Community-Engaged Learning
Faculty Handbook

Utah State University
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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION
Community-Engaged Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community engagement with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Through Community-Engaged Learning students have the opportunity for practical application of course materials and professional skills, while addressing a defined community need. Participating community organizations gain a fresh perspective on a project or issue and added capacity to better serve their community. When structured correctly, Community-Engaged Learning also can provide engaging classroom discussion, enhance the student experience, and provide research and networking opportunities for faculty. At USU Community-Engaged Learning aims to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the university and the community, improving learning experiences while providing needed assistance to local governments and nonprofits organizations.

Benefits OF Community-Engaged Learning
Community-Engaged Learning at USU is defined as a teaching method that utilizes student involvement in community to meet instructional objectives of a course. Students apply information from a class in authentic settings while addressing real needs of the community that have been identified by the community. Faculty often mention that Community-Engaged Learning courses offer an opportunity for students to better internalize course materials, and lead to deeper student engagement and beneficial class discussion.

Additional benefits for teaching Community-Engaged Learning courses include:

- Lead to new avenues for research and publication
- Promote students’ active learning; engage students with different learning styles
- Develop students’ civic and leadership skills
- Boost course enrollment by attracting highly motivated and engaged students
- Provide networking opportunities with engaged faculty in other disciplines
- Foster relationships between faculty and community organizations, which can open other opportunities for collaborative work

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) brought together existing programs dedicated to community engagement, service, and AmeriCorps. The department combines the staff, missions, and values of: Aggie Blue Bikes, Education Outreach, Service-Learning, Student Sustainability Office, Val R. Christensen Service Center, and Utah Conservation corps.
CCE’s work on campus aims to provide students, staff, and faculty the opportunity to become engaged citizens through service and civic engagement. By coming together under one department, CCESL has become the campus hub for community engagement, providing greater institutional vision and direction. CCESL staff are available for support in designing and implementing Community-Engaged Learning courses and work to foster partnerships and an efficient and successful Community-Engaged Learning Program.

**CCESL Student Learning Objectives:**
- Have a deepened understanding of Civic Engagement & Responsibility (awareness)
- Have knowledge and skills necessary to effectively carry out their role within the community (knowledge/skills)
- Have made a positive contribution to the community (action/stewardship)

**COMMUNITY BRIDGE INITIATIVE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**
The Community Bridge Initiative, offered by the USU Center for Community Engagement (CCE), is the partnership program that links community need to courses and resources through USU. Based on the successful CBI pilot year with Logan City, courses and students are matched with community-identified projects. Community Partners complete an application and MOU prior to work on their site, protecting faculty and USU against any liability. During the application process, community partners also define their community needs and proposed priority projects that can be matched with courses. Through this process, a database of potential projects is made available to faculty, decreasing the work necessary in project development. Faculty interested in connecting with a new community partner or building a Community-Engaged Learning component into their courses should contact CCE who can provide them with the list of Community Partners that have completed MOUs and proposed projects. Faculty who might be interested in working with a partner who has not yet completed an MOU can also contact CCE who can walk the partner through the MOU process.

**COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING AT USU**
Community-Engaged Learning opportunities have been available on USU campuses for many years, and we invite all faculty to consider how their courses could be made into Community-Engaged Learning courses. Students who have completed Community-Engaged Learning courses often share that these courses provide an opportunity to learn practical skills, experienced a deeper learning, and increase their civic responsibility – creating in them a responsibility to use the knowledge they gained from USU to help others. ‘I learned that application is completely different than just planning something,’ one student
responded in course assessments. ‘Getting out there, doing things that actually come into contact with people who aren’t your professors makes school a completely different experience.’ Additionally nearly 88% of students who were planning on taking future courses with USU stated that their experience with their Community-Engaged Learning course would lead them to take additional CEL designated courses. Community-Engaged Learning student learning objectives at USU aim to provide opportunities for all Community-Engaged Learning students to build Civic Knowledge, Civic Skills, and Civic Responsibility.

