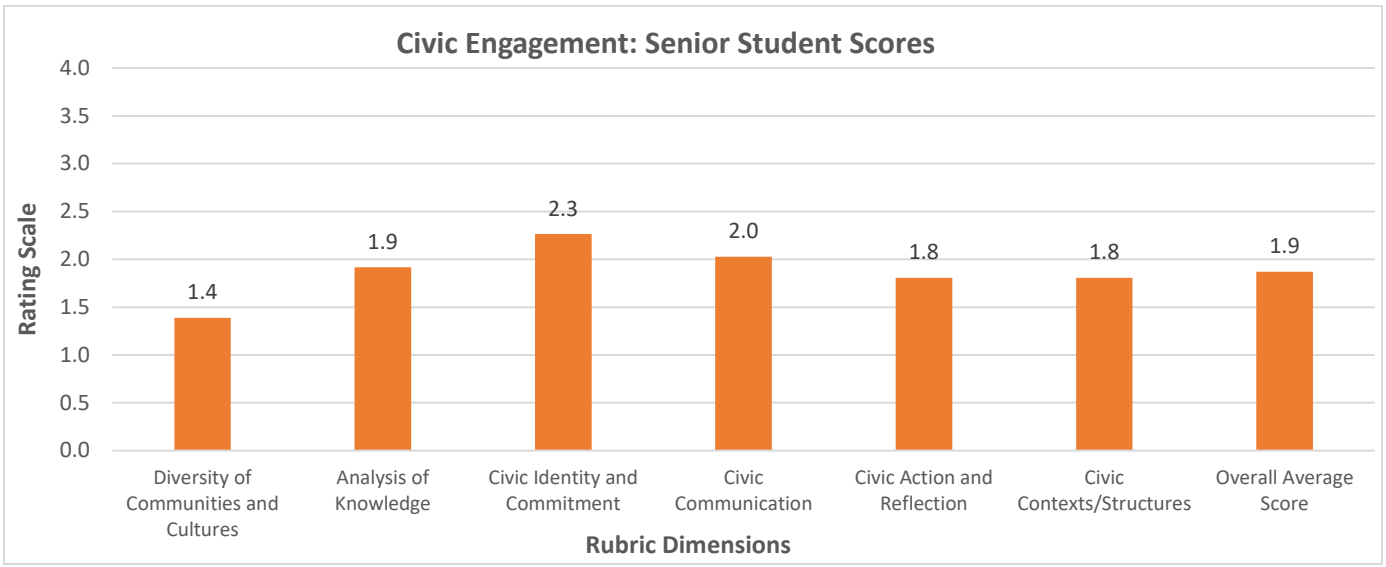

Figure 2. Overall scores of senior students for Civic Engagement Rubric, n=36

Data Disaggregated by Gender

When looking at the results of first-year students by gender, female students had higher scores overall and for each dimension other than *Analysis of Knowledge* (Figure 3). *Diversity of Communities and Cultures* had the largest differential in scores, with female students scoring 0.5 points higher than male students.

