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Educating for Civic-Mindedness: Examining Student Impacts of Academic Programs of Community and Civic Engagement in Higher Education

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EDUCATING FOR CIVIC-MINDEDNESS: EXAMINING STUDENT IMPACTS OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS OF COMMUNITY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
International Family and Community Studies

by
Laura T. Minor
December 2019

Accepted by:
Dr. Martie P. Thompson, Committee Chair
Dr. Bonnie Holaday
Dr. Arelis Moore de Peralta
Dr. Nghi Thai
ABSTRACT

Within the last decade, colleges and universities in the United States have embraced the “community engagement” model to fulfill their public missions and prepare their students for work within increasingly complex and diverse communities. The number of academic majors and minors in community engagement-related fields has multiplied across the country, yet there is little literature that examines their impact on students, and whether or not they are producing uniquely engaged citizens upon graduation. This quasi-experimental, quantitative study explores the effects of one such program on students at Central Connecticut State University. Graduates who have completed a minor in Community and Civic Engagement were compared with a second group of graduates with similar majors on the Civic-Minded Graduate (CMG) Scale; it was found that those who had completed the Community and Civic Engagement minor showed significantly higher levels of civic-mindedness on all four CMG subscales than graduates who did not complete the minor. Sex was found to be a significant factor on three of the four subscales. The results of this study promise to inform university curriculum design and allocation of resources in the area of community engagement, as well as to fill a gap in the literature regarding outcomes assessment for academic community engagement programs. Areas for future research include assessment of community impact, more precise evaluations of program components, and the inclusion of global learning as an outcome for community and civic engagement programs.
DEDICATION

“...Deep down, young people need more than just a place...It’s not a place young people need so much as a role, an opportunity to be powerful, a chance to shape their world.”
Eboo Patel, Acts of Faith

This dissertation is dedicated first to the students and graduates of Central Connecticut State University, whose passion and determination to make the world a better place have inspired me to understand the dynamics of community engagement. May this research lead to more effective ways to equip them to become powerful voices for good in this world. It is also dedicated to my husband, Jim, for all of those hot, timely cups of tea - and more support than any one person deserves.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have come to realize that the completion of a PhD is indeed a community effort, which is fitting, given the topic of my research. Detailing the thanks that I owe to the incredible people in my life for their support, encouragement, and inspiration is a dissertation in and of itself.

First, to my family: Jim, thank you for cooking all of those dinners, snoring next to me while I worked late into the night, coming to my rescue with every %*# computer issue, and helping me think through every step of this journey with patience, insight, and a sacrificial spirit; it truly would have been impossible without you, and I am excited to enjoy our lake with you without the cloud of PhD-mania drifting overhead. To Abby and Joseph, thank you for your endless encouragement and support - your pursuit of excellence in your own fields has inspired me more than you could possibly know, and your shining souls will always be the brightest lights in my heart. And to my lifelong pal, Lynne, who has patiently waited for me to be done with this so we could move on to less sedentary adventures - thank you for gamely listening to me drone on about measuring program outcomes, and always keeping my mind sharp, my motivations pure...and promising me a trip when it was done (it worked!).

This work has been birthed and nurtured through the care and mentoring of the incredible people at Central Connecticut State University. Special thanks to my supervisor, mentor, and friend, Mary Horan, who heroically cleared the way for me to grow beyond where I was, and constantly reminded me that I was "plenty smart" and "they should just go ahead and give me the PhD"; and to my colleague and “little buddy”,
Allison Audet, who dealt with my students while I was in class and took care of my dog for a month when my whole world fell apart - you two have made work "not feel like work," and I am so grateful for "the three of us". To Dr. Abigail Adams and Dr. Nghi Thai, who have co-taught the Community and Civic Engagement course with me, and made me a better learner and a better teacher; and my amazing student, Vaishali Belamkar, who helped me conceive of data analysis as a fun adventure and not the torture I thought it was.

To my wonderfully supportive, snarky, brilliant cohort at Clemson University, Drs. Emily Schafer, Rachael Bowers, and Emily Winburn: belonging to such an incredible community of women that is #TnB has been one of the deepest joys of my life. Thank you for the hilarious texts, the late-night chats, the matching t-shirts, and the inspiration to finish this degree in the wake of your accomplishments - I truly feel like we limped over the finish line together, and that I would not have made it without you. And a special thanks to "Edubs" for tutoring me in Qualtrics and always answering my late-night panicky texts as I neared the end - you kept me going when I really needed it, and made me laugh every time.

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There are so many more faithful friends, family members, and colleagues to thank; I am incredibly blessed to have all of you in my life. I hope that this study sheds light on the (often thankless) work being done by universities across the country to equip the next generation in civic-mindedness.
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As tuition costs soar and the competition for students becomes more intense, colleges and universities in the United States are fighting to retain their relevance in modern society. Public higher education institutions are called upon to prepare students for an increasingly specialized job market and demonstrate their value to the communities in which they reside – all on an ever-shrinking budget. Over the past decade, universities have embraced the “community engagement” model as a way to fulfill higher education’s public mission, as well as effectively prepare its graduates for the real world; as of this writing, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has approved 361 U.S. colleges for its coveted Community Engagement Classification (CUEI: College & University Engagement Initiative, 2018). Research has shown that academic programs that include community engagement result in higher retention and completion rates, and higher grade point averages (Cress et al., 2010). However, research on civic outcomes of community engagement programs have lagged behind the pace of their creation and implementation. This study addresses the question of whether or not higher education community engagement programs are actually producing students who are more likely to be civically engaged and eager to address community issues.

**Statement of the Problem**

Due to its richly rooted history in education, there is ongoing and robust literature on student outcomes in service-learning courses – courses in which students address
community issues as a part of the class curriculum, as a tool for learning content and benefiting society (Furco, 2003) - which are often one component of community engaged programs. Warren (2012), for example, found that service-learning had a positive effect on student learning outcomes, including increased multicultural awareness and enhanced social responsibility. Similarly, Novak, Markey, and Allen (2007) conducted a meta-analysis evaluating the cognitive outcomes of service-learning in nine higher education programs, and found an overall positive relationship between service-learning and civic-related learning outcomes. Overall, service-learning has developed over the past three decades as a reliable educational tool for increasing students' sense of civic responsibility (Battistoni, 2002).

However, outcome assessment in the more broadly encompassing programs of “community engagement” — which may or may not include service-learning — is notably absent, and the lack of standardized measurement instruments for evaluation has been noted in the literature (Granner & Sharpe, 2004; Rowe & Frewer, 2000). Indeed, assessment in general continues to be an ongoing challenge for higher education, so it is not surprising that assessment of community engagement is in dire need of development. Driscoll (2009) highlighted this need in a discussion of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification:

*Few institutions could be specific about institution-wide student learning outcomes related to engagement, so most assessment of curricular engagement took the form of individual course assessments and occasional program assessment...few examples of consistent assessment of community engagement*
were found. As we expand community engagement across institutions of higher education, it is essential to develop the expertise and resources to assess and evaluate practices. Community engagement requires extensive resources, especially faculty time commitments, so it is imperative to assess well to articulate clarity of direction for these efforts and to ensure that this work is effectively achieving its intentions. (p. 10)

Unfortunately, nine years later, outcome assessment in the field of community engagement is not faring much better. Hart (2011) confirmed the impression that the development of effective audit and evaluation tools for university community engagement was still at a formative stage, and cited lack of focus on outcomes, lack of standardized tools, and the variety of pedagogical approaches being used as reasons for the lack of progress. In 2012, a research group at Merrimack University found “no unanimity or uniformity to…expected outcomes, pedagogical methods, or normative standpoints” (Brammer et al., 2012, p. 2); and in 2015, an exhaustive literature review by Reason and Hemmer could not identify any instrument that “fully assessed the entire construct of civic learning…There is not a single body of literature or set of easily identifiable instruments in higher education that are tied to the majority of civic learning assessment” (p. 6).

Student outcomes assessment in academic community engagement programs represents a gap in the research that will take many steps to address. This research begins that process by evaluating outcomes of students in one academic community engagement program at a state university in the Northeastern United States. With well-established
roots in service-learning and the emerging benchmarks being developed by the Carnegie Foundation and others, the field of community engagement holds promise in contributing to the development of civic-minded students. As Dan Butin writes in the prologue to the Merrimack study, the lack of assessment data “does not mean chaos rules. It simply means that there are frameworks within which contested notions of complex phenomenon can and should be analyzed, engaged, and appropriated” (Brammer, et al., p. 2).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between student participation in the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement at Central Connecticut State University, and the desired learning outcomes of the program – simply put, were students who have studied community engagement at the post-secondary level likely to be more “community engaged” than their peers? To borrow a term from Steinberg, Hatcher, and Bringle (2011), are graduates of such programs measurably more “civic-minded”? This study aimed to examine the relationship between participation in an academic community engagement program and community-related student outcomes, such as civic knowledge and attitudes, skills critical to community-building, and intentions to be civically engaged – which can collectively be considered “civic-mindedness” – by comparing graduates of that program with other graduates from the same university, with similar majors, during the same time period, who did not complete the program.
Definition of Terms

Community Engagement

Any evaluation that seeks to assess the impact of an academic program in community engagement must first wrestle with the salient question: what is community engagement? This first question is imperative, because it has become clear that outcome assessment in this area has suffered from a confusion of terms. When one embarks on a journey to research community engagement program outcomes in higher education, one becomes quickly mired in competing terms of “civic engagement”, “community service”, “engaged scholarship”, and its monumental predecessor, “service-learning.” Most literature regarding student outcomes in community-engaged programs is still rooted in “service-learning” terminology, so a brief look at what distinguishes community engagement from service-learning is in order.

Applegate and Morreale (1999) defined service-learning as "what happens when students are afforded the opportunity to practice what they are learning in their disciplines, in community settings where their work benefits others" (p. x). Service-learning is distinct from other forms of experiential learning, such as volunteerism, community service, internships, and field education, by its "intention to benefit the provider and the recipient of the service equally, as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring" (Furco, 2003, p. 14). The use of service-learning by faculty is now widely recognized as a “high-impact” educational practice, yielding significant gains in student GPAs and retention,
particularly for non-white and underserved students (Kuh, 2008). Researchers point to the factors involved in high-impact educational experiences – such as collaborative learning, increased student-faculty interaction, and immediate applicability of concepts – as possible contributors to increased persistence of traditionally marginalized students and the resulting higher achievement benchmarks (Brownell & Swaner, 2010).

Over the past decade, the term “community engagement” has supplanted that of service-learning at many colleges and universities. The recently published Cambridge Handbook of Service Learning and Community Engagement (2017) indicates that this evolution is due to the desire on the part of universities to provide a broader umbrella for all activities done in partnership with communities – of which service-learning courses are just one part of the larger whole. These other activities may include student volunteerism, faculty research, university policy centers and advocacy efforts, and social entrepreneurship (Dolgon et al., 2017). Additionally, in contrast to service-learning, community engagement models embrace a deeper reciprocity between universities and their community partners – “one that goes beyond the application of knowledge to passive recipients, that requires collaboration and respects the wisdom of practice” (Dolgon et al., p. 73). Community engagement, in other words, “describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (Driscoll, 2009, p. 6).

It is in this context, then, that the variables involved in assessing student learning outcomes in a community engagement academic curriculum take shape. Across the
country, several colleges and universities have implemented academic majors and minors in community and civic engagement – in which “community engagement” is not simply something to do but a field of expertise to be studied and learned. Students who study “community engagement”, then, are typically examining principles of civic and community life in areas of equity and social justice, an ability to cooperate and build consensus, an appreciation of diversity, and a prioritizing of community service and activism (Brammer et al., 2012). An academic program of community or civic engagement will often include activities that fall under the larger umbrella of community engagement – such as taking service-learning courses or doing community-based research – as well as studying civic engagement as a discipline unto itself. For example, students may take courses that examine diversity, citizenship, or the local or global forces that impact social change and therefore, communities. The majority of outcome-based literature addresses service-learning, and assessment of those “other” community engagement activities has not kept up with current university trends in practice and framework. To that extent, it has been useful and necessary to borrow terms, measures, and frameworks from service-learning literature to piece together a picture of learning outcomes in programs that broadly address community and civic engagement.

**Civic Participation and Civic-Mindedness**

Block (2008) defines a citizen as “one who is willing to be accountable for, and committed to, the well-being of the whole” (p. 63) – whether the whole is a school, a neighborhood, a town, or a country. Community, he explained, is something that grows out of people acting as citizens, and owning and exercising their power, rather than
delegating it to others. Programs addressing civic participation “prepare educated, engaged citizens” and “strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility” in student participants (New England Resource Center for Higher Education, 2018).

A broader term for the orientation toward, and foundation for, civic participation was described by Steinberg, Hatch, and Bringle (2011) as “civic-mindedness”. A “civic-minded graduate” of a college or university, in their view, was “a person who…has the capacity and desire to work with others to achieve the common good…and an inclination or disposition to be knowledgeable of and involved in the community, and to have a commitment to act upon a sense of responsibility as a member of that community” (p. 20). Civic outcomes that include awareness and/or commitment to social justice, the ability to cooperate and build consensus, appreciation of diversity, and desire to serve and be politically active are all considered integral to being “civic-minded” and are the fabric of a community engagement curriculum (Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, 2019). Steinberg et al. (2011) maintained that students achieve “civic-mindedness” via the integration of three main areas: personal identity (knowing oneself as an individual), civic experiences (being actively involved in a community), and education (knowledge and skills gained through formal or informal educational experiences). In the development of their Civic-Minded Graduate (CMG) scale, Steinberg, Hatch and Bringle (2011) isolated ten dimensions of civic-mindedness clustered in four major areas: knowledge (in areas of volunteering, academic skills, and contemporary social issues); skills (in communication, diversity, and consensus-building); dispositions (valuing community engagement, desiring to take action, and
feeling a sense of responsibility as a trustee of higher learning); and behavioral intentions (a stated intention to serve communities). This study used the Civic Minded Graduate Scale to measure potential outcomes of civic-mindedness in student participants in an academic minor in Community and Civic Engagement at Central Connecticut State University.

