CARNEGIE SELECTS COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

FOR 2010 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLASSIFICATION

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has selected 115 U.S. colleges and universities for its 2010 Community Engagement Classification. These institutions join the 196 institutions identified in the 2006 and 2008 selection process.

Colleges and universities with an institutional focus on community engagement were invited to apply for the classification, first offered in 2006 as part of an extensive restructuring of The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Unlike the Foundation’s other classifications that rely on national data, this is an “elective” classification—institutions elected to participate by submitting required documentation describing the nature and extent of their engagement with the community, be it local or beyond. This approach enabled the Foundation to address elements of institutional mission and distinctiveness that are not represented in the national data on colleges and universities.
“Through a classification that acknowledges significant commitment to and demonstration of community engagement, the Foundation encourages colleges and universities to become more deeply engaged, to improve teaching and learning and to generate generation socially responsive knowledge to benefit communities,” said Carnegie President Anthony Bryk. “We are very pleased with the movement we are seeing in this direction.”

To create this elective classification, the Foundation, working with a team of advisors and a pilot study conducted by 14 colleges and universities, developed a documentation framework to assess the nature of an institution’s community engagement commitments. This year, 305 institutions registered to receive the application, up from 217 in 2008. One hundred fifty-four (154) institutions applied to document community engagement, up from 147 in 2008. Of the total applications, 115 were successfully classified as community engaged institutions. Five (5) campuses that had previously received the classification under the category of Outreach and Partnerships added the category of Curricular Engagement. One (1) campus that had previously received the classification under the category of Curricular Engagement added the category of Outreach and Partnerships. (Starting with 2010, there are no longer any separate classification categories – all campus applications have to be successful in both Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships.)

Sixty-six (66) are public institutions and 49 are private. In terms of representing Carnegie’s Basic Classification, 35 are classified as research universities, 41 are master’s colleges and universities, 25 are baccalaureate colleges, 12 are community colleges and 2 institutions have a specialized focus—arts, medicine and technology. They represent
In order to be selected, institutions had to provide descriptions and examples of institutionalized practices of community engagement that showed alignment among mission, culture, leadership, resources and practices.

“Clearly there is a great deal of interest among colleges and universities in being recognized for their community engagement commitments,” noted John Saltmarsh, the Director of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE), the Carnegie Foundation’s Administrative Partner for the classification. “We noted strong institutional alignment across leadership, infrastructure, strategic planning, budgeting, faculty teaching and scholarship, and community partnerships” explained Amy Driscoll, a consulting scholar with the Carnegie Foundation and with NERCHE; “There is increased student engagement tied to the curriculum as well as increased use of institutional measures such as the NSSE for understanding student engagement in learning through community engagement.”

Driscoll also cited areas that needed development, even among the classified campuses, including the need for better assessment and tracking, and for more attention to the intentional practices of developing reciprocal relationships between higher education and the community. As was true in earlier classification cycles, some institutions continue to operate in a “charity model” with the one-way application of resources, expertise, student, and faculty support to community without acknowledging community assets, expertise, knowledge, and resources. Driscoll noted that “building reciprocity into a partnership with community requires intensive development of mechanisms for mutual understanding, ongoing feedback, and time and attention to a
relationship of respect.”

Another area of challenge for campuses is with regard to faculty rewards for roles in community engagement and community-based achievements, where there are still few institutions providing evidence for promotion and tenure policies that recognize and reward the scholarship associated with community engagement. “Community engaged faculty work is most often considered in a broad category of either campus-based or discipline-based service,” Driscoll explained. “So, despite excellent and extensive examples of faculty scholarship related to both curricular engagement and outreach and partnerships, there is still work to be done.”

The Foundation, through the work of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, developed the first typology of American colleges and universities in 1970 as a research tool to describe and represent the diversity of U.S. higher education. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education continues to be used for a wide range of purposes by academic researchers, institutional personnel, policymakers and others.

A listing of the institutions in the Community Engagement Classification can be found on the Carnegie website.

*The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is an independent policy and research center that supports needed transformations in American education through tighter connections between teaching practice, evidence of student learning, the communication and use of this evidence, and structured opportunities to build knowledge. The Foundation is located in Stanford, Calif. More information may be found on the Web site at www.carnegiefoundation.org.*