THRIVE on Campus: Community Engagement

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Grade Level Secondary

Essential Question(s)

Summary

Students who invest time and effort into academics and campus organizations experience positive academic outcomes. Getting involved in campus social life will make students feel more integrated into the campus community, improving their sense of belonging. Joining an academic club, fraternity/sorority, local church, or student-led organization is an example of community engagement.

Learning Goals

Attachments

- Gallery Walk Posters—Community Engagement - Spanish.docx
- Gallery Walk Posters—Community Engagement - Spanish.pdf
- Gallery Walk Posters—Community Engagement.docx
- Gallery Walk Posters—Community Engagement.pdf
- Match Your Why Cube—Community Engagement - Spanish.docx
- Match Your Why Cube—Community Engagement - Spanish.pdf
- Match Your Why Cube—Community Engagement.docx
- Match Your Why Cube—Community Engagement.pdf
- Notecatcher—Community Engagement - Spanish.docx
- Notecatcher—Community Engagement - Spanish.pdf
- Notecatcher—Community Engagement.docx
- Notecatcher—Community Engagement.pdf
- Oklahoma Colleges Community Engagement Examples—Community Engagement.docx
- Oklahoma Colleges Community Engagement Examples—Community Engagement.pdf
- Session Slides—Community Engagement.pptx
- What, So What, Now What—Community Engagement - Spanish.docx
- What, So What, Now What—Community Engagement - Spanish.pdf
- What, So What, Now What—Community Engagement.docx
- What, So What, Now What—Community Engagement.pdf

Materials

- Session Slides (attached)
- Gallery Walk posters (attached)
- Match Your Why Cube handout (attached; one per group)
- Notecatcher handout (attached; one per student)
- Oklahoma Colleges Community Engagement Examples handout (attached; facilitator copy)
- Pencil/pen
- Chart paper (optional)
- Poster Markers (optional)

20 minutes

Match Your Why

Facilitator Note: Using Slides

Although this resource includes a slide deck, the session can still be facilitated without it if technology or space is limited.

Use the provided **Session Slides** to facilitate this session. Display **slide 1** and introduce yourself and the title of this session. To better understand the personal connection a student might have with their career decisions, the student first needs to understand their "why." *Why did they enroll in this university? Why do they want to join an organization? Why should they feel connected to that organization?*

Have students get into small groups. Display **slide 2** and use the modified 5W Cube strategy by passing out an already prepared **Match Your Why Cube** to each group. Have students roll the cube, then answer the prompt that lands face up. Students will share their thoughts aloud by answering the prompt and explaining how a community organization could assist with their response. Once answered, have the student pass the cube to the next student and continue until all students have had a chance to roll the cube. Remind students that each question relates to how they see community engagement.

After all students have had a chance to share, proceed to **slide 3** and distribute the **Notecatcher** to each student. Allow them time to reflect on what they learned about their "why" in the space provided.

20 minutes

Community Engagement Gallery Walk

Next, move to **slide 4** and introduce the Gallery Walk strategy. Explain that students will either walk around the room or review the table cards with each of the community engagement opportunities. Many of the listed opportunities will be accessible at any campus (e.g., academic organizations or personal interest clubs). However, some campuses will have site-specific organizations that students should be aware of.

Give students 2-3 minutes to review each station. After, have students fill out the right side of their Notecatcher. Give students 2-3 minutes to reflect on potential opportunities they may not have known existed, people they could meet, and something they could try. Have students share their thoughts and explain why they think engaging with their community could have a positive impact on their academic and social careers.

Transition to **slide 5** and share the research rationale to further reinforce why community engagement may be a positive influence during their time at a post-secondary institution.

Participation in volunteering or service-learning is associated with long-term prosocial development and overall well-being in adulthood (Bowman et al., 2010). Similarly, participation in first-year service learning is positively associated with higher GPAs, retention rates, and graduation rates (Do et al., 2024).

10 minutes

What? So What? Now What? (Optional)

If all students in your session have engaged in some form of community engagement during their time in college, you can use the What? So What? Now What? strategy and have them reflect on their levels of engagement. Unhide **slide 6** and have students complete the **What? So What? Now What?** handout and continue discussions about how their involvement in the community has impacted their college experience.

20 minutes

Summer Action Plan

To help students stay engaged beyond their first year and into the summer break, encourage them to start thinking about ways they can stay connected with their community. Move to **slide 7** and have students turn to the back side of their Notecatcher to the "Summer Action Plan" section. Frame this activity as *planning*, not *committing*. Students are not locking themselves into anything today, instead they are simply identifying examples of how they could stay engaged over the summer in ways that support their goals and values.

Explain that students should consider ways to stay engaged in the following areas: career and skills-based, community service, and maintaining connections with peers. Encourage students to refer back to their "why" as they work and check that their examples align with what motivates them.

Close the session by reinforcing that engagement is a habit they can carry with them year-round, both on and off campus.

Research Rationale

Research indicates that students who volunteered or participated in service-learning courses were more likely to continue volunteering later in life, develop a stronger prosocial orientation, and report higher levels of personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and life satisfaction as adults (Bowman et al., 2010). Do et al. (2024) show a positive relationship between service-learning participation during the first year of postsecondary education and a college student's cumulative GPA, retention, and graduation rates across subsequent college years.