A Framework for Engaged Learning Practices at Edgewood College

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Introduction:

Mission Statement

Edgewood College, rooted in the Dominican tradition, engages students within a community of learners committed to building a just and compassionate world. The College educates students for meaningful personal and professional lives of ethical leadership, service, and a lifelong search for truth.

The Dominican studium – study, reflect, act – is the tradition, and process, through which we educate in support of our mission. A commitment to the search for truth through vigorous study, contemplation, and the sharing of the fruits of our contemplation in partnership with others is a distinctive mark of an Edgewood liberal arts education. The particular ways in which we foster a community of learners are simultaneously rooted in our heritage and in what we know from higher education scholarship about meaningful college-level teaching and learning -- certain practices, done well, enhance the learning and personal development of students, particularly students from historically underrepresented or underprepared groups.

We also know that engaged learning practices take focused attention to develop, to cultivate, to sustain. Thus, as a college, we have the responsibility to engage in the same kind of study, reflection, and action that we ask of our students in order to build the support and resources needed to fully integrate engaged learning practices into our campus culture across both curricular and co-curricular experiences. To this end, our institution's strategic and academic plans name support for engaged learning practices as a central priority for connecting learning, beliefs, and action.

Definition:

While a wide variety of pedagogies have the potential to engage our students, high-impact, engaged learning practices are those that are characterized by:

Investment: Students spend a significant amount of time and effort on the part of the student

Relationship: Students experience high levels of interaction between faculty and peers around substantive matters

Diversity: Students engage across differences to promote new ways of thinking and understanding

Feedback: Students respond to and integrate rich and frequent feedback

Relevance: Students see connections and are able to apply their learning to settings beyond the college classroom.

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Specific examples of these practices to which we are committed at Edgewood include: capstone experiences, collaborative assignments and projects, **community-based learning**, first-year seminars, **global and multicultural learning**, **internships and field experience**, **undergraduate research,** and writing intensive courses. Note that those bolded examples are specifically named as priorities in our current academic plan.

We have already incorporated these practices into parts of our curriculum. Some of these practices have become a mainstay of our curriculum; others are scattered throughout and variably supported (see Mapping High Impact Practices throughout the Undergraduate Curriculum, below).

What we know through campus study is that when we intentionally focus on developing and supporting any one of these engaged learning practices, a high percentage of students take advantage of the learning opportunities. When we don't intentionally develop and implement these practices, we have fewer overall students (and our sense is particularly ALANA students) participating in these experiences.

Connection to Institutional-Level Planning Processes:

Engaged learning practices show up as a named institutional priority in the following ways:

- **From the 2012-17 Edgewood College Strategic Plan:**

1. **Cultivate an inclusive teaching and learning environment** that facilitates student growth, achievement, and preparation for meaningful personal and professional lives. To accomplish this, we will:

    d. Develop policies, practices, and procedures that encourage higher rates of degree completion (or goal attainment), reduced time to completion, and success in pursuing meaningful employment and/or further education.
    e. Strengthen selected learning practices proven to have a positive impact on student learning. As expressed in the academic plan, these include study abroad, undergraduate research, community-based learning, and internships.
    f. Sustain and enhance co-curricular activities that build community, enhance student learning and cultivate leadership.

2. **Encourage civic engagement** by Edgewood College faculty, staff, and students as active members of the campus and broader community. To accomplish this, we will:

    a. Develop a coordinated approach and structure to facilitate and coordinate community outreach efforts.
    b. Strengthen and expand partnerships that create meaningful learning opportunities for our students and that have lasting positive impacts on our community partners.
    c. Strengthen curricular and co-curricular activities to enhance campus civic engagement.

- **From the 2011-2016 Edgewood College Academic Plan:**

Priority 2.1: Increase support for engaged learning practices

Goal 2.1.1: Experiential learning (such as community-based learning, internships, study abroad, and other cross-cultural experiences) is recognized as a distinct aspect of an Edgewood College education

> Action 2.1.1.1: Evaluate current experiential learning programs and funding and improve where indicated.

> Action 2.1.1.2: Support faculty participation in experiential learning activities (e.g., faculty development opportunities, compensation, workload considerations, etc.).

Goal 2.1.2: Student research and creative activities are key aspects of a student's experience and development

> Action 2.1.2.1: Evaluate our current student research activities, and improve where indicated.

> Action 2.1.2.2: Institutionalize a dedicated operational account to sufficiently fund the student research conference.

Goal 2.1.3: Enhance student global and multicultural learning.

