Civic Engagement

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The terms *Civic* and *Civility* imply:

- The conviction that the equitable distribution of resources is a worthwhile practice.
- A tolerance for diversity that sustains a pluralistic and vibrant community.
- A sense of shared purpose and common destiny.
- Having to do with the matters of the public sphere.

The terms *Engage* and *Engagement* imply:

- Occupying one’s attention or efforts.
- Involving.
- Entering into conflict with.
- Assuming an obligation.

From our perspective, civic engagement is both a philosophy of education and a way of thinking and acting in the world.

Individuals who are civically engaged:

- Accept and act upon the obligation to become aware of, understand and be involved with the “ideas, conventions, practice, institutions, and relationships directed toward carrying on the affairs of the public” (Norman Jacobson, *Pride and Solace*, 1978, 9).
- Recognize they do not live alone in the world but understand how their decisions and actions affect others.
- Are civically minded. As we use the term, civic mindedness is a “reflective disposition that informs action….civic mindedness involves a developed awareness of others that engages our moral imaginations and enhances our sense of efficacy and empathy as human beings who dwell in civil society” (Brabant and Braid 2009).
- Recognize that civic engagement is inherently political (see Brabant and Braid 2009).

Within an academic context civic engagement becomes a pedagogical strategy for creating programs and learning environments wherein students are obliged to become aware of, involved with, and comprehend the orientations, processes and practices essential to a salubrious community.
