

UNIVERSITY REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF CIVIC LITERACY 2024-2025

Cal Poly Pomona (CPP) fosters student learning and success in our inclusive polytechnic community by encouraging intellectual flexibility, empathy, creativity, curiosity, and rigor. In 2023, Civic Literacy was adopted by the Academic Senate as one of seven essential General Education Student Learning Outcomes ([GE SLOs](#)). Thus, this is the first time this GE learning outcome has been assessed. Civic Literacy is defined as the ability to “apply civic knowledge, associated with historical structures of power, to self-discovery and responsibility to the community.”

As part of the Office of Assessment and Program Review’s commitment to evidence-informed decision making that highlights strengths and identifies areas for improvement in student learning, this report presents the findings of the 2024-2025 Civic Literacy assessment.

Student Demonstration of Learning: Direct Evidence

With Civic Literacy being a new learning outcome for CPP, the Office of Assessment and Program Review implemented a multi-step process to directly assess Civic Literacy using student work:

1. *Rubric Development:* In Summer 2024, faculty members across disciplines drafted the Civic Literacy Rubric. The Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) then finalized and adopted the rubric. The Civic Literacy rubric (Appendix A) included four criteria: *Civic Knowledge, Analysis of Structures of Power, Application to Self-Discovery, and Use of Civic Knowledge to Advance Social Responsibility*. Each criterion was defined by four proficiency levels: Advanced, Proficient, Developing, and Beginning.
2. *Artifact Collection:* In Fall 2024 & Spring 2025, a total of 211 artifacts from senior students were collected from 3000-level and 4000-level courses taught in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 representing 14 courses across 8 colleges (Table 1). Artifacts included individual project reports, reflective journals, research papers, and case write-ups. To ensure anonymity, all identifiable information (i.e., names, course titles) was removed, and each artifact was assigned a unique ID prior to scoring.
3. *Scoring:* In Summer 2025, fifteen faculty members from different disciplines participated in a two-day assessment scoring event. It consisted of a norming session to calibrate the assessment rubric followed by a scoring session during which faculty independently read and scored student artifacts.

Each artifact was scored by two faculty members using the civic literacy assessment rubric. Artifacts with one-point discrepancies were resolved by assigning the lower score. Artifacts with discrepancies of two points or more were scored by a third reviewer. Subsequent score discrepancies were resolved by using a modification of the “Consistency Estimate” (Stemler, 2004)¹ scoring method, where the final score was the one closest to the third reviewer scores. For example, if a criterion received scores of 2 and 4, and a third score of 1 then the final score was 2.

¹ Stemler, S. E. (2004). A comparison of consensus, consistency, and measurement approaches to estimating interrater reliability. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 9(1).

