

Appalachian State University

Community Engagement in the Rural Context

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Contexts

Appalachian State University is one of 5 designated “rural universities” in North Carolina

- Located in Watauga County, pop. 46,000
- Two-hour drive from closest airport
- 17,000 students (2700 graduate)
- Local economy based on tourism, the University, and the regional medical center:
 - Aging population except for University
 - Surrounded by Tier 1 counties

Community engagement is woven into the University's fabric

- Institution's history – teachers' college
- Student and faculty population – activist, involved
- Types of degree programs - applied
- Co-curricular opportunities – coordinated involvement
- Appalachian's strategic plan values engagement
- *UNC Tomorrow*
- University traditions
- Carnegie designation



Types of Engagement

- **Degree requirement** (MSW, MPA, Psychology, Exercise Science, Counseling, Speech Pathology)
- **Research opportunity** (Appalachian Studies, Biology, Education Administration, Technology)
- **Social networking** (Graduate Student Association Senate, COB club)
- **Personal commitment** (ACT: Appalachian and the Community Together)

Degree requirements and Engagement

- Communication Disorders Clinic
- Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic
- Psychology Clinic
- Exercise Science partnership with Watauga Medical Center
- **MPA partnership with the NC Rural Center and Golden Leaf Foundation (places town managers in small underfunded municipalities)**
- Methamphetamine Intervention Project

Research and Engagement

- Human Performance Lab
- BeActive North Carolina
- Cardiac Rehabilitation unit in Avery County
- Community-Based Research program
- Elk Knob State Park development
- Blue Ridge Parkway Project
- **Appropriate Technology (renewable energy, zero-energy Habitat House)**

<http://www.tec.appstate.edu/appropriate/student.htm>

Personal Commitment and Engagement

- University projects
- Local charities
- K-12 engagement
- Community organizations
- **Political activism (strong involvement in wind energy policy, efforts to halt mountain-top removal)**

Social Networking and Engagement

- The Net Impact Club, Graduate Chapter
- **Graduate Student Association Senate**
(ongoing involvement with the Hospitality House, a temporary shelter for homeless families)

Incentives for Engagement

- Personal satisfaction
- Grades and a degree
- Conference presentation and/or journal publication
- Expanded opportunities: some projects go “local to global”
- ***Transforming North Carolina Award***
<http://www.graduate.appstate.edu/students/awards/transforming.html>

University Resources

- Community link on University's website
<http://community.appstate.edu/>
- ACT: Appalachian and the Community Together
<http://community.appstate.edu/program/act-appalachian-and-the-community-together>