> Action 2.1.3.1: Develop culturally relevant pedagogies.

> Action 2.1.3.2: Enhance curricula and academic programs to develop global and multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills.

> Action 2.1.3.3: Seek funding to increase the number of students who study abroad.

> Action 2.1.3.4: Explore opportunities for students to study issues of race and ethnicity in the United States.

Vision Statement for Engaged Learning at Edgewood College:

Edgewood College will be recognized externally as a leader in effectively incorporating engaged learning practices throughout its curricular and co-curricular programs to foster student, faculty and staff development.

- Edgewood takes an integrated, holistic, and intentional approach to designing and implementing engaged learning practices.
- Edgewood has a clearly defined infrastructure that effectively deploys and grows resources (human, financial, etc.) to support engaged learning.

- *Every* Edgewood student has *multiple* engaged learning experiences throughout their time at Edgewood in places such as Gen Ed and major/minor curricula and through co-curricular enrichment.
- Edgewood students have the ability to articulate and demonstrate how their engaged learning experiences have shaped their identity and how they interact with the world.
- Faculty, staff and community partners have the ability to articulate the types of engaged learning practices used at Edgewood and to demonstrate their impact on student, faculty and staff development as well as the impact on the broader community.

Guiding Principles:

The following ideas guide our decisions about how to support a shared vision for engaged learning practices at Edgewood College:

Equity:

We are committed to engaged learning experiences for all of our students with a particular responsibility to ensure that these experiences are part of the Edgewood experience for students who are historically underrepresented at or underprepared for college.

Cross-Institutional Partnerships:

We are most effective when we partner across our institutional functions (i.e. academic and student affairs) and across our disciplines to support engaged learning.

Faculty/Staff Development:

The learning to which we commit needs to be generative. Our individual professional development should trigger institutional change because we are invested in sharing our work to contribute to the broader community. We will develop spaces for faculty and staff to learn from each other about their engaged learning practices.

Assessment:

Continuous growth and development is our aim. We have strengths upon which to build and we can always get better. We always need to be asking ourselves, "What's next?" We need to be able to demonstrate the impact our choices are having.

From Edgewood Mission to Engaged Learning Vision – A Working Model:
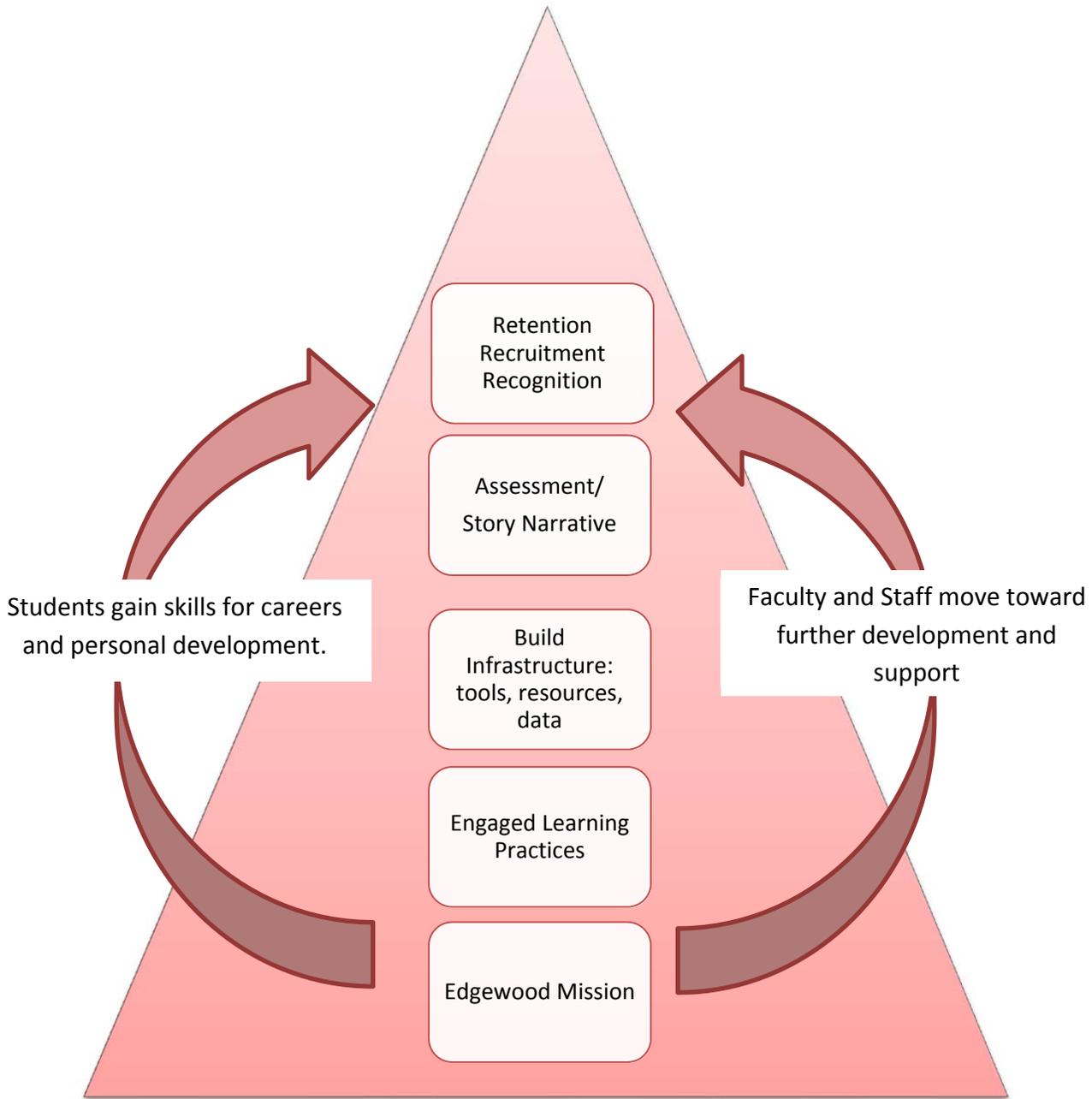
Retention
Recruitment
Recognition