**Emerging Perspectives on University Community Engagement Programs**

Academic community engagement programs include more than service-learning experiences, as explained above. Because this research aims to examine outcomes of one of those academic programs, it is necessary to dig deeper into emerging perspectives regarding university curricula that engages students not only in the practice of community and civic engagement, but in the theory behind it. Butin (2011) argued that the “service-learning-as-social-movement” phase in higher education has reached the apex of its impact, and that it has plateaued at a “far from substantial level of implementation and institutionalization” (p. 3). It is necessary, he said, for the academy to embrace community engagement as a legitimate field of intellectual inquiry and academic rigor in order for true civic education to take root in higher learning. Indeed, many vexing issues regarding community engagement in higher education – such as lack of clarity regarding concepts, research rigor, and outcomes assessment – can be explained by the fact that at most universities, community engagement programs lack an academic “home” (Butin & Seider, 2012). “For without ‘academic homes’…it becomes difficult to develop and sustain safe spaces for critical reflection and action over extended periods of time not beholden to external grant funding, individual force of will (be they presidents, faculty, or
community partners), or political pressures” (Butin & Seider, 2012, p. 6). Therefore, Butin maintained that an “engaged campus” model of community engagement means embracing civic education as an intellectual movement, and not just a social one. Similar to the progression of Black Studies or Women and Gender Studies in higher education, which began as social movements but were subsequently embraced as legitimate academic disciplines, the “engaged campus” model detailed by Butin (2012) involves creating and supporting university majors and minors committed to “sustained, sequential, and scaffolded academic programs that provide coherent models for a true apprenticeship in the practices and theories of citizenry” (p. 2). Recently, Sandmann, Saltmarsh, and O’Meara (2019) revisited the state of community engagement “homes” within academia and found that, although there existed a proliferation of various academic engagement programs, institutional structures such as faculty training, leadership, information sharing, and administrative support still favored a marginalized approach to community engagement, necessitating the need for stronger inter- and intra-university networks to accomplish these purposes.

Theoretical Framework

This study on the outcomes of community engagement programs in higher education was guided by one main theoretical framework, discussed below.

The Civic Learning Spiral

This study examined the impact on students in a higher education community and civic engagement program; as one can see in the literature review (below), the variety of
emphases of such programs is daunting and in need of a cohesive framework for
evaluation and understanding. Musil (2009) laid a unifying groundwork for such
programs by describing them as the convergence of three related but distinct areas of
educational reform: U.S. diversity; global learning; and civic engagement. U.S. diversity
and global learning, Musil argued, provide “powerful critical lenses” through which to
address issues in communities; likewise, without the lens of civic responsibility and
engagement, studies in diversity and global issues lose their educational potency as
relevant issues of the greater public good and citizenship. Musil (2009) conceived of an
integration of the three movements reflected in the following definition of civic
engagement:

...Civic engagement is acting on a heightened sense of responsibility to one’s
communities that encompasses the notions of global citizenship and
interdependence, participation in building civil society, and empowering
individuals as agents of positive social change to promote social justice locally
and globally. (p. 58-59)

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has formed a
Civic Engagement Working Group to investigate civic learning pathways from K-12
through college, aiming to develop a scaffold of learning that was cumulative over time
(Leskes & Miller, 2006). As a part of that investigation, the work group developed the
Civic Learning Spiral - a model of civic learning applicable from elementary school
through college, establishing “the habit of lifelong engagement as an empowered,
informed, and socially responsible citizen” (Musil, 2009, p. 59).
Musil (2009) described the Civic Learning Spiral as “distinguished by principles of interactivity and integration” befitting of the image of a spiral (in contrast to a ladder), with each element being constantly revisited with increasing depth. Learning outcomes of the Civic Learning Spiral consist of the following six “braids” that are separate but interconnected:

- the self (identity, voice, convictions, and relationships)
- communities and culture (appreciation of and curiosity about diverse populations, understanding of historic marginalization)
- knowledge (that information is socially constructed, understanding of social movements and democracy)
- skills (critical thinking, conflict resolution, self-expression, community-building)
- values (reflecting on personal priorities and the public good, character-building and integrity)
- public action (civic practices and governance, strategies for policy change)

At the college level, outcomes for each “braid” are meant to direct learning goals for both curricular and co-curricular experiences during the undergraduate years. This model played a significant role in influencing the development of the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ Civic Engagement meta-rubric (AAC&U, 2009); and since 2009 the AAC&U’s Civic Engagement VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) rubric has helped colleges and universities assess student learning on various outcomes related to civic engagement across the curriculum.
In this effort, the AAC&U utilized Ehrlich’s (2000) definition of civic engagement as “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes” (p. vi). The AAC&U added that civic engagement “encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community” (AAC&U, para. 2). The domains of the Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric – and ways in which they echo the Civic Learning Spiral – include: diversity of communities and cultures (similar to the “communities and cultures” thread); analysis of knowledge (“knowledge”); civic identity and commitment (similar to “the self” and “values”); civic communication (“skills”); civic action and reflection; and civic contexts/structures (“public action”).

The conception of the Civic Learning Spiral and subsequent work of Musil (2009) has been a significant contribution in the effort to bring together the various streams of community and civic engagement at the higher education level, paving the way for both the defining of a discipline and its accompanying research and assessment.

Steinberg, et al. (2011) built upon the six interconnected elements of the Civic Learning Spiral and the AAC&U VALUE rubric in the development of the Civic-Minded Graduate Scale, which is used in this study to assess civic learning outcomes in an undergraduate program. With a working group at the Center for Service and Learning at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), Steinberg et al. developed
Table 1.1. American Association of Colleges and Universities Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of Communities and Cultures</td>
<td>Demonstrates evidence of adjustment in own attitudes and beliefs because of working within and learning from diversity of communities and cultures. Promotes others’ engagement with diversity.</td>
<td>Reflects on how own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.</td>
<td>Has awareness that own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of other cultures and communities. Exhibits little curiosity about what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.</td>
<td>Expresses attitudes and beliefs as an individual, from a one-sided view. Is indifferent or resistant to what can be learned from diversity of communities and cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Knowledge</td>
<td>Connects and extends knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one’s own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one’s own participation in civic life, politics, and government.</td>
<td>Analyzes knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one’s own academic study/field/discipline making relevant connections to civic engagement and to one’s own participation in civic life, politics, and government.</td>
<td>Begins to connect knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one’s own academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and to one’s own participation in civic life, politics, and government.</td>
<td>Begins to identify knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from one’s own academic study/field/discipline that is relevant to civic engagement and to one’s own participation in civic life, politics, and government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Identity and Commitment</td>
<td>Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she has learned about her or himself as it relates to a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action.</td>
<td>Provides evidence of experience in civic-engagement activities and describes what she has learned about her or himself as it relates to a growing sense of civic identity and commitment.</td>
<td>Evidence suggests involvement in civic-engagement activities is generated from expectations or course requirements rather than from a sense of civic identity.</td>
<td>Provides little evidence of her/his experience in civic-engagement activities and does not connect experiences to civic identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Communication</td>
<td>Tailors communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others to establish relationships to further civic action.</td>
<td>Effectively communicates in civic context, showing ability to do more than one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others’ perspectives.</td>
<td>Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do more than one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others’ perspectives.</td>
<td>Communicates in civic context, showing ability to do one of the following: express, listen, and adapt ideas and messages based on others’ perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Action and Reflection</td>
<td>Demonstrates independent experience and shows initiative in team leadership of complex or multiple civic engagement activities, accompanied by reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one’s actions.</td>
<td>Demonstrates independent experience and team leadership of civic action, with reflective insights or analysis about the aims and accomplishments of one’s actions.</td>
<td>Has clearly participated in civicly focused actions and begins to reflect or describe how these actions may benefit individual(s) or communities.</td>
<td>Has experimented with some civic activities but shows little internalized understanding of their aims or effects and little commitment to future action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Contexts/Structures</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability and commitment to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve civic aims.</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability and commitment to work actively within community contexts and structures to achieve civic aims.</td>
<td>Demonstrates experience identifying intentional ways to participate in civic contexts and structures.</td>
<td>Experiments with civic contexts and structures, tries out a few to see what fits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the scale to reflect the concepts of identity and educational and civic experiences integral to civic-mindedness. The subscales of the CMG (Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions, and Behavioral Intentions) mirror the six braids of the Civic Learning Spiral, as suggested in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2

*Domains of the CMG Scale and Civic Learning Spiral Braids*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMG Subscale</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Civic Learning Spiral Braid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>• ways to contribute to society</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• relevance of at least one discipline in addressing societal issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• understanding current events and complexity of modern society</td>
<td>Communities and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• understanding current events and complexity of modern society</td>
<td>Public Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>• communication and listening</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• appreciation of diversity</td>
<td>Communities and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• consensus-building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositions</td>
<td>• valuing service</td>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sense of self-efficacy</td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• responsibility to use education for the public good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>• intention to be personally involved in communities</td>
<td>Public Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior research has indicated that some demographic factors may influence outcomes of community and civic learning at the postsecondary level (Musil, 2009). In
regard to gender, it has been shown that women are more likely to participate in community-related programs than men (Astin & Sax, 1998; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000); some have shown that, ostensibly due to social norms and discriminatory labor markets, volunteering is more likely to be engaged in by females, although it often depends on the type of service (Einolf, 2011). However, Reason and Hemer (2015) concluded that “women seem to have higher scores [on civic engagement], but that isn’t universal” (p. 30). In regard to race/ethnicity, some research has shown White students outperformed African American or Hispanic/Latino students on measures of civic learning, due to greater opportunities to be involved in civic activities, such as debates, mock trials, and discussions of social issues (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2013). Lastly, students who have participated in community or civic programs prior to college may demonstrate high levels of civic-mindedness than their undergraduate peers (Bringle et al., 2015; Malin et al., 2015). Therefore, it is important to account for any sex or race differences on civic-mindedness when assessing program impact; hence, this study controls for sex in its analysis of civic-minded outcomes in its participants.

In summary, the above theoretical framework has provided a foundation of definitions, pedagogical goals, and a wider university context necessary to begin to evaluate student outcomes of an academic community and civic engagement program at the post-secondary level. The Civic Learning Spiral represents the “merging” of historically separate educational movements and delineates distinct areas for assessment; Butin’s perspective regarding the “engaged campus” provides a proposed academic “home” for such learning and assessment to take place. This study aimed to assess gains
in civic-mindedness in an academic program while accounting for confounding factors such as race/ethnicity, sex, or prior community engagement experience.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on information identified in a literature review and the theoretical concepts providing a foundation of inquiry, the following research questions and hypotheses were identified for this study:

RQ1: Do students who complete CCSU’s Minor in Community and Civic Engagement report higher levels of civic-mindedness compared with other students of similar majors who did not participate in the minor, after controlling for race, sex, and prior community engagement experience?

H1-H4: It was hypothesized that students completing the Community and Civic Engagement Minor at Central Connecticut State University would display significantly higher levels of civic-mindedness in the domains of knowledge (H1), skills (H2), dispositions (H3), and intentions (H4) (subscales of the Civic-Minded Graduate Scale) when compared with other students of similar majors who did not participate in the minor, after controlling for race, sex, and prior community engagement experience.

RQ2: How does participation in the Minor in Community Engagement impact participants’ civic-mindedness, when compared with their own perception of their engagement prior to participation in the minor program?
H5-H8: It was hypothesized that students who have completed the Community and Civic Engagement Minor at Central Connecticut State University would self-report a significantly higher level of civic-mindedness in areas of knowledge (H5), skills (H6), dispositions (H7), and intentions (H8) than before they began the program.

**Limitations of the Study**

One limitation to this study, in contrast to much of service-learning literature, is that it is broad in its focus and does not target one pedagogical method or experience for assessment. The intent of this “wide lens” is to get a sense of what students are gleaning from a comprehensive program in community and civic engagement across several different years, courses, instructors, and experiences; it is not able to isolate the impact of specific strategies for teaching and learning. That investigation is recommended as an area of future research.

**Significance of the Study**

When Butin (2010b) published a summative list of the universities offering academic majors or minors in a discipline related to civic and/or community engagement, 31 such programs in the United States were found. The list created for the literature review in this study, however, found 73 such programs (27 majors and 46 minors) – a 135% increase over the last nine years. Slowly but surely, it seems, the academy is embracing community engagement as a legitimate field of intellectual inquiry in and of itself, beyond the pedagogical practice of service-learning. The literature, however, reveals a gap in assessment of these programs; are they, in fact, producing students that
are civic-minded? Unlike the bulk of service-learning research, this study quantitatively examines the impact of not just individual course delivery type but a cohesive program of community-engaged learning at the post-secondary level. To date, there has been little to no research regarding student outcomes of university academic community and civic engagement programs (see review of the literature); this study addresses the gap between the “real and ideal” in terms of the degree to which these programs cultivate the civic engagement and identities of their undergraduates (Knefelkamp, 2008).

In some ways, however, even asking the question of outcomes seems unfair to the growing discipline of community and civic engagement – after all, how regularly are Sociology majors assessed regarding their overall knowledge and skill base in Sociology post-graduation? Do less-than-stellar results in that hypothetical assessment negate the legitimacy of the field of Sociology?

