

AAC&U Announces New Collaboration with the Utah State System of Higher Education to Advance State-Level Evidence on Civic and Community-Based Engagement

The [American Association of Colleges and Universities](#) (AAC&U) announced today that it will collaborate with the [Utah System of Higher Education](#) on a statewide project to advance evidence on civic and community-based engagement in higher education. Involving all sixteen public colleges and universities in Utah—eight technical colleges and eight degree-granting colleges and universities—this new project will be aligned with a companion [AAC&U civic evidence project](#) involving an additional fifteen two- and four-year colleges and universities nationwide. Both projects are focused on establishing baselines for students' demonstrated performance on civic outcomes, and both are supported by a grant from Lumina Foundation. The new Utah-based project will also be supported by additional funding from the Utah System of Higher Education.

“Every part of American higher education has a role to play in preparing students to meet the challenges of tomorrow in service of their communities, families, and country. Utah’s public institutions are helping lead the way as we work to understand what students actually learn and experience in college that best prepares them for this future,” said Terri Taylor, strategy director for innovation and discovery at Lumina Foundation. “I hope that they will serve as inspirational models for states and colleges across the country.”

“The Utah System of Higher Education and the presidents of the participating institutions have shown tremendous leadership and unity in forming this new initiative,” said AAC&U President Lynn Pasquerella. “At AAC&U, we have long believed in the power of state-level initiatives to create transformative change in higher education. Utah’s effort is a bold statement on how state systems of higher education can help promote civic learning and student success in service to democracy.”

“Within the Utah System of Higher Education, we believe civic and community-based engagement is one of the key components to a high-quality education and can lead to increased student success,” said Dave Woolstenhulme, USHE commissioner of higher education. “We value what civic and community-based engagement brings to the higher education experience for all Utah students. I am pleased to announce alongside AAC&U that all sixteen of our institutions have joined this project to advance students’ performance on civic outcomes.”

At the sixteen colleges and universities in Utah, project participants will gather student work products that result either from direct engagement in civic or community-based experiences or from other high-impact practices designed to promote civic learning outcomes. Each institution will submit at least a hundred student work products to AAC&U’s [Valid Assessment of Learning](#)

[in Undergraduate Education \(VALUE\) Scoring Collaborative](#) for evaluation by nationally certified scorers using the [VALUE rubrics](#). The resulting state-level baseline data will be disaggregated to identify equity gaps in students' civic skill development.

The following institutions will participate in the Utah Advancing Evidence on Civic and Community-Based Engagement in Higher Education project:

- Bridgerland Technical College
- Davis Technical College
- Dixie State University
- Dixie Technical College
- Mountainland Technical College
- Ogden-Weber Technical College
- Salt Lake Community College
- Snow College
- Southern Utah University
- Southwest Technical College
- Tooele Technical College
- Uintah Basin Technical College
- University of Utah
- Utah State University
- Utah Valley University
- Weber State University

The Civic Evidence Project is affiliated with the Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement (CLDE) Coalition spear-headed by AAC&U, College Promise, Complete College America (CCA), and State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)