
SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT

The College commits to a definition of community engagement that is linked to creative industries, grounded in Chicago's creative practice, honors our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and access, and understands that our community includes our students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and neighbors. We align our engagement efforts with our core academic mission and programs, with funding models that will ensure and sustain their success. Ultimately, engagement affords the college the opportunity to tell our unique story and share our assets as a collective of diverse practitioners and innovative thinkers; intentionally networking with industry through deliberate and organized engagements that support our students' development as creative professionals. Ideally, our students should have the opportunity to practice the theoretical, artistic, business planning and leadership skills they are learning in class, while connecting with interdisciplinary teams to respond to production needs both on and off our campus.

ACTION STEPS: CAMPUS COMMUNITY

We will foster a collaborative environment and sense of broad community amongst all our stakeholders by investing in communication strategies, curriculum, and programming that harnesses and features the talents and expertise of all community members, regardless of their job titles or positions in the college.

- As part of our communications strategy, we will establish academic social media accounts that are officially verified and regularly maintained and invest in staffing to ensure content that is consistent and relevant. We will use these resources to reflect the creative work of our community, curricular achievements, using this space to discuss trending topics, success stories and engagement among faculty, staff, current and prospective students, and alumni. This effort will use both external platforms (e.g., Facebook and Instagram) and internal platforms (e.g. Columbia Engage).
- We will develop internal networking opportunities to celebrate full- and part-time faculty and staff, to improve internal connectedness amongst employees of the college, support and encourage creative engagement and collaboration, and reenergize existing industry relationships between Columbia and faculty and staff who are embedded in industry.
- We will support retention of our faculty, staff and students from underrepresented communities through thoughtful efforts to build appropriate community supports that are inclusive and promote equity.
- We will leverage the interdisciplinary curriculum in CCCX courses to expand community-building outcomes between classes and with the greater College community.
- We will support and build on the successful Columbia Votes model which connects faculty, students and student workers in an effort to raise civic engagement, by providing incentives for faculty who develop co-taught interdepartmental courses centered around community engagement and industry partnerships, through the curriculum innovation grant process.

ACTION STEPS: SOUTH LOOP NEIGHBORHOOD AND BEYOND

We strive to be a key cultural and intellectual pillar of our surrounding neighborhood and to create a welcoming and collaborative environment at Columbia College Chicago that facilitates longevity and trust-building with neighborhood stakeholders. Columbia College Chicago needs to be bold in our engagement activities while being sensitive to the aspirations of all the stakeholders of our neighborhood. We will work to establish Columbia College Chicago as an indispensable partner in the greater Chicago's creative education, and cultural landscape.

- We will build social equity in partnership with community partners. We will support the ongoing work of the Special Advisor for Community Engagement to collect information about ongoing engagement activities, develop standards for community engagement, and create rubrics for measuring the success of those initiatives.
- We will create an internal industry and community engagement council connecting faculty, staff, career center, alumni relations, academic departments, and executive leadership to each other to better understand the external partnerships and relationships that are happening each year/semester at the institution.
- We will develop narratives about our community through storytelling in partnership with our community engagement and neighborhood partners, and create a publication to promote our engagement activities and partnerships within the neighborhood.
- We will develop ways to recognize meaningful community engagement activities by our students, faculty and staff, using such strategies as badging, awards, and other incentives.
- We will promote partnership opportunities with government, business, and non-profit organizations within the City of Chicago.
- We will continue to grow and leverage our partnerships with Black, Asian and Latino/Latinx community stakeholders and lawmakers to responsibly recruit and retain these diverse emerging creatives.
- We will create a Columbia College Chicago Cultural Passport to encourage attendance and raise the audience for our public-facing events and performances, and promote Columbia College Chicago and local businesses, and support and promote the Wabash Arts Corridor.
- We will develop a “Neighborhood Discovery Initiative” in partnership with local businesses and other neighborhood stakeholders to encourage the Columbia College Chicago internal community to engage with the surrounding neighborhood. Key to this initiative is to recover the narrative of our neighborhood as accessible and safe through targeted communication and activities programming.
- We will reconceive Manifest to serve as the “Coming Home” or “Block Party” event for the surrounding neighborhood that celebrates the creative work of our institution and the entrepreneurial and creative spirit of the neighborhood in ways that create and support linkages with community partners.
- We will Utilize the college’s resources to engage, particularly with government and non-profit organizations within the City of Chicago.

ACTION STEPS: COLUMBIA AGENCY

- Create a creative agency for Columbia College Chicago staffed with creative professionals who can support a broad variety of production needs, leading teams of student workers, and connecting to relevant classwork. The Columbia agency should provide meaningful practical experiences for our students. This can be in the form of employment, internships, and projects through associated classes.
- Activate public-facing space to support the work of the Columbia agency, providing professional space to meet with clients as well as investing in creative work spaces that lean into cutting edge production methodologies and technology.
- The Columbia agency should serve as a gateway to support the work of community organizations, as measured by a stable and growing client base. The Columbia agency should support more effective communications by departments to students and others on campus.
- The Columbia agency will also serve as a campus-wide talent booking agency to help the neighborhood easily identify and book Columbia College Chicago talent for events.

ACTION STEPS: CREATIVE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS & ALUMNI RELATIONSHIPS

We will maximize industry relationships, and external partnerships to develop deeper and meaningful industry connections to the College's academic programs, and student body. We will develop programs and experiences that will expose students to industry projects, industry representatives and alumni connections. We will build sustainable relationships for the future that will positively impact the career prospects and career mobility of our students and celebrate the achievements of our alumni.

- We will incentivize academic departments and programs that incorporate industry partnerships and internship experiences into their degree programs, and prioritize industry partnerships that align with our values in diversity, equity, and inclusion and the skill and aspirations of our students.
- We will develop an **Industry Experience Fund** and fundraising initiative to engage students in learning about their industry and improving their career readiness. An Industry Experience Fund would support funding students to participate in career experiences beyond their financial reach including scholarships for internships and industry specific conferences, or networking events, joining a professional organization, or other professional development-related activities which help students gain industry experience along with their degree.
- We will capitalize on our institution's current memberships with such bodies as America's Urban Campus, Council of Independent Colleges, and Imagining America to build institutional partnerships and collaborative research and learning initiatives.
- We will expand on existing efforts to celebrate alumni milestones and achievements.
- We will expand on existing efforts to bring alumni to the college on a regular basis to engage with the arts, faculty, prospective students, and career programs with masterclasses, performances, in-class speakers, gallery shows, film openings, portfolio reviews, career talks, and admission events, building sustainable connections for future industry relations and mentorship opportunities.
- We will invest in mechanisms to expand and provide scalable options for student-alumni mentoring, and incentivize efforts to integrate academic classes more formally with alumni mentoring program.