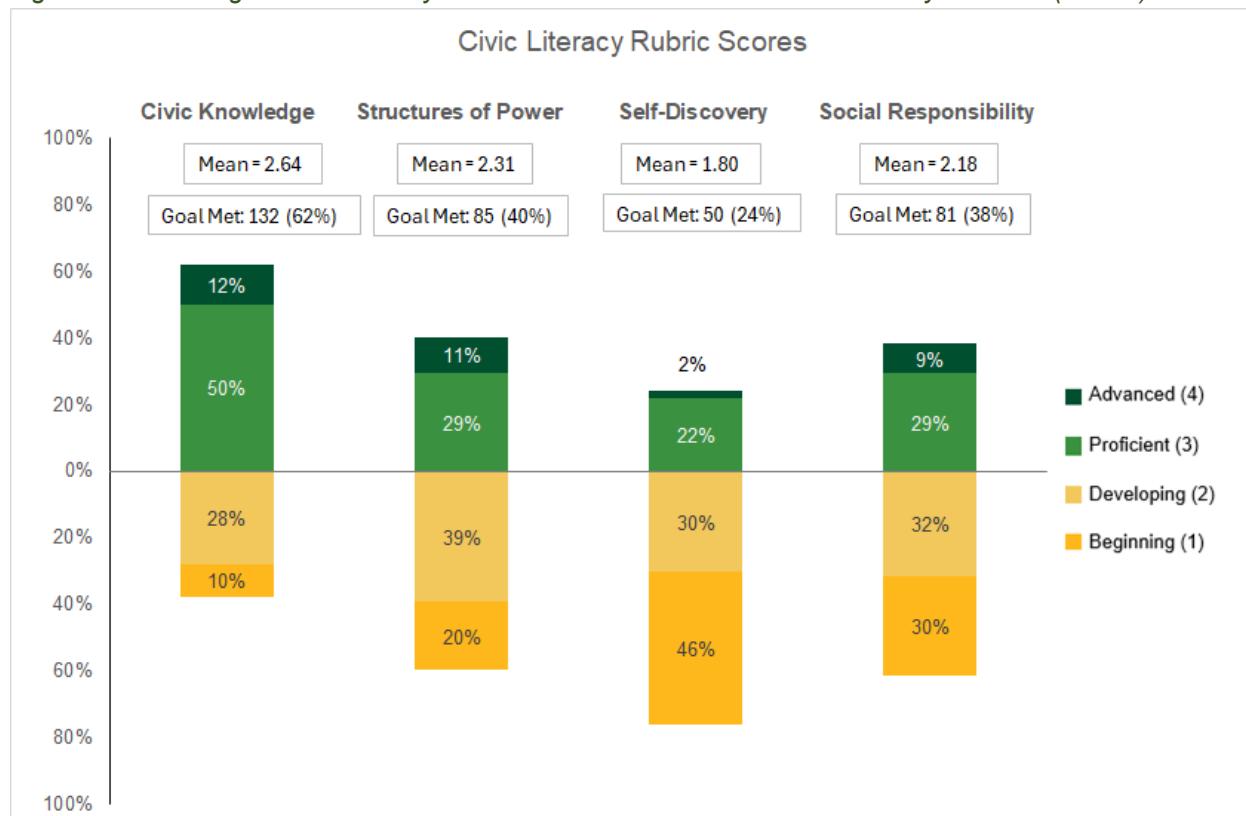
Table 1. Summary of Artifacts Collected and Scored

College	# of Artifacts	Percentage
Letters, Arts, & Social Sciences	49	23%
Engineering	44	21%
Science	35	17%
Environmental Design	32	15%
Business Administration	22	10%
Agriculture	20	9%
Hospitality Management	7	3%
Educ & Integrative Studies	2	1%
Total	211	100%

Overall Findings

Figure 1 shows our Civic Literacy assessment findings. CPP considers the goal met when seniors score at the proficient or advanced levels, so scores of 3 and 4 are grouped as “Goal Met”.

Figure 1. Percentage of Students by Achievement Level for each Civic Literacy Criterion (N=211)



Seniors' strongest performance area was in Civic Knowledge. Defined as understanding governmental structures, processes, and civic responsibilities, 62% of CPP seniors met CPP's goal by performing at “proficient” or “advanced” levels, with an overall mean score of 2.64.

Performance was not as strong when seniors were asked to move beyond knowledge acquisition (i.e., Civic Knowledge). Only 40% of seniors met CPP's performance goal in *Structures of Power*, which assesses students' ability to analyze the distribution and dynamics of authority with a mean score of 2.31.

Self-Discovery, defined as the extent to which students connect personal values with civic engagement, was the lowest performance criteria of Civic Literacy. Only 24% of students met CPP's goal, with an overall mean score of 2.00.

Seniors demonstrated modest improvement in applying knowledge to advance Social Responsibility relative to Self-Discovery. In this area, 38% met the performance goal, with an overall mean score of 2.3.

Demographic Background

The purpose of demographic analysis is to examine whether student performance outcomes differ across key groups to identify potential equity-related patterns in achievement of CPP's civic literacy learning outcome. Specifically, comparisons were conducted by Underrepresented Minority status (URM versus Non-URM), generation status (Continuing Generation versus First-Generation), and enrollment status (First-time Freshmen versus Transfers), see Table in Appendix B.

The analysis focuses on the percentage of seniors who met performance goals which includes advanced and proficient levels. Chi-Square analysis was conducted due to the categorical nature of the data and the objective of examining potential differences related to students' backgrounds. Comparisons revealed no statistical differences between groups and criteria, see Figures C1, C2, and C3 in Appendix C.

