Community Engagement by Faculty and Students at Trinity College, Academic Years 2015-2019

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In 2016, Trinity College adopted a new mission statement that emphasizes three words: Engage, Connect, and Transform. But exactly who engages with communities outside of Trinity's gates, and are these participation rates representative of the college demographics at large? In late spring 2018, the Center for Hartford Engagement and Research (CHER) was created to strengthen educational partnerships between Hartford's diverse communities and students, staff, and faculty at Trinity College, and to evaluate campus-city relationships. This report focuses on faculty and student participation rates in CHER programs: primarily Community Learning courses, and secondly, co-curricular activities sponsored by the Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement, and Trinfo Cafe. This report was prepared to answer questions for Trinity's application for Carnegie Community Engagement classification in April 2019. (See also prior CHER reports on Hartford community partner focus groups, and the HMTCA-Trinity partnership at http://cher.trincoll.edu.)

Trinity College values community engagement, both in Hartford and around the globe. Although this report focuses on programs managed by CHER, we recognize that additional activities in Hartford are sponsored by other Trinity offices (such as the Center for Student Success and Career Development; the Office of Student Activities, Involvement & Leadership; the Center for Caribbean Studies; the Athletics Department; and the Office of Community Relations). Also, experiential learning programs around the globe are sponsored by the Office of Study Away, the Center for Urban and Global Studies, and others. We encourage other Trinity offices to collaborate and pool together relevant information for future reports.

Both the Carnegie Foundation and Campus Compact define community engagement as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity." At Campus Compact conferences, leaders caution that "experiential learning" is not the same as "community-engaged learning," because the latter requires mutually-beneficial relationships and reciprocity between colleges and community partners. In this spirit, Trinity defines Community Learning courses as experiential learning that features collaborative partnerships and perspective-building relationships in the Hartford area or beyond. Currently, the Community Learning courses are primarily self-designated by individual faculty, who have different expectation for types and levels of student engagement, with support provided by the Office of Community Learning. See the full definition and examples of Community Learning courses at:

https://cher.trincoll.edu/community-learning/

Faculty Participation

During academic years 2015-19, Trinity has offered around 20-25 Community Learnings courses per semester, taught by faculty who decided to add a Community Learning component to their course. Total enrollments have ranged from around 280-440 per semester, with an average around 370, depending on the number of faculty who choose to add a Community Learning component to their course, and the average size of these courses.

In the table below, Actual Courses combines cross-listed courses from two different departments/programs that actually meet in the same classroom with one instructor (such as RHET 320 and WMGS 320: Queer Rhetorics). Also, Actual Courses does not count Teaching Assistanships, which receive credit under a different course code.

Beginning in academic year 2018, two new types of Community Learning courses appeared: the Community Action Gateway (which added 2 per year) and the Liberal Arts Action Lab (which added 4-5 per semester). In the Action Lab model, one course (LAAL 200) typically enrolls up to 20 students, and four others (LAAL 201) are project teams with smaller enrollments of 4-6 students. Since of these counts as a separate Community Learning course, this should be considered when interpreting the data below.

Table 1: Total Enrollments in Community Learning Courses by Semester

Community Learning	Fall 2014	Spr 2015	Fall 2015	Spr 2016	Fall 2016	Spr 2017	Fall 2017	Spr 2018	Fall 2018	Spr 2019	Average
Total Enrollments	441	417	312	283	390	390	375	413	363	324	371
Total Actual Courses	24	23	23	18	20	22	23	27	23	26	23

Data sources:

CHER Airtable Engagements, and Analytics and Strategic Initiatives Center Discover database

Enrollments for specific courses over time available upon request

During academic years 2015-19, Community Learning courses have been offered by 22 out of 32 (or 69%) of academic departments and programs in which students can major at Trinity College. Additional academic units also have participated.

In 2017-18 alone (as requested by the Carnegie application), Community Learning courses were offered by 18 out of 32 (or 58%) of academic departments and programs in which students can major at Trinity College. An additional 11 Community Learning courses (for a total of 50) were offered that year by other academic units, such as Liberal Arts Action Lab, Health Fellows Program, Writing and Rhetoric, the First-Year Program, and Community Learning.