One critical difference with community engagement, it can be argued, is that its academic pursuit at U.S. colleges and universities is often highlighted as evidence of a university’s mission and commitment to the civic development of students, more so than with the other academic majors. It would seem to follow, then, that the majors and minors in community and civic engagement should be evaluated as they grow, in order to determine their effectiveness. Several key reasons for this study, both for the body of literature and for Central Connecticut State University are:

- **Mission Accomplishment.** Since CCSU’s focus on community engagement – and hence the academic minor in community engagement – came directly from the
stated mission and goals of the university, it stands to reason that the program should be periodically evaluated to determine if it is helping the university to meet those goals. In an era of state budget cuts and declining enrollments in the state of Connecticut (see National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), only those initiatives that can demonstrate effectiveness in addressing university priorities will receive continued support and funding.

- **Participation in Carnegie Classification.** In 2019, CCSU sought to renew its Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification (pending at time of writing), and will need to re-apply every five years. Data supporting positive outcomes of CCSU’s academic focus on community engagement will be a key component of that Carnegie classification. To date, the Minor in Community Engagement is the only explicit evidence of curricular community engagement (although much engagement takes place embedded in various courses throughout the academic disciplines).

- **Allocation of Faculty and Funding.** To date, the administration of the Minor in Community Engagement has fallen to the interdisciplinary committee on community engagement, a subcommittee of CCSU’s Faculty Senate. Courses are taught by “community-engaged” faculty on the committee as an extension of their faculty load assignment with the permission of their department chairs, and by other administrative faculty at the university. As the minor grows, it is likely that more classes will need to be taught and more students will need advisement - and there will need to be allocated full-time faculty positions to support and grow the
program, advise its students, and teach its courses. An assessment that indicates if the curriculum is meeting its stated goals would be critical in justifying the allocation of additional resources to this academic area.

- **Curriculum Adjustments.** At this point, since the newer version of the minor has been in circulation for nearly three years, an evaluation of its educational outcomes is necessary to reveal strengths and weaknesses in its structure and administration. An initial assessment could highlight areas in which the minor is not having its intended impact, and trigger a re-structuring of the program, or a re-examination of its stated goals.

Joining with the AAC&U, the Carnegie Foundation’s Community Engagement Classification has called on universities to prepare students to “address critical societal issues” and “contribute to the public good” (New England Resource Center for Higher Education, 2018). This belief that the individual can make a positive impact on his or her community, is an essential outcome of community and civic education programs (Brammer et al., 2012). The Merrimack study describes this component as a “disposition toward practice and action” necessary for students to go forth into communities and create positive change. Civic-mindedness, with its components of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and intentions, is the soil in which that ability to bring about change is planted, nurtured, and allowed to grow into impactful individual and collective action.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This section reviews the literature regarding civic-mindedness, and conducts a search for published literature regarding outcomes of academic community engagement programs. A comprehensive list of academic community and civic engagement programs was compiled and is discussed.

Civic-Mindedness in Higher Education

As mentioned, Steinberg, Hatch, and Bringle (2011) defined a “civic-minded graduate” as “a person who...has the capacity and desire to work with others to achieve the common good...[and an] inclination or disposition to be knowledgeable of and involved in the community, and to have a commitment to act upon a sense of responsibility as a member of that community” (p. 20). Research has indicated that measuring outcomes that indicate a “civic-minded graduate” is complex (Hatcher, 2011), and can be inconsistent across disciplines (Battsitoni, 2002), but that almost all desired civic outcomes can be described as a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors (Bringle, Hatcher, & Hahn, 2016). In regard to the measurement of these outcomes, Reason and Hemer (2015) concluded that “civic learning research has predominantly been based on student self-report and cross-sectional design. The addition of more direct measures of civic learning, especially those that can be applied longitudinally, would strengthen the current understanding of how college experiences affect civic learning” (p. 33). One strength of this study,
although it still represents just one snapshot in time, is its comparison to a control group with similar characteristics as the intervention group, and its inclusion of participants up to four years post-graduation, thus beginning to address the question of longitudinal impact in civic education.

Service-learning literature has shown that outcomes of academic learning, civic learning, and individual civic responsibility can be enhanced through participation in service-learning courses (Bowman, 2011; Novak, Markey, & Allen, 2007; Warren, 2012; Yorio & Ye, 2012). In fact, Finley (2011) asserted that almost all of what we know regarding civic outcomes has come from service-learning literature. What follows is a summary of demonstrated outcomes of service-learning on the desired domains of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors (subscales of the CMG used in this study):

Knowledge. Service-learning literature has demonstrated that participation in service-learning programs yields gains in academic knowledge (Jameson, Clayton, & Ash, 2013) and that discipline-specific knowledge leads to unique perspectives on participation in democracies and coming together on civic issues (Hatcher, 2011; Battistoni, 2013). Regarding civic knowledge specifically, Bringle et al. (2015) noted that service-learning promoted gains in civic learning through the “action-based experiences…[not] possible through didactic and other forms of nonexperiential teaching and learning” (p. 6). Engberg (2013) found that participation in service-learning programs was associated with greater student gains in the cognitive
processes associated with being a global citizen, when compared with those of students who did not participate in such programs.

**Skills.** Skills that are integral to community and civic engagement have been identified in the literature as including those related to leadership, problem-solving, communication, and consensus-building (Astin & Sax, 1998; Barnhardt, Sheets, & Pasquesi, 2015; Bowman, 2011). Barnhardt et al. (2015) demonstrated that structured peer-to-peer reflection and discussion regarding contributing to communities, a critical component of service-learning courses, supports the development of civic skills; Parker and Pascarella (2013) found that participation in diversity-related experiences in the undergraduate years – another common component of service-learning experiences – improved students’ leadership skills in the area of social responsibility.

**Dispositions.** Civic dispositions – or attitudes and values – refer to a belief in the inclusive principles of a democratic society, and the willingness to practice civic skills with a sense of self-efficacy (Torney-Purta et al., 2015), and these values can be applied locally, nationally, or globally. Several college experiences have been linked to the development of civic dispositions, such as social leadership and volunteering (Lott, 2013) and diversity experiences (Bowman, 2011). Barnhardt et al. (2015) found that student reflection and discussion around community issues led to an increased commitment to contribute to communities; Engberg and Hurtado (2011) found that positive student discussion across racial and ethnic differences led to increased levels of pluralistic values in participants. Conversations with others in
which different ways of thinking are emphasized and encouraged is a hallmark of
service-learning pedagogy (Bringle, Hatcher, & Hahn, 2016); in summary, it has been
found that participation in service-learning programs has a positive impact on
diversity attitudes (Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000) and a sense of social responsibility
(Reinke, 2003).

**Behavioral Intentions.** Civic behaviors can include activities such as
volunteering, voting, and addressing community issues with diverse partners (Bringle,
Hatcher, & Hahn, 2016). Behaviors related to addressing social change has been
linked at the undergraduate level to involvement in student organizations (Johnson,
2014) – especially organizations related to diversity or volunteering (Bowman et al.,
2015). The intent to participate in civic life through service is what is measured in
the Behavioral Intentions subscale of the CMG, and has been shown to be an outcome
of service-learning programs (Mayhew & Engberg, 2011).

As described below, the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement at Central
Connecticut State University – the outcomes of which are the focus of this study –
includes several service-learning and diversity-related components that may indicate an
ability to influence levels of student civic-mindedness. The Introduction to Community
and Civic Engagement course (CEN 200) has a co-requisite practicum course (CEN 201)
that involves working in a diverse group, with a community partner, to identify and
address a community issue. Also, since 2015, students in the minor have been required to
take a course related to diversity and inequity, as well as do a 120-hour internship in the
community. According to the above research, all of these factors may contribute to
increased levels of civic-mindedness in minor participants when compared with their peers who did not participate in the minor.

**Other Factors Impacting Civic-Mindedness**

Beyond participation in a service-learning-related program, research has shown that certain demographic factors may also influence outcomes of civic-mindedness in students. For the purposes of this review, those factors include: sex, race/ethnicity, and prior experience with community and civic engagement.

*Sex.* Prior research has shown that women are more likely to participate in community-related programs than men (Astin & Sax, 1998; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000); additionally, some research has shown that, ostensibly due to social norms and discriminatory labor markets, volunteering is more likely to be engaged in by females, although it often depends on the type of service (Einolf, 2011). Dolan (2011) observed that men tended to outscore women in the area of political knowledge; however, that difference disappeared when the focus was the status of women in politics or topics related to social welfare or education. Pragman, Flannery, and Bowyer (2012) studied the impact of service-learning on empathy, morality, and other civically related factors, and found that female students showed greater gains in these areas than their male counterparts. That finding, in particular, seems relevant to any research regarding outcomes of a community engagement program, since the majority of students participating in these programs (or other experiential ones, e.g., study abroad) are female (Musil, 2009).
Race/Ethnicity. Some research has identified significant demographic differences in civic learning outcomes based on race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Rios-Aguilar & Mars, 2011; Hurtado, Ruiz, & Whang, 2012), suggesting that White students outperform African American or Hispanic/Latino students on measures of civic learning, due to greater opportunities to be involved in civic activities, such as debates, mock trials, and discussions of social issues (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2013). Black and Latino/a students have demonstrated lower levels of political knowledge than White students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005); however, researchers have speculated that these between-groups differences may be a result of the way a researcher frames concepts of civic knowledge, which may advantage on group over the other (Hatcher, Bringle, & Hahn, 2016). The impact of race/ethnicity on community and civic outcomes is an area in need of further research.

Prior Community Experience. It has been shown that high school leadership experiences have been predictive of civic involvement in college (Weerts & Cabrera, 2015), and that students begin to develop their “civic identity” prior to their undergraduate study (Bringle et al., 2015; Malin et al., 2015). Participation in high school activities such as tutoring fellow students or volunteering has also been positively linked to civic-minded outcomes, such as civic responsibility and life skills (Astin & Sax, 1998); additionally, personal values related to social activism and racial understanding developed in high school have been shown to persist through college (Bryant, Gayles, & Davis, 2011).
Therefore, research has indicated that a study seeking to measure outcomes of civic-mindedness in the domains of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behavioral intentions should control for students’ predispositions and demographic factors in the areas of sex, race/ethnicity, and prior community involvement, in order to accurately assess gains in civic learning.

**Review of Outcomes Literature in Academic Community Engagement Programs**

The intent of this review was to identify published literature regarding outcomes of academic community engagement programs. Although there is some literature regarding student outcomes in civic-mindedness (Palomboro et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2014), it is not in the undergraduate context, and does not address a specific academic program in community and/or civic engagement (the studies cited measured civic-mindedness in graduate health professional programs). A search on Google Scholar, in relevant academic journals, and on university library databases using variations of “academic community engagement outcomes” as search terms was conducted; since the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification was initiated in 2010, research prior to 2010 was not considered, in an effort to be consistent with up-to-date approaches to community engagement at colleges and universities. In the process, a database of university community engagement programs in the U.S. was created via an internet search, and each program was personally contacted for any outcomes data available (see Table 2.1).

Dr. Dan Sarofian-Butin, Dean of the School of Education & Social Policy at Merrimack College, is one of the few scholars with significant work published in the
area of academic programs in community and civic engagement. His article *Can I Major in Service-Learning? An Empirical Analysis of Certificates, Minors, and Majors* (2010) was an early attempt to list the academic programs around the country and examine their components, and analyze their content in search of a cohesive academic “field” of service-learning. Although his research did not address student outcomes, it proved to be a useful place to begin in the search for data on such programs. Sarofian-Butin recently published an updated list of programs (2017), which became the base point for the expanded and updated list (via the aforementioned internet search) for academic majors and minors in community engagement in the United States detailed below. It is interesting to note that Sarofian-Butin’s first list, published in 2010, contained 31 programs (including certificates, which are not included here); the list created for this review contains 73 programs (not including certificates), pointing to the rapid growth of community engagement as an academic field over the past nine years.

**Methodology of the List of Programs**

In the search for outcomes literature on community engagement majors and minors, it became clear that the creation of a current list of programs was necessary for several reasons. First, it forced a more refined definition of what constitutes a “community engagement”-related major or minor. One can see that, upon reviewing the 73 programs identified in Table 2.1, it is rare for programs at different schools to share the same name, and there is a dizzying variety of terms being used to describe similar programs. All of the programs included on the list expressed the goal of
helping students learn how to address community issues and actively solve social
problems. Some programs that overlapped with community engagement but
appeared to focus on just one aspect of it – such as those titled “social justice”, “urban
studies”, or “leadership development” – were not included, because they concentrated
in just one area of engagement, were philosophical and not active in their approach,
or could be considered separate or specialized minors apart from that of community
engagement.

Secondly, developing a list of current programs identified potential colleges or
universities where outcomes research may be taking place, since it is unlikely that
academics would conduct community engagement outcomes research at universities
that do not have such programs. All four-year colleges on the list that had published
desired learning outcomes were contacted for information on research regarding
student outcomes of their academic programs. Certificate programs were not
included.

Lastly, an ongoing, continuously updated list of current programs is crucial for the
sharing of best practices as student outcomes literature begins to emerge. Butin and
Seider (2012) began this dialogue with a collection of articles and reflections on
academic community engagement programs, and suggested that such programs need
“an academic space from which it becomes possible to critique, explore, develop, and
build a different model of what an engaged campus might look like” (p. 2). In order
for universities to more effectively address student outcomes through academic
community engagement programs, an intellectual space for the sharing of research
and best practices must begin to take shape and networks formed (Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & O’Meara, 2019) - and that space cannot be built until these programs find each other. This list is a step toward that goal.

**Search for Outcomes Literature**

Despite an exhaustive internet and library search, no articles were identified that addressed student outcomes in four-year, undergraduate majors or minors in community engagement. Of the 73 programs identified, 29 were found to have published desired learning outcomes for their students. All of the 29 program coordinators were contacted, and 15 responded. None had any outcome research to share.

