

CENTER FOR CIVIC LEADERSHIP **STRATEGIC PLAN 2025**



RICE UNIVERSITY
Center for Civic Leadership

CENTER FOR CIVIC LEADERSHIP STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2025

In 2019, after a self-study and external review, the Center for Civic Leadership launched a strategic plan for its next five years. With the successful publication of its inaugural Annual Report for 2024 and Rice University's launching of the Momentous strategic plan, the CCL is ready to engage its next strategic plan to guide decision-making, resource allocation, and initiatives over the next 5 years. For background and assessment of our accomplishments and lessons from the 2019-2025 strategic plan, please see the [2019 – 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN ASSESSMENT SUMMARY](#).

Our programming and mission align with Rice's Momentous strategic plan, especially in terms of "Advancing Undergraduate Education":

Rice will build on its leading position with a premier undergraduate program by enhancing its personalized approach to education through strengthening and integrating academic and co-curricular activities. We will attract an academically excellent, diverse, curious, and deeply engaged student body and develop an educated citizenry that will lead in their field of study and advance the public good through insights, service, innovation, and discourse to solve the challenges of the future and the betterment of the world.

as well as in the key research area to "Build Thriving Urban Communities":

Rice University will be the national and international hub for global applications of research and programs that seek to enhance the social, economic, and infrastructure issues that impact urban life. Utilizing creative, data-driven approaches, we will address the multidimensionality of urban challenges to develop interdisciplinary solutions while contextualizing these complex challenges through an understanding of culture and history. We will define each issue through a lens that celebrates diversity while addressing disparities. We will work across all disciplines and in partnership with communities, nonprofits, and industry all around the world to better society, advance equity, and foster inclusive prosperity in urban communities, utilizing our location in the most diverse city in the country as a laboratory to incubate our impact worldwide.



The CCL's revised mission statement, adopted in March 2025, articulates a vision aligned with Rice's strategic plan:

The Center for Civic Leadership develops students as civic leaders and mentors them in identifying their sense of purpose as agents of positive, meaningful change in their communities. We nurture networks on and off campus that work collectively to address systemic challenges. Through intentional and rigorous curriculum and through experiential learning programs developed with partners as co-educators, we equip students and faculty to leverage their skills to work with stakeholders to act on social issues locally and globally.

(CCL Mission Statement adopted March 19, 2025)