Table 2: Community Learning courses offered by Academic Units during Academic Years 2015-19

Academic Units	Fall 2014	Spr 2015	Fall 2015	Spr 2016	Fall 2016	Spr 2017	Fall 2017	Spr 2018	Fall 2018	Spr 2019	Total
AHIS							1				**1**
AMST				1		1	3	1	2			**8**
ANTH					1		1				**2**
BIOL	2		1				0.5		0.5		**3**
CACT							1	1	1	1	**4**
CHEM		1		1						1	**3**
CLAS-LATN									1	1	**2**
CLIC	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	**20**
CPSC											**0**
CTYP										1	**1**
ECON	1	1	2	1		1	1	1	1	1	**10**
EDUC	3	4	3	4	1	2	1	2	1	3	**24**
ENGL							1		1		**2**
ENGR											**0**
ENVS	1	1	1		1	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	**7**
FILM											**0**
FORG			2	1		1					**4**
FYSM	3		2		4		3		3		**15**
HFPR		2		1		2		2		2	**9**
HIST											**0**
HRST	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	**12**
INTS	2				1	2	1				**6**
ISP	1		1		1						**3**
JWST											**0**
LACS-HISP		1			1		1	1		1	**5**
LAAL								6	5	5	**16**
MATH											**0**
MUSC	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	3			**14**
NEUR											**0**

PBPL	1	1				1		1		1	**5**
PHIL								1			**1**
PHYS											**0**
POLS	3	1	1	2	2	1	1		1	1	**13**
PSYC	1	2	1		3	1	3		2	1	**14**
RELG											**0**
RHET			1					1	1	0.5	**3.5**
SOCL		1					1				**2**
STAR											**0**
THDN		1				1		2	1	1	**6**
URST	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	**11**
WMGS										0.5	**0.5**

Data Source: CHER Airtable Engagements

During academic years 2015-19, 56 full-time faculty members each taught one or more Community Learning courses, or about 18% participation by the full-time faculty, with similar rates across ranks for full-time tenure-track, renewable contract, and visiting faculty positions. But participation varied by gender, with about 23% of female faculty versus 13% of male faculty teaching at least one Community Learning course during this period, though this pattern fluctuated by faculty status.

In the table below, percentages were calculated by identifying the total number of faculty at each rank who taught at least one Community Learning course during the five-year period (numerator), divided by the total number of faculty at each rank during the five-year period (denominator). Faculty are listed by their most recent title, and some were promoted during the five-year period. Also, if a faculty member left their position during the 5-year period, and was replaced by another faculty member in the same position, both are counted below. Percentages were not calculated for Physical Education faculty, Action Lab faculty fellows (since they visit but do not teach the course), and CL Research Fellow faculty sponsors (since they supervise students in their own courses, but do not teach the Research Fellows course). Also, percentages were not calculated for part-time visiting faculty because very few teach Community Learning courses (only 12 individuals over a 5-year period). Finally, percentages were not calculated for a small number of administrators with teaching roles who offer Community Learning courses, but this is a significant part of the job description for at least two: the Director of Community Learning and the Director of the Liberal Arts Action Lab.

In 2017-18 (the year requested for the Carnegie application), 34 full-time faculty taught one or more Comm Learning courses. Of these, 16 (47%) were full-time tenure-track, 13 (38%) were full-time non-tenure-track, and 5 (15%) were part-time. Overall, there were about 320 faculty members (full-time and part-time) in 2017-18. Therefore 34 out of 320 total faculty (or 11%) were the lead instructors for CL courses in 2017-18.

