



December 3, 2014

Elizabeth Burman
Director of Community Engagement & Outreach
University of Tennessee; UT Institute of Agriculture
Office of Community Engagement & Outreach
1534 White Avenue
Knoxville, TN 37996-1539

Dear Elizabeth:

On behalf of the Carnegie Foundation, congratulations! Your institution has been selected to receive the 2015 Community Engagement Classification. We are pleased to inform you of this classification decision before its public release on January 7, 2015, when we will announce the entire set of classified institutions.

Your application documented 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. The application also documented evidence of community engagement in a coherent and compelling response to the framework's inquiry.

Your campus is one of 361 institutions that now hold the Community Engagement Classification. It is heartening to see this level of commitment and activity. Clearly, higher education is making significant strides in finding ways to engage with and contribute to important community agendas. There is much to celebrate.

There are also areas where more work must be done. During the selection process, the application reviewers noted that even among the most effective applications, there are areas of practice in need of continued development. As a way of improving your institutional practices and to position your campus for successful re-classification in the future, we encourage you to attend to the areas of (1) assessment, (2) reciprocal partnerships, (3) faculty rewards, and (4) integration and alignment with other institutional initiatives:

- (1) The assessment practices required by the Community Engagement Classification must meet a broad range of purposes: assessing community perceptions of institutional engagement; tracking and recording institution-wide engagement data; assessing the impact of community engagement on students, faculty, the community, and the institution; identifying and assessing student learning outcomes in curricular engagement; and providing ongoing feedback mechanisms for partnerships. That range of purposes calls for sophisticated understandings and approaches in order to achieve the respective assessment goals. We urge institutions to continue developing assessment toward those ends.

- (2) Partnerships require a high level of understanding of—and intentional practices specifically directed toward—reciprocity and mutuality. Campuses have begun to attend to processes of initiating and nurturing collaborative, two-way partnerships, and are developing strategies for systematic communication. Maintaining authentically collaborative, mutually beneficial partnerships takes ongoing commitment, and we urge institutions to continue their attention to this critical aspect of community engagement.
- (3) With regard to faculty rewards for roles in community engagement, it is difficult to create a campus culture of community engagement when there are not clearly articulated incentives for faculty to prioritize this work. We would like to see more examples of campuses that provide evidence of clear policies for recognizing community engagement in teaching and learning, and in research and creative activity, along with criteria that validate appropriate methodologies and scholarly artifacts. We urge Community Engagement Classified institutions to initiate study, dialogue, and reflection to promote and reward the scholarship of engagement more fully.
- (4) Community engagement offers often-untapped possibilities for alignment with other campus priorities and initiatives to achieve greater impact—for example, first-year programs that include community engagement; learning communities in which community engagement is integrated into the design; or diversity initiatives that explicitly link active and collaborative community-based teaching and learning with the academic success of underrepresented students. There remain significant opportunities for campuses to develop collaborative internal practices that integrate disparate initiatives into more coherent community engagement efforts.

Included with this letter is a digital file of a seal signifying your achievement as a Carnegie Community Engaged campus. We hope you will use this seal as you publicize your accomplishments. We also hope that you will use the announcement of the classified campuses as an opportunity to capitalize on the self-study process you undertook in completing your application, creating opportunities to reflect on what you learned about community engagement on your campus and ways that you can advance and deepen your practice.

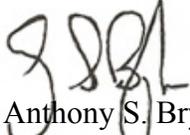
The classification you have achieved is valid until 2025, at which time you will need to seek re-classification if your campus intends to retain its Community Engagement Classified status. If you choose to re-classify in 2025 (starting the process in 2023), you will be asked to provide evidence of how community engagement has become deeper, more pervasive, better integrated, and sustained on your campus.

We also hope you will find ways to support campuses that are in earlier stages of institutionalizing community engagement. Your guidance will contribute significantly to the strength of community engagement across higher education.

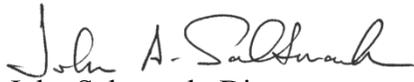
As noted above, the announcement of the 2015 Community Engagement Classification is scheduled for public release on January 7, 2015. Once again, congratulations to you, your faculty, staff, students, and community partners on this achievement.

If you have any questions, please contact John Saltmarsh, Director of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education, at john.saltmarsh@umb.edu.

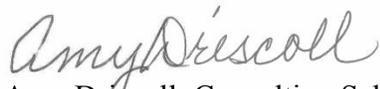
Sincerely,



Anthony S. Bryk, President
Carnegie Foundation



John Saltmarsh, Director
New England Resource Center for Higher Education



Amy Driscoll, Consulting Scholar
Carnegie Community Engagement Classification

cc: Chancellors Jimmy G. Cheek (UTK) & Larry Arrington (UTIA)