*California* | **Campus Compact**

# *Service-Learning and Civic Engagement: Thriving in Uncertain Times*

Summary Report of
Five Regional Dialogues
in California

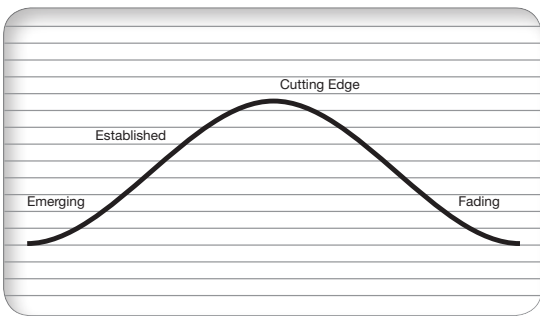Spring 2009

*Italic* logo text: *California* | **Campus Compact**

# *Introduction*

During spring 2009, California Campus Compact sponsored five regional dialogues across the state focusing on the past, current and future involvement of California higher education institutions in the service-learning and civic engagement field. More than 85 students, community partners, service-learning directors, faculty and senior administrators from non-profit organizations and colleges and universities throughout California participated in these conversations. During the dialogues, which were facilitated by California Campus Compact senior staff members, participants identified trends in the field as well as many of the challenges they face in doing this work. Participants also devoted time during each dialogue to discussing strategies to address these challenges. The dialogues provided participants with an opportunity to share lessons and insights regarding where the service-learning and civic engagement field has been, where it is heading and how those involved can continue to advance and strengthen the work in the face of the current economic climate and other challenges.

On the following pages is a two-part summary report of those dialogues. Part one of the report provides snapshots of the trends in service-learning and civic engagement that were identified during each of the regional dialogues. To identify the trends, participants engaged in an activity, known as "The Wave," adapted from The Institute of Cultural Affairs, Technology of Participation (www.ica-usa.org). They gathered in small groups and identified either emerging, established, cutting edge or fading trends in the field of service-learning and civic engagement. Through collectively identifying specific trends in this wave-like continuum (see graphic at left), participants were able to determine where they are in the work in relation to others in the field, how far they have come and in what areas there is a need to advance. For example, while practices, such as "one-time service activities," "faculty going solo" and "top-down service-learning" uniformly appeared on the continuum as fading trends and practices across the state, the placement on the continuum of other trends and practices, such as international service-learning, K-12 service-learning and the use of social media, varied from dialogue to dialogue.

P art two of the report provides a snapshot of seven challenges that participants from across the five dialogues found themselves facing and the strategies they suggested to help address these challenges. In presenting the challenges, participants were asked to think beyond what they do not have (for example, "lack of staff," "lack of time," "lack of funding") and instead were encouraged to identify what was creating a particular challenge (for example, "competing priorities for one funding stream" rather than "lack of funding").  The Institute of Cultural Affairs, Technology of Participation offered this analogy: *If you were watering your plants and the water running through the hose suddenly stopped, you would not just put the hose down and walk away.  Instead, you would look for a kink in the hose.  You might see if someone turned the water off or if someone was stepping on the hose.* As part of the discussion around challenges, participants in these dialogues were asked to look for the "kinks" they face in their work and to suggest strategies for addressing the "kinks."

We hope you find this summary report informative and useful. We encourage you to review the outcomes from each of the five dialogues and identify where on the continuum your work fits in relation to others in the field. We also invite you to reflect on the challenges and strategies that were identified by participants during the regional dialogues. Finally, we invite you to consider whether adapting any of these strategies might be beneficial to you, your campus, community partners and others.

We welcome your comments and feedback regarding this summary report as well as suggestions for future dialogues.