Community-Engaged Learning courses have been designated in the course catalog since 2014. Student transcripts list Community-Engaged Learning courses, so students can identify which courses they completed tied classroom work with community-based education. Community-Engaged Learning courses can be identified on the semester course listing by the ‘CEL’ listed at the end of a course title.

**PROCESS OF CREATING A Community-Engaged LEARNING COURSE**

›‘I found that it was very beneficial for my major to get out in the field and try some real work.’

With the roll out of the new CBI Partnership in Fall 2016, all Service-Learning courses will be implementing an updated partnership process, aimed to better foster relationships, set clear goals, and agree to roles and work prior to the start of the class. With this new process, faculty will be protected from liability as all community partners will be required to complete a Memorandum of Understanding prior to the start of a Community-Engaged Learning course. The Community-Engaged Learning Program will also keep a database of Community Partner Project Proposals, which will be used to match courses with community need. Once you have decided to teach a Community-Engaged Learning class, follow the process below:

**COMMUNITY-Engaged LEARNING PROCESS**

1. **Course Matching** – Community Partners and Faculty check in with the Community-Engaged Learning office to identify project and course matches. Although we do our best to meet all community need, there is not always a match each semester, and some community agencies/classes might have to wait until the following semester for a match.

2. **Designation Form** – Faculty are required to complete and submit a simple Community-Engaged Learning Course Designation Form to have their class officially classified as a CEL course. This form can be completed at any time, but we ask for it when possible by the end of the second month of the semester to have courses listed in banner prior to student registration. For more information on the Designation Process, please view our Faculty Resource Webpage.

3. **Scope of Work** – Prior to the start of the semester, community partners and faculty will meet to complete the Scope of Work (SOW), outlining goals of the project, roles and responsibilities, and deliverables to be completed by the end of the semester. Both parties will be involved in the
completion of this document and will sign it. Scope of Works can be found in the ‘resources’ section of this website.

4. **Orientation** – At the beginning of the semester, the community partner should schedule time to provide an orientation to students who will be involved in the CEL project—either during class time or on-site. Orientation should include a discussion of the issue in the community, background of the agency, and overview and goal of the project.

5. **Mid-Semester Check In** – A mid-semester meeting provides time for faculty and community partners to assess the progress of the project, determine if any changes are necessary in the Scope of Work or project deliverables, and address any challenges or concerns.

6. **Assessments** – After the completion of the semester and the project, Community Partners, faculty, and students complete a short survey assessing their experience with Service-Learning, outlining impact, identifying ways to improve the SL program, and sharing their accomplishments.

**DESIGNATING A COURSE AS COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING**

Once a project is defined for a course, a designation form for Community-Engaged Learning should be completed. The form will request basic information including course information, details on the Service-Learning, and community partner particulars. The Community-Engaged Learning Program requests that if possible designation forms are submitted prior to student registration to allow students to view courses offer Community-Engaged Learning components. All designation forms should be submitted prior to the start of the semester.

**TO LOOK UP DESIGNATED COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING COURSES THROUGH USU BANNER:**

1. Go to main menu and click on STUDENT
2. Click on REGISTRATION
3. Click on Look Up Classes
4. Select term & submit
5. Click on Advanced Search at bottom of page
6. Under Attribute Type, select Service-Learning
7. Current CEL course offerings under each subject will be listed

**MINI GRANTS**

Faculty who teach Community-Engaged Learning designated courses are eligible to apply for Service-Learning Mini Grants to cover costs associated with the service component of the course. Mini Grants are dispersed each semester, and applications are due prior to the start of the semester on either December 15th (for Spring semester course) and May 15th (for Fall semester course).

**REQUIREMENTS OF COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING**

Community-Engaged Learning can take many form and projects completed span a diverse range. All Community-Engaged Learning courses at USU do have some similar structural requirements. The requirements of teaching a Community-Engaged Learning course are outlined below.