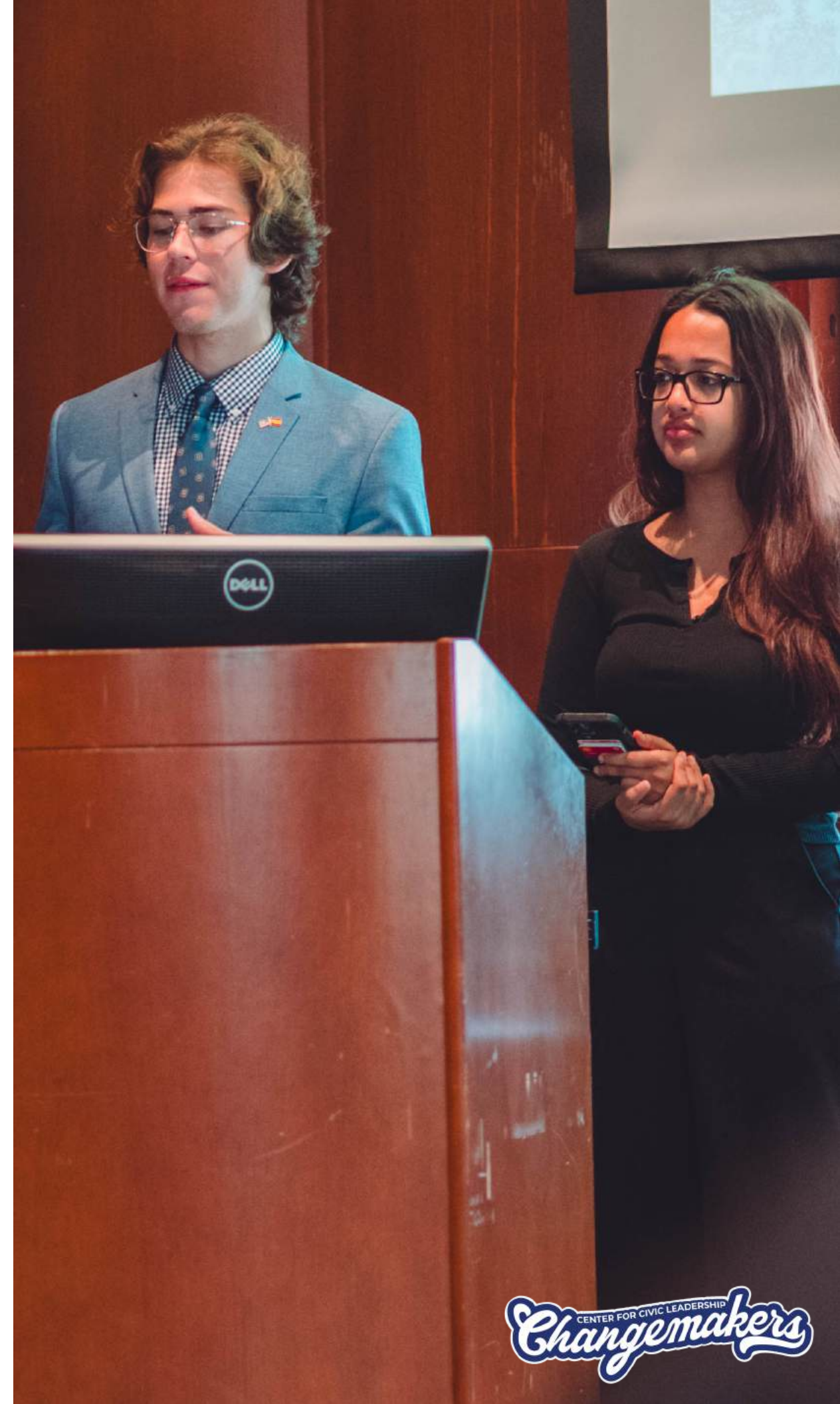
Based on our analysis of our previous priorities and strategies and based on our updated mission statement, we have identified three strategic priority areas foregrounding our work with *students, community and faculty members as co-educators*, and broader *networks of stakeholders*. Within those priority concentrations, our strategic focus areas will include **development and implementation**, **rigorous assessment**, and **communication of our achievements**. These focus areas will guide goal setting, action planning, and resource allocation for all CCL activities.



STUDENT DEVELOPMENT: SENSE OF PURPOSE & LEADERSHIP FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

Rice's strategic plan seeks to “Enhance *academic* experiences and *student* supports to ensure students develop the academic and personal skills to be a leader in their field”. The strategic plan indicates a commitment to “well-rounded individuals...prepared to advance industry and societal change,” as well as “develop[ing] global citizens” (Momentous, “Advance Undergraduate Education”, Objective 2). The CCL's representation and collaboration with both the Leader Development Council and the QEP: Global Experiences have positioned us to leverage and continue to develop our activities in these areas.

We seek to **lead at Rice** in developing student leaders with a sense of purpose, commitment to action and facilitating others to act, with an understanding of the interdependencies and broader implications of their leadership. To these ends, we will:



DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Utilize our resources to ensure broad reach and access for all students at Rice
- Develop curriculum that engages students in questions of global interconnectedness and international issues within the local context to equip them to meet the challenges of rapidly changing social contexts
- Continue to build and scale opportunities for students to develop skills to take action and mobilize others toward collective goals
- Enhance our capacity to offer experiential learning opportunities by offering leadership and pedagogical development for graduate students as mentors

RIGOROUS ASSESSMENT

- Ensure broad reach and access through articulated metrics of accountability and transparent data on whom we serve, which we will continuously monitor for program revision and innovation
- Develop systems of tracking and documenting experiential learning and leadership development outcomes to offer verified measurement for student records
- Assess sense of belonging, intercultural competence, and sense of purpose in reliable and meaningful ways
- Develop students' skills and commitment to assessing learning outcomes for the programs they design and lead