Students Experiences of Learning: Indirect Evidence

To complement our direct assessment of student work, we use indirect evidence by drawing from students' responses in the National Survey of Student Engagement ([NSSE](#)) and [CPP's Graduating Senior Survey](#) (GSS). The findings reflect CPP's seniors' experiences in three key areas of civic knowledge: 1) participation in service-learning courses or activities (Maravé-Vivas, 2022²); 2) discussions of social and political issues (Hurtado, 2019³); and 3) discussion on the ethical consequences of courses of action (Hatcher, 2011⁴).

Each of these areas was assessed through survey questions measured on a 4-point scale.

NSSE Question	CPP (n=649; 21% of seniors)		Other CSUs
	None/ Some	Most/ All	Most/ All
About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?	82%	19%	15%

NSSE Questions	Never/ Sometimes	Often/ Very Often
Discussed or debated an issue of social, political, or philosophical importance.	62%	38%
Discussed the ethical consequences of a course of action.	55%	45%

Note: CPP responses only; CSU comparative data unavailable.

² Maravé-Vivas, M., Gil-Gómez, J., García, O. M., & Capella-Peris, C. (2022). Service-learning and physical education in preservice teacher training: Toward the development of civic skills and attitudes. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 42(4), 631-639.

³ Hurtado, S. (2019). "Now is the time": Civic learning for a strong democracy. *Daedalus*, 148(4), 94-107.

⁴ Hatcher, J. A. (2011). Assessing civic knowledge and engagement. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2011(149), 81-92.

Most seniors reported not engaging frequently with civic literacy-related learning activities at CPP with only 55% to 62% of seniors reporting that they discussed critical aspects of civic literacy *often/very often* in their time at CPP. Engagement in community-based projects embedded within courses was even lower with only 19% of seniors reporting that it was the norm.

In addition to senior responses to the NSSE, this report further highlights [CPP's Graduating Senior Survey](#) (GSS) responses from 17% of graduating seniors (N=927) in 2024-2025. The findings are as follows:

GSS Questions	Very Little/ Some	Quite a Bit/ Very Much
How well did CPP prepare you to help improve local and global communities?	33%	67%
How well did CPP prepare you to understand the responsibility one had to themselves and their community?	20%	80%

In contrast to the NSSE, internal GSS responses convey a more positive perception of CPP's role in contributing to students' civic literacy. The majority of students credited CPP for preparing them to be responsible to themselves and their communities.

Conclusion

From our assessment, evidence indicates that CPP has established a strong but uneven foundation for Civic Literacy. Nearly two-thirds of graduating seniors met CPP's goal in Civic Knowledge and some indirect evidence reflects positive student perceptions of civic preparedness. These findings affirm institutional commitment to civic learning that aligns with CPP's mission.

However, direct assessment results also revealed areas requiring focused improvement. Fewer than half of seniors met CPP's performance goals in Social Responsibility and Structures of Power, and performance in Application of Self-Discovery was notably low.

Indirect evidence similarly points to areas of concern: fewer than half of graduating seniors reported engaging in discussion of social, political, or philosophical issues or ethical consequences of actions. Opportunities for courses that included a community-based project were also limited.

Providing opportunities for students to learn about and integrate civic literacy into their academic pursuits and daily experiences is a shared institutional responsibility. Faculty and staff play essential roles in ensuring that curriculum, assessment, and campus systems are aligned to support student learning in formally adopted key outcomes.

Closing the Loop to Improve Student Learning

Drawing on this report's findings and conversations with faculty, this section presents initial ideas for closing-the-loop activities to improve student performance and assessment resource infrastructure in the future. One example was refining the Civic Literacy assessment rubric by clarifying the descriptions of criteria and performance scales to draw stronger distinctions between levels. This was completed by the Academic Assessment Committee in Fall 2025.

- Assessment findings may be used to inform and strengthen instruction, learning opportunities, and assessment of Civic Literacy. Collaboration among faculty and staff recommended to ensure

that clear Civic Literacy outcomes and assessment are consistently implemented across curricula.

