

U.S. Legislators Join College Presidents in Celebrating Campus Compact's 20th Anniversary

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PROVIDENCE, RI—U.S. legislators joined foundation and higher education leaders, including college and university presidents from around the country, in celebrating the 20th anniversary of Campus Compact last night. Campus Compact—the only national association dedicated solely to advancing higher education's public purposes—kicked off a year of celebration in Washington, DC, in an event that highlighted the role of colleges and universities in educating citizens and building strong communities.

“Over the past 20 years, we've seen an increase in community service and civic engagement, thanks in large part to Campus Compact,” stated keynote speaker Jeanne Shaheen, former governor of New Hampshire, who now directs the Institute of Politics at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Student service levels have risen sharply in recent years; more than 30% of students at Campus Compact's 950+ member colleges and universities engage in service, contributing an estimated \$4.45 billion to their communities each year. Shaheen also challenged campuses to sustain recent growth in student voting levels, which rose 11% between 2000 and 2004.

Legislators and staff members from both sides of the aisle joined in celebrating the progress made over the past 20 years and looking forward to 20 years of future growth. Senator John Kerry (D-MA) praised bipartisan support for service, noting, “We need a call to service in this country.” Also present were Representative Christopher Shays (R-CT), who co-chairs the Community Service Caucus; Representative Allen Boyd (D-FL); Representative Barney Frank (D-MA); and numerous congressional staff members, including representatives from the House Education Committee.

Speaker David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), addressed higher education's public role from his agency's perspective and encouraged college presidents to make access to higher education a priority. CNCS, through its Learn and Serve America, AmeriCorps, and other programs, is a major supporter of campus-based service and service-learning efforts.

The event gave college and university presidents from across the nation a chance to discuss the vital work they do in their communities with their Congressional representatives. These conversations will be extended today as both individual presidents and regional caucuses meet with representatives on Capitol Hill. Joining in these discussions will be leaders from many of Campus Compact's 31 state offices, who coordinate state and regional campus engagement efforts.

Also in attendance were executives from a range of education organizations and foundations with an interest in student service and civic engagement. Those present included directors from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC), the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), Learn and Serve America, the Points of Light Foundation, the Carter Partnership Foundation, Global Youth Partners for Africa, TOSA Foundation, and KPMG Foundation, which sponsored the dinner and reception.

Campus Compact's 20th anniversary year will culminate in an October 2006 celebration in Chicago, honoring campus-community partnerships that contribute both to students' civic understanding and to community development at the local, state, national, and international level.

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Campus Compact is a national coalition of more than 950 college and university presidents—representing some 5 million students—dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service-learning in higher education. To support this mission, Campus Compact promotes service initiatives that develop students' citizenship skills, helps campuses forge effective community partnerships, and provides resources and practical guidance for faculty seeking to integrate civic engagement into their teaching and research. For more information, visit www.compact.org.