

COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLARS HANDBOOK

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY



Updated Fall 2017

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COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLARS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Community Engaged Scholars (previously known as Service-Learning Scholars) is an elite group of USU students dedicated to making a difference in their community and the world. Students accepted into this program will have the opportunity to engage in service related to their field of study and personal interests in addition to completing Community Engaged Learning (SL) courses for general education credit, and the option to take a spring Foundation course that introduces them to civic responsibility and action. Upon graduation, scholars attend an awards banquet where they receive a plaque and graduation stole. Scholars are acknowledged in the commencement program, and the distinction is recorded on their official transcript so employers and graduate programs can see evidence of a student's determination to go the extra mile.

Between 2011 – 2016, 55 students graduated with the Service-Learning Scholars distinction. In 2017, the program expanded to put greater emphasis on reciprocal community partnerships and civic engagement and build upon USU's dedication to creating Citizen Scholars. Aligned with that expansion, the program changed its name to Community Engaged Scholars.

The purpose of the CE Scholars Program is to provide students with the opportunity to:

- Make a difference in their community
- Combine community engagement with academic course work
- Enhance learning through experience and career preparation
- Create sustainable change in the form of a capstone project

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING AT USU

Community Engaged Learning (CEL) is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. All Community Engaged Learning courses blend the three components of meaningful service, connection to learning, and reflection into their classroom material.

Meaningful Service: It's important that the Community Engaged Learning project meet a genuine need that is significant and recognized as important by both the participants and the community. The activity can include teaching others, creating a product or performance, providing a service, community-based research, or advocating for change

Connection to Learning: Effective Community Engaged Learning establishes clear learning goals that require the application of concepts, content, and skills from the course and involves participants in the construction of their own knowledge.

Reflection: Reflection is the term for the processing of these experiences. It can take many forms, including essays, discussions, journals, presentations, creating a portfolio, or filming a video. When reflecting students should consider: WHAT? SO WHAT? NOW WHAT?

Community Engaged Learning at USU is set up with reciprocity in mind, ensuring that the community partners, student, and university all benefit from the service project. Engaged community agencies are called Community Bridge Initiative (CBI) Partners at USU. CBI community partners regularly submit

Community Engaged Learning projects to the CEL program, which are then matched with available courses. CBI Partners are seen as co-educators, taking an active role in teaching students through implementation of Community Engaged Learning projects. Faculty regularly report that adding a Community Engaged Learning component to course material leads to deeper learning and more student engagement, while developing an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

Community Engaged Learning, provides students the following benefits:

- Develops deeper understanding of subject matter
- Fosters greater motivation to learn
- Promotes greater self-understanding
- Heightens awareness of community
- Integrates concepts from class into authentic issues
- Provides quality educational experiences in college
- Raises awareness of social issues
- Reduces negative stereotypes
- Increases tolerance for diversity
- Enhances interpersonal skills
- Improves leadership skills

HISTORY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLARS

The Service-Learning Scholars Program was created by Cameron Woolf, the 2003-2004 ASUSU Service Vice President. Along with student Aaron Brown and Community Service Director Nellene Howard, Woolf built the structure of the certificate program and gained approval of USU's Vice President of Student Services, Dr. Juan Franco, the Provost's office, and the Dean's Council.

A Faculty Steering Committee was created, and developed the criteria for Service Learning course designation through the Educational Policy Committee. The Vice President for Student Services drafted a proposal for the Service-Learning Scholars Program to be presented to the Faculty Senate. The University Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees, and Faculty Senate passed the proposal, ongoing funding was secured through a Tier II tuition proposal, and a part-time faculty coordinator to manage the program was hired in 2004. The first Scholar graduated with distinction in 2006.

Since 2013, the Scholars program has been run through the Center Community Engagement (Previously known as CCESL), based in Student Affairs. In 2017, the program was renamed Community Engaged Learning, and Community Engaged Scholars, and a new coordinator, Kristin Brubaker, was assigned. The coordinator is supported by a team of approximately ten Faculty Advisors who assist in designating Community Engaged Learning courses and distributing Community Engaged Learning Mini Grants. Since the Scholars Program was started, 89 students have graduated with the distinction.

EXPECTATIONS AS A COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLAR

To get the most out of this experience, Scholars should go into all service activities prepared, understanding goal and outcomes, and expectations of your role within the project. It is expected that all Scholars act professionally and respectfully when working with our community partners – remember

our partners are going out of their way to work with USU and give you this opportunity. Please remember you are a guest when you are working in the community; be on your best behavior.