- Redesign courses and/or assignments to intentionally align with all criteria of the Civic Literacy assessment rubric, with particular emphasis on *Self-Discovery* (criteria in most need of improvement). Examples include:
 - Integrate civic and ethical dimensions into courses across disciplines, emphasizing how technical and professional work impacts communities (Hatcher, 2011) into GE and/or program courses;
 - Expand/refine civic engagement and service-learning opportunities that connect academic content to community impact.
- Use the Civic Literacy rubric as an instructional tool with faculty sharing assessment criteria and providing rubric-based feedback to clarify expectations and deepen student learning.
- Offer workshops or funding opportunities to design civic engagement activities or service-learning courses (e.g. [Inside Philanthropy Grants Finder](#)) (Maravé-Vivas, 2022⁵)
- Develop shared resources such as scoring guidelines and annotated student work samples to support more consistent and meaningful assessment.
- Organize panel discussions or workshops current issues to engage students and all members of the CPP community (Hurtado, 2019⁶).
- Share assessment results with college leadership, college assessment committees, and on-campus leadership bodies to help inform decision-making as it pertains to Civic Literacy in program curricula and GE.
- Continue to assess and analyze longitudinal and disaggregated data to identify trends and potential equity gaps.

Guiding Question for Faculty Use and Application of the Report

- What do the results indicate about student learning of civic literacy within the program and discipline?
- Which findings confirm expectations, and which are surprising?
- What specific aspects of instruction or curriculum should be maintained, adjusted, or redesigned?
- What short- and long-term steps should faculty take to revise assignments or integrate civic learning experiences?
- How can assignments, assessments, or learning activities be better aligned with outcomes?
- How can rubric refinement and norming practices be implemented at the program-level in a sustainable and scalable way?
- How can assessment conversations and systematic reviews be structured for maximum impact?
- How can these strategies be adapted across disciplines, course formats, and class sizes?

⁵ Maravé-Vivas, M., Gil-Gómez, J., García, O. M., & Capella-Peris, C. (2022). Service-learning and physical education in preservice teacher training: Toward the development of civic skills and attitudes. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 42(4), 631-639.

⁶ Hurtado, S. (2019). "Now is the time": Civic learning for a strong democracy. *Daedalus*, 148(4), 94-107.

Appendix A

CIVIC LITERACY ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students will apply civic knowledge, associated with historical structures of power, to self-discovery and responsibility to the community.

Criteria	Advanced (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
Civic Knowledge <i>How well one understands governmental structures, processes, and civic responsibilities.</i>	Thoroughly comprehends the complexity of key civic concepts (e.g., evidence, theories, members, issues).	Comprehends key civic concepts but does not grasp complexity of the concepts.	Approaches comprehension of key civic concepts with occasional inaccuracy.	Exhibits limited comprehension of key civic concepts.
Analysis of Structures of Power <i>How well one analyzes the distribution and dynamics of authority in society and institutions (e.g., institutionalized privilege, oppression, inequity, violence, marginalization, and minoritization).</i>	Thoroughly analyzes historical and contemporary power structures by articulating the distribution and dynamics of authority while considering community well-being.	Adequately analyzes historical and contemporary structures of power by acknowledging the dynamics of authority and community well-being.	Provides incomplete analysis of historical and contemporary structures of power by omitting important aspects of the dynamics of authority and community well-being.	Provides insufficient analysis of historical and contemporary structures of power.
Application to Self-Discovery <i>How well one connects personal values with civic engagement opportunities.</i>	Thoroughly communicates self-discovery by identifying one's role relative to civic identity, values, and their potential community impact.	Communicates self-discovery by identifying one's role relative to civic identity, values, and their potential community impact, but lacks depth in some areas.	Approaches self-discovery with a limited recognition of one's role relative to civic identity, values, and their potential community impact.	Lacks one's self-awareness.
Use of Civic Knowledge to Advance Social Responsibility <i>How well one integrates civic knowledge when examining community needs.</i>	Thoroughly incorporates civic knowledge in the evaluation of community needs while demonstrating a clear commitment to social responsibility.	Applies civic knowledge proficiently to evaluate community needs with some commitment to social responsibility.	Applies civic knowledge, but the application inaccurately reflects community needs.	Exhibits minimal application of civic knowledge in evaluating community needs.
Disciplinary Application <i>How well one applies civic knowledge to disciplinary-specific issues.</i>	Thoroughly synthesizes and integrates the complex relationship between civic knowledge and the discipline.	Adequately analyzes the relationship between civic knowledge and the discipline.	Identifies and describes the relationship between civic knowledge and the discipline in a limited manner.	Exhibits little to no recognition of how the relationship between civic knowledge and the discipline is intertwined.

