

# Discussion Guide

## “For Democracy’s Future – Education Reclaims Our Civic Mission”



On January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012, from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM EST, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and other senior Obama administration officials will join with people of different backgrounds and views – including college presidents, students, and leaders in business and philanthropy – for a national convening at the White House – “For Democracy’s Future: Education Reclaims Our Civic Mission.” This event brings people together to discuss the importance of citizenship for the 21st century and the role of educational institutions in educating students for citizenship.

January 10<sup>th</sup> marks the release of *A Crucible Moment: Civic Learning and Democracy’s Future*, a National Call to Action to the Department of Education by leading civic scholars and practitioners. The year is also the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Morrill Act, which created land grant colleges, once known as “democracy’s colleges.” The event highlights the new American Commonwealth Partnership (ACP), which promotes the Morrill Act’s civic mission in every educational setting. ACP brings together many different groups to call for a shift from scattered “civic activities” to strong “civic identity” in families, schools, professions, colleges and universities. It is organizing a national conversation about how to make this happen. In addition, the Department of Education is releasing a document titled *Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy: A Road Map and Call to Action*.

The full agenda for the event is below. We invite those who are not participating in person to join online at [www.WhiteHouse.gov/live](http://www.WhiteHouse.gov/live) and convene a local discussion during the breakout session, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM EST, which will not be live streamed. This short discussion guide is prepared as an optional resource. If you are tuning in as an individual, we encourage you to use it to hold discussions

after the event today on citizenship and civic education with your friends, neighbors, co-workers, or fellow students.<sup>1</sup>

In this guide you will find:

- Full event agenda
- Tips for organizing your event
- Discussion guide with suggested questions
- Tips for moderating the discussion
- Highlights from *A Crucible Moment: Civic Learning and Democracy's Future*

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion guide has been developed for those participating in sites across the country, by Harry C. Boyte, Director of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at Augsburg College and Senior Fellow at the University of Minnesota Humphrey School, and Jean Johnson, National Issues Forums, with the assistance of John Detric and Derek Barker, Kettering Foundation.

# For Democracy's Future: Education Reclaims Our Civic Mission

January 10, 2012

2:00 PM – 6:00 PM EST

[www.WhiteHouse.gov/live](http://www.WhiteHouse.gov/live)

## Event Program

### Welcome

#### **A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future**

*Martha Kanter, Under Secretary, US Department of Education*

*Carol Schneider, President, Association of American Colleges and Universities*

#### **Panel Discussion: Higher Education's Call for Democratic Engagement**

*Chair: James Leach, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities*

*Participants:*

*Brian Murphy, President, De Anza College*

*Richard Guarasci, President, Wagner College*

*Azar Nafisi, Executive Director of Cultural Conversations; Foreign Policy Visiting Fellow, Johns Hopkins University*

#### **Panel Discussion: Changing Lives, Changing Communities**

*Chair: David Mathews, President, Kettering Foundation*

*Participants:*

*Molly Jahn, Professor of Agronomy and Genetics, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

*Dantrell Cotton, Student, University of Wisconsin*

*Romand Coles, McAllister Chair of Community, Culture and the Environment, Northern Arizona University*

*Nikki Cooley, Program Coordinator, Northern Arizona University*

*Paul Markham, Professor, Western Kentucky University*

*Bianca Brown, Student, Western Kentucky University*

#### **Coalitions and Collaboration: Framing the Discussion**

*Harry Boyte, Director, Center for Democracy and Citizenship, Augsburg College*

### Break (5 minutes)

#### **Breakout Sessions (this portion not live streamed; online viewers may facilitate local conversations)**

Deepen Civic Identity, Values and Vision

*Harry Boyte, Director, Center for Democracy and Citizenship, Augsburg College*

*Molly Jahn, Professor of Agronomy and Genetics, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

*Jean Johnson, Executive Vice President, Public Agenda*

*John Sicheloff, Director, Jumpstart Productions*

Expand Public Scholarship and Research

*Nancy Cantor, Chancellor, Syracuse University*

*Timothy Eatman, Research Director, Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life*

