

# Merrimack College

## Center for Engaged Democracy

### E-News

Dear friends and colleagues,

The political theorist Benjamin Barber has [recently](#) reminded us, returning to de Tocqueville's eloquent phrasing, that the "apprenticeship of liberty is never easy." Indeed, in a world ever more privatized, ever more inequitable, ever more interdependent, how are we to avoid the worry that this is "democracy for some"? Does higher education any longer have a role to play in this "apprenticeship"?

The answer, I believe, is a resounding "yes." But not for the usual reasons. For I believe that the community engagement field is at a critical juncture. As [A Crucible Moment](#) clearly stated, it is an "undisputed priority... [to construct] educational environments where education for democracy and civic responsibility is pervasive, not partial; central, not peripheral." This is a worthy sentiment, echoing decades of similar calls for higher education to help develop the next generation of engaged citizens. Yet the very fact that this report echoes across an entire generation - from Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* to AASCU's *Stewards of Place* to the Wingspread Statement *Calling the Question* - must give us pause. It is a pause, I suggest, that points to what I have termed an ["engagement ceiling"](#) in higher education. It is a pause, moreover, that gives us a space, an opening, from which to begin to rethink and re-engage with complementary strategies for the sustained and impactful institutionalization of community engagement in higher education.

The [Center for Engaged Democracy](#) has stepped into this opening to support academic programs - certificates, minors, and majors - that focus on community engagement, broadly construed. We are acting as a central hub for research, best practices, and networks to help develop, strengthen, and expand such programs around the country and the world. We believe that such academic programs constitute a key site, exactly the kind of "educational environments" spoken of in the report, that can act as apprenticeships in liberty and sustain and deepen the community engagement field.

To be clear, we do not believe that such academic programs are the silver bullet of, much less the replacement for, the widespread service-learning and civic engagement community of offices, centers, scholars and practitioners. Rather, what we offer are academic spaces where we can incubate and grow ideas, students, and programs committed to community engagement. Where theory and practice can find the space for thoughtful, thorough, and sustained interaction. Where the engaged campus is operationalized in an academic space. This, for us, is part of the new community engagement.

We thus hope you will join us in this initiative - at the forthcoming summer research institute, on the web, and in our research - to build this field. Please, as such, read on to learn more.

Best wishes,

Dan W. Butin, PhD  
Dean, School of Education, Merrimack College  
Executive Director, Center for Engaged Democracy

## REGISTER! *for the 3rd Annual Summer Research Institute on the Future of Community Engagement in Higher Education*

Join an ever-growing movement of administrators, faculty, researchers, graduate students, and community partners for the next step in growing academic programs- certificates, minors, and majors - focused on community engagement. The 3rd annual research institute will be held at Merrimack College on June 23-24 and feature conference tracks in research, best practices, program development, and syllabus construction. Please see the conference website for the schedule of events, lodging information, and key resources. Merrimack College is conveniently located just 15 miles north of Boston, and the weekend conference focuses on supporting cutting-edge research, networking, and support for developing and strengthening academic programs. Registration is just \$50. [Register now.](#)

## CALL for PRESENTATIONS at the 3rd Annual Summer Research Institute on the Future of Community Engagement in Higher Education

We are looking for presentations on the following topics:

- Research Track - presentations on research relating to academic programs in community engagement, broadly defined.
- Best Practices Track - presentations on specific aspects (e.g., curricular, instructional, policy) of a specific major, minor, or certificate program.
- Program Development Track - presentations about how to develop, sustain, or expand a major or a minor.
- Syllabus Development Track - detailed presentations and walk-through of a syllabus used in a course within an academic program.

Please [click here](#) to submit your submission.

## KEY RESEARCH - Core Competencies, Alumni & Democratic Leadership, and an Online Document Repository

The Center has sponsored a host of new research initiatives, all of which will be presented at the summer institute and will be published thereafter in a set of working papers. A working group has created a draft set of Core Competencies for Community Engagement programs; a research team led by Rick Battistoni (and includes Arthur Keene, Tania Mitchell, and John Reiff) will present their research on three programs' influence on alumni's civic identity and civic action and promoting

democratic leadership after college; and Mark Wilson of Auburn University has been building and analyzing an online document repository of program syllabi and materials. Join us this summer to learn more.

## Web Presence

The Center has created a [Wikipedia](#) page, a [Participedia](#) page, and a [WikiSpace](#) site in order to better document, promote, and support the dissemination and updating of information and research about academic programs in community engagement around the country. These spaces document all of the known programs around the country, compile key documents and resources, and serve as a site for distribution of and communication around new ideas, research, and programs. Please visit these sites to learn more, to update them, and to contribute to their growth.

## Key Publications

Three new publications are coming out based on last year's research institute. The [Journal of College and Character](#) just published a theme issue (edited by Dan W. Butin and Scott Seider) on "*The Future of Community Engagement in Higher Education*," which includes Benjamin Barber's keynote talk, Dan Butin's opening address, as well as articles about Portland State University, Allegheny College, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, and CSU, Monterey Bay. Additionally, *The Engaged Campus: Certificates, Minors, and Majors as the New Community Engagement* is in press and will be published this summer. Finally, David Moore, associate professor at NYU, will have a book in Palgrave's new series *Community Engagement in Higher Education* entitled *The Challenges and Possibilities of Engaged Learning: Experience in the Academy*.

## Advisory Board and Affiliated Scholars

The Center is pleased to announce the formation of an [Advisory Board](#) and an [Affiliate Scholars group](#). These individuals represent a broad spectrum of perspectives of how to support deep and impactful institutionalization of community engagement in higher education and will support the Center's activities with academic programs.

## Additional Professional Development Opportunities

There are two additional conferences that may be of interest and that address similar issues as those being worked on at the Center:

- Duke University is hosting the *Conversations that Matter III: The Third International Conference on Service-Learning in Teacher Education* [conference](#), June 21-23.
- Tufts University is hosting the *Frontiers of Democracy II* [conference](#), July 19-21.

[Forward email](#)



4/13/12

Center for Engaged Democracy E-Newsletter

This email was sent to sarofianmoea@merrimack.edu by [democracy@merrimack.edu](mailto:democracy@merrimack.edu) | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Merrimack College | 315 Turnpike Street | North Andover | MA | 01845