

# WSU Center for Civic Engagement

## Community Partner Survey 2014-2015

### Community Partner Survey Overview

The Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) Community Partner survey was created using the forms feature in OrgSync and an internet link to the survey was e-mailed to 530 people listed as administrators for 376 community partners. Eighty-four responses were recorded, which is the highest number of responses received since this annual survey was implemented in 2006. The survey had a 16% overall return rate of the total number of individuals receiving the survey, and a 22% return rate of agency responses.

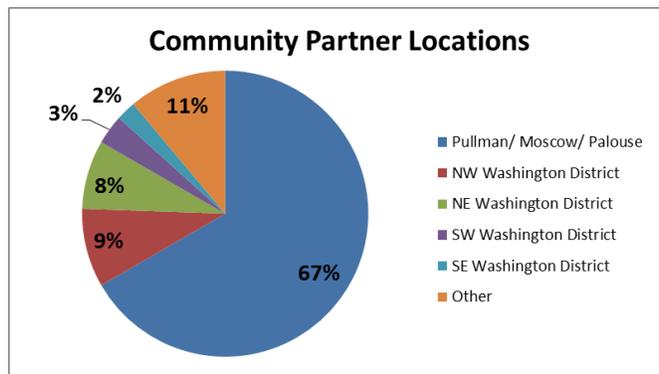


Fig. 1

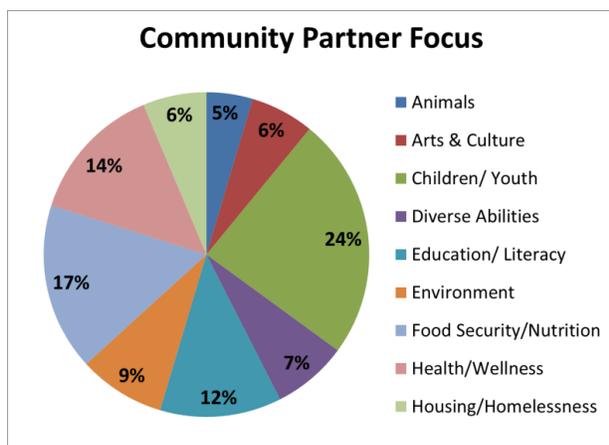


Fig. 2

Two-thirds of the completed surveys were partners from the Pullman/Moscow community; the remaining respondents indicated they were from different Washington districts, with four partners from Idaho, one partner from California and another from Indiana (see fig. 1). Additionally, community partners represented a wide-range of focus areas with the largest representation coming from organizations serving children and youth (see fig. 2). Also noteworthy, 72% of organizations responding to the survey indicated that they have partnered with the CCE for less than five years (see fig. 3).

The survey was divided into five sections beginning with the overall satisfaction of CCE interaction and its partnership with community organizations. Then community partners responded to prompts regarding the impact of WSU students on community organizations and how community partners have contributed to student learning. Next, the survey asked community partners to address the extent they viewed the university as an engaged institution. Lastly, community partners were asked to complete a series of questions regarding their agency's demographic information, including how long they have partnered with the CCE and the purpose/focus of their agency.



Fig. 3

## CCE- Community Partnership

Satisfaction among community partners was fairly high regarding their overall satisfaction with the CCE. On a six point scale with the highest level being highly satisfied and the lowest being highly dissatisfied, the majority of the organizations were either highly satisfied or satisfied with the eight question prompts (see fig. 5). Respondents indicated an 89% overall satisfaction with the CCE. There was a very low level of dissatisfaction with the CCE’s role in the community involvement process. The range in mean scores was 4.7 to 5.3 on a 6-point scale.

In comparing survey data from 2015 and 2013, communication was the one area that showed significant improvement with agencies’ satisfaction with the CCE.