Assessment/
Story Narrative

Build
Infrastructure:
tools, resources,
data

Engaged Learning
Practices

Edgewood Mission

Students gain skills for careers
and personal development.

Faculty and Staff move toward
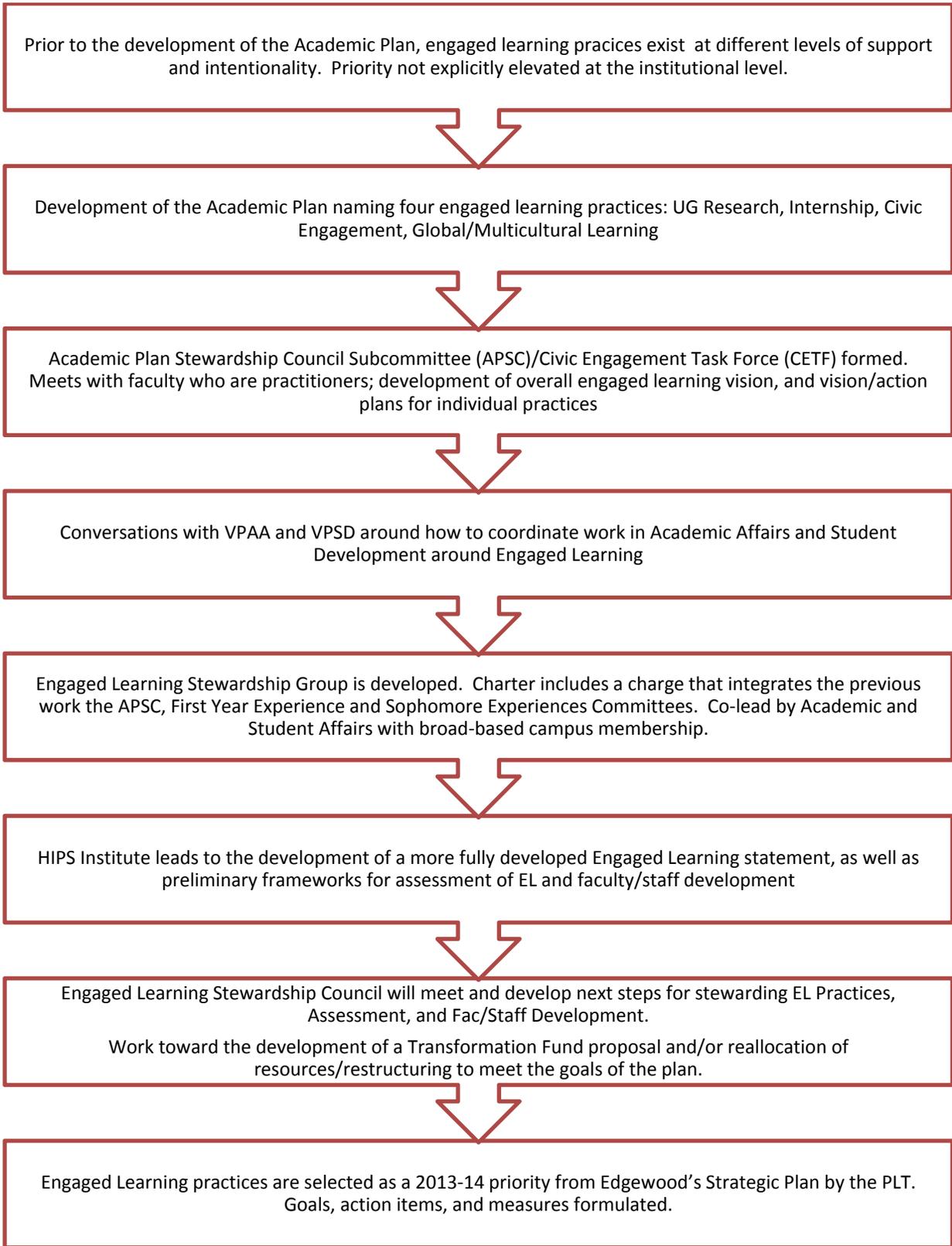further development and
support