Developed by Summer Assessment Institute faculty, 8.13.2024 – Approved and adopted by Academic Assessment Committee, 10.28.2024

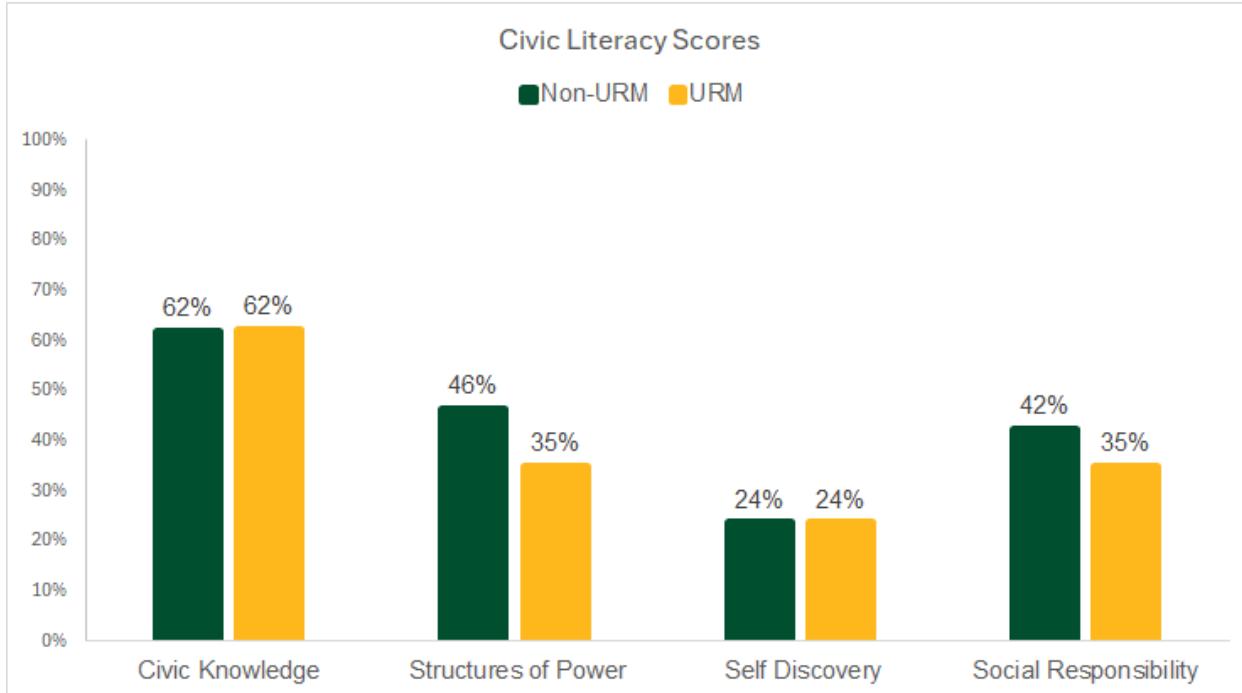
Appendix B

Civic Literacy Outcome: Performance Levels by Student Groups

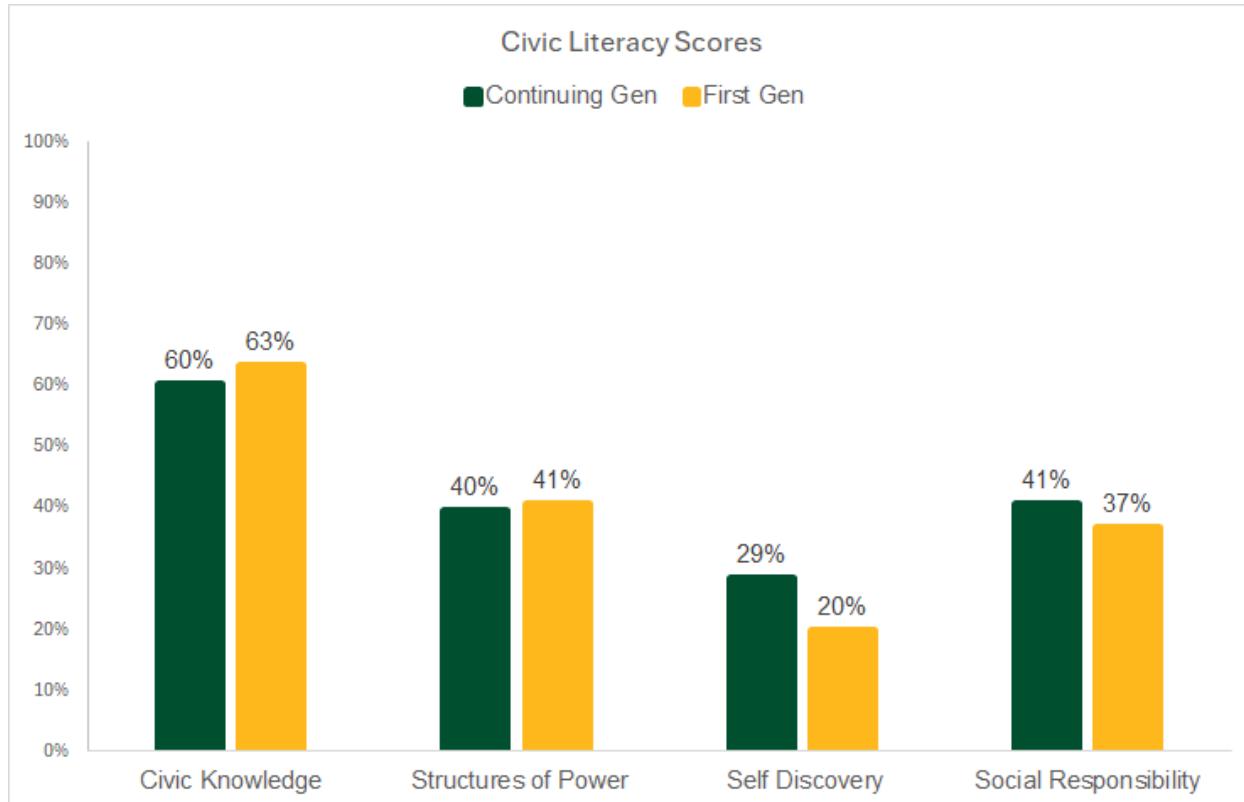
	URM		1st Gen		Transfer							
	Non-URM		URM		Continuing Generation		First Generation		First Time Freshman		New Transfer	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Civic Knowledge												
1 Beginning	9	(9%)	12	(11%)	8	(9%)	13	(11%)	7	(10%)	14	(10%)
2 Developing	28	(29%)	31	(27%)	28	(31%)	31	(26%)	17	(23%)	42	(30%)
3 Proficient	46	(47%)	60	(53%)	45	(49%)	61	(51%)	40	(55%)	66	(48%)
4 Advanced	14	(14%)	11	(10%)	10	(11%)	15	(13%)	9	(12%)	16	(12%)
Structures of Power												
1 Beginning	19	(20%)	24	(21%)	22	(24%)	21	(18%)	14	(19%)	29	(21%)
2 Developing	33	(34%)	50	(44%)	33	(36%)	50	(42%)	30	(41%)	53	(38%)