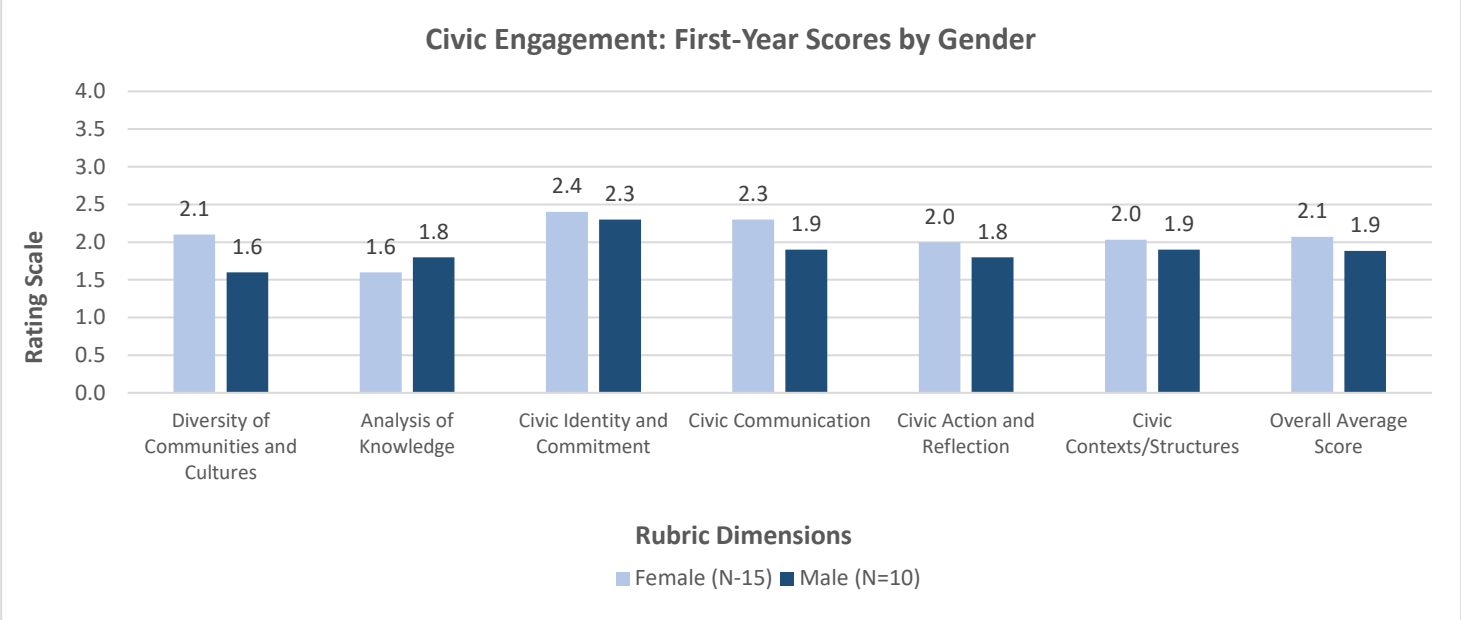

Figure 3. Scores of first-year students by gender

For senior-level students, female and male students had the same overall score, and the same scores on three of the six dimensions. Interestingly, both female and male senior students scored the lowest on *Diversity of Communities and Cultures*, with senior females scoring significantly lower than first-year females for this dimension. Comparing male students, the scores were very similar, with the largest differential of 0.2 points for *Civic Communication* and *Civic Contexts/Structures*.

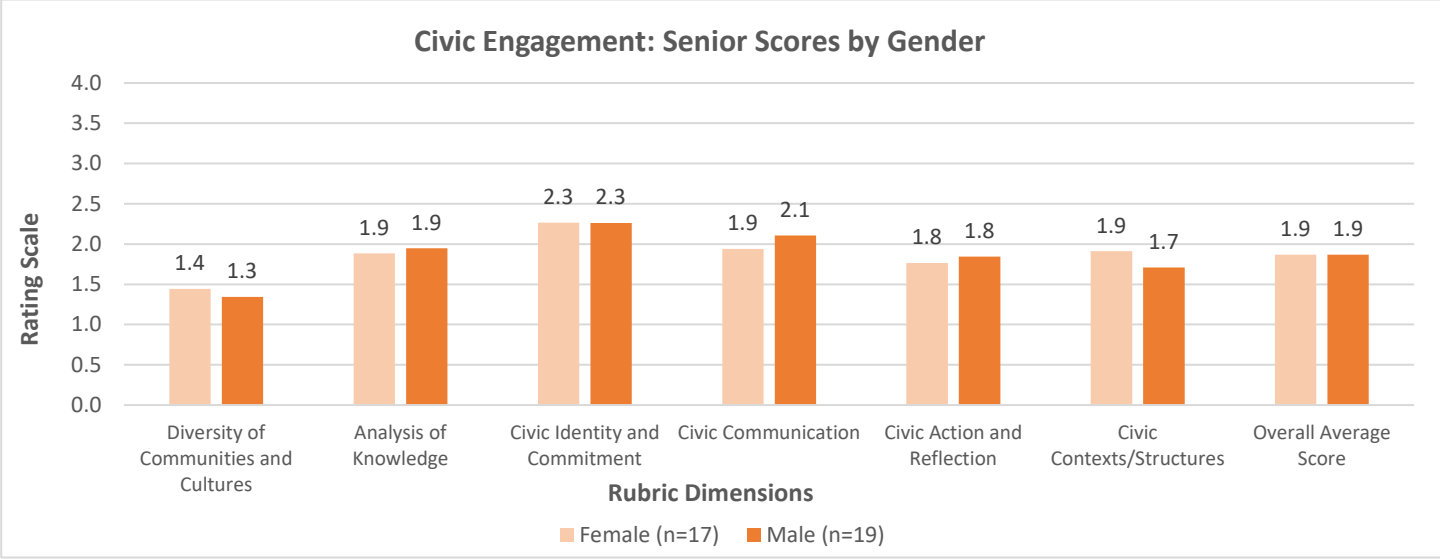

Figure 4. Scores of senior students by gender

Data Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity

For privacy concerns, results based on race/ethnicity for both first-year and senior students are not reported as both groups had very small sample sizes in each category, other than White.