Additionally, Dr. Dan Sarofian-Butin was contacted via email, to inquire if he had encountered any outcome research during his nearly ten years of investigation on the subject of community engagement curricula. His reply confirmed the results of this review: “The literature is indeed scarce on the topic of outcomes assessments on academic programs in civic and community engagement…I might suggest that part of the problem is that outcome assessments for any minor or major -- in social work, history, physics, etc. -- is scarce and/or problematic” (personal communication, December 3, 2018). Butin’s point is well-taken; how many universities, after all, are spending time and money researching if their psychology majors are applying brain science to their post-graduate lives? The difference with majors and minors in community engagement, however, is two-fold: first, one of the primary goals of
nearly every community engagement program involves putting what is learned about engaging with communities into practice, to produce citizens who are prepared to be more actively involved in the mechanisms of our democracy; second, other disciplines are not touted as central to a university’s purpose – and cited as evidence of that mission being accomplished – the way programs in community engagement are. It stands to reason, then, that such programs would be held to a higher standard of impact than other academic programs. “These ‘academic homes’ for community engagement…provide the academic foundation – the ‘thought leadership’ if you will – for an institution’s commitment to public engagement” (Butin, 2012, p. 5).

Results of the List of Programs

Results of the internet search for academic majors or minors in community engagement are listed in Table 2.1. As mentioned, 73 programs were identified, and of those programs, only 29 (39.7%; 10 majors, 19 minors) had published desired learning outcomes for their programs.

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College/University</th>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Published</th>
<th>Name of Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allegheny College</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Community &amp; Justice Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegheny College</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Community &amp; Justice Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumption College</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Community Service Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn University</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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Implications of the Literature Review Findings

Clearly, one of the salient implications of this literature review is the need for outcomes research on undergraduate community engagement academic programs. If the field is to be taken seriously as an effective vehicle for creating active, engaged citizens who go on from the university to impact their communities, there will need to emerge a body of cohesive research that corroborates that claim. Community engagement
programs require extensive investment in faculty, resources, and funding, and in a budget-cutting environment, in the absence of such supporting research, universities will surely seek alternate ways to be publicly engaged.

Secondly, a review of the desired outcomes revealed that a majority (61.3%) of academic civic engagement programs had no learning outcomes published (although they could exist privately within the institution). For those institutions, this study – as well as the studies and models upon which it rests – may prove useful in developing measurable outcomes and refining program design to attain desired results in student engagement. Research in outcomes, then, must focus on measures that address those competencies to assess their impact effectively. A greater focus in outcomes research on the part of these programs is needed to build up a body of knowledge, share best practices, and make the case for data-driven resource allocation in accomplishing university engagement goals.

Central Connecticut State University’s Minor in Community and Civic Engagement

Because this study sought to determine outcomes of a particular academic program in community engagement, a brief review of the program is necessary to provide context for the study.

The Context: Background of the Program

Central Connecticut State University is a regional, comprehensive, public university located in New Britain, Connecticut. In the past several years, CCSU has identified certain “distinctives” of its educational approach, which it believes elevate it above the other public and private universities in the state. One of those distinctive
community engagement, is listed as one of the institution’s chief concerns and figures prominently in its stated vision to graduate “broadly educated, culturally and globally aware students who will contribute meaningfully to their communities as engaged professionals and citizens” (CCSU, 2019). In 2010, CCSU sought and received recognition for being a “community engaged institution”, as evaluated by the Carnegie Foundation. The assessment process required for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification includes examining community perceptions of the institution, tracking and recording institution-wide engagement data, measuring the impact of community engagement on students, faculty, community, and institution, evaluating student learning outcomes in curricular engagement, and ongoing feedback from community partnerships (New England Resource Center for Higher Education, 2018).

With its newfound status as a community-engaged university, faculty and staff began to address the “curricular engagement” facet of the Carnegie rubric by designing and launching a new academic Minor in Community and Civic Engagement in the fall of 2011. In spring of 2012, it offered its first Introduction to Community and Civic Engagement course, with an enrollment of 16 students. Due to a largely unworkable structure of the interdisciplinary minor requirements (many of the courses listed as options in the minor were rarely offered or required multiple prerequisites, for example), the minor languished with only a handful of participants until it was re-vamped by a second faculty and staff committee in 2015. The new version of the minor included a more accessible interdisciplinary curriculum, an additional one-credit “community lab” co-requisite to the introductory course, and a required 4-credit community internship.
Since the revision, the number of participants in the minor has grown yearly and now has a consistent 30-40 participants. The President of CCSU, Dr. Zulma Toro, has stated that she would like to see the minor grow to 100 participants by 2020. To date, CCSU has graduated 42 students with the minor, with the first of them graduating in 2015. Of those graduates, the majority have majored in Psychological Science (30.2%), followed closely by Criminology and Sociology (equally at 28.6%), and assorted others (such as English, Journalism, and Political Science, 11.9%).

In formulating questions critical to guiding this study, it was useful to refer to Central Connecticut State University’s description of the Minor in Community Engagement, which addresses its goals and objectives; concepts of the Civic Learning Spiral are salient:

*The minor in Community Engagement is an interdisciplinary program designed to provide students with the skills and creativity to solve problems in their own communities, and to develop students’ own sense of self and collective efficacy. The Community Engagement program allows students to build their civic agency, their interpersonal, leadership, and advocacy skills, as well as their academic skills such as critical analysis, appreciation for diversity, and an enhanced understanding of community issues and challenges. The program is ideal for students seeking academic and hands-on opportunities to make a measurable difference in improving the quality of life for citizens in the community and region. (CCSU Community Engagement Minor, 2019)*
Requirements of the Program

CCSU’s Minor in Community and Civic Engagement consists of 17 credits, distributed as follows (see Appendix A for course descriptions):

Required Courses:
CEN 200 Introduction to Community and Civic Engagement (3 credits)
CEN 201 Practicum in Community and Civic Engagement (1 credit)
CEN 402 Community Engagement Internship Seminar (4 credits)

One course from the following (3 credits)
PHIL 244 Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Justice
CRM 245 Diversity and Criminal Justice
SOC 212 Race, Class, and Gender
ANTH 200 Dimensions of Diversity and Inequality

2 courses from any of the following, in consultation with CEN facilitator (6 credits):
ANTH 170 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
ART 270 Art in Community
BIO 132 Introductory Ecology
COMM 215 Introduction to Interpersonal Communication
COMM 343 Communication and Social Influence
COMM 451 Environmental Communication
CRM 230 Law Enforcement & Society
CRM 240 Gender, Crime and Criminal Justice
ECON 200 Principles of Macroeconomics
ECON 321 The Economics of Social Issues
WRT 370 Creative Nonfiction I
AST 278 Observational Astronomy
ENT 330 Entrepreneurship and New Venture Creation
GERO 101 Introduction to Gerontology
HIST 302 Introduction to Public History
JRN 200 Introduction to Journalism
JRN 370 Global News in Context
JRN 371 Reporting Cultural Diversity
Since the minor was restructured in 2015, some of the participants in this study who began the minor prior to 2015 were subject to the old requirements, which did not include the 1-credit CEN 201 Practicum, the 4-credit CEN 402 Internship, or a required course in diversity/inequity (although they were options). However, all took the CEN 200 Introduction to Community and Civic Engagement class and received a grade of C- or better, per the university policy for courses included in academic minors.

**Summary of Literature Review Findings**

Although the research surrounding student outcomes in service-learning courses is robust, there has been little research to accompany the rise of comprehensive academic major and minor programming in undergraduate community engagement. Over the past ten years, these programs have increased across the country, however, to date no significant literature has been published that supports program effectiveness in producing students who specifically demonstrate the knowledge, skills, values and intentions
necessary to participate as citizens – even though more than one-third of existing programs purport to do just that in their published outcomes.

This study addresses a gap in the literature because it aims to assess outcomes in civic-mindedness in a post-secondary academic (not co- or extra-curricular) program specifically purporting to study community and/or civic engagement, as opposed to one that utilizes service-learning pedagogy in the study of a different discipline. It is also unique in that, while other programs have attempted to evaluate civic learning in their students (e.g. Keen & Hall, 2009), few have compared those outcomes to those of other students in similar major disciplines from the same university during the same time period.

For the field of community engagement to go forward as an academic discipline and vehicle for student development, “it is crucial that university faculty and administrators leading majors, minors, and certificate programs in community service-learning undertake their own evaluation of the impact of their programs upon their particular students and within the context of their particular community” (Seider & Novick, 2012, p. 132). It is that evaluation that this study aimed to undertake.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methods for this study, as well as background information on the program to be studied. Research questions and hypotheses are reviewed, the methodology and design of the study are described, and the sampling strategy is outlined, with particular attention to identification of intervention and comparison group participants. Data collection and storage procedures are described, participant confidentiality is addressed, and data analysis is explained.

Research Questions

This study focused on civic-related outcomes of students who have completed an academic minor in Community and Civic Engagement in the context of public higher education. The impact of participation in this minor was examined using a post-completion survey and a Retrospective Pre-Test (RPT) questionnaire. Two research questions guided this study.

1. Do students who complete the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement report higher levels of civic-mindedness, compared with other students of similar majors who did not participate in the minor, when controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and prior community engagement experience?
2. How does participation in the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement impact participants’ civic-mindedness, when compared with their own perception of their engagement prior to participation in the minor program?

Research Hypotheses

Based on information identified in the literature review and the theoretical concepts providing the foundation of this study, the following research hypotheses were identified:

RQ1: It was hypothesized that student participants in the Community and Civic Engagement Minor at Central Connecticut State University would display a significantly higher level of civic-mindedness when compared with other students of similar majors who did not participate in the minor, after controlling for race, sex, and prior community engagement experience. Specifically:

H1: Students in the minor would display significantly more knowledge regarding issues and challenges in communities (e.g., structural inequities and historic imbalances of power) and how to address them than those who did not participate in the minor;

H2: Students in the minor would display a significantly higher level of the skills needed to work in communities (e.g., conflict resolution and consensus-building) than those who did not participate in the minor;
H3: Students in the minor would display a significantly higher value on taking action to address social issues and serving communities (e.g., processes of civic reform) than those who did not participate in the minor;

H4: Students in the minor would display a significantly higher level of behavioral intention to be involved in communities (e.g., volunteering or voting) in the future than those who did not participate in the minor.

RQ2: It was hypothesized that students who have completed the Community and Civic Engagement Minor at Central Connecticut State University would self-report a significantly higher level of civic-mindedness than before they began the program. Specifically:

H5: Students in the minor would report significantly more knowledge regarding issues and challenges in communities and how to address them after completion of the minor compared to before;

H6: Students in the minor would report a significantly higher level of the skills needed to work in communities after completion of the minor compared to before;

H7: Students in the minor would report a significantly higher value on taking action to address social issues and serving communities after completion of the minor compared to before;
H8: Students in the minor would report a significantly higher level of behavioral intention to be involved in communities in the future after completion of the minor compared to before completion.

**Research Methodology and Design**

A comparative, quasi-experimental and quantitative research design utilizing two groups was the research approach of this study. The intervention group included graduates of CCSU who have completed all of the academic requirements of a Minor in Community and Civic Engagement since its inception in 2012, and have self-selected to participate in the study. The second (comparison) group included graduates of Central Connecticut State University during the same period with similar majors as those in the intervention group, but without completion of the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement, who also voluntarily consented to participating in the study. A quantitative analysis was used to determine if there were significant differences on a measure of civic-mindedness between the two groups, utilizing the Civic-Minded Graduate scale.

**Population and Sample**

This study was conducted at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Connecticut. A non-probability sample of any graduate who completed the minor in Community and Civic Engagement and chose to participate comprised the intervention group; the comparison group consisted of a stratified sample (by academic major) of recent graduates of CCSU’s College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, to which the majority of the minor participants belong. Participants in each stratum were chosen
randomly by an automatic number generator utilized with a list of graduates in each academic major.

**Population of Central Connecticut State University**

Central Connecticut State University, centrally located in New Britain, CT, is the largest of Connecticut’s four regional, comprehensive state universities (separate from the state’s flagship institution, the University of Connecticut). CCSU serves approximately 11,000 students – 9,000 undergraduates and 2,000 graduates – nearly 85% of whom come from the central Connecticut region and stay in the area upon graduation. The university is comprised of four academic schools: Business; Education & Professional Studies; Engineering, Science & Technology; and Liberal Arts & Social Sciences (the final school being the largest in terms of student enrollment with approximately 3,000 students). The university reports that female students account for 48 percent of the student population; males, 52 percent; “more than 30 percent of students are students of color”, with African American students comprising 11 percent of the student body; Latinos, 12 percent; and Asians, 3 percent (CCSU website profile, 2019).

**Sampling Procedures**

Particular attention was paid to the selection of participants to protect the validity of the study. A list of all CCSU graduates from the past four years (2015-2019) from the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences was obtained from the university registrar and sorted by major and minor. All CCSU students who graduated with a minor in Community and Civic Engagement ($n = 44$) were invited to participate in the study and
comprised the intervention group. A list of 200 graduates for the control group was compiled using the same percentages of academic majors as the intervention group (Psychological Science, 31%, \( n = 62 \); Criminology, 29%, \( n = 58 \); Sociology, 29%, \( n = 58 \); English, 4%, \( n = 8 \); Journalism, 4%, \( n = 8 \); and Political Science, 3%, \( n = 6 \)). Graduates of both groups were contacted via email to participate. Since many graduates in the comparison group in particular were predicted to be less likely to respond to the survey (due to their potential lack of familiarity with the subject or community engagement program), a pool of 200 ensured that a response rate of only 22% still provided an adequate comparison group.

**Sample Size and Statistical Power**

Using the software package G*power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), it was determined that 25 people in each group would be sufficient to detect an effect size (\( r = .34 \)) similar to what was reported by Steinberg et al. (2011), assuming power of .80, an alpha level of .05, and a 1-tailed test. Thus, the actual sample size of 38 non-minors and 29 minors provided sufficient power to detect group differences.

