



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Mission

The Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships facilitates long-term partnerships and civic engagement initiatives that bring campus and community together to collaborate on real-world projects that address pressing social challenges. We believe a student experience focused on civic learning and democratic engagement prepares students to become innovative leaders and active citizens who foster the common good and propel social change in their local communities and world.

Program Structure

The Civic Engagement Program at Colby has several interrelated components. The goal and vision for the newly launched program create a holistic approach to civic engagement that integrates multiple spheres of the Colby experience including academics, campus life, and residential life. In this new model, civic engagement encompasses an intentional sequence of skills, knowledge, and experiences that prepare Colby students for a life of active citizenship and civic leadership.

Bill & Joan Alfond Main Street Commons

The Bill & Joan Alfond Main Street Commons is a living and learning community focused on civic engagement. Students living downtown have a demonstrated commitment and active participation in community engagement and service. Currently, there are 196 students living downtown who are serving at community organizations. Collectively, students contributed close to 14,000 hours of service in the Waterville community for the 18/19 academic year.

Academic Civic Engagement

Colby faculty from a range of disciplines and programs work with community partners on real world projects in their courses, including faculty in Arts and Humanities, Education, Environmental Science, Religious Studies, and Social Sciences among others. Faculty in residence at the Alfond Commons launched the course Citizenship and Community, a new required course for Colby students living in the downtown residence hall. This course asks students to examine the relationship between self and community, and their role and responsibilities as engaged citizens.

Direct Service

Colby students participate in a large number of community service opportunities at a wide range of Waterville area organizations. The Office of Civic Engagement collaborates with student-run programs to recruit and connect hundreds of Colby volunteers to episodic service events and regular weekly volunteering at community partners including Maine General Hospital, Inland Hospital, SAT Prep Classes, Hope's Place, Hospice Volunteers, Lakewood Continuing Care Center, Mid Maine Homeless Shelter, Waterville Humane Society, among others.

Colby Cares About Kids (CCAK), founded in 2001, is a program that pairs Colby students (mentors) with local youth (mentees) in one-on-one mentoring pairs for students in grades K-8 within the greater Waterville area. The goal of the program is to provide the youth with an additional role model and friend who can be a consistent part of their school experience. Mentors are expected to visit their mentee for at least one hour per week during the school year for at least three semesters. CCAK currently has 380 Colby mentors paired with mentees at 13 school sites throughout Central Maine.

Co-Curricular Education and Programs

The Office of Civic Engagement collaborates with academic departments, divisions, and student-run organizations on targeted programming to highlight civic engagement as a critical aspect of the educational experience. Events and initiatives bring the campus and community together for relevant and meaningful experiences on a range of contemporary topics.

Chace Forum

The *Chace Community Forum*, on the first floor of the Bill & Joan Alford Main Street Commons, is a communal events space for creating and cultivating dialogue and relationship building among community members. This centralized space is for community organizations that advocate for, and provide resources to, our Waterville-area community. The Chace Community Forum hosts public meetings and supports local nonprofits and businesses by providing a public gathering space in the heart of downtown.

AmeriCorps Volunteers

In fall 2018, the College launched the Colby College Rural AmeriCorps Program focused on capacity building in Waterville area non-profit organizations. The Corps members' efforts are focused on strengthening volunteer recruitment, increasing involvement in community organizations and engaging more Colby student volunteers.

Location & Staff

The Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships is located in the Bill and Joan Alford Main Street Commons, 150 Main Street, downtown Waterville.

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