*The Staff of California Campus Compact*
*November 2009*
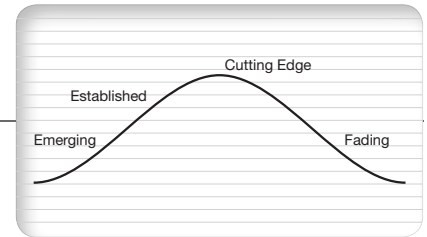
## *Snapshots of Trends*



*Location: Santa Clara University*
*Santa Clara, CA*
*Date: March 4, 2009*

**Emerging: Which trends and practices are picking up momentum and acceptance?**
- Stronger link between internships and community engagement
- "Veggielution" environmental justice (school learning gardens)
- Political engagement
- Assessment
- Students as colleagues
- Increased locally-based resources/involvement
- Partnership with education abroad/international internships
- Community-based research
- Addressing economic situation through service-learning or community-based research
- Facebook
- Faculty interest and innovation
- Reward structure – faculty tenure and promotion
- University offering more financial support for community-based internships
- Growing popularity of international and national service

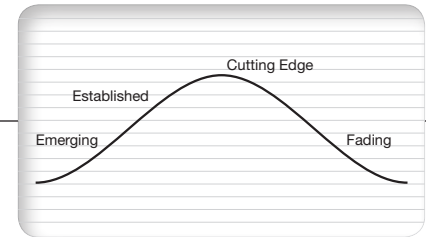**Established: Which trends and practices are mainstream or standard operating procedures?**
- Service-learning and social justice strongly interrelated
- One-time service activities
- Engaged departments
- Service-learning courses (lower division and upper division) required with 30 hours of service in community for/with each course
- Student service-learning leaders working with faculty and community partners to support/cultivate relationships
- Deepening, mutually beneficial relationships between faculty members and community partners

**Cutting Edge: Which new ideas are creeping out and pushing to become accepted trends and practices?**
- Intercampus service-learning coursework and partnerships
- Issue-driven campus/community coalitions
- Developmental service-learning experiences
- Global service-learning through third-party organization
- Corporate sponsors
- Long-term global service-learning experience
- Community partners as paid co-educators
- Community-based research by community partners
- Partnering with residents
- Community partner seminar
- Advanced interactive service-learning database (partnership driven)
- Technology to enhance service-learning/community-based education
- Integrating career services and vocation
- Equitable collaboration between faculty and staff
- Graduate education

**Fading: Which trends and practices are no longer relevant and considered outdated?**
- One-stop shop
- Funding focus on national security
- One-time service activities
- "Hit it and quit it" model
- Community partners as placements or laboratories
- Warm-body model
- "Story-telling only" research
- Community engagement reporting through student affairs
- Lack of intra-unit partnership
- "Add on" of service component
- Student ignorance of community-based learning
- Narrow focus on service-learning

*Location: California State University, Stanislaus*
*Turlock, CA*
*Date: March 31, 2009*

**Emerging: Which trends and practices are picking up momentum and acceptance?**
- Bring community into the classroom
- Partner flexibility re: student participation
- Technology-based fundraising
- Outcome evaluation/assessment
- Continuum of K-12 service-learning to university service-learning
- Risky social action
- Classes held in community setting
- Online training
- California Campus Compact-Carnegie Faculty Fellows
- University as a resource
- Civic engagement
- Political service-learning
- Students as liaisons between campus and community
- Reward structure – faculty tenure and promotion
- Validation

**Established: Which trends and practices are mainstream or standard operating procedures?**
- Hispanic-serving institution
- K-12 science partnerships
- Community garden
- Center for Public Policy
- Passport to University
- Cesar Chavez Day of Service
- Service-learning in graduate education
- Parent-Child Home Program
- Tax preparation
- Wellness works
- Office of service-learning
- Multi-year sustained projects
- Turlock Community Collaborative
- Staff team
- Student volunteer opportunities
- Group discussion classes
- Service in all years (freshman-senior)
- Campus cultural diversity

- Funding (some)
- Risk management
- Faculty trainings
- Interdisciplinary work at shared site
- Continued outreach to community agencies
- All colleges involved
- Awards recognition
- Stockton Homeless School
- Service-learning newsletter
- Head Start Family Fitness Day
- Grants office
- Steering committee

**Cutting Edge: Which new ideas are creeping out and pushing to become accepted trends and practices?**
- Online service-learning
- Moving "me" to "us"
- Greater awareness/caring of community
- Student-driven projects
- Use of technology
- Research
- Interrelatedness
- Sustainable agriculture
- Obama-ism
- Social networking
- Green technology
- Intercampus service-learning activities and training
- Engaged departments