Table 3: Faculty who taught one or more Community Learning courses, by rank and gender, academic years 2015-19

Faculty status	Number	Percent of total faculty with same status	Percent of female faculty	Percent of male faculty
Tenure-Track Faculty	32	17%	24%	12%
Assistant Professor	7	17%	23%	10%
Associate Professor	11	17%	20%	13%
Full Professor	14	18%	30%	13%
Long Term Renewable	6	16%	14%	20%
Full-time Visiting faculty	18	19%	26%	13%
Total of faculty above	**56**	**18%**	**23%**	**13%**
Part-time Visiting faculty	12			
Admin with teaching role	5			
Grand total	73			

Data sources:

CHER Airtable Engagements, Dean of Faculty's Office

Every summer, the Dean of Faculty asks tenure-track and long-term renewable contract faculty to complete the Professional Activities Inventory (PAI), which asks about teaching, research, and service activities during the prior academic year, as well as personal reflections on goals, obstacles, and support. With the assistance of the Center for Hartford Engagement and Research (CHER), the Dean's office redesigned the PAI in summer 2018 to ask more focused questions about community engagement in teaching, research, and service in the Hartford area and beyond. The new online form was designed to allow faculty to designate "community engagement" when listing specific courses, scholarly/creative works, grant activities, board memberships, etc. Furthermore, faculty are now encouraged to respond to an open-ended question on whether community engagement in the Hartford area and beyond is one of their professional goals, and if so, the kinds of obstacles they encounter and support they desire.

In Summer 2018, 153 (86%) of tenure-track and long-term renewable contract faculty submitted valid responses to the redesigned PAI, with an evaluation conducted by the Director of Academic Assessment. Of these responses, 57 faculty (37%) reported teaching activities with community engagement (such as Community Learning courses, supervising internships, field visits, school partnerships, public events, etc.). The majority of these teaching responses referred to Hartford, with some elsewhere in Connecticut, and a small number elsewhere around the globe. Similarly, 48 faculty (31%) reported service activiites with community engagement (such as non-profit board membership, volunteer activities, etc.), with a similar proportions in Hartford, Connecticut, and other communities around the globe. Unfortunately, we do not yet have reliable data on faculty research activities with community engagement, because data collection methods did not clearly indicate which scholarly works faculty marked as ones involving community engagement. Furthermore, none of the PAI data is comparable to past years due to changes made in summer 2018.

Among the 84 faculty who responded to the open-ended question about community engagement in their work, 52 (62%) responded positively, 9 (11%) negatively, and the remaining 23 (27%) were neutral. Positive responses included faculty who described the Community Learning program as "one of the most personally satisfying of my professional career" or "a major focus of my position" since arriving at Trinity. Others mapped out their future scholarly trajectory on specific topics that will allow them to "pursue public engagement with numerous constituencies in the greater Hartford area." The most common obstacles were the burden of time, finding the right matches with partners, building trust, and lack of funding to develop larger projects. Another mentioned the need to recognize "that one can engage Hartford in many ways," such as a global engagement experience that helps students to reflect on related dynamics in Hartford.

One important finding in the first year of collecting faculty data is the difference in community engagement participation rates depending on definitions and data sources. On one hand, about 18% of faculty reported teaching a designated Community Learning course, while 37% of faculty (nearly twice as many) reported some type of community engagement in their teaching during 2017-18. Several factors may explain this difference. Some faculty may not be aware of how to designate their courses as Community Learning, or may prefer not to do so, or may be unsure whether their own definition of community engagement matches that of the Office of Community Learning (which emphasizes experiential learning through collaborative partnerships and perspective-building relationships).

Table 4: Faculty Describing Community Engagement in Professional Activities Inventory, by Category and Region, 2017-18

	Any community engagement	in Hartford	in other parts of Connecticut	in other communities around globe
Teaching (number)	57	45	12	4
Service (number)	48	35	13	3
Teaching (percent)	37%	29%	8%	3%
Service (percent)	31%	23%	8%	2%
Research	na	na	na	na

Source: PAI 2017-18 data from Dean of Faculty, analyzed by Director of Academic Assessment

Note: Total number of tenure-track and long-term renewable contract faculty responding to PAI = 153

Student participation

About 62 percent of traditional undergraduates in the Class of 2018 completed at least 1 Community Learning course during a typical four-year period of study at Trinity. Furthermore, 25 percent completed 2 or more CL courses, and 11 percent completed 3 or more CL courses. But about 36 percent of traditional undergraduates did not enroll in any CL courses.