COMMUNICATION OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Create innovative and effective ways to continue showcasing student leadership and accomplishments of CCL students
- Facilitate and create opportunities for students to apply and demonstrate their civic leadership skills to broader audiences
- Enhance the ambassadorial activities of program participants both during and after their programs

The CCL currently serves ~16% of Rice's current student body (4,100) through programs and fellowship advising. Our current staff and organizational capacity will allow us to maintain that percentage even with Rice's anticipated 30% growth (to 5,200 by 2028).

However, our staffing and focus area teams are structured to be highly scalable. Our organizational structure is built as a scaffold in specific areas and, **depending on demand and institutional commitment, can be scaled in each area without having to reorganize.** For example, if there is institutional need to expand access to community partners or assessment activities, the operations team can be expanded. If university initiatives depend on building out student leader development, additional staff or graduate student funding could be integrated into that team; similarly, if local and international experiential opportunities need to be scaled up, those teams could expand with staff and graduate students to meet that demand.

Our current **certificate completions** are about 9-10 students per year. We will have increased that number to 15 by the 2025-2026 academic year. If the university budget model is adjusted to include LEAD courses, we could significantly increase our course offerings and, subsequently, our certificate pipeline as well.



PARTNER ENGAGEMENT: CO-EDUCATION, ACCESS TO LEADERS, AND DEMOCRATIZING KNOWLEDGE

The university's strategic plan seeks to "Expand *opportunities* to learn and lead through co-curricular venues that connect learning to real-world problems solved by collaborative teams, including undergraduate research, global experiences, entrepreneurship and innovation activities, and robust civic engagement projects" and seeks to "[e]nhance the number of options for global experiences," as well as "[b]olster student leadership development to unite students' experiences in a cohesive and immersive set of leadership experiences" (Momentous, "Advance Undergraduate Education", Objective 3).

Our second strategic priority recognizes that students having high quality experiential learning opportunities requires community organizations and experts be engaged as co-educators who are committed to students' experiences resulting in the kind of development envisioned in these objectives. Building on our long history of mutually beneficial, co-educational relationships with community organizations both locally and globally, the CCL will enhance these strategic partnerships with community partners across all sectors and faculty in all disciplines to collaborate as co-educators providing CCL students and staff engagement with diverse expertise and global perspectives for addressing social issues. Our key focus areas will be:



DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Continued development of resources and training for partners around mentorship and CCL foundational approaches (critical reflection, collaboration, collective impact)
- Developing and prioritizing partnerships with organizations and individuals that provide access to international relationships and global perspectives
- Expanding STEM partnerships and experiential learning opportunities with faculty and community partners
- Investing in staff development in partnership building and co-educational principles, providing opportunities for staff to identify and build community partnerships
- Developing formal mentorship opportunities for faculty and alumni and rewarding their leadership in those activities
- Establishing relationships with public journalism networks to create opportunities for public scholarship collaborations between students, staff, and partners

RIGOROUS ASSESSMENT

- Developing strategies to collect data to measure “spread of knowledge” and evidence of students’ integration of multiple and global perspectives through their engagement with partners
- Measuring the impact of our collaborations and student engagement on community partners’ capacity to achieve their missions
- Developing strategies to measure the impact of continued involvement with the CCL for alumni experience

COMMUNICATION OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Creating opportunities to amplify community voice and showcase community partners’ expertise
- Highlighting partner involvement and contributions in stand-alone features and in all student project profiles, as well as developing students’ skills in promoting the roles of their community partners when they describe their work
- Recognizing partners for their mentorship and professional development of our students as a center

Through Loewenstern and Moody Global Fellows, we currently partner with organizations and universities in:

Kenya	Bolivia
Uganda	Colombia
Argentina	Costa Rica
Brazil	Mexico

Our local partners with international connections include (but are not limited to):

Bilingual Education Institute (BEI)
FIEL Houston
Tahrir Center
Amaanah Refugee Services
Pangea Network
Daya Houston

These partnerships engage students in developing global awareness through independent research opportunities, internships, and capstone projects. We work closely with community partners and engage our students in curricular and cultural preparation for these global experiences.