**Fading: Which trends and practices are no longer relevant and considered outdated?**
- Faculty going solo
- University as an ivory tower
- General service
- Informal service
- "The days of no paperwork"
- Lack of campus awareness
- Service-learning only
- Top-down service-learning
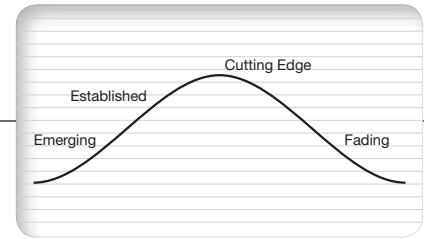
*Location: California State University, San Marcos*
*San Marcos, CA*
*Date: April 6, 2009*

**Emerging: Which trends and practices are picking up momentum and acceptance?**
- Engaged departments
- Prioritization of service-learning as a part of school identity
- Role of service-learning in global civil society
- "Professional" school/departments engaged in service-learning
- International programs
- Stand alone service-learning courses
- Use technology to improve outreach and connections
- Student leadership
- Reciprocal relationship with community partners
- Connecting service to social change
- Academic distinction for service-learning work on transcripts
- Focus on the relationships – community partners, faculty, students

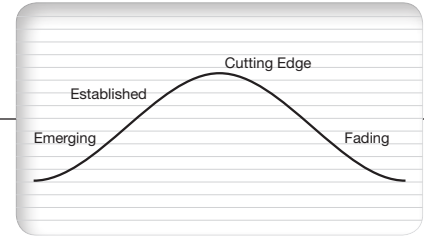**Established: Which trends and practices are mainstream or standard operating procedures?**
- Community partners as "co-educators"
- Alternate spring breaks
- Office of service-learning
- Arts classes partnering with community organizations
- Reflective activities
- Service-learning/civic engagement advisory committee
- Community-based research tied to promotion and tenure process
- Empowering and supporting students in the transformational nature of the work (charity > change)
- Sacrificial pancake theory
- Regional networks
- One-time service activities (entry point)
- AmeriCorps programs (both campus-based and community-based programs)
- Student leaders in service-learning classes
- Faculty development programs focused on service-learning/ civic engagement

**Cutting Edge: Which new ideas are creeping out and pushing to become accepted trends and practices?**
- Community impact research
- Research 1 institution doing service-learning
- Pragmatic/realistic approaches to community engagement
- Student-directed/initiated projects in service-learning – real investments
- Service-learning courses extended beyond one semester
- Service-learning at younger ages – reflection in high school
- Recognition of value of community wisdom
- Service-learning certificate program – department + partner buy-in
- Experiential learning in the classroom
- Train faculty in service-learning (masters in service-learning)
- Service-learning in online classes
- Clear collaboration between community service and service-learning
- Interdisciplinary approaches
- AmeriCorps initiative – how can we collaborate?

**Fading: Which trends and practices are no longer relevant and considered outdated?**
- Traditional lecture mode of instruction without incorporating service
- Service as extra-curricular as opposed to co-curricular/integrated
- Faculty who don't address the "why" behind service
- Partners using students for menial work
- Ability to donate money (community partner perspective)
- Student "clock-punch" mentality about service

*Location: California State University, Dominguez Hills*
*Carson, CA*
*Date: May 1, 2009*

Emerging: Which trends and practices are picking up momentum and acceptance?
- Bridge to global community engagement
- Bridge between student affairs and academic affairs
- Accommodating non-traditional students
- Service portfolio
- Long-term advocates and policy changes
- Community as co-creators
- Student initiatives (course/partnerships)
- Utilizing new/social media
- Sustaining partnerships beyond academic constraints

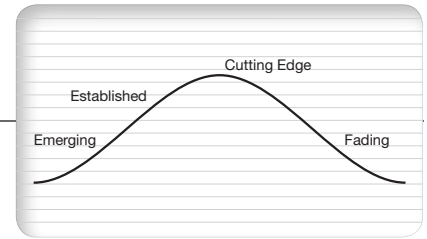Established: Which trends and practices are mainstream or standard operating procedures?
- Service-learning continuum
- Students develop skills
- Reflection
- Tension between service-learning and engaged scholarship
- Community partners
- Institutional learning as a two-way street
- Long-term vision
- Institutional culture/mission
- Leadership development
- Mutual benefits
- "In the real world"
- Time commitment dedication

