

5-4-2017

## Morris Makes Plans to Boost Outreach Efforts

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### Recommended Citation

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**[Morris Makes Plans to Boost Outreach Efforts](#)**

*The Center for Small Towns, Offices of Community Engagement and Sustainability hope to maximize the University's impact in Stevens County.*

MORRIS, Minnesota (May 4, 2017)—When Minnesota Campus Compact challenged member campuses to “go bold” in planning their next steps for civic engagement, the University of Minnesota, Morris responded with a plan to build on its successful outreach initiatives. By doing so, staff from the Center for Small Towns and the Offices of Community Engagement and Sustainability aim to better serve the region and the state.

In recent years the Morris campus has grown its efforts to address the integration of Spanish-speaking newcomers into the community, prepare the area for the impacts of climate change, and rewrite the rural narrative by growing arts, culture, and entrepreneurship in greater Minnesota. Its civic action plan focuses on strengthening these initiatives by streamlining the work of outreach units through an intentional and inclusive assessment process that will maximize the University's impact in Stevens County.

To do so, outreach staff will look for new ways to make sure their initiatives are truly inclusive of all those in the university and broader community, better align institutional practices and assessment efforts with campus-wide student learning outcomes, and more intentionally assess the effects of their work by researching and adopting best practices in the community development and community-based learning fields.

“Our plan focuses on ways to strengthen our existing initiatives through better collaboration among our units and with a broader range of stakeholders,” says Argie Manolis, coordinator of community engagement. “Working more closely together—and more inclusively across the campus and community—is especially important at a time when rural communities are extremely divided politically, and campus-community relationships in rural communities have the potential to be strained.”

Action plan next steps include hosting focus groups and a stakeholder convening over the next year. Based on the outcomes of these activities, outreach staff will determine how their core initiatives might be strengthened through enhanced collaboration across units, with the hope of integrating new models and assessment tools into their work in fall 2018.

To learn more about Morris's outreach units and initiatives, visit [morris.umn.edu/outreach](http://morris.umn.edu/outreach).

[View this story electronically.](#)

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