“Very impressed with the direct way you approach projects and communication. There is exceptional communication and action both in the CCE Community.” –Community Partner

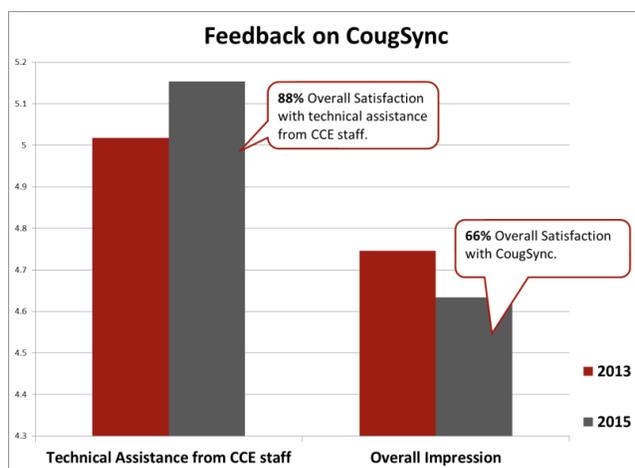


Fig. 4

The most significant decrease between 2015 and 2013 was overall satisfaction with the CCE website. Only 71% of community partners indicated that they were highly-satisfied or satisfied with the CCE website (see fig.5). The CCE website was overhauled over the summer and there are additional changes planned to enhance the community partner sections of the CCE website. Additionally, while 88% of community partners indicated that they were highly satisfied or satisfied with the technical assistance they received from CCE staff, only 66% of community partners were highly satisfied or satisfied with their overall impression of CougSync (see fig. 4).

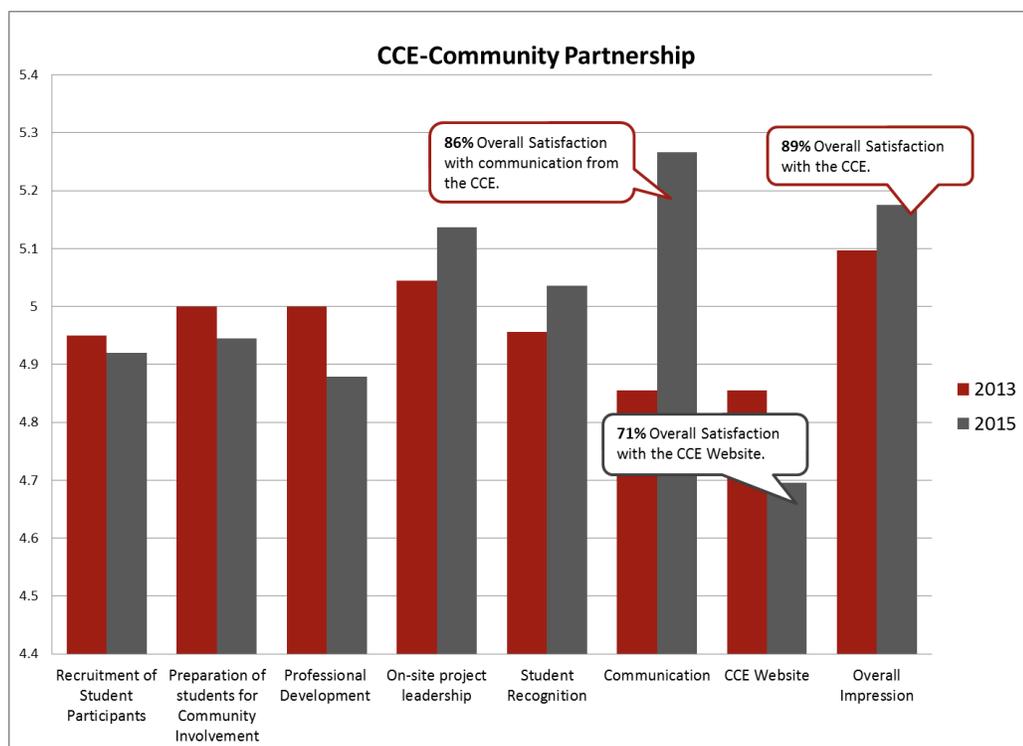


Fig. 5

Additionally, several comments indicated the need for additional support in recruiting students to fulfill the opportunities that exist within their organizations and training community partners on how to better utilize CougSync.

## Impact of Students on Community Organizations

Almost all community partners agreed that the quality of the work done by students and the quality of their interaction with others had met the expectations of the organization. Only one respondent indicated that the quality of work or interactions with others did not meet their expectations (see fig. 6).