Some tips for creating and maintaining a productive professional relationship with community partners include:

- **Arrive on time and prepared to work.** If you cannot make your service commitment, or will be significantly late, notify the partner in advance.
- **Pay Attention-** Store cell phones, tablets, or other devices during your service activity. Your attention should be on the service activity, not on your phone.
- **Be open and understanding** with clients or those you are working with
- **Maintain a positive attitude!**
- **Foster clear and regular communication** with community partner supervisor. This is especially true with your partner agency for your Capstone. Ensuring that you are meeting their need is an essential part of the project.
- **Dress appropriately** for the work you will be completing
- **Maintain a professional relationship** – swearing, using slang, or being too casual may give the wrong impression.
- **Understand expectations and rules.** Each partner will have different rules and expectations on site. Take time the first time you volunteer to learn what is allowed and what should be avoided, and follow all rules.
- **Ask Questions** – Don't be afraid to ask questions or for clarification if you don't know the proper action. Also remember that they may do things differently than you, and this is their work space – even though something may not be what you would do, they could have a good reason to do it that way.

If issues or misunderstandings regarding expectations, goals, and your role within a project do arise, please notify the CE Scholars Coordinator. We are happy to help you brainstorm solutions, or work with you to address any concerns or issues on site. If you don't understand something or have questions about the proper behavior with a partner, please ask. Our role is one of a liaison between Scholars and community partners, and we are here to ensure your experience with our partners is beneficial and positive.

COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLAR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Students who are accepted into the CE Scholars program must meet the following requirements to graduate with this certificate:

1. **400 hours** of community service, documented on timesheets and submitted each semester
2. **9 credits** of Community Engaged Learning course work
3. **Capstone (individual) project** that combines the student's academic interests and service
4. **Community Engaged Learning electronic portfolio**, documenting service experience and reflection
5. **Meeting** with the Community Engaged Learning Coordinator each semester
6. **Attendance** at a Fall semester orientation
7. **Maintain a 3.0 GPA**

SERVICE HOURS

Community Engaged Scholars are required to complete a minimum of 400 hours of documented community service while at USU. Service hours must:

1. meet a recognized community need through a non-profit agency or group, provide service to the broader University community, or assist an individual (non-related) person in need.
2. cover activities such as (but not limited to) direct service, advocacy, public policy development, community organizing, or other activities that meet the learning goals identified by a specific Community Engaged Learning course.
3. NOT benefit a religion, fraternal organization, or political party. That said, service to the greater community organized by these groups can count. For example, teaching a religious study class would not count toward service hours, but participating in a food drive for the food bank that is organized by a religious group does count.
4. be performed without an hourly wage. Service supported through grants, work-study, stipends, AmeriCorps, and/or scholarships is acceptable.
5. Regularly log and update your service hours through USU AggieSync correctly and timely.

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING COURSE WORK

Community Engaged Scholars can fill the requirement of 9 credit hours of course work in one of two ways. (1) take courses that have already been approved as designated Community Engaged Learning classes or (2) incorporate a service component into any course to make it a Service- Learning course.

Courses that have been approved SL are designated in Banner, and fulfill the Community Engaged Learning course requirements. A list of current approved Community Engaged Learning courses can be requested from the Center for Community Engagement (CCE). We strongly recommend all Scholars take the Civic Foundations class offered during spring semesters. This class will cover community engagement principals, civic and social awareness topics, and ways to make a difference in your community. It is designated as 'SL', and students must complete a community project over the semester.

For students interested in incorporating a service component into a non-SL designated course, a Community Engaged Learning Contract is necessary. (A blank Contract form can be found in the appendix.) This contract is an agreement between the scholar and an instructor to convert an upper-division course for Community Engaged Learning credit. The instructor identifies service requirements to be completed for credit, and determines at the end of the semester whether the student has successfully earned SL credit. Additional service work, beyond the standard course requirements, is not generally graded and would not affect the student's grade in the course.

Community Engaged Learning Contracts can be obtained from the Community Engaged Learning Coordinator before the end of the second week of classes. Prior to filling out the form, students should gain approval from their instructor, and additional service related requirements should be agreed upon. Once an agreement is made the form should be completed, signed, and returned to the Community Engaged Learning Coordinator. A copy of the contract will be sent to the faculty member at the end of the semester to verify completion. The deadline for a student to file a Community Engaged Learning Contract is no later than the fourth week of classes.

