



Community Engagement Mission Statement

What is Community Engagement?

Fairfield University earned the [Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement](#) in 2008 and was re-classified in 2015. As such, the University has adopted the below definition for community engagement, drafted by the Carnegie Foundation and commonly utilized throughout higher education.

Community engagement describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger broader communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial creation and exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

The purpose of community engagement is to generate positive impact for communities and the campus by enriching research; enhancing teaching and learning; preparing educated and engaged citizens; strengthening democratic values and civic responsibility; addressing critical societal issues; and contributing to the public good (Carnegie Foundation, 2011).

Community Engagement at Fairfield University

Community engagement is at the heart of Fairfield University's mission as a modern Jesuit Catholic institution to "develop the creative intellectual potential of its students and to foster in them ethical and religious values and a sense of social responsibility." Our commitment to pursuing academic excellence in the Ignatian tradition invites our students, faculty, and staff to develop an ongoing intellectual and spiritual practice of **encounter**, **reflection**, and **action**. Community engagement welcomes **local and global partners** into that practice with the dual purpose of **enacting social change** and **fostering mutual learning**.

Enacting Social Change: The Faith That Does Justice

Our engagement with local and global partners is grounded in the Ignatian commitment to a [faith that does justice](#) for the betterment of communities and the creation of a more just and equitable world. We work in solidarity with institutions and organizations across the globe in the pursuit of equity and social and economic justice.

Community engagement at Fairfield exemplifies our institutional values of **inclusive excellence** and **radical hospitality**, two pillars of our [Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Mission Statement](#). To realize these ideals, we employ anti-oppression and anti-racist frameworks, pedagogies, and strategies throughout our work.



We are committed to building partnerships that are ethical and sustainable. Our initiatives leverage the expertise and assets of both the University and community partners in pursuit of the common good.

Well-Educated Solidarity and Fostering Mutual Learning

Fairfield University develops in students [a well-educated solidarity](#). This approach prepares them for informed democratic engagement and to lead their communities with empathy, critical rigor, cultural humility, and a determination to promote social justice. Our collaboration with local and global partners creates experiential learning opportunities for students built on a process of reflective practice and discernment which contributes to their holistic intellectual and personal development.

We believe that engagement with community partners expands possibilities for exchanging and creating knowledge that includes the perspectives of those traditionally excluded from the academy. In the context of these reciprocal partnerships, all are teaching and all are learning equally together.

Initiatives and Programs

Fairfield University offers intentional learning opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to develop a civic identity and a commitment to being persons for and with others. Through an institutional commitment to community-engaged learning, direct service, civic and democratic engagement, and cultural exchange, our programs seek to create a positive social impact and prepare our students to be socially just and ethical members of our campus community and of the local, national, and global communities to which they belong.

The initiatives below capture the broad range of programming and engagement opportunities:

- Direct Service Programs
- Community-Engaged Learning and Research
- Philanthropy and Humanitarian Action
- Intercultural Learning and Immersion
- Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement
- Dialogue Across Difference
- Advocacy and Activism
- Social Entrepreneurship
- Arts and Cultural Engagement

The programs and offices listed below provide opportunities for students, faculty, and community partners to engage in the above initiatives. For more information, visit:

- [Center for Social Impact](#)
- [Campus Ministry](#)
- [Service Life@Fairfield Portal](#)



- [Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Life@Fairfield Portal](#)
- [Fairfield University Art Museum](#)