Data by Distribution of Scores

Looking at the data by percentage of students in each rubric rating category, the largest percentage of first-year students had a score between 2.00 and 2.99 for five of the six dimensions, as shown in Figure 5. Students performed best on *Civic Identity and Commitment* and *Civic Communication* with 75% scoring in this range. *Analysis of Knowledge* had the highest percentage of students scoring between 1.00 to 1.99 at 55%. *Diversity of Communities and Cultures* had the most variance in scores with a few students scoring below 1.00 and above 3.00.

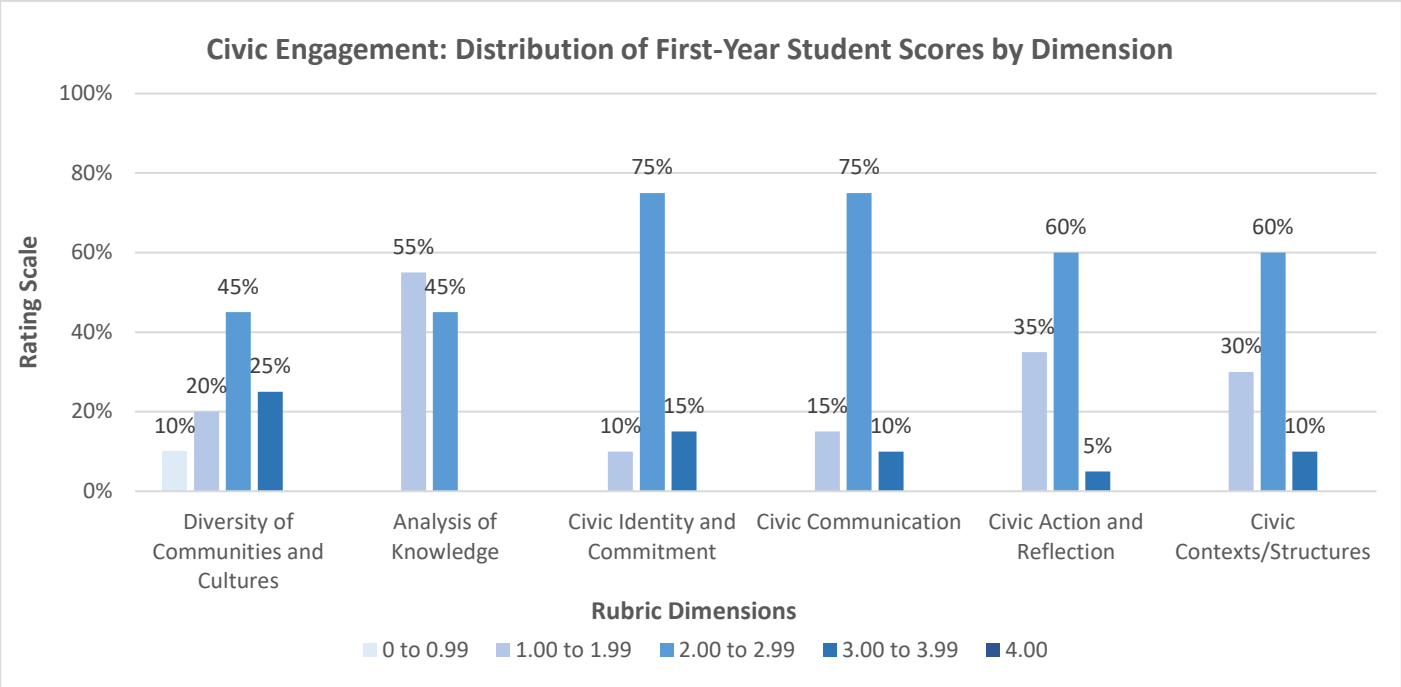

Figure 5. Distribution of first-year student scores

Similar to first-year students, Figure 6 shows that seniors scored in the range of 2.00 to 2.99 on five of the six dimension, with *Civic Communication* having the highest percentage at 73%. Seniors also had the most variance in scores for *Diversity of Communities and Cultures*, however, 33% of seniors scored between 0.00 and 0.99 compared to 10% of first-year students, and only 8% of seniors scored above a 3.00 compared to 25% of first-year students.

