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Elite Status

University of Dayton

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Elite Status

Community engagement is our way of life. Now the Carnegie Foundation has noticed.
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has selected the University of Dayton for its 2015 Community Engagement Classification, recognizing the school's long-standing commitment to community engagement through teaching, service, research and partnerships.

The University is one of just 361 institutions nationwide that earned the classification this year. Unlike the foundation's other classifications that rely on national data, institutions participated voluntarily by submitting materials describing the nature and extent of their community engagement.

"Active engagement in the local community is a central part of the Marianist tradition and integral to the University's mission and identity," said University President Daniel J. Curran. "We are honored with this designation, which is an affirmation of our long-term efforts to put into action the Marianist spirit of social justice, peace and commitment to community."

A group of University staff and faculty spent more than a year gathering data and preparing the formal application. According to Paul Vanderburgh, associate provost and task force chair, a long-term benefit of the process has been that the University found ways to improve planning, supporting and evaluating community-engaged learning across campus.

The designation is indicative of a university's deep engagement with local, regional, national and global communities, according to John Saltmarsh, director of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education. "These are campuses that are improving teaching and learning, producing research that makes a difference in communities, and revitalizing their civic and academic missions."

The University of Dayton's engagement includes PK-12 neighborhood schools, environmental sustainability advocacy and remediation, community and economic development, arts and cultural programming, service-learning, civic leadership, research in areas such as human rights and neighborhood stabilization, and other activities.

"The University of Dayton has a long and very rich tradition of community involvement on many different levels ranging from human services to economic development," said Michael Parks, president of The Dayton Foundation. "This engagement is a very real embodiment of the Marianist teachings and we are so fortunate to have UD in our community."

While community engagement efforts extend across campus, many develop in the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, created in 2002 to initiate and sustain partnerships between the University and the greater community.

The programs and projects of the Fitz Center are determined entirely on the basis of the leadership
challenges facing more than two dozen community partners. Nonprofit and local government partners participate in one or more of the Fitz Center’s leadership programs: Semester of Service, Dayton Civic Scholars, Graduate Community Fellows, Neighborhood School Centers, Rivers Institute and River Stewards.

"The University should be an agent for social change," Curran said. "Our students, faculty and staff are deeply engaged in the community, advocating for change, working directly with those in need and creating innovations that improve the quality of life.

"I'm proud of their service, and especially grateful to our students, who approach community engagement with great passion, commitment and ingenuity, and bring the Marianist spirit to life each and every year."

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