**INCORPORATION OF COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING ELEMENTS IN SYLLABUS**
• **Meaningful Service Activity** - Community-Engaged Learning is not adding “volunteer” activities to a course. It is integrating community engagement in such a way that students apply the knowledge and skills they are learning in class to meet community needs. The students’ learning experience is graded and is measured through structured reflection activities.

• **Reflection** – Reflection is an essential element of a Community-Engaged Learning course. It is a structured time for students to recount their experiences and the learning acquired in the community setting. It can be accomplished in a number of different ways, depending upon the instructor’s preference. Some common forms of reflection include writing in journals, answering specific questions, or classroom/small group discussions.

**COURSE DESIGNATION FORM**
A designation form can be found on the Community-Engaged Learning website, which all courses must complete, submit, and obtain approval prior to being listed in Banner as a SL course. Designation forms are reviewed by the Community-Engaged Learning Faculty Advisory Committee, and faculty are given feedback on how to best improve their course.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**
A key component is the partnership that is created between faculty and a community partner to implement Community-Engaged Learning within the classroom. The community partner can be an organization, serving the local, state, national, or international community. The community need should be defined by the community partner – not the faculty. Community-Engaged Learning courses model reciprocity by providing learning opportunities for students, classroom/research assistance to faculty, and project assistance to community partners.

**ASSESSMENT**
Community Partners, Faculty, and Students are asked to complete assessments at the end of each semester. Assessments measure learning objectives, project impact. They also provide a forum for parties to give feedback on program improvements. Assessments will be sent out and the end of each semester to all Community-Engaged Learning Students.

**SCOPE OF WORK**
Prior to the start of the semester, community partners and faculty are encouraged to meet to complete the Scope of Work (SOW), outlining project goals, roles and responsibilities, and deliverables to be completed. Both parties are involved in the completion of this document. Scope of Work forms can be found in the ‘resources’ section of this website.

**RECORDING COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING HOURS**
Students are required to record their community engagement hours in AggieSync. A training for students can be arranged at the start of the semester to ensure students are properly recording hours. Faculty can request a final report of students’ hours completed through the Community-Engaged Learning program for grading, research, or class reporting.
LEARNING OUTCOMES
The Community-Engaged Learning program aims to develop civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic responsibility in students. Community-Engaged Learning courses foster these outcomes, but we realize not all classes touch on all three areas. Online training have been created for students. Faculty have the option of requiring or encouraging students to complete these training modules.

RESOURCES
Additional resources are available for faculty interested in developing Community-Engaged Learning courses on the USU Community-Engaged Learning, https://www.cel.usu.edu. Some of the key resources that can be found on our website are listed below. If any questions remain, the Community-Engaged Learning Program Coordinator is always available for additional support in the matching of faculty and community projects, development of syllabi, aid throughout the semester, and further assistance as needed.

FACULTY ORIENTATION
Online training has been created to provide further guidance to faculty as to you create your successful Community-Engaged Learning course. It is recommended all faculty complete this training prior to teaching their first Community-Engaged Learning course.

SAMPLE SYLLABI
Campus Compact, a national coalition of over 1000 universities committed to the public purposes of higher education, provides a range of sample syllabi in many disciplines that can be used for brainstorming and guidance.

PRE-SERVICE STUDENT TRAINING
In addition to having your Community Partner provide an introduction prior to the start of the service project, two pre-service student trainings are available on our website. These trainings cover professionalism at the service site and social justice.
RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES IN SUCCESSFUL SERVICE-LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

This document provides a quick overview of who holds what responsibilities during a Service-Learning course, providing guidance as to the roles of Community Partners, faculty, and the Service-Learning Program.

For more information on any of these resources or for additional assistance, please contact the Service-Learning Office at TSC 318 or contact Kate Stephens, kate.stephens@usu.edu.