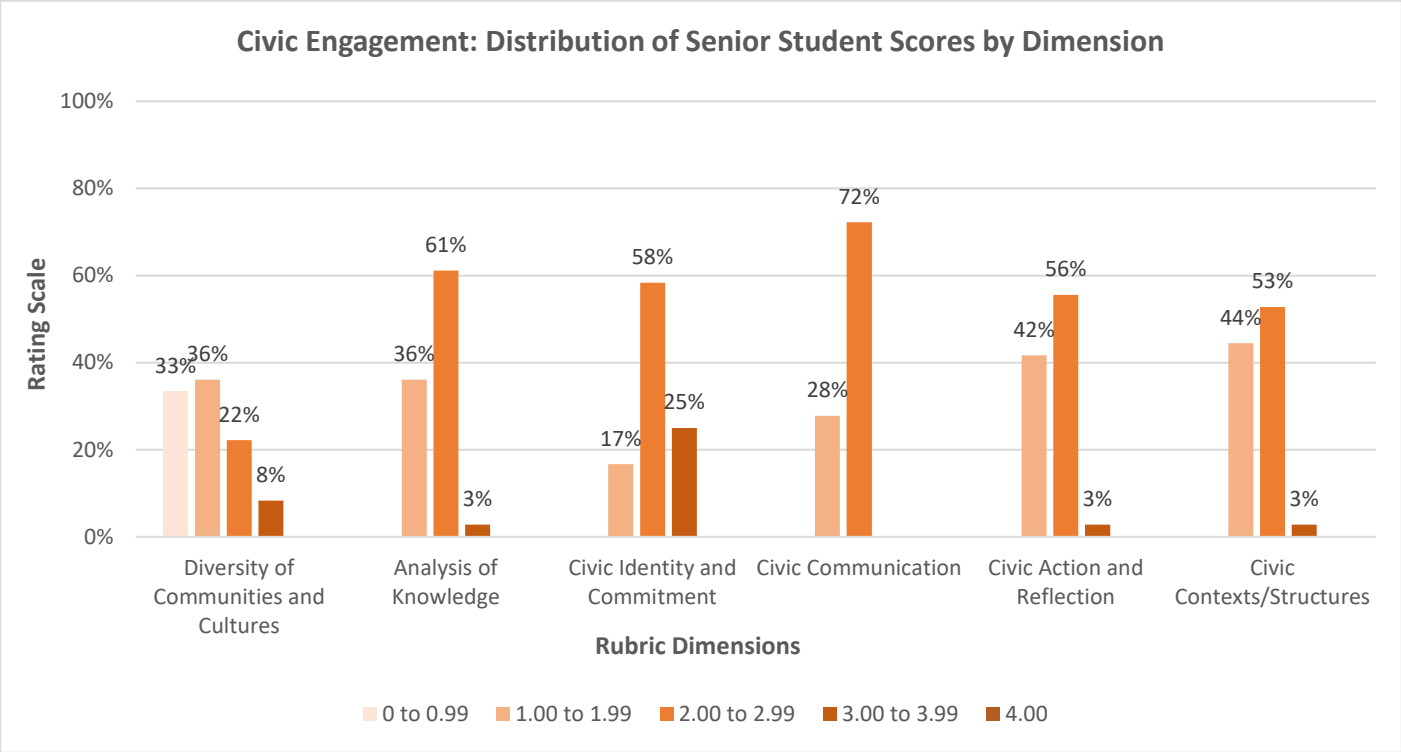

Figure 6. Distribution of senior-level student scores

AAC&U Scoring Results for Civic Engagement

During Summer 2022, AAC&U VALUE COLLABORATIVE scored 100 of our Civic Engagement artifacts as part of a national collaborative project, funded by the Lumina Foundation. CCSU was one of 18 colleges and universities selected by the AAC&U to participate in this project. Of the 18 participants, CCSU was the only one to have 100% of assignments aligned to the Civic Engagement rubric.

