

What does it mean for Slippery Rock University to receive the Carnegie Foundation's 2020 Elective Community Engagement Classification?

I. Definition and Purpose of Community Engagement

- Definition: The Carnegie Foundation defines community engagement as the “collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial creation and exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (Carnegie Foundation, 2019).
- Purpose: “Community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good” (Carnegie Foundation, 2019).

II. General Information about the Classification:

- The Community Engagement Classification is a self-initiated but gated distinction requiring years of effort on the part of institutions to achieve. Applications are accepted once every six-year period.
- Classification is akin to a Michelin Star. Applicants provide evidence-based documentation of institutional practice and outcomes that seek to convince reviewers of the breadth and depth of high-quality community engagement, as well as a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Carnegie's extensive selection criteria ensure each classified school has “institutionalized” community engagement university-wide.
 - Classified schools demonstrate commitment in their institutional mission, overall identity, teaching, service, scholarly growth, rewards/incentives, commitments, assessment, and other practices.
- Once “classified,” an institution holds the designation for 6 years. Just as restaurants lose Michelin Stars, Universities lose Classification.
- Slippery Rock must reapply for classification in 2026, during which SRU must demonstrate how community engagement has grown deeper and more pervasive at the institution.
- Currently, only 359 institutions hold the classification nationwide. Of the 109 campuses that applied for initial classification in 2020, only SRU and 43 other institutions received the classification.
- Only 27 Pennsylvania institutions currently hold the classification.
- For more information, see Carnegie 2020 by the numbers at:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1alf1E8649wRUR1V-GIgOXUDbB_ZDBne6ztz8W-dYwH0/edit#gid=0

Current Pennsylvania “classified” community-engaged institutions include:

Note: PASSHE institutions are bolded with an asterisk.

Allegheny College	Juniata College	Swarthmore College
Alvernia University	Lafayette College	University of Pennsylvania
*Bloomsburg University of PA	La Salle University	University of Pittsburgh
Cabrini College	Messiah College	University of Scranton
Dickinson College	*Millersville University	Villanova University
Drexel University	Muhlenberg College	*West Chester University of PA
Duquesne University	Northampton Community College	Widener University
Elizabethtown College	Pennsylvania State University	
Gannon University	Saint Joseph’s University	
Gettysburg College	*Slippery Rock University	

III. What factors helped SRU earn classification?

- SRU demonstrated community engagement increasingly lay at the heart of the university.
- SRU showed strong and improving alignment and integration of community engagement with our institutional mission, identity, culture, commitments, resources, and practice.
- SRU showed that we possess excellence and expertise in community-engaged teaching, service, and scholarship, as well as community outreach and partnerships.
 - Critically, SRU initiated a process to explicitly reward community-engaged teaching, service, and scholarship via tenure and promotion revisions.
 - **Critically, SRU began to integrate community engagement in our general education program (Rock Studies).**
- **Note: In 2026, Carnegie will judge us on our ability to deliver on our promises/initiatives in these areas.** SRU provided evidence of high-quality community engagement spread across the university.

IV. What types of actions did SRU and the SRU Carnegie Committee take in order to earn classification?

- SRU created the Office for community-Engaged Learning as a campus resource in 2016.
- We achieved a 271% increase in student participation in academic HIP designated service-learning courses between 2018 – 2020.
- We developed and implemented a conceptual framework for service-learning experiences that clearly outlined rigorous course attributes, and areas of professional practice and competency.
- We significantly advanced the provision of faculty incentives and rewards for community-engaged work, through:
 - proposed revisions to faculty P-T that explicitly reward community-engagement in teaching, service, and scholarly growth;
 - support for professional development through faculty learning communities,
 - and the creation of on-going service-learning course and departmental grants and programs through the Office for Community-Engaged Learning.
- We revised SRU’s institutional strategic goal (9) in March 2019 to explicitly emphasize partnerships -- reciprocal engagement, co-creation, and mutual benefit with communities.
- We leveraged community engagement to advance SRU’s diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts through the launch of the Bonner Leader program in Fall 2019. Bonner provides scholarships to low-income and under-represented students dedicated to service, civic engagement, and social justice.
- We developed and implemented systematic assessment mechanisms to more accurately assess the effects of community engagement on students, faculty/staff, community partners, and the institution.