*Julie Ellison, Professor of American Culture, English, and Art and Design, University of Michigan*

#### Build and Strengthen Community-Campus Connections

*George Mehaffy, Vice President, American Association of State Colleges and Universities*

*Ira Harkavy, Associate Vice President and Director, Netter Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania*

*Blase Scarnati, Director, University First Year Seminar Program & Global Learning, Northern Arizona University*

#### Advance Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Across School and College

*Ronald A. Crutcher, President, Wheaton College*

*Caryn McTighe Musil, Senior Vice President, Association of American Colleges and Universities*

*Ted McConnell, Executive Director, Civic Mission of Schools*

#### Provide Evidence: Civic Learning and College Success

*Carol Schneider, President, Association of American Colleges and Universities*

*Ashley Finley, Senior Director of Assessment and Research, Association of American Colleges and Universities*

*Sarita Brown, President, Excelencia in Education!*

#### **Break (5 minutes)**

#### **Reports from Breakout Sessions**

*Session Facilitators*

#### **Commitments: Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – A National Imperative**

*Harry Boyte, Director, Center for Democracy and Citizenship, Augsburg College*

*Carol Schneider, President, Association of American Colleges and Universities*

#### **The Obama Administration's Commitment to Advancing Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy: Connecting College, Career and Citizenship**

*Robert Velasco II, Acting Director, Corporation for National and Community Service*

*Arne Duncan, Secretary, US Department of Education*

#### **Close**

*Eduardo Ochoa, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, US Department of Education*

## **Organizing Your Event**

1. Tune in yourself
2. Encourage your members/others to tune in by putting announcement/link on your web site or in email blast
3. Host an in-person viewing session and discussion (see this optional discussion guide)
4. Encourage your members (e.g. colleges, high school principals, local school boards) to host in-person viewing sessions and discussions
5. Issue a media advisory if you host a local event
6. Issue a press release the day of or day after event to tell the public about your participation in the event and announce any new commitments to educating students for citizenship.

## Discussion Guide

### Reinventing Citizenship and the Role of Education

The guide below is designed to help moderators introduce the topic and launch the conversation. It includes suggested language for introducing the topic, questions that can be used to open and conclude the discussion and information about collecting and sharing the group's ideas. See also the Moderators' Tips section that follows.

#### 1. Introducing the subject:

*Citizenship has different meanings.*

*For some citizenship means voting. Some see it as a legal status, or obeying the law, or being a good person and a role model. To others it means respecting those of different views and backgrounds.*

*"Productive citizenship" means making a public contribution through work, paid or unpaid – one can be a citizen teacher, a citizen business owner, or a citizen homemaker.*

*There is no single "right answer" to the question, "what is a citizen?"*

*People also have different views on where education for citizenship takes place. Some see families as the main "school for citizenship." Other stress schools, colleges, universities or religious congregations. Many see all these playing important though differing roles.*

*This discussion is intended to begin an ongoing national conversation on the topic of what is citizenship, and how do we educate for it.*

#### 2. Some questions to start with:

- If you were explaining the responsibilities that come with being an American citizen to a visitor from another country, what would you say?
- As citizens, what do you think we owe to future generations?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of different groups (e.g. families, schools, colleges or universities) in educating citizens?
- What are your ideas for how we can learn to listen to each other and work together across partisan and other divides?
- What are the skills and values of 21<sup>st</sup> century citizenship? Do we have new or additional responsibilities that we didn't have in the past?

### 3. Summarizing the discussion:

Before ending the discussion, take a few minutes to reflect on what has been achieved. Consider the following questions:

- Has your thinking about citizenship changed?
- What are two or three things you take away about explaining citizenship to an immigrant or visitor from abroad?
- What do you now think about the role of education and higher education in educating citizens who contribute to communities and the larger democracy?