Bilingual Education Institute
Creating Bridges Among Languages and Cultures



NETWORKS: LEVERAGING AND CREATING EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL NETWORKS FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Rice's strategic plan promises to “[b]uild more opportunities for *community building and engagement* . . . continuing to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment” (Momentous, “Advance Undergraduate Education”, Objective 3). The strategic plan also envisions the university contributing to “Build[ing] thriving urban communities”: “We will work across all disciplines and in partnership with communities, nonprofits, and industry all around the world to better society, advance equity, and foster inclusive prosperity in urban communities, utilizing our location in the most diverse city in the country as a laboratory to incubate our impact worldwide” (Momentous, “Build Thriving Urban Communities”).

Given our commitment to working with and alongside community organizations and other institutions to create meaningful opportunities for Rice students, we believe we are ideally situated to also contribute to the vision of Rice positively impacting the broader community. The CCL will work with intentionality to create, leverage, and sustain diverse networks of stakeholders to foster shared values and goals that can enhance our ability to serve students, amplify social impact, and create the conditions for positive institutional change. We will work with internal campus partners including schools, centers, institutes, and departments, and our external networks will include local, regional, national, and international organizations and educational institutions and associations. Key focus areas toward this strategic priority will include:



DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **Creating professional development opportunities for staff with relevant on- and off-campus partners to build their social capital along with professional skills**
- **Facilitating cross-partner collaborative opportunities through intentionally designed, goal-oriented activities**
- **Engaging in local, regional, national, and international coalition building through conferences, structured meetings, and shared advocacy endeavors**

RIGOROUS ASSESSMENT

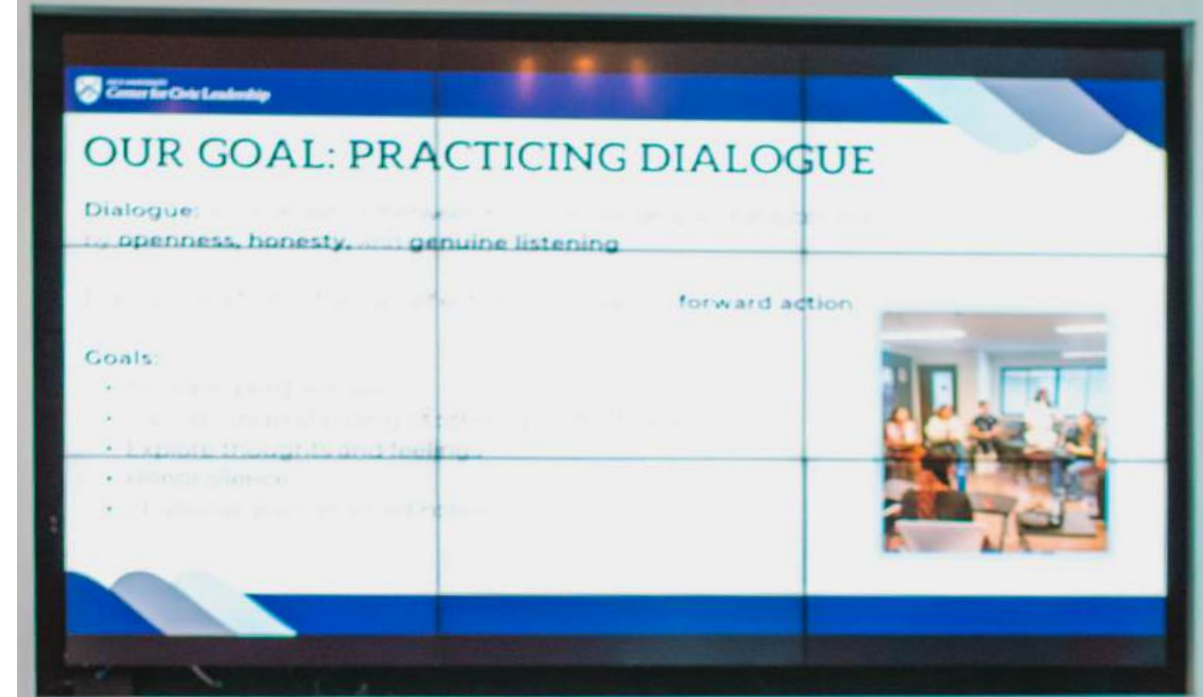
- **Developing indicators and rubrics for measuring robust, healthy civic and community engaged networks**
- **Collaborating on research opportunities both on the scholarship of engagement and the impact of community engaged professional networks on institutional change**

