ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC & LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

UTSA



CECE | INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AWARDS PROGRAM

IEP CATEGORY - PLACE

2024 CASE STUDY

The University of Texas at San Antonio

Civic and Community Engaged Leadership

UTSA's CENTER FOR CIVIC AND COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEADERSHIP

The UTSA Center for Civic and Community-Engaged Leadership (CCCEL) supports community-based experiential learning and scholarship opportunities, strengthening campus/community working partnerships. Through community-engaged and civic leadership programs, CCCEL's mission is to develop socially responsible leaders by applying an asset-based approach to making a collective difference and contributing to the public good. CCCEL programming is aligned with the UTSA Classroom to Career and Quality Enhancement Plan goals of providing community-based experiential learning opportunities and strengthening the public mission of the university.

CCCEL's three-programing areas include:

- Rowdy Corps Community Scholars (RCCS), a community-based federal work-study program where students serve at local nonprofits and public serving agencies.
- civic leadership activities and RowdyVOTES Community of Practice, designed to build civic capacity through voter education and community partnerships.
- the newly implemented Community-Engaged Leadership Certificate, which is open to all disciplines and houses the community engagement platform to facilitate campus/community collaboration.

ROWDY CORPS COMMUNITY SCHOLARS (RCCS)

The Rowdy Corps Community Scholars program is open to federal work study-eligible students in all majors and is intended as a mutual capacity-building experience for both the student and the community partner site. Much like AmeriCorps VISTA, the program enhances the mission of the organizations while the organizations provide the students with high-impact practice learning experiences, building mutually beneficial campus/community engagement partnerships. The RCCS program makes community-based experiential learning accessible to economically challenged students, providing the opportunity to work with nonprofit leaders in many social sector priorities.

Students' roles vary from working in social media, designing websites, broadcasting, accounting and finance, research, development, youth literacy and education, technology, and building strategic partnerships. Community sites represent various social service areas such as youth literacy, disability services, houseless healthcare, historical, cultural and art, broadcasting, youth empowerment, education, science, environmental preservation, emergency response, military services, and municipal government.

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More specific examples of partnering organizations include:

- City Council District offices
- Chromosome18
- disABILITYSA
- American Indians of Texas
- American Red Cross
- ChildSafe
- Classical Music Institute
- Family Services Association Teen Tech Program
- Girls on the Run
- Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance
- ICare San Antonio
- Kid Nation
- Morgan's Wonderland
- My Cityis My Home
- MOVE Texas
- Operation Homefront
- KLRN
- WEX Foundation
- SA Zoo
- San Antonio Museum of Science and Technology
- Witte Museum
- Texas Public Radio

Rowdy Corps Community Scholar alumni can be found making an impact across the business, nonprofit, education, and public sectors within and outside of San Antonio as teachers, accountants, marketing executives, IT support specialists, and other service-centered positions.

In addition, students may design an initiative emerging from their experiences. For example, the Inspire Greater Potential Community of Practice (ISGPCoP) emerged from a student's experience while working with disABILITYSA. With support from CCEL, the students hosted a panel with nonprofit, university, school district representation leading to the ISGP CoP, with a long-term goal to build pathways from high school to college designed for students with disabilities.

CCCEL is working to advance the Community of Practice concept to bring together communities with shared common interests to learn and contribute beyond one event or gathering (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and is hosted on the online platform GivePulse.

ROWDYVOTES

A second area where CCCEL strengthens campus community partnerships is in the civic leadership programming dedicated to building civic capacity and strengthening voter engagement. In addition to preparing students to be career-ready, CCCEL works to support preparing students to be socially responsible and civic-ready, in partnership with local and national organizations. RowdyVOTES,

Community of Practice, strives to institutionalize civic engagement across campus and community. CCCEL participates in the All IN Campus Democracy Challenge, a national awards program that recognizes institutions of higher education for their commitment to preparing students to become informed civically engaged citizens and has been nationally recognized as having a Highly Established Action Plan in 2022 and 2024, has earned the silver campus award for increasing student voting rate to over 60%.

Youth Voters Fest 2023

To launch the 2023 National Voter Education Week (NVEW), CCCEL collaborated to host the first annual "Youth Voter Fest 2023", a civic engagement resource fair, with the League of Women Voters-San Antonio, City of San Antonio Department of Human Services: Youth Initiatives, and featuring an emerging nonprofit, Youth Do Vote, dedicated to support building the civic capacity of high school students.

Youth Voter Fest creates an ecosystem of support that includes elected officials, nonpartisan civic engagement and cultural arts organizations as well as city offices hosting youth leadership programs, local journalists, Secretary of State's Election Identification Certificates, the League of Women Voters of San Antonio and Bexar County Elections. This civic ecosystem provides a campus/community experiential learning experience for students and their families using sample ballots and voting machines as well as trivia challenges engaging students in voting process requirements, Texas Voting Bill of Rights and important dates. All participants are invited to join the RowdyVOTES Community of Practice for future collaborations including a second Youth Voter event in 2024 and move the needle on student and community voter turnout.

SERVING AS A CONVENER

The Center for Civic and Community-Engaged Leadership houses the community-engagement platform UTSA Engaged (GivePulse) to facilitate a direct connection between campus and community. About 425 community partners list volunteer opportunities for students, staff, and faculty and reach over seven local colleges and universities and health science center to recruit and engage volunteers from several universities at once. CCCEL is an active member of the Service-Learning Intercollegiate Collaborative (SLIC) comprised of the civic engagement offices at local universities and collaborates to bring intercollegiate service-learning programming such as the annual Intercollegiate Service-Learning Faculty Panel (4 x academic year) and foster intercollegiate collaboration to support community partners and their priorities. SLIC strives to design collective

impact efforts to support local community priorities. In short, the CCCEL cultivates social relationships to build and collaborate around mutually beneficial community engagement to collectively address social priorities, strengthening the public serving mission of the university.

LINKS TO FURTHER INFORMATION

Supporting Information:

- Center for Civic and Community-Engaged Leadership
- Bold Careers Check Fall 2022 - Summer 2023

Articles:

- UTSA, San Antonio and Bexar County team up to prepare high school students to vote

ABOUT APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is North America's oldest higher education association. APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

Based in Washington, DC, the association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration as well as the media to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students they serve.

ABOUT THE IEP PROGRAM

APLU and its Commission on Economic and Community Engagement (CECE) established the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Program to help higher education institutions codify, elevate, and advance their campus enterprise supporting economic and community development.

The **IEP Program** recognizes institutions that have demonstrated a meaningful, ongoing and substantial commitment to economic and community development, growth, and economic opportunity.

The **IEP Awards Program** recognize exemplary and innovative projects in university-based economic and community engagement:

- Talent and workforce development
- Innovation, entrepreneurship, and tech-based economic development
- Place development through public service, outreach, and community engagement

Learn more at: www.APLU.org/IEP