The scorers for AAC&U are certified by AAC&U; scorers must participate in a training program and pass a certification test. Having our artifacts scored by AAC&U allow us to benchmark our students to those at other similar institutions from across the country; it also allows us to assess how our CCSU scorers compare to those that are certified by AAC&U.

For this project, AAC&U scored artifacts from all student levels. When we compare our CCSU-scored results for all student levels, the AAC&U results show higher scores for all six dimensions, with an overall average score of 2.3. *Civic Identity and Commitment* were scored highest scores by both AAC&U and CCSU scorers, however, the scores for *Diversity of Communities and Cultures* and *Civic Context/Structures* are noticeably higher for AAC&U scorers.

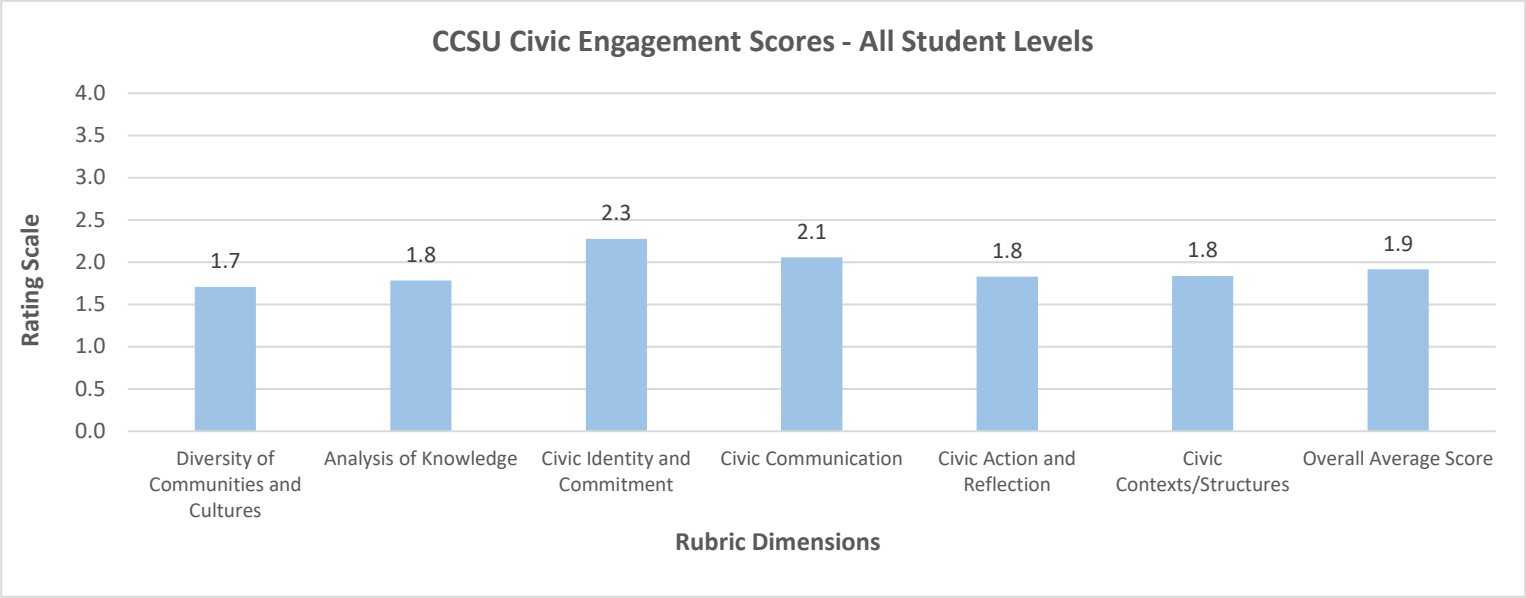

Figure 7. Overall scores for all student levels, scored by CCSU faculty

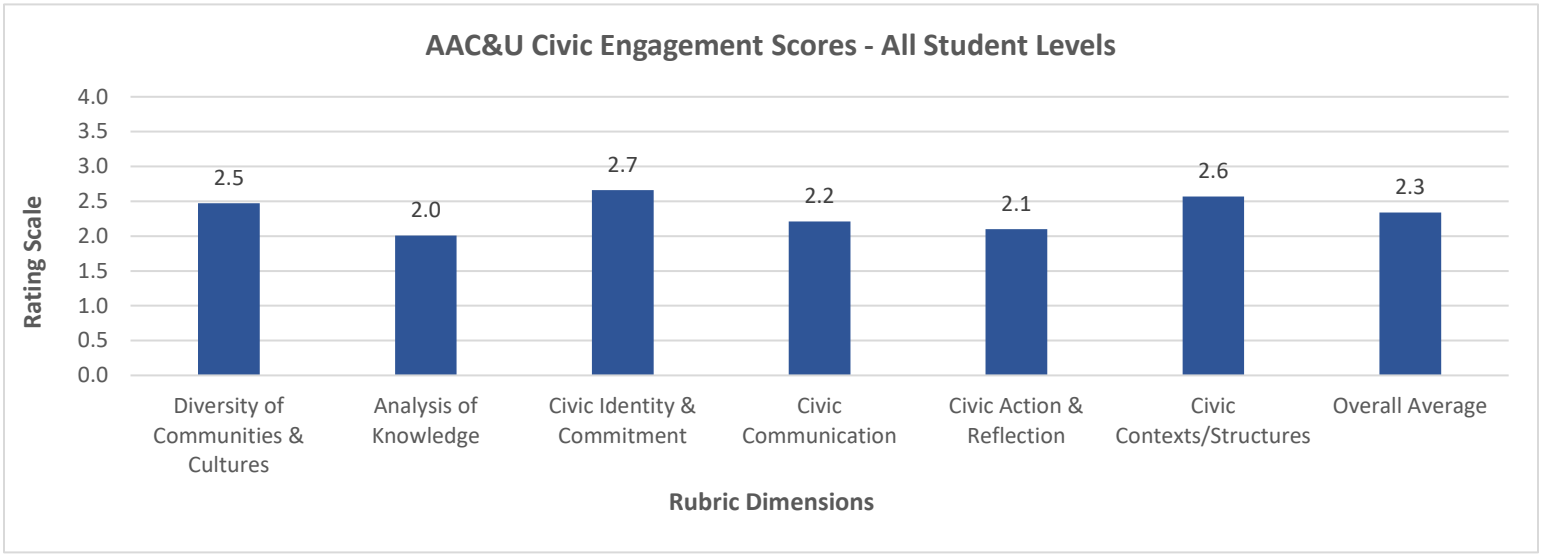

Figure 8. Overall scores for all student levels, scored by AAC&U national certified scorers

Conclusion

Based on the results of our assessments and faculty feedback regarding the collection of artifacts for Civic Engagement, the decision was made to revise the rubric to better fit the needs of our students and campus. To this end, a team of four faculty members revised the rubric in Fall 2023 to incorporate community engagement, a pillar of our education model for undergraduates. This new rubric, entitled Community and Civic Engagement, will be tested in Spring 2024, with the goal of scoring artifacts later in the year.

In the meantime, it is our hope that you find these results both informative and valuable. As with any assessment, the results can be used to validate current practices, applaud successful outcomes, and/or identify areas for further attention.