### 4. Collecting the participants' ideas and suggestions:

Moderators are encouraged to collect observations from the groups and send to [CivicLearning@ed.gov](mailto:CivicLearning@ed.gov) with "feedback" in the subject heading. We are especially interested in hearing:

- **Are there two or three areas of general (although perhaps not complete) agreement among the group from today's discussion?**

**We also are eager to continuously develop and improve the work of "educating for citizenship." Either now or in the future, we would like your thoughts on these questions:**

- **Are there other questions we should ask in the future to promote a lively and productive discussion of citizenship and citizenship education?**
- **Are there ideas for specific policies or practices that schools, colleges, and universities could implement to promote education for citizenship in ways that are consistent with other important efforts such as increasing graduation rates, improving student learning, and preparing students for 21<sup>st</sup>-century careers?**
- **Are there ideas for how federal, state, and local governments, or the business and philanthropy communities, could make it easier for schools, colleges, and universities to focus on educating students for citizenship?**

## **Moderating the event**

Choose a moderator who welcomes all present

### **Moderator Tips<sup>2</sup>**

If this is your first experience as a moderator, remember, you don't have to be an expert on the topic. The point is to encourage everyone to speak, and respect each other across differences like partisan belief, age, culture, faith, income. Citizenship is not a partisan issue!

- Look through the suggested questions for discussion, and choose one or two that get to the heart of the issue
- Stay focused on what the discussion is about—deliberation that allows different points of view on “reinventing citizenship” to be heard
- Keep the discussion moving and focused on the issue.
- Reserve ample time for reflections on the discussion at end.
- One good way to start is for participants to take a few minutes to talk about their personal experiences with making a contribution to the community or society.

### **Ground Rules**

Before the discussion begins, it is important for participants to review guidelines for their discussion. These guidelines have been found useful in many settings:

- Everyone is encouraged to participate,
- No one or two individuals should dominate,
- The discussion should focus on the topic, not get sidetracked
- All help to maintain an open and respectful atmosphere for the discussion, and
- All agree to listen to each other.

Ask the group to suggest other rules

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the National Issues Forums Institute

## For background and further information

### *A Crucible Moment: Civic Learning and America's Future*

[www.aacu.org/civic\\_learning/crucible](http://www.aacu.org/civic_learning/crucible)

**DemocracyU** This is the overall web site for the American Commonwealth Partnership

<http://www.civicyouth.org/democracyu/>

Stories of strong education for citizenship discussed at the White House event on January 10<sup>th</sup> can be found at:

Chicago High School of Agricultural Science <http://www.chicagoagr.org/>

Northern Arizona University <http://cbarts.weebly.com/index.html> and  
<http://home.nau.edu/FYSeminar/>

Western Kentucky University <http://www.wku.edu/icsr/programs/publicachievement.php>

**About the creators of this guide:**

**Center for Democracy and Citizenship** <http://www.augsburg.edu/democracy/index.html>

The Center for Democracy and Citizenship collaborates with a variety of partners to promote active citizenship and public work by people of all ages. The center's work is grounded in the belief that a healthy democracy requires everyone's participation, and that each of us has something to contribute.

**National Issues Forums Institute** <http://www.nifi.org/>

National Issues Forums (NIF) is a network of civic, educational, and other organizations, and individuals, whose common interest is to promote public deliberation in America. It has grown to include thousands of civic clubs, religious organizations, libraries, schools, and many other groups that meet to discuss critical public issues. Forum participants range from teenagers to retirees, prison inmates to community leaders, and literacy students to university students.

NIF does not advocate specific solutions or points of view but provides citizens the opportunity to consider a broad range of choices, weigh the pros and cons of those choices, and meet with each other in a public dialogue to identify the concerns they hold in common.

# Highlights From

## ***A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future***

### **A report from the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement**

In response to widespread concern about the nation's anemic civic health, *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future* calls for investing in higher education's capacity to make civic learning and democratic engagement widely shared national priorities. The report calls on higher education and many partners in education, government, and public life to advance a 21<sup>st</sup> century conception of civic learning and democratic engagement as an expected part of **every student's college education**.

