



Civic Engagement

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



At George Mason University, we are dedicated to empowering students to become active, engaged citizens both on campus and in their communities. Through a wide range of civic engagement opportunities including volunteer programs, voter education initiatives, community partnerships, and leadership development offices and fellowships—we help students connect their passions to meaningful action. By fostering a culture of participation and responsibility, we aim to equip Mason Patriots with the tools, experiences, and networks needed to make a lasting impact in the world around them.

Pre-Chapter Reflection:

How do you
define success in
the area of civic
engagement?

Community Action Plan

The Significance of a Community Action Plan

A Community Action Plan is vital for its proactive and structured approach to addressing concerns that arise at George Mason, promoting a resilient and compassionate campus atmosphere. By anticipating potential issues and outlining support mechanisms in advance, this plan guarantees that you can access timely and coordinated assistance during critical moments.

Reflecting on Community Safety and Vibrancy

Take a moment to think about the issues you are passionate about that contribute to creating a safer and more vibrant environment for everyone. Here are a few starter topics that may resonate with our student populations:

1. Access to healthcare
2. Immigration rights on and off campus
3. Availability of sustainable green spaces on campus
4. Peace-building and leadership fellowships that foster community unity and address conflicts through open dialogue and healing
5. Support for underrepresented student populations

Questions for Consideration

1. How can you apply your current skills in this context? Which skills do you believe will be most beneficial in achieving your objectives?
2. Who can you partner with on this plan? Are there any organizations or groups already engaged in this area of focus?
3. In which areas will you need to rely on the strengths of others? Where do you think you can find supporters for your initiatives?



Community Action Plan

Write down an issue that you are passionate about or something in your community you want to address

ISSUE YOU FIND IMPORTANT:

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ADDRESS?

HOW WILL YOU ADDRESS THE ISSUE?

PLAN:

MATERIALS NEEDED:

ASSESSMENT:

Social Identity Groups

Social identity groups are based on the physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. They are sometimes obvious and clear, sometimes not obvious and unclear, often self claimed and frequently ascribed by others. For example, racial groupings are often ascribed as well as self-claimed. Government, schools, and employers often ask an individual to claim a racial identity group or simply ascribe one to an individual based on visual perception. Other social identities are personally claimed but not often announced or easily visually ascribed such as sexual orientation, religion, or disability status.

For the purpose of this self-examination please identify the memberships you claim or those ascribed to you. Below are examples of social identity groupings. Since issues of social identity often are the basis of much social conflict, it is reasonable to expect that even the terms we use to describe them may cause disagreement. So feel free to use your own preferred terms for the material below.

Gender • Woman • Man • Transgender • Post-Gender	Sex • Intersex • Female • Male	Sexual Orientation • Lesbian • Gay • Bisexual • Pan-Attractional • Heterosexual • Queer • Attraction • Questioning	Race • Asian Pacific Islander • Native American • Latina/x • Black • White • Bi/Multiracial
Race • Irish • Chinese • Puerto Rican • Italian • Mohawk • Jewish • Guatemalan • Lebanese • European-American	Religion/Spirituality • Hindu • Muslim • Buddhist • Jewish • Christian • Pagan • Agnostic • Faith/Meaning • Atheist • Secular- humanist	Social Class • Poor • Working Class • Lower-Middle Class • Upper-Middle Class • Owning Class • Ruling Class	Age • Child • Young Adult • Middle-Age Adult • Senior
Nation(s) /or Citizenship • United States • Nigeria • Korea • Turkey • Argentina	Tribal or Indigenous Affiliation • Mohawk • Aboriginal • Navajo • Santal	(Dis)Ability • People with disabilities (cognitive, physical, emotional, etc.) • Temporarily able-bodied • Temporarily disabled	

Marginalized Group: social identity groups that are disenfranchised and exploited
Privileged Group: social identity groups that hold unearned privileged in society

The Program on Intergruop Relations, University of Michigan

As you reflect on your own identities, consider these guiding questions:

1. Identities you think about most often
2. Identities you think about least often
3. Identities you would like to learn more about
4. Identities that have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself
5. Identities that have the greatest effect on how others perceive you

Gender	Sex	(Dis)Ability	Race
Ethnicity	Religion or Spirituality	Language	Age
National Origin and/or Citizenship	Tribal or Indigenous Affiliation	Socio-Economic Status	Sexual Orientation



Bias Check

We all see the world through our own unique lenses, shaped by our lived experiences, upbringing, culture, and environment. These lenses can lead to **biases**—unconscious assumptions that influence how we think, make decisions, and interact with others. While biases are a natural part of who we are, they can sometimes result in unfair and assumed judgments, missed opportunities, or inequitable outcomes.

That's why it's critical to engage in bias checking which is the practice of actively identifying, questioning, and working to unlearn our biases. Whether in personal relationships, the workplace, or interacting with those on Mason's campuses, checking our biases helps us foster fairness, community care and inclusivity.

By learning to recognize our biases, we can take the first step toward creating a more inclusive community on our campus. Here are some reflection questions to help you get started.

- 1. How do you connect with people who have different life experiences than you?**
- 2. What is a stereotype/generalization/belief you hold about people sharing a common identity with you. Where does that idea come from?**
- 3. What is a stereotype/generalization/belief you hold about people with a different identity than you. Where does that idea come from?**

Reflect on what you can do to combat any potential stereotypes or unconscious biases that you may hold about others:

LET'S CREATE A SMART GOAL TO KEEP YOU ON TRACK WITH YOUR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

S SPECIFIC	WHAT SPECIFIC TASK DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?
M MEASURABLE	WHEN WILL YOU KNOW YOU HAVE FINISHED THE TASK? WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO STOP?
A ACHIEVABLE	CAN YOU REALISTICALLY ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?
R RELEVANT	DOES THIS GOAL ALIGN WITH YOUR OVERALL GOALS?
T TIME BOUND	WHEN DO YOU WANT TO DO THIS TASK / WORK ON THIS GOAL?

Meet with your Success Coach to talk through your goals and check in about your goal progress!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Office of Community Engagement and Civic Learning (CECIL): Develops strategies to help our students, faculty, and partners collaborate on positive social change in their communities.

Center for Leadership and Intercultural Engagement (CLIE): We are excited to announce that the Center for Culture, Equity, and Empowerment and the Leadership Education and Development Office have merged to form the Center for Leadership and Intercultural Engagement (CLIE). Merging the expertise and passion of two departments is no small task, but our staff is deeply committed to the educational and support services that we offer to the Mason community. We are working diligently to ensure a seamless transition and to evolve our outreach efforts, programming, and services. We ask for your continued support, flexibility, and trust as we embark on this new chapter together.

Mason Chooses Kindness: At George Mason, we believe that we *thrive together* with shared success as one of our core values. Our goal is to evolve as a model well-being university, providing a place for all members of our George Mason community where everyone thrives while contributing to others' well-being.

Post-Chapter Reflection:

Now that you have worked through the activities, what areas do you still need help with that you can talk to your Success Coach about?