While a relatively small proportion of faculty teach Comm Learning courses, they reach a relatively large proportion of students. About 18 percent of regular full-time faculty taught at least one Community Learning course, while about 62 percent of traditional undergraduates enrolled in at least one CL course, during the most recent 4-5 year period for which data is available.

Table 5: Community Learning Credits Earned over 4 Years by Traditional Undergraduates in Class of 2018

Comm Learning credits	Students	Pct of total	Cumulative Pct
0 credits	171	36%	
0.25 to 0.75	8	2%	
1 to 1.75 credits	174	37%	62%
2 to 2.75 credits	66	14%	25%
3 or more credits	54	11%	11%
Total student sample	473	100%	

Data source: Discover Workbook: Student career from extract v4; Sheet: CLI Credits for Class of 2018

Note: The population was limited to traditional undergraduate students who entered in the fall 2014 semester and completed their degree within four consecutive years, either in December 2017 or May 2018. Transfer students, IDP students, and traditional undergraduates not completing within this timeframe were excluded.

To better understand the demographics of students who participate in Community Learning, the tables below identify "unique" students to avoid double-counting students who enrolled in multiple CL courses. During the past five academic years, about 600 unique students enrolled in one or more Community Learning courses each academic year. The vast majority of Community Learning students are traditional undergraduates (95%), with some adult undergraduates in the Individualized Degree Program (IDP) (2%), and non-matriculated undergraduates (3%).

Table 6: Number of Unique Students Enrolled in Community Learning, by Academic Program and Year

Academic Program	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average	Total Unique Students	Percent of Total
UGRD (traditional undergraduate)	633	470	610	600	492	561	2,124	95%
IDP (individualized degree program, undergraduate)	15	8	8	10	6	9	39	2%
NONU (non-matriculated undergraduate)	16	16	4	12	16	13	59	3%
GRAD (graduate)			2	6	13	7	21	1%
NONG (non-matriculated graduate)			1			1	1	0%
TOTAL	664	494	625	628	527	603	2,240	100%

Data source: Discover

To calculate participation rates for each demographic category in the tables below, the number of students enrolled in Community Learning for each category is divided by the total students in that category.

Traditional undergraduates who enrolled in at least one Community Learning course ranged from 21 to 28 percent between academic years 2015 and 2019. (As mentioned above, about 62 percent enroll in at least one CL course during their typical four years at Trinity.)

Table 7: Academic Program and Community Learning Enrollments of Unique Students

Academic Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
UGRD (traditional undergraduate)	28%	21%	27%	27%	22%
IDP (individualized degree program, undergraduate)	18%	9%	9%	17%	13%
NONU (non-matriculated undergraduate)	10%	11%	3%	7%	13%
GRAD (graduate)	0%	0%	2%	8%	24%
NONG (non-matriculated graduate)	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%

Note: Total enrollments includes students enrolled in Trinity-run study-away programs, not in Hartford

Data source: Discover

To calculate student participation rates in Community Learning in the tables below, we focus solely on matriculated, degree-seeking undergraduates (traditional and adult IDP), with one or more credit-bearing enrollments marked as in Hartford during the academic year. (Note that this includes Juniors who may study-away for one semester, but study in Hartford for the other semester. If we had the ability to easily exclude students who were not enrolled in Hartford by semester, and therefore could not participate in a Hartford-based Comm Learning course, the participation rates would be somewhat higher for all subgroups.)

Female students participated in Community Learning at higher proportions than male students during each academic year from 2015-2019. On average, about 29% of women enrolled in one or more Community Learning courses each year, compared to about 21% of men. This gender difference was consistent and statistically significant ($P < 0.05$) during each of the five years.