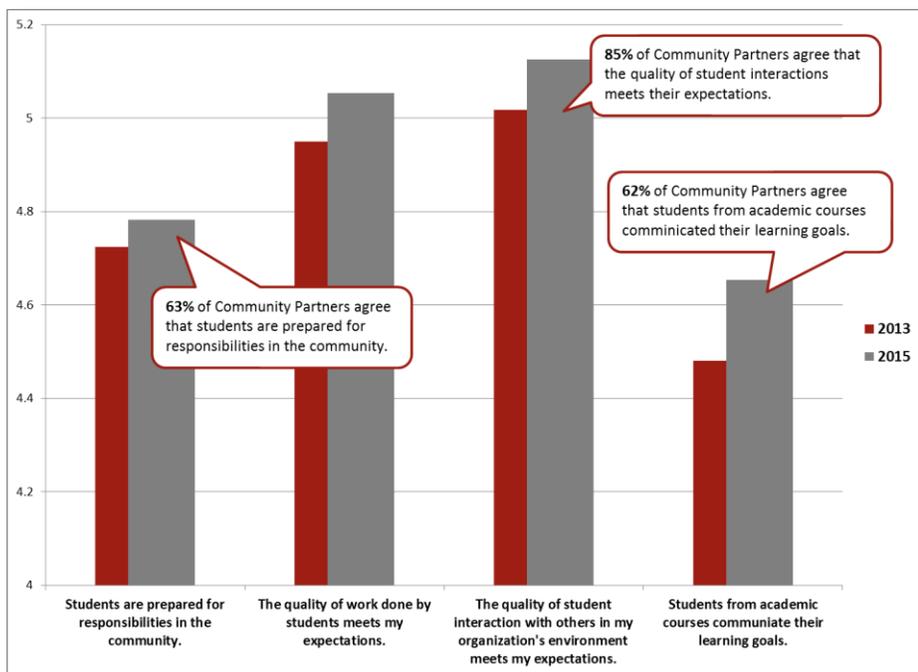


Fig. 6

An area of concern involved student

preparation for responsibilities in the community. Only 63% of community partners agreed or strongly agreed that students are prepared for responsibilities in the community. This is only a slight increase from 2013, which was at 62% and deserves further analysis. All four statements in this section showed an increase in agreement from 2013, including 62% of community partners agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that students from academic courses communicate their learning goals. This is an increase from 52% of respondents in 2013.

## Community Partners' Impact on WSU Students

Organizations agree that community engagement supports student learning as well as increases students' awareness of themselves and their community (see fig. 7). Teaching students how they can be involved in the community and how their involvement can help the community is high on the list of benefits to students. Although all the responses showed an increase from the 2013 survey, there is still more that can be done to support the role of community organization staff in seeing themselves as educational partners with the university.

"We have experienced student volunteers change their majors, modify their studies, and find connections through their work here. One student, built her Thesis on her work at this site, held her Thesis Defense here, wrote a successful \$6000 grant for us and I am typing on the computer from this grant. She is now working in the local Historical community."

“When we have students join us from the nursing program, they have an opportunity to work with a population of people with rare diseases that would otherwise probably be shared only through a textbook, if at all. Having that face to face contact helps them understand each individual story and how these diseases impact each person. Experiencing something first hand is far more impactful than hearing about it. I think it also educates them and makes them realize just how much out in the world is unknown to them, and that there is always something new to discover.”