**Risks and Benefits of the Study**

Risks to participants in this study were minimal, and no more than one might encounter in everyday life. Although there is always a risk that data is lost or stolen, no real harm was expected even in that case due to the nature of the study. In order to encourage participation, students were entered into a drawing to win a $50 Amazon gift card; one card was purchased by the researcher and delivered electronically to one
participant chosen randomly from the survey responses, identified by an optional question to provide an email address for entry.

Beyond the potential to win a gift card, participants received no direct benefit for participating in the study; however, there were several potential benefits for the institution, the academic program, and for society. This study aimed to assess the civic outcomes of one of the academic programs at the host university, the results of which can be used to promote the program’s benefits and/or target areas for curricular improvement. Additionally, particularly because this program seeks to prepare students to become engaged and valued members of their communities, society at large has much to gain from this study’s potential to make that preparation more consistent and substantive.

 Measures

Dependent Variable: The Civic-Minded Graduate (CMG) Scale

Steinberg, Hatcher, and Bringle (2011) developed a measure of undergraduate outcomes in civic-mindedness called the Civic-Minded Graduate (CMG) Scale, which measures attributes closely mirrored in the desired outcomes of CCSU’s Minor in Community and Civic Engagement and the research questions for this study. The authors of the scale and its subsequent psychometric testing define “civic-mindedness” as “a person’s inclination or disposition to be knowledgeable of and involved in the community, and to have a commitment to act upon a sense of responsibility as a member of that community” (p. 20).
The CMG Scale is a 30-item self-report measure with a 6-point response format (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree). Items used in the CMG Scale came from prior research (Eyler & Giles, 1999) as well as other related scales, such as the Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire (Moely et al., 2002). Questions developed for the CMG Scale are grouped into four major domains/subscales: Knowledge (understanding the complexity of society’s challenges and how one’s discipline can contribute to addressing those challenges); Skills (communication, consensus-building, and working with diversity); Dispositions (valuing community engagement and a sense of self-efficacy in addressing societal issues), and Behavioral Intentions (the desire to be personally involved with communities in the future). This research will examine all four subscales as potential outcomes of participation in the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement at CCSU. The authors of the scale encourage adapting the survey to include a particular course, program, and/or university to “focus the respondents’ attention on their experiences” as a student in the program being measured (p. 23). The domains on the CMG scale directly address this study’s questions regarding knowledge, skills, dispositions, and intentions inherent in the concept of civic-mindedness (see Appendix B for survey questions adapted to CCSU).

Steinberg et al. conducted three psychometric studies on the CMG scale (2011). In the third study, they generated a random sample of undergraduates ($n = 4,396$) and received a 13.8% response rate for the participant sample ($n = 606$). Cronbach’s alpha for the CMG Scale was .96 in multiple administrations of the test. The items for the Civic-Minded Graduate Scale in this study had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84,
indicating good reliability; subscale reliability scores were robust as well (Knowledge = .87; Skills = .89; Dispositions = .94; Behavioral Intentions = .81).

The scale also has demonstrated validity, confirming in all three studies that the number of service-learning courses a student had taken was positively correlated with the CMG Scale Overall Average Score, $r (595) = .34, p < .001$, providing further evidence for construct validity. Correlations for subscale scores with the number of service-learning courses were .37 (Knowledge), .29 (Skills), .31 (Dispositions), and .28 (Behavioral Intentions); all were significant at the $p < .01$ level (Steinberg et al., 2011).

Test-retest reliability in the first and second studies were .62 and .43 respectively (nine-month intervals). Component factor analysis indicated one factor that accounted for 49.4% of the variance in responses, indicating that “the scale is unidimensional and lends further support for its construct validity” (p. 27).

In addition to the CMG survey, participants who completed the minor were asked to complete four multiple-choice questions addressing their perceptions of their own civic-mindedness before and after completing the minor (see Appendix B). Questions mirrored the four domains (knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behavioral intentions) and were in retrospective pre-test (RPT) format (Sibthorp et al., 2007). Sample questions include: “Think about your knowledge of community issues and challenges BEFORE you completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement at CCSU. How would you rate your understanding of community issues and challenges at that point?” and, “How would you rate your understanding of community issues and challenges NOW,
having completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement?” Response options ranged from 1 (no understanding at all) to 4 (above average understanding).

Both the CMG scale and the RPT questions are susceptible to social desirability bias, in that graduates may be tempted to indicate a greater sense of civic responsibility in order to be viewed more favorably by others. However, the use of the control group helps to mitigate this bias in the case of the CMG scale, as it is assumed that both groups would display that bias in equal measure. The RPT questions are likewise susceptible to participants indicating greater gains in civic-mindedness than is objectively true; however, the question format is meant to correct what Sibthorp et al. (2007) describe as a “response-shift bias”. Response-shift bias arises when the experimental intervention (e.g., a program in community engagement) has the potential to change a participant’s evaluation standard (e.g., what it really means to be civically engaged) with regard to the dimension measured with the self-report instrument (e.g., civic-mindedness) - affecting the internal validity of pre- and post-test results. In such cases it is recommended to use an RPT format instead of pre-/post-test models to more accurately assess changes in perceptions (Howard, 1980).

Independent Variables

In this study, the independent variable was a student’s status regarding completion of the requirements of the Community and Civic Engagement minor at Central Connecticut State University; the dependent variable studied was the CMG scale score. However, this study did not use a randomized control design, and it was possible that
there was a differential impact of the program among different types of students in regard to gender and racial/ethnic demographics, as well as prior experience in community engagement. These background variables were identified and controlled for in the data analysis.

**Demographic Variables**

Two demographic variables were assessed. Sex included choices of male, female, or other; race/ethnicity was assessed using wording of the question regarding racial identification for the 2020 United States census reported by the Pew Research Center (Cohn, 2015), which allows participants to choose more than one response from eight options (including a write-in option for “other race, ethnicity, or origin”; see Appendix B).

**Community Engagement Experience Variables**

Participation in prior activities such as volunteering and tutoring other students has been positively linked to the development of civic responsibility and life skills (Astin & Sax, 1998); therefore, prior experience and interest in community and civic engagement had the potential to be a confounding variable in this study. For that reason, the survey included the following questions regarding community involvement prior to college enrollment:

1. Did you belong to a civic, faith, or community group that valued and practiced community service prior to attending Central Connecticut State University? (Yes/No)
2. Did you individually participate in community service or social action prior to attending Central Connecticut State University? (Yes/No)

**Procedures**

The data collection for this study was completed, with IRB approval, between October 7 and 18, 2019, utilizing the CMG Scale adapted for use at Central Connecticut State University, and additional demographic and confounding variable survey questions as described. The researcher applied for approval through the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) of both Central Connecticut State University and Clemson University, where the researcher is a PhD candidate.

**Participant Contact and Survey Delivery**

Graduates who completed the minor, as well as a random selection of 200 graduates with comparable majors, were identified via a list run from the Registrar’s office at the university and supplied to the researcher, and an email invitation was sent to graduates to participate (see Appendix B). Participants were contacted via email during the data collection period, using both the university and personal email addresses on file at the university. The email included a description of the study and a link to an online survey. Graduates of the minor completed additional questions relating to their perceptions of their civic-mindedness before and after completion of the program using the RPT format.
Participant Consent

An explanation of the study, the role of the researcher, and how subjects were identified was sent to each potential participant with an invitation to enter the online survey (Appendix B). A consent form was included as the first item on the survey, with an option to opt out of the study or check “I consent” and continue with the survey questions.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Responses to the CMG and participant demographic survey were sent directly and anonymously to the online survey host for researcher analysis. Access to the online survey site was password protected and known only to the researcher. The data reported from this study was aggregate in nature; no individual responses were highlighted or personal identifiable information used. No photos or videos were included in the study.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the surveys was downloaded to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. After survey data are converted into an SPSS database, descriptive statistics were computed to examine frequency distributions. Differences between the intervention and comparison groups on demographic variables were controlled statistically (covariates) in the analyses testing study hypotheses.

In order to address the first research question, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used to determine if the two groups’ CMG averages
reflected a significant difference in “civic-mindedness” for the graduates who have completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement, in comparison to the sample of graduates who have not completed the minor, after controlling for between-group differences on sex, race, and prior civic engagement. The magnitude of that difference (effect size) was also examined. Analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were used to determine if the two groups differed on each of the four CMG subscales (knowledge, skills, disposition, and behavioral intentions) regarding community engagement.

In order to assess if participants in the Minor showed gains in civic-mindedness (Research Question 2), four paired sample t-tests (one for each CMG subscale) were conducted. This helped to determine if differences in civic-mindedness were due to participation in the community engagement minor and not a predisposition toward civic involvement.

**Threats to Validity**

At the outset, the group of participants who had completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement appeared to be susceptible to self-selection bias – presumably, only students with an interest in engaging civically tend to choose the minor to begin with. However, regardless of where on the spectrum of civic-mindedness a student starts, both the CMG scale and the additional questions were designed to target net gains in dimensions of civic engagement as a result of program participation, which was one rationale for the RPT format (Sibthorp et al., 2007). Graduates might have also been susceptible to a history bias (in which events experienced between the time of being
in the program and that of taking the survey confound the results) or maturation bias (in which factors inherent in maturation could account for changes in civic-mindedness) – however, the two-group design of this study helped to offset these biases, since they were theoretically experienced by both the intervention and comparison groups. Nevertheless, likely the most significant limitation to this program evaluation was the lack of random assignment to condition. Although potential differences between the intervention and comparison groups (e.g., sex, race) can be accounted for via matching and statistical controls, there may still remain differences between the two groups other than participation in the minor. The addition of questions to the intervention group using RPT format attempted to address this potential threat to validity by asking participants to evaluate their experience in the program, measuring only their perceptions pre- and post-participation without regard to the comparison group. It does, however, point to the need for further research using pre- and post-test design, or more restrictive comparison group criteria.

**Summary of Methodology**

This comparative, quasi-experimental study used a two-group model to explore varying levels of civic-mindedness among graduates of Central Connecticut State University. Data were collected using the CMG Scale and accompanying background information survey during the Fall of 2019; analysis of the data addresses the research questions regarding outcomes of students who have completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement described above. Data from the background survey identified potential confounding or intervening variables.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This study explored the effect of participation in the Community and Civic Engagement academic minor at Central Connecticut State University on civic-mindedness, as measured by the Civic-Minded Graduate scale. A total of 67 graduates participated in this study. In this chapter, the results of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses are presented.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze all variables. Key characteristics are presented below; Table 4.1 presents characteristics for the entire sample group, comparing characteristics of graduates who did not participate in the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement with graduates who did participate.

Participant Demographics

A total of 67 graduates completed the CMG survey (five partially completed surveys were not included in the analysis). Of the 67 participants, 29 indicated that they had completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement, and 38 did not, providing an adequate sample size for analysis of both groups. Participants were predominantly female in both groups (82% of non-minors and 76% of minors). The general population at CCSU is 48% female and 52% male, so the comparison group differed widely from the general population; the population of graduates who have
completed the minor, however, is 78% female, which more closely resembles the sample group. A Pearson chi-square analysis demonstrated that there was no significant association in the sample between sex and minor participation ($\chi^2 = .325$).

Table 4.1

*Frequency Table for Nominal Variables by Minor Participation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Non-Minors $n = 38$</th>
<th>Minors $n = 29$</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7 (18%)</td>
<td>7 (24%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31 (82%)</td>
<td>22 (76%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>7 (18%)</td>
<td>5 (17%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic, Latino(a), or Spanish origin</td>
<td>5 (13%)</td>
<td>7 (24%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>22 (58%)</td>
<td>17 (59%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other race, ethnicity, or origin</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern or North African</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Group Community Experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.865</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>30 (79%)</td>
<td>20 (69%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8 (21%)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Individual Community Experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22 (58%)</td>
<td>19 (66%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16 (42%)</td>
<td>10 (34%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participant racial/ethnic distribution was equally as, or slightly more, diverse than the general population at CCSU (participants were 18% Black or African American and 13% Latino(a), compared with 11% and 12% respectively in the overall CCSU...
population; Asian participants were 3% of the respondents, which is also the percentage of Asians at CCSU). Further, a Pearson chi-square analysis showed no significant association between race/ethnicity and participation in the minor ($\chi^2 = 4.174$).

To explore a possible relationship between prior community engagement and outcomes on the CMG scale, participants were asked whether they belonged to a community, faith, or civic group that practiced community service prior to attending CCSU. Those who minored in Community Engagement showed slightly higher rates of prior group involvement (31% of minors vs. 21% of non-minors) as well as individual engagement (66% of minors reported prior individual community activity vs. 58% of non-minors), but a Pearson chi-square analysis showed there was not a statistically significant relationship between non-minors and minors in prior community engagement group or individual experience ($\chi^2 = .865$ and .402 respectively).

Research Question 1

RQ1: Do students who complete CCSU’s Minor in Community and Civic Engagement report higher levels of civic-mindedness compared with other students of similar majors who did not participate in the minor, after controlling for the covariates of race, sex, and prior community engagement experience?

H1-H4: It was hypothesized that students completing the Community and Civic Engagement Minor at CCSU would display significantly higher levels of civic-mindedness in the domains of knowledge (H1), skills (H2), dispositions (H3), and intentions (H4) (subscales of the Civic-Minded Graduate Scale) when compared with other students of similar majors who did not participate in the minor, and that this finding
would persist even after controlling for race, sex, and prior community engagement experience.

A Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted, to compare the subscale scores of the Civic-Minded Graduate Scale between the two groups, controlling for race, sex, and prior community engagement experience. The multivariate test in the MANCOVA for overall differences was significant (Wilks $\lambda = .69$, $F(4, 53) = 5.89$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .308$). Covariates of race/ethnicity and prior community engagement experience were not significant factors in the MANCOVA. However, there was a significant multivariate effect for Sex (Wilks $\lambda = .84$, $F(4, 53) = 2.56$, $p = .049$, partial $\eta^2 = .162$).