CAPSTONE PROJECT

The Capstone, or individual, project is the culminating activity of the Community Engaged Learning Scholars program. It is recommended that the capstone project involve between 50 – 100 hours of service. The capstone project should be self-sustaining and leave a lasting impact. Scholars should focus on creating something that will remain after they have left the University. For example, students might create a new service program, a new event that can be replicated, a piece of art work, a new hiking trail...the possibilities are endless.

EXAMPLES OF A COMPLETED CAPSTONE PROJECT:

- **Senior University:** After volunteering with and later directing the Val R. Christensen Service Center Program, Friends of the Elderly, Melissa created a program called Senior University. Each week a group of 20 to 30 senior citizens is bused from the Logan Senior Center to campus to attend a class presented by a volunteer faculty member. Classes included creative writing, indoor plant care, a lecture on sea turtles, and even the opportunity to dissect a squid! The program will continue as a new Service Center sponsored program (currently known as Grandfriends).
- **Event Planning Handbook:** The English Learning Center of Cache Valley hosts an annual picnic to celebrate their students and bring communities together. After helping to organize the event as a volunteer, Sydney worked to develop an extensive handbook, with additional resources and a website, to be used in future years. This has greatly increased the capacity of The English Learning Center and addressed the challenge of transfer of knowledge and sustainability of their annual event.
- **Making Every Event a Green Event** – Viviane quickly noticed while at USU that many events created unnecessary waste, especially food waste! To address this issue, Viviane developed an educational brochure that could be offered to the planners of each event to advice on green

practices and waste reduction. Partnering with other groups on campus such as SSO and Dining Services, Viviane also develop Green Event Kits that students can rent out.

For more information on Capstone projects and project criteria, please visit the Community Engaged Learning website.

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING ELECTRONIC PORTFOLIO

The Community Engaged Learning E- Portfolio is a compilation of a student's Community Engaged Learning experiences throughout their time at USU. The Community Engaged Learning Portfolio should be completed one month prior to graduation at the exit interview with the Community Engaged Learning Coordinator.

The following items are **required** for the Community Engaged Learning Portfolio:

- The syllabus, projects, and assignments from your Community Engaged Learning classes
- Copies of Community Engaged Learning contracts for any course adapted into Community Engaged Learning courses
- An unofficial transcript documenting 9 Credits of Community Engaged Learning course work
- The reflection piece from your capstone project
- Photos of your service experience
- Report from AggieSync or IPT showing your approved 400 hours of service

The following items are **suggested** for the Community Engaged Learning Portfolio:

- Reflective journal entries
- Newspaper articles highlighting your service or projects
- Resource information about the agency with which you served
- Research regarding the community issue addressed
- Letters of thanks or evaluations of your work from community partners or faculty

MEET WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING ADVISOR

Students are required to meet with the CEL coordinator each semester. This meeting should cover questions about scholar requirements, capstone project ideas, and progress toward completing program requirements. Meetings will be set up prior to the priority registration period for the next semester, so students can properly plan their courses to meet Scholar requirements.

CAPSTONE WORKSHOP

A series of orientations are offered Fall semester annually. These cover expectations of the Community Engaged Scholars Program, training on AggieSync, and offer time for meeting other scholars and asking questions. Workshops are typically 1-1.5 hours long, and take place in Sept and Oct. Scholars are only required to attend one of these orientation workshops, but multiple will be provided to ensure each scholar can attend. Exact dates and times will be shared at the start of the Fall semester. It is an

expectation you attend the first Fall after you've been accepted into the program, although you are welcome to attend each year.

MAINTAIN HIGH GPA

To graduate as a Community Engaged Learning Scholar, you must maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA. The program will pull GPA's on a semester basis, so up to date information is available during your semester meetings with the S-L Coordinator. If your GPA slips below a 3.0, a plan will be made to ensure you can continue on your path of graduating with the CE Certificate.

GETTING STARTED

Submit online application at <http://www.usu.edu/asusu/servicelearning/scholarsApplication.cfm> or to the Community Engaged Learning Program in TSC 318. *Note: application are received on a rolling basis, but spots are limited annually.*

Once you have submitted your completed application, the Community Engaged Learning Coordinator will review and determine if you are a good fit for the program. The Community Engaged Learning Coordinator will contact you regarding your application and, if satisfactory, will notify you of your acceptance as a Scholar.

If you have questions regarding the Scholars program, requirements, or capstone projects, please stop by TSC 318 to speak with staff from Community Engaged Learning Program to learn more!