Cutting Edge: Which new ideas are creeping out and pushing to become accepted trends and practices?
- Filming faculty development workshops
- Online service-learning
- Long-term community impact
- Creating institutional culture in civic engagement
- Engagement for doctoral students
- Translating service to skill acquisition and values
- Leaders with a passion for it

Fading: Which trends and practices are no longer relevant and considered outdated?
- Service without reflection
- Charity model
- Perceived as unimportant
- Lack of evidence
- Limited support
- Narrow concept

Cutting Edge

Established

Emerging

Fading

*Location: San Francisco State University*
*San Francisco, CA*
*Date: May 22, 2009*

**Emerging: Which trends and practices are picking up momentum and acceptance?**
- Environmental justice
- Reflection – deeply integrated
- Professional school service-learning
- Translational research
- International service-learning
- Mandates/requirements
- Measuring student-learning outcomes
- Community advisory groups
- Citizen journalism
- Political engagement
- Engaged research – community-driven
- School-age service-learning
- New administration – shift in ideology and funding
- Sustaining long-term partnerships
- Social entrepreneurship
- Participatory action research
- Defining community engagement competencies
  (for service-learners)

**Established: Which trends and practices are mainstream or standard operating procedures?**
- Community awareness
- Student leadership
- Integrating service-learning in expository writing
- Intercultural and intergroup dialogue
- No longer a misunderstood practice
- Stable, long-term relationships
- Reflection
- Student leaders, faculty and community partners in
  learning communities
- Multiple definitions of service
- Getting people off campus
- Civic engagement
- Unrepresentative demographics
- Addressing immediate needs vs. systemic issues

**Cutting Edge: Which new ideas are creeping out and pushing to become accepted trends and practices?**
- Campus as authentic partner with community
- Measuring community impact
- Small contributions by lots of people (time, $, …)
- Instruction in how to be a real partner – democratic practices
- Surge of student activism
- Reciprocal service-learning center
- Broader range of discussion of promotion and tenure
- Dialogue as an outcome (rather than a need for one definition)
- Promoting field to students for job opportunities
- Renewed call for creativity
- Successful application of what we "know"
  re: power and privilege
- Meaningful application of social media
- Community organizing

**Fading: Which trends and practices are no longer relevant and considered outdated?**
- Traditional curricula
- Top-down pedagogy (teacher-centered)
- Funding
- Binders
- Grades for service
- Volunteer(ism)
- Want political apathy to fade – from service to advocacy
- Doing separate from character building

# *Defining Challenges: From Dialogue to Action*

During each of the five regional dialogues, participants engaged in conversations about a variety of challenges that they are facing in their work. Not surprisingly, participants across the state shared many challenges in common. On the following pages is a summary of these challenges and strategies, as suggested by participants, to address them. Many participants noted that the conversations around strategies helped spark ideas of how they could adapt similar strategies for use on their own campus.

### *The Challenge: Collaborating with and supporting non-profit staff who wear many "hats" and have less time to dedicate to partnerships*

Strategies shared:
- Orient new partners
- Have partners be very engaged with the course and student learning
- Have student leadership at all sites
- Involve students in meaningful roles
  - Student leaders as liaison/partnership coordinators
  - Interns, academic credit, AmeriCorps Students in Service
- Direct funding to community partners
- Encourage students to apply for funding for their organizations
- Bring partners together to network and share best practices
- Help find individual donor for organizations with which you work
- Value the work in all three: teaching, service, scholarship
- How does this help the university?
  - How do we engage in these conversations?
  - Find funding to support community projects
- Focus on local partners (e.g., school district) in which many could get involved
- Manage issues like fingerprinting
- Identify opportunities based on majors that already offer service-learning
- Draft Memorandum of Understanding to clarify roles and responsibilities of each party
- Host fair to bring agencies to campus
- Build trust, involve them in project design, understand community needs
- Match high-risk work with student learning
- Define clear objectives/frame for students