Because the Wilk’s lambda was significant for participation in the minor and for sex, univariate one-way analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were examined for these two variables to determine on which CMG subscales the respective groups differed. These results revealed that there was a significant effect for minor participation on the Knowledge subscale after controlling for covariates, $F(1, 56) = 18.82$, $p < .001$; estimated marginal means demonstrated that when controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and prior group or individual community experience, those who minored in Community and Civic Engagement scored higher on the Knowledge subscale score (minor $M = 45.33$, $SD = 2.52$; non-minor $M = 36.84$, $SD = 2.11$). Therefore, H1 was supported. Sex did not have a significant effect on the Knowledge subscale, $F(1, 56) = 2.54$, $p = .117$. Results are summarized in Table 4.2.
Table 4.2

**CMG Knowledge Subscale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
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<td>Minor</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45.333</td>
<td>2.520</td>
<td>18.815</td>
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<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>39.003</td>
<td>2.548</td>
<td>2.535</td>
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<td>0.117</td>
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<td>43.174</td>
<td>2.416</td>
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<tr>
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<td>39.364</td>
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<td>2.955</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>42.813</td>
<td>2.479</td>
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<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>38.017</td>
<td>1.473</td>
<td>0.946</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>37.737</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
<td>42.605</td>
<td>7.629</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>47.884</td>
<td>7.591</td>
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<td>Other race, ethnicity, or origin</td>
<td>45.054</td>
<td>5.639</td>
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</table>

* p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

There was also a significant effect for minor participation on the Skills subscale, $F(1, 56) = 15.53, p < .001$; estimated marginal means demonstrated higher scores for minors than for non-minors (minor $M = 44.38, SD = 1.98$; non-minor $M = 38.31, SD = 1.66$). Therefore, H2 was supported. There was also a significant effect for Sex on the Skills subscale, $F(1, 56) = 5.25, p = .026$; estimated marginal means demonstrated higher...
scores for females than for males (females $M = 43.70$, $SD = 1.90$; males $M = 38.98$, $SD = 2.00$). Results for the Skills subscale are summarized in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

**CMG Skills Subscale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>Minor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44.376</td>
<td>1.983</td>
<td>15.531</td>
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<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>38.305</td>
<td>1.664</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38.977</td>
<td>2.006</td>
<td>5.252</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.026*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43.703</td>
<td>1.902</td>
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<td>Previous Exp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40.274</td>
<td>1.718</td>
<td>1.823</td>
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<td>0.182</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>42.407</td>
<td>1.952</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>38.032</td>
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<td>1.760</td>
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<td>0.136</td>
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<td>Black or African American</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.005</td>
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<td>47.739</td>
<td>5.976</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other race, ethnicity, or origin</td>
<td>40.965</td>
<td>4.439</td>
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</table>

* p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Additionally, there was a significant effect for minor participation on the Dispositions subscale, $F(1, 56) = 8.25$, $p = .006$, with estimated marginal means demonstrating higher mean scores for minors (minor $M = 54.72$, $SD = 2.99$; non-minor $M = 48.06$, $SD = 2.51$). Therefore, H3 was supported by the data analysis. Sex also had a
significant effect on the Dispositions subscale, $F(1, 56) = 4.82, p = .032$, with estimated marginal means demonstrating higher mean scores for females (females $M = 54.80, SD = 2.86$; males $M = 47.98, SD = 3.02$). Results are summarized in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMG Dispositions Subscale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54.723</td>
<td>2.987</td>
<td>8.245</td>
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<td>0.006*</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>48.061</td>
<td>2.505</td>
<td>8.245</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.006*</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47.982</td>
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<td>54.802</td>
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<td>4.823</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.223</td>
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<td>0.274</td>
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<td>46.323</td>
<td>1.746</td>
<td>1.163</td>
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</table>

* $p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Lastly, there was a significant effect detected for the Behavioral Intentions subscale, $F(1, 56) = 9.58, p = .003$; estimated marginal means showed a higher subscale score for minors than for non-minors (minor $M = 14.68, SD = 1.07$; non-minor $M = 12.11, SD = .90$). Therefore, H4 was supported, indicating that the difference between minor and non-minor scores on the Behavioral Intentions subscale was significant when
controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and prior experience. There also was a significant effect for Sex on the Behavioral Intentions subscale, \( F(1, 56) = 8.02, p = .006; \) estimated marginal means showed a higher subscale score for females than for males (females \( M = 14.97, SD = 1.03; \) males \( M = 11.82, SD = 1.08 \)). Results are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMG Behavioral Intentions Subscale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Minor</td>
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<td>1.070</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td>0.897</td>
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<td>Sex</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11.816</td>
<td>1.082</td>
<td>8.021</td>
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<td>.006*</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 \)
**Research Question 2**

RQ2: How does participation in the Minor in Community Engagement impact participants’ civic-mindedness, when compared with their own perception of their engagement prior to participation in the minor program?

H5-H8: It was hypothesized that students who have completed the Community and Civic Engagement Minor at Central Connecticut State University would self-report a significantly higher level of civic-mindedness in areas of knowledge (H5), skills (H6), dispositions (H7), and intentions (H8) than before they began the program.

To examine graduates’ overall perceptions of their civic-mindedness prior to participating in the minor and after participation, a two-tailed paired samples $t$-test was conducted to examine whether the mean difference in their perceptions before the minor and after the minor was significantly different from zero.

Levene's test was conducted to assess whether the variances of total Before Minor responses and After Minor responses were significantly different. The result of Levene's test was not significant, $F(1, 56) = 3.25, p = .077$, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met.

The result of the two-tailed paired samples $t$-test was significant for the combined before and after responses, $t(28) = -10.50, p < .001$, indicating the null hypothesis can be rejected. This finding suggests the difference in the mean of Before Minor perceptions and the mean of After Minor perceptions was significantly different from zero. The mean of Before Minor responses was significantly lower than the mean of After Minor
responses, indicating that overall, graduates who participated in the minor indicated that their levels of civic-mindedness were significantly higher after participation than before. The results are presented in Table 4.6. A barplot of the means is presented in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.6

Two-Tailed Paired Samples t-Test for the Difference in Civic-Mindedness Before and After Minor Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Minor</th>
<th>After Minor</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>14.69</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>-10.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 29. Degrees of Freedom for the t-statistic = 28. d represents Cohen's d.

Figure 4.1. The means of overall perceived civic-mindedness before and after minor participation.
To address each of the hypotheses in RQ2, a two-tailed paired samples \( t \)-test was conducted on each of the retrospective pre-test questions to examine whether the mean difference on each of the corresponding subscale domains (Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions, and Behavioral Intentions) was significantly different from zero.

For the knowledge subscale, the result of the two-tailed paired samples \( t \)-test was significant, \( t(28) = -7.65, p < .001 \), indicating the null hypothesis can be rejected; the difference in the mean of Knowledge before minor was significantly lower than the mean of Knowledge after. Therefore, H5 was supported. The results are presented in Table 4.7. A barplot of the means is presented in Figure 4.2.

Table 4.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge before</th>
<th>Knowledge after</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( M )</td>
<td>( SD )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* \( N = 29 \). Degrees of Freedom for the \( t \)-statistic = 28. \( d \) represents Cohen's \( d \).
Similarly, a two-tailed paired samples $t$-test was conducted to examine whether the mean difference of Skills before minor participation and Skills after participation was significantly different from zero. The result of the two-tailed paired samples $t$-test was significant, $t(28) = -7.76, p < .001$, indicating the null hypothesis can be rejected; the mean of perceived Skills before the minor was significantly lower than the mean of perceived Skills after participation; therefore, H6 was supported. The results are presented in Table 4.8. A barplot of the means is presented in Figure 4.3.
Table 4.8

Two-Tailed Paired Samples t-Test for the Difference Between Skills before and Skills after minor participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills before</th>
<th>Skills after</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 2.55</td>
<td>M 3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 0.69</td>
<td>SD 0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t -7.76</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d 1.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 29. Degrees of Freedom for the t-statistic = 28. d represents Cohen's d.

Figure 4.3. The means of Skills before and Skills after minor participation.

For determining if participation in the minor impacted student dispositions toward civic-mindedness, a two-tailed paired samples t-test was conducted to examine whether the mean difference of Dispositions questions before and after was significantly different from zero. The result of the two-tailed paired samples t-test was significant, t(28) = -8.19, p < .001, indicating the difference in the mean responses related to Dispositions
before was significantly lower than the mean of Dispositions after, supporting H7. The results are presented in Table 4.9. A barplot of the means is presented in Figure 4.4.

Table 4.9

Two-Tailed Paired Samples t-Test for the Difference Between Dispositions before and Dispositions after minor participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dispositions before</th>
<th>Dispositions after</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>-8.19</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 29. Degrees of Freedom for the t-statistic = 28. d represents Cohen's d.

Figure 4.4. The means of Dispositions before and Dispositions after minor participation.

Finally, a two-tailed paired samples t-test was conducted to examine whether the mean difference of Behavioral Intentions before minor participation and Behavioral Intentions after participation was significantly different from zero. The result was
significant, $t(28) = -6.66, p < .001$, indicating the difference in the mean of perceived Behavioral Intentions before and the mean of Behavioral Intentions after minor participation was significantly different from zero, with the mean of before significantly lower than the mean of after. H8, therefore, was supported. The results are presented in Table 5. A barplot of the means is presented in Figure 4.5.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral Intentions before</th>
<th>Behavioral Intentions after</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t$ $p$ $d$
-6.66 $< .001$ 1.24

*Note.* $N = 29$. Degrees of Freedom for the $t$-statistic = 28. $d$ represents Cohen's $d$.

![Figure 4.5](image_url)

*Figure 4.5.* The means of Behavioral Intentions before and Behavioral Intentions after minor participation.
Results Summary

This study showed the statistically significant impact of a university academic program in Community and Civic Engagement on levels of civic-mindedness as measured by the Civic-Minded Graduate scale. CMG scores for participants in the minor were significantly higher than those of other graduates from the same university during the same time period with similar majors on all of the CMG subscales.

Among graduates who participated in CCSU’s minor in Community and Civic Engagement, this study also showed a statistically significant change in self-assessed levels of civic-mindedness after participation in the program, indicating that a predisposition to community involvement and self-selection in the minor program did not account for the higher scores on the CMG scale. In future research, a pre- and post-test model would yield more reliable results in this area, since it would not rely on participants’ assessments of their past selves for pre-program data.

These results affirm the emerging body of research connecting civic learning and higher education in the development of civic-mindedness. Though this is one of the first quantitative studies of its kind and more research is needed to further investigate contributing factors to effective integration of all levels of the Civic Learning Spiral in higher education programs, these results provide evidence that deliberate, scaffolded community engagement experience makes a positive difference in civic-mindedness among university undergraduates.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

This section reviews, interprets, and discusses key findings for each of the research questions in this study.

Research Question 1

RQ1: Do students who complete CCSU’s Minor in Community and Civic Engagement report higher levels of civic-mindedness compared with other students of similar majors who did not participate in the minor, after controlling for race, sex, and prior community engagement experience?

H1-H4: It was hypothesized that students completing the Community and Civic Engagement Minor at Central Connecticut State University would display significantly higher levels of civic-mindedness in the domains of knowledge (H1), skills (H2), dispositions (H3), and intentions (H4) (subscales of the Civic-Minded Graduate Scale) when compared with other students of similar majors who did not participate in the minor, after controlling for race, sex, and prior community engagement experience.

The results supported all of the four hypotheses, showing statistically significant differences in CMG scores between participants and non-participants in the minor on the Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions, and Behavioral Intentions subscales, when controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and prior community engagement experience.
The results of this study indicate that an academic program in community and civic engagement is indeed an effective tool in producing graduates who have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and intentions necessary to work in and with communities toward the public good; the data soundly support efforts of universities to grow in their commitment to “sustained, sequential, and scaffolded academic programs that provide coherent models for a true apprenticeship in the practices and theories of citizenry” (Butin, 2012, p. 2). These results support the assumptions inherent in Musil’s Civic Learning Spiral, which emphasizes continual integration of civic concepts in order to learn how to put principles of community engagement into practice and work toward policy change, which a sustained academic program can provide.

Research Question 2

RQ2: How does participation in the Minor in Community Engagement impact participants’ civic-mindedness, when compared with their own perception of their engagement prior to participation in the minor program?

H5-H8: It was hypothesized that students who have completed the Community and Civic Engagement Minor at Central Connecticut State University would self-report a significantly higher level of civic-mindedness in areas of knowledge (H5), skills (H6), dispositions (H7), and intentions (H8) than before they began the program.

In the absence of the ability to do a true pre- and post-test research model to answer RQ2, a retrospective pre-test model was used to examine if graduates who self-selected to participate in the minor were in fact more civic-minded at the outset, or if
participation in the minor increased their civic-mindedness overall and in each of the four domains of the CMG (Sibthorp, 2007). Results showed that, according to their own assessment, there was a significant increase in civic-mindedness after participation in the minor in Community and Civic Engagement - overall, and in all four domains of the CMG (Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions, and Behavioral Intentions).

**Covariates**

Race/ethnicity and prior community engagement had no statistically significant effect on any of the CMG subscales when controlling for the other factors in the analysis. This suggests a different finding than some of the literature on racial differences in civic learning outcomes (see Chapter 2). Although perhaps impacted by the small sample size, this is a positive finding, and points to the potential of scaffolded programming in community engagement in equalizing differences in race/ethnicity and prior experience.