Table 8: Gender and Community Learning Enrollments of Unique Matriculated Undergraduates in Hartford

Participation rate in one or more Comm Learning courses	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average
Female	32%	24%	30%	31%	26%	29%
Male	23%	17%	23%	23%	18%	21%

Data source: Discover

Students of color enrolled in Community Learning courses in higher proportions than White students, on average, during each academic year from 2015-2019. For example, 34% of Black students and 30% of Hispanic students enrolled in one or more CL courses, compared to 23% of White students. These Black-White and Hispanic-White differences were consistent during the five-year period, but statistically significant for only some years. Also, Asian students enrolled in higher proportions (on average, 27%) than White students (23%), but this difference only appeared in 4 of the 5 years, and usually was not statistically significant.

Note: In general, this report adopts current federal definitions of racial identity. Due to the very small number of American Indian/Alaskan Native students, we combined them with Asian students to keep them in the analysis while maintaing anonymity. We removed students with Unknown racial identity from the analysis, and did not conducted a detailed analysis of students with Two or more races due to smaller numbers.

Table 9: Racial Identity Community Learning Enrollments of Unique Matriculated Undergraduates in Hartford

Participation Rates in one or more Community Learning courses	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average
White	25%	20%	24%	25%	21%	23%
Two or more races	32%	25%	32%	23%	24%	27%
Nonresident alien	33%	18%	26%	31%	21%	26%
Hispanic, any race	32%	25%	32%	32%	31%	30%
Black or African American	39%	25%	39%	39%	27%	34%
Asian and Am Indian/Alaska Native	31%	18%	35%	28%	25%	27%

Data source: Discover

We also examined financial aid status and student participation in Community Learning. This definition is based on the student's need-based financial aid during their first year at Trinity. Students with need-based financial aid enrolled in one or more Community Learning courses at a higher proportion (27%) than students without financial aid (24%), on average, during each academic year from 2015-2019. This difference is consistent across all five years, but is statisticall significant for only two years. Due to current data limitations, there are large unknowns for financial aid status in academic year 2019.

Table 10: Financial Aid Status and Community Learning Enrollments of Unique Matriculated Undergraduates in Hartford

Participation rate in one or more Comm Learning courses	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average
Need-based financial aid during first year	32%	23%	30%	29%	23%	27%
No need-based financial aid during first year	25%	20%	25%	25%	22%	24%
Unknown	18%	8%	12%	20%	21%	16%

Data source: Discover

First-generation students enrolled in one or more Community Learning courses at higher proportions (32%) than non-first-generation students (25%), on average, for each of the three years that Trinity has collected this data from 2017-2019. This pattern is consistent for all three years, but statistically significant for only the two most recent years, due to limitations of the data as it was collected for entering students.

Table 11: First-Generation Status & Community Learning Enrollments of Unique Matriculated Undergraduates in Hartford

Participation rate in Community Learning	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average
First generation in college			28%	38%	31%	32%
Not first generation in college			27%	25%	22%	25%
Unknown			27%	27%	20%	25%

Data source: Discover

When we analyzed co-curricular community engagement (specifically Community Service and Trinfo.Cafe), about 25 percent of traditional undergraduates participated in 2017-18. When we combined participation in curricular programs (Community Learning courses) or co-curricular programs, about 43 percent of traditional undergraduates participated in 2017-18. Note that the level of student engagement varies across programs, from one-day events (such as Do-It Day) to semester-long courses and programs.

Note that these numbers only include CHER programs, and as a result undercount the number of students involved in curricular programs (such as the Political Science Legislative Fellows, Internships, Office of Study Away) and co-curricular programs (managed by the Center for Student Success and Career Development, Athletics Dept, etc.) that might count as community engagement, according to the Carnegie definition. CHER invites these offices to share program definitions and data with us to help the College to track community engagement more comprehensively.

Table 12: Unique Student Participation in Curricular and/or Co-Curricular Community Engagement with CHER, 2017-18

Type	Fall 2017	Spr 2018	F17 or S18
Any Curric or Co-curricular	43%	45%	43%
Curricular + Co-curricular	8%	8%	7%
Curricular only	15%	17%	17%
Co-curricular only	20%	20%	18%
None	57%	55%	57%
Total at Hartford campus	100%	100%	100%

Data source: CHER Airtable Engagements