Mapping Current Engaged Learning Practices throughout the UG Curriculum:

	First Year Experience	Transfer	Mid-Career	Culminating Experience
Required for every student on a specific timeline	COR 1 • Advising • Academic Orientation Orientation Common Reading	Transfer Bridge to COR Academic Orientation	COR 2 (pathways to engagement linked to multiple HIPS)	COR 3 (many are capstones in the disciplines)
Required for every student with a choice for timing	Writing Intensive Courses, Global Perspective, Gender Perspective, and Multicultural Perspective			
Optional Experiences	SD and Academic Programming Student Work CAP and Bridge Developmental Education	Study Abroad Internships Undergraduate Research Other field experiences (practicums, student teaching, clinical) Service Learning Student Leadership Opportunities Student Work Other capstones		

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Historical Development Engaged Learning Priority at Edgewood:

Prior to the development of the Academic Plan, engaged learning pracices exist at different levels of support and intentionality. Priority not explicitly elevated at the institutional level.

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Development of the Academic Plan naming four engaged learning practices: UG Research, Internship, Civic Engagement, Global/Multicultural Learning

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Academic Plan Stewardship Council Subcommittee (APSC)/Civic Engagement Task Force (CETF) formed. Meets with faculty who are practitioners; development of overall engaged learning vision, and vision/action plans for individual practices

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Conversations with VPAA and VPSD around how to coordinate work in Academic Affairs and Student Development around Engaged Learning

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Engaged Learning Stewardship Group is developed. Charter includes a charge that integrates the previous work the APSC, First Year Experience and Sophomore Experiences Committees. Co-lead by Academic and Student Affairs with broad-based campus membership.

⬇

HIPS Institute leads to the development of a more fully developed Engaged Learning statement, as well as preliminary frameworks for assessment of EL and faculty/staff development

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Engaged Learning Stewardship Council will meet and develop next steps for stewarding EL Practices, Assessment, and Fac/Staff Development.

Work toward the development of a Transformation Fund proposal and/or reallocation of resources/restructuring to meet the goals of the plan.

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Engaged Learning practices are selected as a 2013-14 priority from Edgewood's Strategic Plan by the PLT. Goals, action items, and measures formulated.

Next Steps:

The following next steps are suggested to advance the Engaged Learning priority during the 2013-14 academic year:

Goal 1: Institutionalize a structure for advancing engaged learning practices across the college with particular attention to academic/student affairs partnerships.

> **Action 1a:** Charter an Engaged Learning Stewardship Group co-led by academic and student affairs with broad-based campus representation.
>
> **Action 1b:** Build campus consensus around a vision and goals for Engaged Learning practices as part of a distinctive Edgewood educational experience.
>
> **Action 1c:** Develop a group work plan for prioritizing and advancing short and longer term Engaged Learning initiatives.
>
> **Action 1d:** Develop learning outcomes and a plan for assessing the impact of Engaged Learning practices on student learning, and integrate with academic assessment initiatives. (Coincide with assessment planning)
>
> **Action 1e:** Develop a plan for promoting and communicating student, faculty, staff, and community partner learning from these practices.

