

Madrid 2011 Conference Resolution on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education

I. Meeting the Challenges of Today and Tomorrow

As leaders of universities from around the world, we have come together in Madrid to promote civic engagement and social responsibility as core commitments of our institutions, to learn from each other's best practices in furthering those commitments, and to chart collaborative efforts in this arena for the years ahead. To these ends, we have engaged in intense and productive discussions and have shared insights and understandings on how higher education can play a leadership role in promoting civic and social participation by university students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners.

We reaffirm the goals and undertakings set out in the Talloires Declaration of 2005 and embodied in the Talloires Network created by that declaration. Since that time, we note with pride the growth of the Talloires Network spanning six continents and including several hundred institutions representing millions of students across the globe. What began as a small meeting in the village of Talloires, France, has now captured a global movement of universities committed to civic engagement.

The Madrid Conference affirmed the demand for the Network's collaborative sharing of ideas and practices as well as the burgeoning effort across the world of universities moving beyond the ivory tower to honour the mission of civic engagement and social responsibility.

The world is a very different place than what it was when the Talloires Declaration was signed. Across the globe, the societies in which our institutions are situated are facing increased economic, social, and civic challenges. At the same time, in universities on every continent, something extraordinary is underway. Mobilising their human and intellectual resources, institutions of higher education are providing opportunities and directly tackling community problems—combating poverty, improving public health, promoting environmental sustainability, and enhancing the quality of life.

Universities across the globe are embedding civic engagement in their core missions of teaching, research, and service. Around the world, the engaged university is replacing the ivory tower. In 2005, we stressed that our institutions exist to serve and strengthen their societies through educating students, expanding access to education, and the development and application of new knowledge.

We now reaffirm those judgments. In this, the Madrid Resolution, we also affirm that our institutions need to be active and engaged participants as our societies grapple with the great challenges they face. True community engagement is, at its heart, mutually beneficial for all parties, reciprocal in nature, and designed to promote learning and the exchange of knowledge in the search for collaborative approaches to real-world problems and opportunities.

Our universities are obliged to foster a spirit of social responsibility and a commitment to the common good among our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and working partners so that they all can be effective leaders in collectively working to solve the difficult issues that beset our communities at every level.

We are partners with those communities in seeking new knowledge, and we have responsibilities to contribute not only to the intelligence of our students, but also to their civic and social values in ways that help ensure they will be effective community citizens. Further, we need to be mindful of the forces in all our societies that are trying to resist broad-based civic participation. We must do all we can to counter those forces.

Ultimately, we believe that university-community engagement supports and enhances the development of sustainable communities and universities across the globe that meet the needs of the present generation, that do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and that allow each person the opportunity to develop in freedom, within a well-balanced society and in harmony with their surroundings.

The Madrid meeting has enabled us to share best practices both in meeting the specific undertakings set out in the Talloires Declaration and in other programs by which we seek to meet the objectives expressed in that Declaration. We have, for example, learned from each other ways to enhance civic training of students, faculty, and staff. We have shared assessment practices for university civic engagement and social responsibility programs. Similarly, we have shared means to promote regional networks that have become a cornerstone of our collaborative efforts.

The Talloires Network is a dynamic catalyst for change and brings us together in support of our shared goals. The next part of this declaration covers the commitments of the Talloires Network and its members in the near or medium term.

II. Talloires Network Current Commitments

The Talloires Network has committed to:

- Advance civic engagement globally through the dissemination of best practices, encouragement of innovation, development of communities of practice, policy advocacy, and promotion of the field to philanthropic organizations
- Elevate public awareness of the value of university-community engagement through our communications platforms
- Promote the work of regional networks committed to community engagement, encouraging existing higher education networks to focus on engagement, catalysing the creation of new networks where none currently exist and participating in and/or improving existing networks
- Collaborate with regional partners and member institutions to develop frameworks, toolkits, training materials, and other resources that are informed by global best practices and are contextually relevant
- Expand student programs, student participation in international conferences, and exchange opportunities
- Foster peer communities of professors, scholars, and researchers by providing regional training opportunities and events
- Identify and disseminate compelling case studies, examples, and narratives from around the world to highlight the powerful impact of university-community engagement

- Assist in the creation of tools for evaluating impact and the collection of data on university-community engagement, as well as the assessment of student civic engagement and social responsibility competencies.
- Disseminate resources directly to our members whenever possible, as, for example, in the upcoming small grants program for Chilean universities funded by the Walmart Foundation
- Explore and develop possible strategies for universities to increase economic opportunity and participation of disadvantaged youth with the support of the MasterCard Foundation
- Advance university-community engagement throughout the core work of the university, including Learning and Teaching, Research, and Service and thereby empowering universities to address community-identified needs and deepening students' civic and academic learning