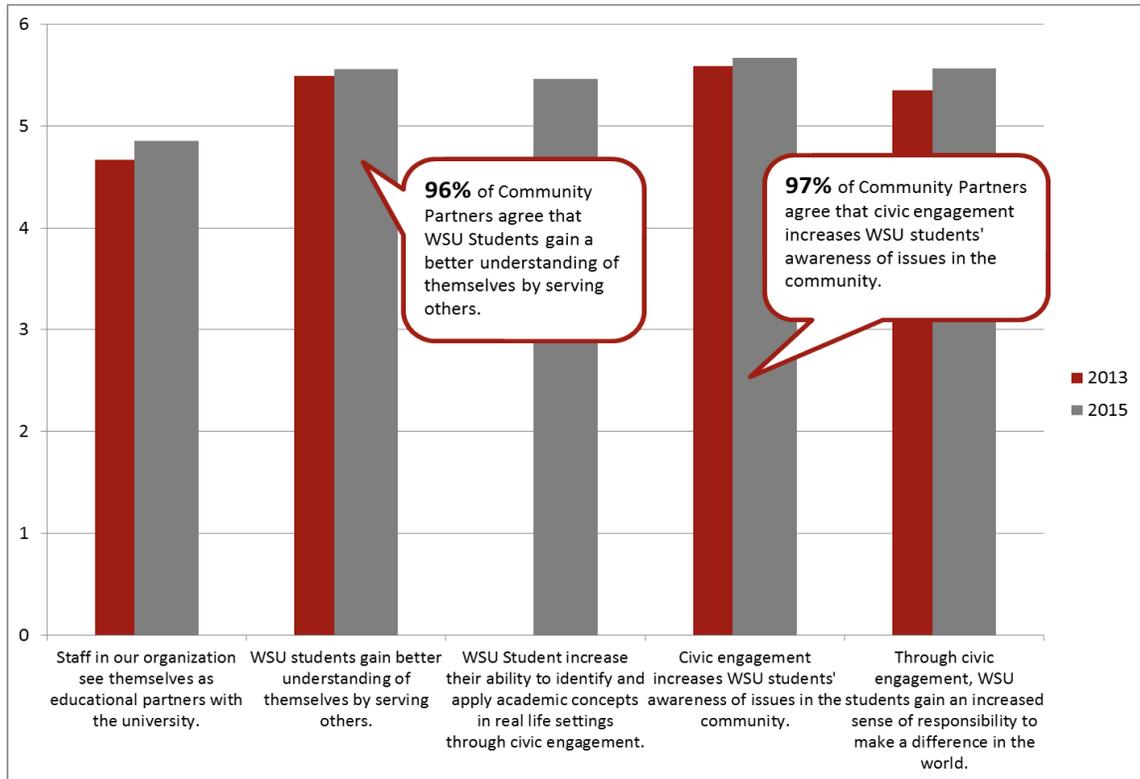


Fig. 7

## University Engagement

According to respondents of the 2015 survey, 72% of community partners indicated that they view WSU as an institution engaged in partnership with the community (see fig. 8). This is an increase from the 67% of respondents in 2013, but still lower than the 83% in 2008 when this question was first asked in preparation for WSU’s application to become classified as a community engaged institution through the Carnegie Foundation.

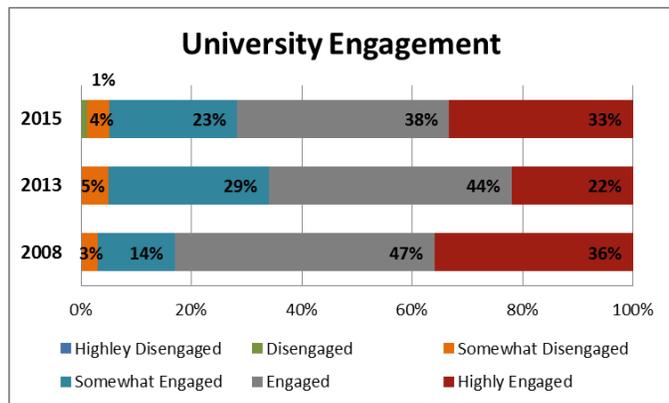


Fig. 8

From the qualitative responses, several partners indicated that they were not aware of any community engagement beyond their experiences and interactions with the CCE as noted in the selected quotes below:

“The students are definitely engaged in the community, as are some of the professors, but I am unfamiliar with what other ways WSU is involved other than through CCE. There may be many more examples; I am just unaware of them.”

“CCE is the best example of WSU engagement as a partner in the community. However, we interact with community businesses and leaders who bemoan the lack of engagement from the faculty & admin with the Pullman community, and especially in the outlying areas of Whitman County.”

## Conclusions

The overall conclusion that can be taken from the 2015 survey is that the Center for Civic Engagement lives up to the expectations of our community partners. This can be seen by the large number of respondents who agreed with questions throughout the survey and the overall positive reaction by community partners to most of the questions that the respondents were asked.

According to the results of the 2015 survey, the areas that need increased attention are the resources and supports available through the CCE website and information and training to enhance community partners’ ability to navigate CougSync. Additionally, some thought needs to be given on how the CCE can better support student preparation for community engagement. Many students receive an orientation by CCE staff through their academic service learning courses, however an increasing number of students are seeking to be involved in the community for other reasons and do not receive an orientation to the community and engagement best practices before they begin their involvement.

Lastly, a more complete qualitative analysis of responses is needed to discern additional themes in the open responses, which total six pages of comments submitted, by community partners. Many of those comments are included in the summary above to compliment and support the quantitative data.

A parting quote from a community partner in the 2015 Community Partner Survey:

***“Please pass the message on to Administration that we believe CCE plays a critical role in our organization's success and provides tangible evidence of the symbiotic partnership between WSU and our community.”***