On all of the subscales, females had higher overall means than males, and on three of the four subscales, sex had a statistically significant impact on the CMG subscale score, when controlling for race/ethnicity, prior community experience, and participation in the minor. That trend would seem to support the findings of the literature presented in Chapter 2, which indicated that women tended to have higher scores on measures of civic engagement than men (e.g. Reason & Hemer, 2015). Participation in the minor was still a stronger predictor of civic-mindedness than sex, as seen by the accompanying effect sizes (partial $\eta^2$) for the minor and sex on each of the scales (participation in the minor accounted for 30.8% of overall variance on subscales, and sex accounted for 16.2%).
This result has strong implications for the potential of a program like the minor to impact levels of civic-mindedness in male students in particular; although females trended toward civic-mindedness regardless of minor participation, for males, participation erased the disadvantages in regard to sex. The predominantly female representation in the sample (54 out of 67 respondents) did not likely affect the results, as seen by the similar standard error measures between males and females; however, a follow-up to this study that includes a sample with more male representation might still be interesting for comparison and inform future programming efforts.

Upon further inspection of the estimated marginal means, there were some other interesting findings. Contrary to previous indicators (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2013), white students did not have higher levels of civic-mindedness than their peers from minority backgrounds on any of the subscales, when controlling for other factors (sex, previous experience, and minor participation). Although this bodes well for the hope of equity in regard to civic education, the limitation of this study’s sample size in regard to non-white representation points to the need for further study with larger and more diverse populations.

Lastly, estimated marginal means indicated that graduates with prior community experience actually had lower mean scores on CMG subscales as a group than their counterparts without prior experience when controlling for other factors. This, although not significant in the model, was a surprising observation; the impact of pre-college community engagement experience on civic-mindedness after college (especially if not involved civically during the undergraduate years) may be an area in need of further
study. Additionally, one feature of this study was the academic nature of the community engagement program; participants were not asked if they participated in extra-curricular community-related activities while in college. A potential future study that compared outcomes among students who were in an academically-based program vs. extra-curricular involvement would add significantly to understanding the dynamics of civic learning in higher education.

At this point, it is important to revisit the fact that one of the most crucial aspects of community and civic engagement, beyond its impact on students, is its impact on the community. Cross (2005) was famously critical of “drive-by” volunteering and service-learning placements that only served to reinforce racist attitudes in students and exploit them for the benefit of the (mostly white) students who participated; Sleeter (2007) found that some service-learning classrooms may in fact reinforce deficit perspectives and “norms of whiteness” in college students. In the area of community-based research, Cruz and Giles (2000) observed that the literature to date was “almost devoid of research that looks at the community either as a dependent or independent variable” (p. 28); and Butin (2010a) asserted that “there is little empirical evidence that service-learning provides substantive, meaningful, and long-term solutions for the communities it is supposedly helping” (p. 11). Thankfully, however, the criticism of academics on this shortfall of university engagement has initiated a fresh look at community impact over the past decade. This change in perspective has been due, in large part, to the growing influence of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, which has required universities to demonstrate community input, partnership, and evidence of impact in order to attain
the classification (Driscoll, 2009). Although this study only examined the impact on students of an academic program in community and civic engagement, the impact on and perceptions of these programs in the community is a crucial area that deserves further research. A follow-up study to this one that includes community impact as its focus is necessary to shed light on the entire scope of impact of university engagement programs.

Implications

This study demonstrated that an intentional program of community and civic learning at the undergraduate level, such as is implied by the Civic Learning Spiral and supported by Butin’s Engaged Campus perspective, can have a measurable impact on students with respect to civic-mindedness into their post-graduate years. Previous research indicates that the inclusion of service-learning experiences and diversity-related courses is likely a strong reason for the gains in civic-mindedness observed in this study; however, the intentional “spiraling” of concepts throughout the program is likely another contributing factor. Graduates in the control group had majors strongly associated with the understanding of diversity and societal issues (e.g. sociology, criminology, political science, and psychology), but were measurably less civic-minded than their counterparts in the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement – suggesting that the minor had a broader effect beyond course content related to issues of diversity and social justice. The minor includes an Internship and a service-learning course (Introduction to Community and Civic Engagement), which may account for much of the difference between the two groups. However, Criminology majors, for one are required to do an internship as well as a part of their major program (other majors may choose to do one as well). Therefore,
the data suggest that Musil’s conception of civic learning as a spiraled, continuously revisited framework of civic concepts in many different contexts during the undergraduate years is what makes the crucial difference in civic-minded graduate outcomes.

This has many implications for universities that have as one of their aims the development of global citizens who impact their communities, particularly in the following areas:

*Strategic Planning.* As universities struggle to allocate money, time, and other resources to competing programs, it is imperative to identify those programs that are directly contributing to, and fulfilling, the mission of the university itself. Although other programs may fulfill other aspects of a university’s mission, this study demonstrates that a comprehensive academic community engagement program is a worthy investment of university resources, and a priority should be given to support such programs.

*Academic Inclusion.* Butin (2012) stressed the need for community engagement programs to be allowed into the space of academia in order to have continuity, rigor of thought, and continued evaluation and research. For universities to effectively address student outcomes through such programs, an intellectual space for the sharing of research and best practices must begin to take shape and networks formed (Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & O’Meara, 2019). After all, the “spiral” part of the Civic Learning Spiral is difficult to attain if the various levels of engagement and learning are not in coordination with one another – which is the case with many university programs in this area. “As institutions
struggle to move from scattered and uncoordinated activities within and across all three learning reform movements, one vehicle for creating educational coherence is to organize more intentional, developmental, and integrated student learning outcomes” (Musil, 2009, p. 59). This study confirmed that academic programs that focus on civic learning are indeed impactful, but that much more research needs to be done. Faculty who engage in community research and engagement need to be given support and space to pursue this area as an academic discipline beyond just being allowed to teach the occasional service-learning course; this study showed that intentional programs matter in terms of student civic learning.

*Community Partnerships.* As discussed previously and again below, there are no community engagement programs without community. The impact of programs - like the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement studied here - on the community stakeholders and organizations that make them possible has yet to be studied, and should be. Beyond that, universities need to recognize that the success of their academic community engagement programs rests on the strength of their community partnerships – and those partnerships also require time and resources to flourish.

*Limitations*

As mentioned above, one of the biggest limitations of this study was that it examined only one facet of what is a (somewhat complicated) web of relationships involved in “community engagement” at the higher education level. It did not address one of the most important aspects of community engagement – the impact of student
involvement on the communities in which students are studying. An argument can be made, however, that the development of civic-mindedness in students is an important first step to understanding and interpreting ensuing feedback from communities – if we are not growing as a community of learners in our knowledge, skills, attitudes and intentions in regard to civic practice, community feedback may fall on deaf ears.

Other limitations pertained to the methodology of the study; there are at least three weaknesses that should be mentioned here. The relatively small number of graduates in the minor and ensuing small sample size no doubt impacted the strength of the results. Further studies, once the potential pool of minor graduates grows, promise to demonstrate more robust results. Growth in the minor may also bring greater diversity, especially in regard to the gender of its participants. Although the study samples roughly reflected the wider population of the university in regard to race and ethnicity, the respondents were predominantly female, which statistically limited the study due to the small number of male participants.

A further limitation of the study was its lack of ability to target specific program components in terms of their impact on civic-mindedness. As described previously, the structure of the minor was changed two years into its implementation, and some of the minor respondents may have had different program requirements than other respondents. For example, more recent graduates had a semester-long internship in the community, while earlier participants did not. As more students graduate from the program, further studies can narrow participant selection to only those graduates who shared the same program requirements for a more homogeneous intervention group. While this study
points to the strength of the Community and Civic Engagement Minor curriculum as a whole in developing civic-mindedness, more information is needed regarding the specific experiences of the participants to increase its impact by targeting weaker areas, or to duplicate its methods in other contexts. Additional studies that are qualitative in nature may provide insight into program components that are most effective from the student point of view.

Lastly, it should be noted that one of the strengths of the Civic Learning Spiral is its integration of three important intellectual movements: U.S. diversity; global learning; and civic engagement (Musil, 2009). The CMG, and the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement at CCSU, are both notably lacking in terms of the “global learning” aspect of community engagement (the CMG includes no questions about international knowledge or skills, and the minor does not require any courses or include any content in that area). In these times, when the choices we make are likely to impact not just our own communities but those of other countries, it is vital to begin to recognize that component of civic learning. One potential change in the minor (currently under review) is to include a Global Community Engagement course, which would attempt to address this aspect of the Civic Learning Spiral. As that “strand” of civic education becomes more of a reality in university community engagement programs, future studies may need to utilize a measure that includes it as one of its measurable domains.
Contributions to the Literature

This quasi-experimental, quantitative study demonstrated the significant impact of an academic program in community engagement on student civic-mindedness at the higher education level. It added to the existing literature by being one of the only studies of its kind to examine the outcomes of a university academic program – not just a specific class or teaching strategy – that is quantitative in nature, controlling for confounding factors such as race, sex, and prior experience, and addressing the self-selection bias through a retrospective pre-test assessment. Various studies have demonstrated gains in civic engagement as a result of program participation, but few (if any) have included comparison groups of graduates with similar major backgrounds at the same university during the same time period. As academic programs in community engagement proliferate among U.S. universities, this study begins the conversation regarding the evaluation of their proposed outcomes, and the importance of their inclusion in the academic structure of the university.

Recommendations for Further Research

The outcome of this study points to potential success of comprehensive academic community engagement programs at undergraduate institutions, but it also reveals the need for further study in several key areas: the impact of accompanying factors such as race, sex, and prior community experience with larger and more diverse sample populations; the comparison between academic and non-academic civic programming; the comparative impact of various program components on student civic-mindedness; the
impact of university academic community engagement programs on the members of the community and the university-community partnerships; and the development and continued evaluation of a global component to these programs. The gaps in the literature regarding academic programs are many, and the field is ripe for collaboration with the community on continued research.

**Conclusion**

Ernest Boyer (1990), in his ground-breaking work *Scholarship Reconsidered*, argued that the “scholarship of discovery”— the pursuit of new knowledge for the sake of the academy — should not be the only valued and rewarded form of scholarship in modern higher education. He stressed that the academic work of integration, pedagogy, and application are other forms of scholarship that are undervalued and largely neglected in today’s university structure, even though those approaches offer promising ways for higher education to fulfill its calling to be “energetically engaged in the pressing issues of our time” (p. 119) and “build bridges between scholarly knowledge and community needs” (Butin, 2010, p. 125). Many universities across the U.S. have invested in academic community engagement programs as a way of promoting, valuing, and teaching principles of citizenship and participation to their undergraduates, and this study aimed to evaluate the impact of one of those programs on a student measure of civic-mindedness. This study demonstrated that one such program had significant impact on student outcomes of in the areas of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behavioral intentions related to civic-mindedness, when compared to other students at the same university, while controlling for race, sex, and prior community experience. More research needs to
be done to add to the literature of academic community engagement programs, but this study brings compelling evidence of program effectiveness to universities concerned with their local and global impact.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Course Descriptions, Minor in Community and Civic Engagement

Required Courses:
CEN 200: Introduction to Community and Civic Engagement (3 credits)
Introduction to the skills, knowledge, and theory for students to solve problems in their own communities, and develop a sense of self and collective efficacy. Emphasis on civic agency, interpersonal, leadership and advocacy skills, critical analysis appreciation for diversity and an enhanced understanding of community issues and challenges. Required for Community Engagement minors.

CEN 201: Practicum in Community and Civic Engagement (1 credit)
This one-credit course is the community-engagement component of the CEN 200 class, and provides the platform for the students, working in groups, to carry out a community-based project.

CEN 402: Community Engagement Internship Seminar (4 credits)
The purpose of the Community Engagement Internship program is to first allow students to gain experience in an area of interest, and second, to apply what they have learned from their community engagement curriculum to real life experiences. Essentially, this course will allow each student to apply skills and knowledge in the context of providing community service work. Although each student will serve in different locations and programs, there will be various overlapping and common themes that will emerge for all students.
One course from the following (3 credits)

PHIL 244: Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Justice
Introduces students to philosophical theories and issues of social justice within the United States. Critically explores the philosophical aspects of systemic oppression and the role of various social institutions and structures in producing inequality and injustice. Possible topics include structural inequality and poverty, racism in the criminal justice system, gender-based violence, and affirmative action.

CRM 245: Diversity and Criminal Justice
Impact of race, ethnicity, and/or gender on the commission of criminal offenses, the likelihood of criminal victimization, and the treatment of criminal offenders. Also examined is the impact of race, ethnicity, and/or gender on those working in the criminal justice system.

SOC 212: Race, Class, and Gender
Sociological definition of race, class, and gender, at academic and experiential levels; the interrelationship of these social characteristics as they affect individual
consciousness, group interaction, and access to institutional power and privileges in the United States.

ANTH 200: Dimensions of Diversity and Inequality
Cross-cultural examination of human diversity, focusing on class, race, gender, and ethnicity. Consideration of the ways that cultural differences figure in the development of social, political, and economic inequality.

2 courses from any of the following, in consultation with CEN facilitator (6 credits):

ANTH 170: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
Cultural anthropology involves the study of socio-cultural norms, practices and change. What does it mean to be human? How are humans shaped by and adapt to diverse environments and encounters? This course demonstrates how insights gained from ethnography can help us engage theories about social practice, as well as reflect on our own cultures and contemporary issues. Students will learn how anthropological practice informs social policy, business and academia.

ART 270: Art in Community
In this studio course students will develop, organize and execute community service art projects that support local communities of need in alignment with the community engagement mission of CCSU. The course is open to all students interested in community development. Students will utilize modalities such as mural painting, installation, performance art and photo and video documentation depending on the project needs. Students from a range of disciplines are welcome and encouraged to join the course for a diversity of skills and opinions.

AST 278: Observational Astronomy
Theory and practice of observational astronomy. Topics include solar and lunar observation, naked eye observation, and coordinate systems, telescope usage and design.