Begin volunteering. The Val R. Christensen Service Center, TSC 332, has many volunteer projects, including one-time events or ongoing volunteer opportunities. You may participate in these projects if you choose, or you may volunteer at any non-profit organization or governmental agency that meets a community need. The Service-Center and Community Engaged Learning program maintain a list of community needs from CBI Community partners on AggieSync. Scholars can review this list for on-going volunteer or internship opportunities, as well as check out Service Center clubs and other upcoming on-time volunteer events.

Be observant while volunteering. Try to notice something different each time you volunteer. Listen to those with whom you serve, whether they are service clients, agency workers, or other volunteers. Then ask yourself some questions.

- *Why is there a need for my service?*
- *What is the underlying problem and why does it exist?*
- *What social, economic, political, and educational systems cause or perpetuate the problem?*
- *What can I do to work for change?*
- *How is my education preparing me to address this problem?*

Track your volunteer hours. Track your volunteer hours both tied to Community Engaged Learning courses and during your personal time using AggieSync at: https://orgsync.com/sso_redirect/utah-state-university (link can be found on left sidebar of My.USU.edu). When recording hours you should indicate the title of the event or volunteer opportunity, who you volunteered with, your supervisor's name and contact information, and any reflection you'd like to include. Once you begin your capstone project, these hours should be labeled as such as well. You should record your hours regularly on an ongoing basis.

Develop a Personal Graduation Timeline. Review the current list of designated Community Engaged Learning courses and determine which will fit into your schedule, when you will start work on your capstone, and how to fit all 400 service hours in before graduation. Remember, you can make ANY

course into a Community Engaged Learning course by creating a contract with your instructor to add a service project to the course requirements. Prepare to spend a minimum of 50-100 of the 400 hours on your capstone project. Please see the Appendix for the sample Graduation Timeline and Contract Form.

Meet with the Community Engaged Learning Scholar Coordinator once a semester. Review the Personal Graduation Timeline and the fulfillment of certificate requirements. **You may be eliminated from the program if you do not make contact with Community Engaged Learning staff for at least two consecutive semesters.** This applies to responding to emails.

Begin thinking about your capstone project. After serving in various capacities, begin to focus and make a commitment to one or two organizations or fields of service. The capstone project offers a way for you to synthesize your community service and your academic work. FYI, your capstone proposal form is due two semesters before you graduate, so start planning ahead.

Begin gathering items for your portfolio. Save your projects and assignments from your Community Engaged Learning classes, take pictures of your service experiences, and keep a journal about things you are learning to be included in your final portfolio.



APPENDIX A: REFLECTIONS ON YOUR SERVICE

Describe the service activities you have performed during this month, and some of the results you have seen. For example: I tutored three elementary aged children this month and have noticed that they are completing and returning their homework more often.

What challenges have you experienced this month in your service, and what steps have you taken to resolve those challenges?

Describe what you are planning to do in the month ahead.

4. Explain how this project relates to your academic course of study.

5. Explain how this project will be sustainable after you have graduated as a Community Engaged Learning Scholar

Student Signature

Date

Community Engaged Learning Scholar Advisor Signature

Date



APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING SCHOLARS CAPSTONE EVALUATION

Name: _____

A#: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Local Address: _____

Major(s) and Minor(s): _____

Semester and year you intend to graduate: _____

On a separate sheet of paper take time to reflect on your Capstone experience. Answer the following questions:

1. Describe the problem or issue you addressed through your capstone project. Did you discover other related issues or problems as you completed your service?
2. Describe your Capstone Project: What did you do? What worked and what did not work?
3. Describe the steps you took and the hours you spent to complete the project described above.
4. How did you incorporate your academic course of study into this project?
5. Explain the steps you have taken to ensure the project will be sustainable after you have graduated as a Community Engaged Learning Scholar.



APPENDIX D: COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING CONTRACT

*A Community Engaged Learning Contract is an agreement between a Community Engaged Scholar and an instructor to take an UPPER-DIVISION course for Community Engaged Learning (SL) credit. The instructor decides what exercises are worthy of Community Engaged Learning credit and whether the student has earned Community Engaged Learning credit. The work is not generally graded and does not affect the student's grade in the class. **The deadline for a student to file a Contract is no later than the fourth week of classes.***

THE PROCEDURES:

Students: Pick up a contract from the Community Engaged Learning Coordinator before the end of the second week of classes. Ask your instructor if he/she would be willing to work with you on a project worthy of Community Engaged Learning credit. If so, legibly print the information below and return the completed and signed contract to the Community Engaged Learning Coordinator.

Instructor: If you agree to take on this additional teaching responsibility, describe the work that the student will complete and sign below as indicated. Questions? Email Kristin Brubaker (Kristin.brubaker@usu.edu). The Community Engaged Learning Scholars Program will send you a copy of the contract at the end of the semester to verify completion.

