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SUMMIT ON  
VOLUNTEERISM  
A Response to  
Economic Crisis

### Maureen Curley, Campus Compact

Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here today. I was particularly happy to hear the encouraging words of His Eminence as he said that we need to think of the positive part because I firmly believe there are huge opportunities out there for all of us to both grow and be very creative about the way that we approach our work in the non-profit sector.

Most people would recognize that wonderful resources within communities are colleges and universities and that's exactly what Campus Compact is about as well. Twenty-three years ago Campus Compact was started by three Presidents who got together and were concerned that colleges and universities were no longer looking at what we call the public purpose of higher education. And that is really to train the next generation of leaders that function within a democracy.

So it is all about what is the responsibility to the society and how in fact do we train young people to be able to respond to that. They got together and they signed a compact, hence our name, and said they were going to hold each other accountable to make sure that they would open the gates of the university and become much more involved in the community as well.

The first thing they did was really to try to provide service opportunities for students. And that seemed to be the one that went along very quickly. They could go into the community. They could get young people out there. And that became very popular and very good.

Quickly, though, they decided that they needed to connect it with the academic achievements of the students because after all that's what they're in the business of doing, educating. And so we were really credited with putting service learning on the map for colleges and universities for higher education. And that then became very popular and it's continued to grow tremendously where an experience in the community is married then with an academic course and the students are able to not only serve but also look into what are some of the systemic issues behind the issue that they're trying to address.

From there, we've even broadened more I guess to what we call civic engagement, which seems to be a big word nowadays, a big popular word. And for that we really mean again going back to training for responsible citizenship. It's about understanding the issues. It's about voting, running for office, grassroots organizing, any of these things would in fact be included in what we call civic engagement.

Campus Compact has grown through the years. We have 35 state offices. So the way that we function is the state offices really get the memberships from the various institutions, bring the Presidents together. It is primarily a Presidential organization and they are the ones that make the commitment to having what we call an engaged campus. The 35 state offices currently represent just about 1,200 institutional members and each state is run actually quite according to the presidents in that particular state and they affiliate with the national office.



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We have with us today Melissa Quan, who is the Executive Director of the Connecticut Campus Compact and we are pleased to say that our host institution is Fairfield University. So thank you for your support of Campus Compact in Connecticut.

We represent about six million students. Approximately 89 percent of our campuses have a dedicated office which is staffed that basically is a service learning or civic engagement office. And that is the touch point for the people that are in between the community, the students, and then also the faculty, who all play a major role in this as well. The institution is able to be pretty strategic about how they interact with the community and how involved they get.

Over a number of years ago we developed indicators of engagement that have institutions look at the different levels in which they're involved with the community so that there's both short-term one day assignments but also, what I think what most institutions are really interested in, sustainable relationships with the community. We do an annual survey each year and the average number of partnerships within universities was about 77 to 80. They may be spread around the campus or they may come out of this community. So a good touch point if you're looking for a way to interact with an institution could be these people that in fact work with the service learning or community service.

Most of the students when we look at what they do, do a lot of work with youth. Tutoring, mentoring, as you can imagine, is very popular. Students are there for chunks of time so sometimes it's more difficult to get them involved on an ongoing basis, although we have a huge number of student leaders. One of the best things for community service within higher education is its ability to really train students in leadership and the majority of the service projects on our campuses are done under student leadership, either through clubs or classes.

There are tremendous amount of internships, too. Eighty-six percent of our schools fund internships to go out into the community. It is important to make sure that when you interact there's a recognition that you as part of the community people are really co-teachers of the students, that you bring to the experience and to the academic goals of that student a rich knowledge of the community and how it works and the issues that you're dealing with so that the combination of the academic and the community could really have an enriching experience for the young person.

I want to mention a couple of opportunities that I see. I mean I'm very excited because we're very involved in the new administration and if everybody saw the speech this week you can see that service was front and center. In fact, even the president expressed his interest and his support for the Kennedy-Hatch Bill, which we have been very involved with from the higher education point of view. This is a bill which is going to amend the National Community Service Trust Act and it tremendously expands volunteer opportunities for people of all ages. So I call your attention to that. I think you're going to see some very quick passage of that soon and there's huge opportunities for everybody here.

A couple of things: Campus Compact sponsors VISTA programs in 26 of their offices. If you know VISTA, which is Volunteer in Service to America, this afternoon you'll be hearing from someone from the



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Corporation for National and Community Service. This is a one year commitment to service. It's a program with a stipend. And the way that Campus Compact runs is that a state office would apply for a number and then they place them at universities and that becomes one of the strong connections between the community and the college.

In the stimulus package that passed a couple weeks ago, there was an increase of \$200 million for VISTA program and this is money that's "one-shot" money that's going to need to get out the door between June of this year and the end of September, 2010. So if people have used VISTA volunteers in the past or are interested in it, I think that's a great resource.

They're also going to fund something called VISTA Associates which is going to be a ten week intensive full-time program really targeted at young people that are not going to be able to find jobs this summer. A lot of them can do direct service. They can also do infrastructure building types of activities.

And the last thing I want to mention is a great opportunity that many people may know which is the Federal Work Study Program. By law, seven percent of federal work study must go to placements within the community and the average I'm pleased to say of colleges and universities is just over 15 percent. So here is a great resource that is very often on campuses. It's done through the financial aid office or the Federal Work Study Program. But again this would be ongoing, 10, 20 hours a week and it's a wonderful resource because it can be an ongoing relationship between a non-profit agency and the university or college. Thank you.