Metropolitan State receives national community engagement classification

Saint Paul, Minn. — Metropolitan State University is among 157 colleges and universities selected for re-classification with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s Community Engagement Classification for 2015. Metropolitan State initially received the Community Engagement classification in 2008. The university is one of 10 institutions in the state to hold this classification, and one of five to earn re-classification for 2015.

The notification from the Carnegie Foundation to Metropolitan State cited the university’s “… excellent alignment among campus mission, culture, leadership, resources, and practices that support dynamic and noteworthy community engagement, and it responded to the classification framework with both descriptions and examples of exemplary institutionalized practices of community engagement.”

“Community engagement has been a core principle of Metropolitan State since the founding vision of a ‘university without walls,’ whereby student learning occurs in many places and communities, and the entire metropolitan region becomes the campus,” says Devinder Malhotra, interim president. “As we’ve grown as a public, urban university to meet the challenges and opportunities of the region, we’ve remained focused on being woven into, rather than merely built within, the Twin Cities communities we serve. I am honored and humbled by the work that our students, faculty, staff and community partners have done in partnership to merit this recognition.”

The Community Engagement Classification is elective and institutions are required to provide evidence of and document the extent and nature of institutional work with community partners. The voluntary approach allows the Carnegie Foundation to base the Community Engagement Classification on assessments of “institutional mission and distinctiveness that are not represented in the national data on colleges and universities.”
Community engagement classification

Colleges and universities were first able to apply for this classification in 2006, and the 2015 classification list is comprised of 240 institutions recognized for their commitment to campus community engagement partnerships in higher education. “This is the first time that there has been a re-classification process,” noted Amy Driscoll, consulting scholar for the Community Engagement Classification, “and we are seeing renewed institutional commitment, advanced curricular and assessment practices and deeper community partnerships, all sustained through changes in campus leadership, and within the context of a devastating economic recession.”

Since the classification was introduced in 2006, 361 colleges and universities have received this recognition of institutional focus on community engagement. The classification application process is on a five-year cycle, and selected institutions hold the designation for a 10-year period.

The Carnegie Foundation is an independent policy and research center and developed the first typology of American colleges and universities in 1970 as a research tool to describe and represent the diversity of U.S. higher education. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education is used for a wide range of purposes by academic researchers, institutional personnel, policymakers and others.

Metropolitan State University, a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, is America’s premier university for lifelong learning, providing unsurpassed, competitive academic and professional degree programs at the bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral levels while maintaining affordability.

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