Lastly, it is important to note that these scores reflect multiple factors at work and should be viewed within that context. As we continue to seek improvements on the various factors that go into scoring, our ultimate goal is to have CCSU undergraduate students demonstrate enhanced performance for our Community and Civic Engagement Learning Outcome, providing them with a solid foundation for future intellectual and personal pursuits.

Please contact Martie Kaczmarek, Assessment Coordinator, OIRA, if you would like additional information. Email: mkaczmarek@ccsu.edu or call 860-832-2304.

CCSU Office of Institutional Research and Assessment January 2023

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition - Civic engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes." (Excerpted from *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, Preface, page vi.) In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

Framing Language - Preparing graduates for their public lives as citizens, members of communities, and professionals in society has historically been a responsibility of higher education. Yet the outcome of a civic-minded graduate is a complex concept. Civic learning outcomes are framed by personal identity and commitments, disciplinary frameworks and traditions, pre-professional norms and practice, and the mission and values of colleges and universities. This rubric is designed to make the civic learning outcomes more explicit. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. For students this could include community-based learning through service-learning classes, community-based research, or service within the community. Multiple types of work samples or collections of work may be utilized to assess this, such as:

- The student creates and manages a service program that engages others (such as youth or members of a neighborhood) in learning about and taking action on an issue they care about. In the process, the student also teaches and models processes that engage others in deliberative democracy, in having a voice, participating in democratic processes, and taking specific actions to affect an issue.