Goal 1 Progress

> In August 2013, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Student Development sponsored the formation of the Engaged Learning Stewardship Group (ELSG), with membership from both Academic Affairs and Student Development. All members of the HIPS team are also members of the ELSG. The HIPS team lead an open forum on Engaged Learning practices during the August Seminar, and helped build consensus around the definitions and initiatives contained in this document (this document is largely the result of those conversations with faculty and staff). The HIPS team also then led the first meeting of the ELSG, directly after the open forum. The ELSG divided into smaller working groups around three key initiatives for 2013-14 (the focus of the working groups will change from year to year): First Year Experience, Internship, and Assessment/Tracking. These working groups are setting the direction and advancing initiatives related to their focus area. The groups are now working to establish benchmarks for their area, define what high quality HIPs look like, develop tracking and assessment practices, and develop communication plans. Some notable progress on this front is included in the Goal 2 and 3 Progress sections.

Goal 2: *Advance work from 2013-13 academic plan priorities and High-Impact Practice Institute so that Edgewood is recognized externally as a leader in effectively incorporating engaged learning practices throughout its curricular and co-curricular programs to foster student, faculty and staff development.*

Action 2a: Gain support for Year One Civic Engagement Task Force accomplishments, and advance Year Two priorities identified in Year One final report.

Action 2b: Create a vision for and develop a plan for implementing component parts of a student research program.

Action 2c: Set benchmarks for and develop plan to increase the number of students who participate in short and long term study abroad experiences.

Action 2d: Plan for and implement faculty/staff development initiatives to advance above initiatives

Action 2e: Collaborate with advancement to develop priorities and targets for external fundraising that supports Engaged Learning practices.

Action 2f: Look for and enact opportunities for internal resource allocation (i.e. Transformation Fund) and reallocation

Goal 2 Progress

The ELSG is advancing named priorities for both the Academic Plan and Strategic Plans as it relates to civic engagement, student research, study abroad, internship, and assessment.

Our Civic Engagement Task Force is in the second year of its work, and has conducted interviews with more than 40 areas of campus that conduct civic engagement work, and is in the process of collecting feedback from community partners to develop a set of resource needs and plans for long-term success and coordination of our Community Engagement efforts that can be delivered to the President's Leadership Team this spring. In addition, the College has created a full-time position of Civic Engagement Coordinator to help lead this work.

This fall, we established a home for student research within the School of Integrative Studies, and hired a part-time Student Research Coordinator. We also established a Student Research Advisory Council to guide the Coordinator's work. This Spring we are working toward establishing Student Research Program Goals, tracking and assessment

measures, and a list of resource needs to help establish a true Program related to student research.

We continue to need to develop better infrastructure and consistent funding for Study Abroad Initiatives and Faculty Development as it relates to engaged learning practices. Members of the HIPs team, and the Dean's Council worked with our new College Advancement team to priorities these areas for their strategic plan.

Central to all of these efforts is gaining a better understanding of where we are, so that we can define where we'd like to go. The ELSG working group related to Assessment (and others) is currently collecting information related student participation to civic engagement, research, study abroad, and internships, as well as tracking faculty development activities related to engaged learning. We will work this summer to develop some goals related to student participation in our four engaged learning priority areas.

Goal 3: Evaluate current internship practices and resources and improve where needed.

Action 3a: Conduct and analyze survey/interview of internship practices across departments and schools.

Action 3b: Gather data on student internship participation across departments and schools.

Action 3c: Set goals/targets for internship structure/participation based upon above evidence.

Action 3d: Designate a structure along with roles and responsibilities for coordinating and supporting internships campus-wide and within particular disciplines.

Action 3e: Develop plan for securing resources needed to progress toward goals/targets through internal allocation/reallocation and external funding sources.

Goal 3 Progress

The ELSG working group on internships has been working this year to better track what internship experiences look like for Edgewood students. In the past, every department or program had the opportunity to provide or require an internship opportunity through their curriculum. The College did not collect data related to these experiences. The working group

has now met with departments and programs who offer internship experiences, and surveyed the faculty at large to understand how and why student participate in internships or field experiences. The group is now working on a guiding framework for departments/schools to use when starting or expanding their internship or field experiences. Part of this plan is to articulate the best practices used on our campus, including what programs do in advance of successful experiences, and what programs do to help students connect their internship/field experience to learning and career goals.

As with the experiences described in Goal 2, the ELSG will be working this summer to define targets for student participation, and structures for collaborating across programs. We are already working on establishing the needed infrastructure to apply for external funding and have working with the Advancement team to prioritize financial support for internships in their strategic plan.