### *The Challenge: Dealing with competing priorities for the same funds*

Strategies shared:
- Look at the history on your campus – how have funds been shared before?
- Define how funding will be used
- Collaborate with students and community partners
- Offer grants for community partners
- Focus on what is sustainable
- See office of service-learning as funder; offer mini-grants for service (department, community partner) for three years
- Attract and retain key employees and volunteers
- Treat staff and volunteers like they are part of the team; offer meaningful work
- Offer stipends/awards for staff and volunteers
- Tell your story to local community
- Retrain unemployed individuals coming into volunteer – new career path
- Have an outstanding program that people want to be a part of
- Host a signature event
- Student engagement/participation in fundraising process
- Increase collaborative efforts to raise funds (e.g., co-sponsor events) – build goodwill
- Work with office of advancement and development
- Develop funding resource base (e.g., use faculty retirees to help run program)
- Identify parents doing civic engagement work and ask them to support your work
- Create/cultivate alumni to support your work
- Ask faculty and staff to direct their donation to your department
- Ask California Campus Compact to identify funders, encourage joint proposals
- Collect a community engagement tax on capital projects
- Advocate for education
- Require a fee for placement to department/program
- Use grassroots methods

*The Challenge: Using marketing and storytelling to share our work with a larger audience*

Strategies shared:
- Tell your story to attract people
- Create photo essays
- Have students do a service project for you (i.e. student in graphic design doing logos)
- Utilize the campus newspaper, local media, press releases
- Utilize your website
- Promote resources on getting involved
- Create newsletters
- Define an audience for each promotional "piece"
- Build university/community awareness
- Expand how we think about resources
- Utilize YouTube, podcasts, video, radio, TV
- Connect faculty to media directly
- Utilize word-of-mouth among students
- Host more 1:1 interaction in departments
- Be more purposeful about what you post (service-learning website as link)
- Focus on effects on individual students
- List service-learning courses in a formal way for students/by students
- Change your message for different audiences
- "Spotlight" students, community, faculty
- Utilize the campus photographer
- Work with public affairs office
- Incorporate performative storytelling
- Be a part of the student newsletter
- Create a student advisory committee
- Attend campus-wide meetings: presenting, announcing and sharing service-learning projects in meetings across campus
- Use social media: Twitter, MySpace, Facebook

*The Challenge: Engaging and supporting adult learners in meeting a new service-learning graduation requirement*

Strategies shared:
- Change the title from community service to something that already resonates with adult learners
- Build service into the curriculum (not standalone course)
- Invite students to talk about the difficulty of meeting the requirement directly with faculty (and Faculty Senate who created requirement), videotape and share student voices/needs/concerns

*The Challenge: Strengthening intra-campus collaboration, including obtaining the administration's buy-in and increasing awareness when information is decentralized*

Strategies shared:
- Host a community partner seminar to support community partners in teaching each other and faculty/administration about the community work
- Utilize the campus list-serve to promote your work
- "Buy" faculty time to train other faculty
- Bring collaborators together in "genuine" way without hierarchy in which everyone can be heard
- If no service-learning center, create a team of like-minded people to come together and focus on it (i.e., service-learning, social justice, community engagement, etc.)
- Do a "ride-along" with a peer institution

*The Challenge: Determining when enough is enough – finding the time to manage paperwork, finances, logistics, etc. – and write about the important work we are doing*

Strategies shared:
- Look to other campuses for support
- Give yourself permission to pursue what you're passionate about
- Reflect on when enough is enough for you personally
- Create and follow a strategic plan
- Work toward balance – if you join a new committee, then give something up
- Prioritize your work
- Respect small increments of time and space
- Journal 20 minutes a day
- Carve out space for growth (intellect, emotion, spirit)
- Acknowledge and get comfortable with the reality that work exceeds capacity
- Utilize the social change leadership models – empower students as colleagues
- Advocate for yourself and your work

*The Challenge: Working within a strong institutional culture to build relationships between the community and higher education*

Strategies shared:
- Ask: What do you want _____ to look like?
- Align the university's civic mission and your practice
- Use social and environmental justice as a focal point and across disciplines
- Find a real need with mutual benefit
- Acknowledge faculty isolation – fears and perception they can't cross "borders" on campus or in the community
- Bring together faculty, staff, students, community partners whenever you can
- Invite people to join you
- Determine your realm of influence
- Give people space to talk about what matters to them
- Develop a culture/policy of reciprocity between university and community
- Look at how we relate to one another
- Work with people who are already motivated
- Study how change does happen on campus
- Ask people: Who are you?
- Find "trouble-makers" with fire/spirit

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