

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: Creating a Collaborative Civic Engagement Resource Center

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Issue(s) Being Addressed:

Civic Engagement has proven its value on college and university campuses. As a cogent force, CE is able to bridge student learning from campus to community in multiple ways. In order to keep abreast with innovative ways to engage with communities, it is essential to be current. In order to meet community needs, we must become aware of them. This can be done in a variety of ways, many of which involve research and include the use of appropriate periodicals. Published books, government tracts, current statistical data, audio-visual materials, and even the use of areas allowing for discussion and—more importantly—presentation of ways to conduct civic activities will all lead to a marked improvement in pedagogy related to ASL and CE.

Overview:

UM-Dearborn's Mardigian Library is particularly well-staffed with very liberal, year-round hours for students, faculty, and staff, as well as providing services to other campuses. Notably, our Mardigian Library has, by title, 250,000 and by item 340,000 books. Our students have access to UMAA's multiple collections. Additionally, Mardigian Library is part of two valuable services: Southern-Eastern Michigan League of Library Services (SEMLOL) and, Michigan Electronic Library Catalogue (MELCat), or, ECat. Today's students can avail themselves both of materials and assistance through all of the above services. Still, the importance of having current pieces of information available to be used repeatedly is obvious. In an effort to equip the Civic Engagement Project with identified journals and other relevant material, we are implementing a CE source facility. Here, both research and discussion can take place, concerns can be shared, and ideas, hatched to serve the needs of the campus community.

To this end, we are meeting with supportive library staff to prepare a multi-faceted approach to building up Civic Engagement resources on campus through both a resource facility in the CE office, and easily accessible and identifiable material in the Library. It will be housed primarily in Mardigian proper with a small number of most often needed materials stored off-site in the Civic Engagement Office/study area. This would facilitate the best in cataloging, storing, and shelving, with wider accessibility. When books come in and prove valuable, Mardigian may choose to purchase its own copy(ies).

With Mardigian staff help, we are presently learning how to highlight materials shelved in the Library, how to create web links to electronic journals & other digital resources, and, how to best track CE materials at either location.

Key Components:

- On-going collaboration with Mardigian personnel;
- CE fundraising component to seek donations: books, add'l training, speakers, etc.;
- Develop method of tracking materials used at the CE Office site,
- Seek funds to pay Mardigian fees for cataloguing, and funds for book purchasing;
- Upgrade office equipment by adding color printer option for new CE leaflets,
- Pursuing grants as well as start-up spending from appropriate discipline sources.