3 Proficient	28	(29%)	34	(30%)	28	(31%)	34	(28%)	21	(29%)	41	(30%)
4 Advanced	17	(18%)	6	(5%)	8	(9%)	15	(13%)	8	(11%)	15	(11%)
Self-Discovery												
1 Beginning	44	(45%)	53	(46%)	40	(44%)	57	(48%)	N	%	N	%
2 Developing	30	(31%)	34	(30%)	25	(27%)	39	(33%)	34	(47%)	63	(46%)
3 Proficient	19	(20%)	26	(23%)	23	(25%)	22	(18%)	20	(27%)	44	(32%)
4 Advanced	4	(4%)	1	(1%)	3	(3%)	2	(2%)	15	(21%)	30	(22%)
Social Responsibility												
1 Beginning	29	(30%)	34	(30%)	27	(30%)	36	(30%)	N	%	N	%
2 Developing	27	(28%)	40	(35%)	27	(30%)	40	(33%)	22	(30%)	41	(30%)
3 Proficient	27	(28%)	35	(31%)	29	(32%)	33	(28%)	23	(32%)	44	(32%)
4 Advanced	14	(14%)	5	(4%)	8	(9%)	11	(9%)	21	(29%)	41	(30%)

Appendix C

Civic Literacy Comparison by URM Status: Performance Goal Met



Civic Literacy Comparison by First Generation Status: Performance Goal Met



Civic Literacy Comparison by First-time Freshman: Performance Goal Met