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Student's Name | Student's Email | Student's A # |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|

| | | |
|-------------------|-------|-----|
| Instructor's Name | Title | UMC |
|-------------------|-------|-----|

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Instructor's Email | Course Title |
|--------------------|--------------|

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Course: Department, Number | Credit Hours | Semester/Year |
|----------------------------|--------------|---------------|

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Student's Signature | Date |
|---------------------|------|

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| Instructor's Signature | Date |
|------------------------|------|

THE REQUIREMENTS:

- Contracts are for use by Community Engaged Scholars only.
- The contract must be for an upper-division class that is part of the student’s plan of study.
- Contracts may not be used retroactively for classes taken previously.
- “Incompletes” are not permitted. The student must finish the Community Engaged Learning work in the semester contracted.

THE WORK:

The work needs to meet a community need, integrating learning, action, and reflection (usually a reflective paper, relating the activity to the disciplinary content being discussed in the course and what the student learned through the activity about the discipline, the community needs, and themselves). The work should provide intellectual enrichment that goes beyond regular course material. The student and the instructor should meet outside of class at least bimonthly to discuss the project. The community agency or partner the student is working with must be involved in the development of the project. Please outline below the following:

- Brief Description of Service-earning Credit Project:
- How the project ties to course concepts
- The community agency the student will be working with (include supervisor and contact information) :

END OF SEMESTER

By signing this you certify that the Community Engaged Learning Contract was completed as planned and to your satisfaction. Form must be completed and returned to the Community Engaged Learning Coordinator, or TSC 318 by the last day of classes.

Instructor’s Signature

Date



APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING SCHOLARS GRADUATION CHECKLIST

This checklist is to be completed by the Community Engaged Scholar and should be reviewed by the coordinator during the Exit Interview. The Exit Interview must be conducted at least one month before the scholar's graduation.

The following items should be included in the Community Engaged Learning Portfolio:

- ✓ Monthly Time Sheets documenting 400 Hours of community service. Should be turned in once a semester and compiled in your portfolio.
- ✓ An unofficial transcript documenting 9 Credits of Community Engaged Learning course work.
- ✓ Syllabi from Community Engaged Learning classes as well as Community Engaged Learning projects included in portfolio.
- ✓ Copies of Community Engaged Learning contracts for any course adapted into Community Engaged Learning courses.
- ✓ The capstone project reflection piece

The following items are suggested for the Community Engaged Learning Portfolio

- Pictures of your service experiences.
- Reflective journal entries.
- Any newspaper articles highlighting your service or projects.
- Any resource information about the agency with which you served.
- Any research regarding the community issue addressed.

The following forms must be completed by the Community Engaged Scholar and will be kept in the scholar's file and reviewed during the Exit Interview.

- ✓ The Community Engaged Scholars Application.
- ✓ The Community Engaged Learning Capstone Project Proposal.
- ✓ The Community Engaged Learning Capstone Project Evaluation.



APPENDIX F: COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLARS PERSONAL GRADUATION TIMELINE

| <h3>Personal Graduation Timeline</h3> | |
|---|--|
| Student Name: | |
| First Semester Enrolled Date _____ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete monthly times logs for the whole semester regardless of enrollment date. Attend orientation Begin thinking about Capstone project |
| Each Semester Enrolled Date: _____ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record volunteer hours on AggieSync weekly for the entire semester. Meet with the coordinator (If you do not contact the coordinator for two consecutive semesters you may be removed from the program). Update your Personal Graduation Timeline. Watch for emails and attend scholar’s socials and events and network with other Community Engaged Scholars. |
| Two Semesters Before Graduation Date: _____ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn in the capstone project proposal form. Begin working on your capstone project and compiling your Community Engaged Learning Portfolio Continue logging hours and meeting with the S-L Advisor |
| Semester Of Graduation Date: _____ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Capstone project at start of final semester. Complete the reflection piece for your capstone project and compile portfolio. Turn in the capstone project evaluation form and portfolio by 2nd week in October (Fall graduates) and before Spring Break (Spring graduates). |
| One month Before Graduation Date: _____ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet w/Coordinator for exit interview no later than 2nd week of November (Fall graduates) and no later than last week of March (Spring graduates) Develop poster and attend graduation poster session and banquet Receive information about graduation recognition. Receive your Community Engaged Learning graduation cords. Confirm that the Community Engaged Learning distinction appears on your transcript. |
| After Graduation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in touch! We’d love to hear how you continue working with your community. |