COMMUNICATION OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Continuing to brand and communicate CCL identity and mission to lay foundations for networks to understand and embrace our work**
- **Producing and disseminating scholarship (academic, professional, and public) on our activities and results**
- **Gaining more local and regional coverage of student projects, impact, and accomplishments**

The Center is already involved in faculty development and collaboration with several Houston area institutions, including University of Houston, Houston Community College, and Glasscock School for Continuing Studies Center for Community Learning & Engagement.

We see opportunities to form regional alliances with higher education institutions working together to promote civic and community engagement as a response to the current restrictive climate around inclusion.



RESOURCES & OPPORTUNITIES

Acting on the strategic priorities outlined here will entail action planning in staff teams. The **Academic Team** will execute program implementation and assessment plans in the areas of student leader development (2 full time staff), Houston civic projects (2 full time staff), and international programs and initiatives (2 full staff). Staff will collaborate and work across programming to share resources, leverage opportunities, and guide students into appropriate trajectories. As a whole team, they will recruit for and support students in fellowships and the Certificate in Civic Leadership, as well as develop and enhance LEAD courses. The Academic Team will also collaborate on initiatives to share resources and provide civic and community engagement expertise for faculty and develop graduate students through work with centers, departments, and schools.

If there are institutional commitments to expand programming to support opportunities for more students to gain access to local and global experiential learning opportunities and leadership development through existing programs, the center would require additional staff capacity. Implementing curricular and mentorship support, including structured and productive feedback, for student leaders and students directly engaged in internships and research teams requires a high level of skill and attention. Additional staff and/or funding for graduate students trained to serve in that capacity would enable the center to meet additional demands. However, such expansion would also require additional funding for students engaged in the experiences. Whether through expanded endowment funding directed to the CCL (for example, as the Moody Funds mature) or through mechanisms within the university for directly funding students' experiences, funding is essential for equity in access for students.



Our **Operations Team** (4 full time staff, including the director) is currently well-positioned to execute action plans toward these priorities because of the robust infrastructure around partner relationship management that can be built out further to support alumni and relevant networks, the foundation of center-wide assessment instruments that can sustain and innovate on data collection and analysis, and our communications foundation that has processes and avenues for building relationships and student capacity to represent center activities. By developing the partnership, assessment, and communication skills of the entire staff as well as student leaders, the operations team will fully support and ensure progress on these strategic priorities.

To enhance and build the capacity of the operations team, in the process of developing this strategic plan we have requested and have been approved to elevate our assessment position to an Associate Director level position. As an associate director, in addition to training the staff and students in assessment practices, the assessment lead will be able to create a plan for developing graduate students as interns and supervise them in special assessment projects. That positionality enables increased collaboration with other Rice departments and will bolster effective participation in institutional initiatives. If there are opportunities to expand partnership development and support more broadly to support schools and departments in identifying and building beneficial relationships with both local and global partners, additional staff support in that area would enable dynamic tracking, assessment, and celebration of those relationships.

The leadership of the Center will continue to advocate for and seek resources to support and expand the work of the Center. An action plan for resource development will include pursuing grant opportunities, demonstrating value and seeking resources from the DOU, working closely with development to identify potential donors and development plans, and working with campus partners to identify appropriate resource sharing when we can increase the impact of their activities.



CENTER FOR CIVIC LEADERSHIP
Changemakers