#### **A New Vision for Civic Learning in Higher Education**

*An earlier definition of civic education stressed familiarity with the various branches of government and acquaintance with basic information about U.S. history. This is still essential but no longer nearly enough. Americans still need to understand how their political system works and how to influence it. But they also need to understand the cultural and global contexts in which democracy is both deeply valued and deeply contested. Moreover, the competencies basic to democracy cannot be learned only by studying books; democratic knowledge and capabilities are honed through hands-on, face-to-face, active engagement in the midst of differing perspectives about how to address common problems that affect the well-being of the nation and the world.*

*Civic learning that includes knowledge, skills, values, and the capacity to work with others on civic and societal challenges can help increase the number of informed, thoughtful, and public-minded citizens well prepared to contribute in the context of the diverse, dynamic, globally connected United States. Civic learning should prepare students with knowledge and for action in our communities.*

*Components of 21<sup>st</sup> century civic learning should include:*

- *Knowledge of U.S. history, political structures, and core democratic principles and founding documents; and debates—US and global—about their meaning and application;*
- *Knowledge of the political systems that frame constitutional democracies and of political levers for affecting change;*
- *Knowledge of diverse cultures and religions in the US and around the world;*
- *Critical inquiry and reasoning capacities;*
- *Deliberation and bridge-building across differences;*
- *Collaborative decision-making skills;*
- *Open-mindedness and capacity to engage different points of view and cultures;*
- *Civic problem-solving skills and experience*
- *Civility, ethical integrity, and mutual respect.*

To advance this vision, The National Task Force urges Americans to:

1. **Reclaim and reinvest in the fundamental civic and democratic mission** of schools and of all sectors within higher education
2. **Enlarge the current national narrative that erases civic aims and civic literacy** as educational priorities contributing to social, intellectual, and economic capital
3. **Advance a contemporary, comprehensive framework for civic learning—embracing US and global interdependence**—that includes historic and modern understandings of democratic values, capacities to engage diverse perspectives and people, and commitment to collective civic problem-solving
4. **Capitalize upon the interdependent responsibilities of K-12 and higher education** to foster progressively higher levels of civic knowledge, skills, examined values, and action as expectations for every student
5. **Expand the number of robust, generative civic partnerships and alliances locally, nationally, and globally** to address common problems, empower people to act, strengthen communities and nations, and generate new frontiers of knowledge

*A Crucible Moment* provides specific campus examples illustrating how to move from “partial transformation to pervasive civic and democratic learning and practices.”

**FIGURE 6. From Partial to Pervasive: Constructing More Advanced Levels of Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement in Higher Education**

Partial foundation laid ...	Civic learning is pervasive ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic learning is optional for some students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic learning is expected for all students, regardless of field or area of study</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic learning is a one-time experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic learning is infused across students' educational experiences over time in a developmental arc</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching critical thinking does not consider real-world contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching critical thinking also occurs in relation to issues of public significance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic learning is individually oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic learning also fosters collaboration with diverse people and groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic learning focuses on external engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic learning also asks students to reflect on their own social identity and location as well as those of others</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty in some disciplines and certificate programs raise civic questions in relation to their field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty in all disciplines and certificate programs raise civic questions in relation to their field</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based scholarship is accepted in some departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based scholarship is positively viewed in all departments and influences the hiring and promotion of faculty</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic learning practices in the curriculum and cocurriculum are parallel but not integrated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic learning practices in the curriculum and cocurriculum are coordinated and connected through partnerships between academic and student affairs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement is one-directional, with colleges and universities providing expertise to the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement is reciprocal, with colleges/universities and communities working together to identify assets and solve public problems</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission and vision statements do not explicitly address civic responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission and vision statements explicitly address civic responsibility</li> </ul>

See [www.aacu.org/civic\\_learning/crucible](http://www.aacu.org/civic_learning/crucible) for full report; see Chapter 3 for full set of recommendations.