BIO 132: Introductory Ecology
Introductory course that introduces students to ecological processes structuring the biosphere and our impacts on it. Emphasis will be placed on current local and global environmental issues and ways of making human lifestyles sustainable.

COMM 215: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication
Introductory survey of interpersonal communication theories and the application of these theories in dyadic, group and organizational contexts.

COMM 343: Communication and Social Influence
Principles and processes of influencing attitudes, beliefs and behavior. Practical illustrations drawn from advertising, speeches, and other communicative settings.
COMM 451: Environmental Communication
Knowledge, attitude, and behavior-change strategies related to environmental and natural resource conservation issues. Coercive, incentive based, and communication-based change strategies will be contrasted.

CRM 230: Law Enforcement & Society
Comprehensive examination of the function of law enforcement in society. Emphasis is placed on such areas as police operations, discretion, police community relations, due process, use of deadly force, and police corruption and deviance.

CRM 240: Gender, Crime and Criminal Justice
Examines how gender is related to crime and criminal justice, with a particular focus on the experience for females. Topics to be covered include patterns of victimization and offending by gender, and women in the criminal justice system as offenders and workers. Theories to explain differences in victimization and offending by gender will be explored.

ECON 200: Principles of Macroeconomics
Macroeconomics. Introduction to the prevailing pattern of American economic institutions, the theory of income, employment and investment in the national economy, and public policies that affect them.

ECON 321: The Economics of Social Issues
Introduction to major social policy debates from an economic perspective. Tools of economic analysis will be used to examine current social issues. Topics include pollution problems, the economics of crime and its prevention, the economics of education, poverty, and discrimination, the economics of professional sports, social security and Medicare.

ENT 330: Entrepreneurship and New Venture Creation
Focuses on how businesses are started. Includes recognizing opportunities and risks, gathering resources to convert opportunities into businesses. Develops the skills to evaluate and formulate a business plan.

GERO 101: Introduction to Gerontology
Introduction to the interdisciplinary study of gerontology and the implications of aging in our society. Includes a review of social, psychological, economic, cultural, health, and policy issues. Discussion of normal vs. abnormal (disease-related) aspects of aging.

HIST 302: Introduction to Public History
Studies issues in, and teaches professional skills for, the practice of Public History. Explores career opportunities in museums, historic societies, and other institutions.
JRN 200: Introduction to Journalism
*Introduction to the principles of journalism. Instruction in writing the basic news story; overview of issues such as journalistic ethics, the First Amendment, and the role of journalists in a democratic society.*

JRN 370: Global News in Context
*Examines International journalism and current events. Students will study the forces underlying issues such as the global economy, war and peace, politics, the environment and coverage in global news media.*

JRN 371: Reporting Cultural Diversity
*Students explore scholarly research and journalistic commentary on the challenges of reporting about race, gender, ethnicity, religious differences, and other aspects of cultural diversity; read exemplary work; and apply what they learn by reporting and writing journalistic articles.*

MGT 295: Fundamentals of Management and Organizational Behavior
*Introduction to the principles of management and their application to business. Emphasis on the development of a philosophy of management and interpersonal behavior within organizations.*

MGT 403: Ethical and Social Issues for the Manager
*Defines contemporary ethical issues of managerial and corporate social responsibility and explores the impact of these issues on managerial decision-making behaviors. Emphasizes issues that emerge in the internal as well as external environments of a business organization. Defines societal expectations of organizations regarding corporate social responsibility.*

MUS 211: Ethnomusicology
*Introduction to the discipline of ethnomusicology. Case studies explore different musical systems and their relationship to their cultural settings.*

PHIL 144: Moral Issues
*Critical examination (both practical and theoretical) of issues arising in the private and public conduct of one's life. Typical issues for examination are abortion, violence, capital punishment, and conflicts between personal values and professional duties.*

PS 230: American State and Local Government
*Organization and major problems of state and local government in the United States, with attention to intergovernmental relations, federalism, and contemporary issues.*

PSY 125: Environment & Behavior
*Effects of built and natural environment on human behavior, cognition, and emotion.*
PSY 250: The Psychology of Community Service
Integration of psychology concepts and principles with community experience to understand service to our communities. Significant community service experience in a new setting required during the course.

PSY 420: Cross-Cultural Psychology
Explores human behavior in a global context. Emphasis will be placed on the influence of cultural factors on behavior cognition, emotion, mental/physical health and group dynamics.

PSY 430: Intergroup Relations
Focuses on the impact of social categorization on human psychology. Examines the motivational, cognitive, and socio-structural factors that contribute to diverse perspectives and social relations within a national context. Topics may include stereotyping, prejudice, gender issues, race relations, and multiculturalism.

PSY 380: Psychology of Dying and Death
Psychological issues of death, dying, and suicide. Topics include death and denial, fear of death, grief and bereavement, child’s and adolescent’s view of death, psychological stages of dying, and euthanasia.

SOC 110: Introductory Sociology
Major theoretical models and research methodologies used by sociologists in examining the institutions of societies and everyday lives of individuals. Topics include social stratification, ethnic relations, race, poverty, gender roles, aging, the family, population and urban/suburban communities.

SOC 111: Social Problems
Conditions or patterns of behavior that are considered to be harmful to society or its members, about which it is considered that something should be done. Included as possible topics are sexism, physical and mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, sexuality, inequality, discrimination, environmental problems and abuses of power.

WRT 370: Creative Nonfiction I
Introduction to various creative nonfiction writing techniques, including how to develop a literary voice, conduct creative research, play with conventional structures, and match a writing style to a specific form, such as personal essay.
Appendix B

Email and Consent Form

Information about Being in a Research Study
Central Connecticut State University and
Clemson University

Educating for Civic-Mindedness: Examining Student Impacts of Academic
Programs of Community and Civic Engagement in Higher Education

KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Voluntary Consent: Dr. Nghi Thai and Laura Minor are inviting you to volunteer for a
research study. Both Dr. Thai and Laura Minor are professors of Community and Civic
Engagement at Central Connecticut State University; Laura is pursuing her doctorate at
Clemson University in South Carolina under the guidance of Dr. Martie Thompson.

You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You
will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part
in the study.

Study Purpose: The purpose of this research is to examine dispositions and behaviors
related to “civic-mindedness” in CCSU graduates within the last four years.

Activities and Procedures: Your part in the study will be to complete this survey, to the
best of your ability, while keeping in mind your experiences in your major or minor
courses at CCSU.

Participation Time: It should take you about 20 minutes to be in this study.

Alternative to Participation: Participation is voluntary, and the only alternative is to not
participate.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this
research study.

Possible Benefits: You may not benefit directly for taking part in this study, however,
your responses will contribute significantly toward understanding the field of community
engagement in higher education and could impact future CCSU students who come after
you. Thank you for your help!
EXCLUSION/INCLUSION REQUIREMENTS
You were invited to participate in this study based on your major and/or minor while a student at CCSU.

INCENTIVES
Those who complete the survey will be given an opportunity to enter their email address to win a $50 Amazon gift card. At the end of the survey, you will be provided an external link to enter your email address. Your contact information will not be connected to your survey responses.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY
The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations; however, no personally identifying information will be collected on the survey or shared. The information collected on the survey could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from the participants or legally authorized representative.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 866-297-3071 or irb@clemson.edu. The Clemson IRB will not be able to answer some study-specific questions. However, you may contact the Clemson IRB if the research staff cannot be reached or if you wish to speak with someone other than the research staff.

If you have any study related questions or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Nghi Thai (thaindg@ccsu.edu), Laura Minor (lauraminor@ccsu.edu; 860.832.2605) at CCSU, or Dr. Martie Thompson at Clemson University (mpthomp@clemson.edu).

CONSENT
By participating in the study, you indicate that you have read the information written above, been allowed to ask any questions, and you are voluntarily choosing to take part in this research. You do not give up any legal rights by taking part in this research study.
Appendix C

Survey Instrument

Demographic Questions

Sex:

Which best describes you?
1 – male
2 – female
3 – other

Race/Ethnicity:

Which of the following is the best description of you?
1. White
2. Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
3. Black or African American
4. Asian
5. American Indian or Alaskan Native
6. Middle Eastern or North African
7. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
8. Other race, ethnicity, or origin

Prior community experience:
1. Did you belong to a civic, faith, or community group that valued and practiced community service prior to attending Central Connecticut State University? (Yes/No)
2. Did you individually participate in community service or social action prior to attending Central Connecticut State University? (Yes/No)

CMG Scale

Subscale items are denoted by (K) = Knowledge; (S) = Skills; (D) = Dispositions; (BI) = Behavioral Intentions

For the following items, please rate your response by circling the appropriate number on the scale. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 6 = Strongly Agree)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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1. My CCSU experiences have helped me know a lot about opportunities to become involved in the community. (K)

2. My experiences as a CCSU student have enabled me to plan or help implement an
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<td>3. My college education has helped me appreciate how my community is enriched by having some cultural or ethnic diversity. (S)</td>
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<td>4. My college education has given me the professional knowledge and skills that I need to help address community issues. (K)</td>
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<td>5. Because of my CCSU experiences, I plan to stay current with the local and national news after I graduate. (BI)</td>
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<td>6. When discussing controversial social issues in college, I have often been able to persuade others to agree with my point of view. (S)</td>
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<td>7. Through my experiences at CCSU, I am very familiar with clubs and organizations that encourage and support community involvement for college students. (K)</td>
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<td>8. My CCSU education has prepared me to listen to others and understand their perspective on controversial issues. (S)</td>
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<td>9. My CCSU education has increased my confidence that I can contribute to improving life in my community. (D)</td>
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<td>10. After being a CCSU student, I feel confident that I will be able to apply what I have learned in my classes to solve real world problems in society. (K)</td>
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<td>11. As a result of my CCSU experiences, I want to dedicate my career to improving society. (D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. My CCSU experiences helped me to realize that I like to be involved in addressing community issues. (D)</td>
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<td>13. My college education has motivated me to stay up to date on the current political issues in</td>
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14. Based on my CCSU experiences, I would say that the main purpose of work is to improve society through my career. (D)

15. Based on my experiences in college, I would say that most other students know less about community organizations and volunteer opportunities than I do. (K)

16. My experiences as a CCSU student have helped make me a good listener, even when peoples’ opinions are different from mine. (S)

17. My experiences in college have increased my motivation to participate in advocacy or political action groups after I graduate. (BI)

18. My CCSU experiences have helped me develop my ability to respond to others with empathy, regardless of their backgrounds. (S)

19. Because of my CCSU experiences, I intend to be involved in volunteer service after I graduate. (BI)

20. Because of the experiences I have had in my college education, I feel a deep conviction in my career goals to achieve purposes that are beyond my own self-interest. (D)

21. My experiences as a CCSU student have prepared me to write a letter to the newspaper or community leaders about a community issue. (K)

22. My CCSU education has made me aware of a number of community issues that need to be addressed. (K)

23. My CCSU education has convinced me that social problems are not too complex for me to help solve. (D)

24. As a result of my experiences in college, other students who know me well would
As a part of your bachelor's degree at CCSU, you completed the academic Minor in Community and Civic Engagement. The below questions ask you to reflect on your knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors before you completed the courses in the minor, and after you completed them.

1. **Think about your knowledge of community issues, challenges, and opportunities BEFORE you completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement at CCSU.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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25. I believe that I have a responsibility to use the knowledge that I have gained through my college education to serve others. (D)

26. My experiences at CCSU have helped me to develop my sense of who I am, which now includes a sincere desire to be of service to others. (D)

27. Because of my CCSU experience, I believe that having an impact on community problems is within my reach. (D)

28. My experiences as a college student have helped me realize that when members of my group disagree on how to solve a problem, I like to try to build consensus. (S)

29. My CCSU experiences have helped me to realize that I prefer to work in a setting in which I interact with people who are different from me. (S)

30. My experiences in college have helped me realize that it is important for me to vote and be politically involved. (D)
CCSU. How would you rate your understanding of community issues and challenges at that point?

1-No understanding at all
2-A little understanding
3-Average understanding
4-Above average understanding

How would you rate your understanding of community issues, challenges, and opportunities NOW, having completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement?

1-No understanding at all
2-A little understanding
3-Average understanding
4-Above average understanding

2. Think about your skills related to working with communities (communication, building consensus, appreciating diversity) BEFORE you completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement at CCSU. How would you rate your skills in working with communities at that point?

1-No skills at all
2-A few skills
3-Average Skills
4-Above average Skills

How would you rate your skills related to working with communities NOW, having completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement?

1-No skills at all
2-A few skills
3-Average skills
4-Above average skills

3. Think about your attitudes related to working with communities (valuing service, believing you can make a difference, wanting to use your education for the public good) BEFORE you completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement at CCSU. How would you rate your attitudes at that point?

1-I did not see the importance of working with communities and social change
2-I was a little bit interested in working with communities and social change
3-I had an average amount of interest in working with communities and social change
4-I had an above average commitment to working with communities and social change

*How would you rate your attitudes related to working with communities NOW, having completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement?*

1-I do not see the importance of working with communities
2-I am a little bit interested in working with communities
3-I have an average amount of interest in working with communities
4-I have an above average commitment to working with communities

4. *Think about your intentions related to working with communities (serving in your community, voting, working for equality) BEFORE you completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement at CCSU. How would you rate your intentions at that point?*

1-I had no intention to work with communities
2-I was a little bit interested in working with communities
3-I had an average amount of intention to work with communities
4-I had an above average intention to work with communities

*How would you rate your intentions related to working with communities NOW, having completed the Minor in Community and Civic Engagement?*

1-I have no intention to work with communities
2-I am a little bit interested in working with communities
3-I have an average amount of intention to work with communities
4-I have an above average intention to work with communities
References


