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The Democracy
COMMITMENT

Keettering Foundation Partners with The Democracy Commitment

Keettering Foundation (KF; www.keettering.org/) is an international research organization focused on one question: What does it take for democracy to work as it should? Keettering's research now involves significant focus on community colleges and their role in democracy and civic education through their partnership with The Democracy Commitment.

The foundation convened a planning meeting in November 2010, facilitated by Brian Murphy of De Anza College, Bernie Ronan of the Maricopa Community Colleges, and Derek Barker of KF. This led to the initial convening of TDC colleges in Orlando in June 2011. A workshop was then convened at the KF headquarters in Dayton, Ohio, in July, led by Ronan and Barker. At this meeting, signatory colleges in The Democracy Commitment discussed the following civic practices and the impact these had on civic learning for students.

- **Miami Dade College** has offered almost a million hours of service learning to its community since it began, and is now hoping to enhance this activity with “civic learning modules” for faculty.
- **Maricopa Community Colleges** provide a variety of deliberative opportunities to engage their community, and offer a Student Public Policy Forum to train students in advocacy.
- **Wayne County Community College District** is actively involved in seeking to remediate the re-segregation of schools in Detroit through civic engagement.
- **Minneapolis Community and Technical College** is doing community organizing with Native American nonprofits driven by credit courses on organizing and community development.
- **Cuyahoga Community College** offers students the opportunity to be trained in and facilitate sustained dialogue over an extended period with other students on issues of diversity and student success.
- **Skyline College trains students** in how to dialogue with others and has held forums that utilize both dialogue and deliberation as techniques to address issues of concern to students on the campus.
- **Macomb Community College** trains students in how to utilize media for engagement and advocacy on issues of concern to them.
- **Gulf Coast College** engages community and business leaders through forums to address regional issues and needs.
- **Lone Star College–Kingwood** engages college students in organizing with high school counterparts through Public Achievement to engage in civic activities designed by the students themselves.
- **De Anza College** undertakes a wide range of campus and community organizing activities, ranging from political advocacy to diversity projects.

KF is entering into a Learning Agreement with The Democracy Commitment to conduct cooperative research with TDC colleges on these and other practices and programs that nurture the intellectual, emotional and political skills that lead to civic engagement for students. This cooperative research will be led by Ronan, whose research report, “The Civic Spectrum: How Students Become Engaged Citizens,” was published this year by KF. The report is available for download at www.keettering.org/media_room/publications/the-civic-spectrum.