- The student researches, organizes, and carries out a deliberative democracy forum on a particular issue, one that includes multiple perspectives on that issue and how best to make positive change through various courses of public action. As a result, other students, faculty, and community members are engaged to take action on an issue.

- The student works on and takes a leadership role in a complex campaign to bring about tangible changes in the public's awareness or education on a particular issue, or even a change in public policy. Through this process, the student demonstrates multiple types of civic action and skills.

- The student integrates their academic work with community engagement, producing a tangible product (piece of legislation or policy, a business, building or civic infrastructure, water quality or scientific assessment, needs survey, research paper, service program, or organization) that has engaged community constituents and responded to community needs and assets through the process.

- In addition, the nature of this work lends itself to opening up the review process to include community constituents that may be a part of the work, such as teammates, colleagues, community/agency members, and those served or collaborating in the process.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

Civic identity: When one sees her or himself as an active participant in society with a strong commitment and responsibility to work with others towards public purposes.

Service-learning class: A course-based educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity and reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility.

Communication skills: Listening, deliberation, negotiation, consensus building, and productive use of conflict.

Civic life: The public life of the citizen concerned with the affairs of the community and nation as contrasted with private or personal life, which is devoted to the pursuit of private and personal interests.

Politics: A process by which a group of people, whose opinions or interests might be divergent, reach collective decisions that are generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy. Political life enables people to accomplish goals they could not realize as individuals. Politics necessarily arises whenever groups of people live together, since they must always reach collective decisions of one kind or another.

Government: "The formal institutions of a society with the authority to make and implement binding decisions about such matters as the distribution of resources, allocation of benefits and burdens, and the management of conflicts." (Retrieved from the Center for Civic Engagement Web site, May 5, 2009.)

Civic/community contexts: Organizations, movements, campaigns, a place or locus where people and/or living creatures inhabit, which may be defined by a locality (school, national park, non-profit organization, town, state, nation) or defined by shared identity (i.e., African-Americans, North Carolinians, Americans, the Republican or Democratic Party, refugees, etc.). In addition, contexts for civic engagement may be defined by a variety of approaches intended to benefit a person, group, or community, including community service or volunteer work, academic work.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT VALUE RUBRIC – Definition - Civic engagement is "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes." (Excerpted from *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000, Preface, page vi.) In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

	Capstone - 4	**3**	**Milestones** **2**	**Benchmark -** 1
Diversity of Communities and Cultures	Demonstrates evidence of adjustment in own attitudes and beliefs because of working within and learning from diversity of communities and cultures. Promotes others' engagement with diversity.	Reflects on how own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Has awareness that own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits little curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.	Expresses attitudes and beliefs as an individual, from a one-sided view. Is indifferent or resistant to what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.
Analysis of Knowledge	Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Analyzes knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline making relevant connections to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Begins to connect knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to tone's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.	Begins to identify knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/discipline that is relevant to civic engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.
Civic Identity and Commitment	Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action.	Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she/he has learned about her or himself as it relates to a growing sense of civic identity and commitment.	Evidence suggests involvement in civic-engagement activities is generated from expectations or course requirements rather than from a sense of civic identity.	Provides little evidence of her/his experience in civic-engagement activities and does not connect experiences to civic identity.
Civic Communication	Tailors communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others to establish relationships to further civic action	Effectively communicates in civic context, showing ability to do all of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do more than one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.	Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others' perspectives.
Civic Action and Reflection	Demonstrates independent experience and *shows initiative in team leadership* of complex or multiple civic engagement activities, accompanied by reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Demonstrates independent experience and *team leadership of* civic action, with reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one's actions.	Has clearly *participated* in civically focused actions and begins to reflect or describe how these actions may benefit individual(s) or communities.	Has *experimented* with some civic activities but shows little internalized understanding of their aims or effects and little commitment to future action.
Civic Contexts/ Structures	Demonstrates ability and commitment to *collaboratively work across and within* community contexts and structures *to achieve a civic aim*.	Demonstrates ability and commitment to work actively *within* community contexts and structures *to achieve a civic aim*.	Demonstrates experience identifying intentional ways to *participate in* civic contexts and structures.	Experiments with civic contexts and structures, *tries out a few to see what fits.*