COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING FACULTY HANDBOOK

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

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. Through CEL 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, CEL also can provide engaging classroom discussion, enhance the experience students have, and provide research and networking opportunities for faculty. At USU, CEL aims to be always create a mutually beneficial relationship between the university and the community, improving learning experiences while providing assistance to local governments, nonprofits, and the common good.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING

Community-Engaged Learning is a teaching method that utilizes **student engagement** 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 CEL 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:

- Leads to new avenues for research and publication
- Promotes active learning; engages students with different learning styles
- Develops students' civic and leadership skills
- Boosts course enrollment by attracting highly motivated and engaged students
- Provides networking opportunities with engaged faculty in other disciplines
- Fosters relationships between faculty and community organizations, which can open new opportunities for collaborative work

> 'Applying what I learned in class helped the material stick. I am very happy that USU partners with community agencies because it helps students and families alike.'

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) brought together six existing programs dedicated to community engagement, service, and AmeriCorps. The department combines the staff, missions, and values of Aggie Blue Bikes, Education Outreach, Community-Engaged 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 active citizens through community engagement. By coming together under one department, CCE has become the campus hub for community engagement, providing greater institutional vision and direction. CCE staff are available for support in facilitating community partnerships and designing and implementing CEL courses.

CCE Student Learning Objectives:

1. Develop Civic Awareness:
   - Articulate civic responsibilities and provide examples of active citizenship.
   - Identify systemic causes of social and/or environmental problems.

2. Develop Civic Knowledge/Skills:
   - Understand and use effective communication strategies to listen, express, and collaborate toward civic action.
   - Connect and extend knowledge of one's own academic discipline to the public good.

3. Engage in Civic Action:
   - Identify and evaluate assets, strengths, challenges, and opportunities in partnership with community.
   - Design and implement solutions to community-identified social and environmental challenges.

COMMUNITY BRIDGE INITIATIVE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Community Bridge partnership program, offered by the USU Center for Community Engagement (CCE), links community-identified needs to USU courses and resources.   Based on the successful CBI pilot year with Logan City, courses and students are matched with community-identified projects. Community Partners complete a project application(s) and an MOU prior to work on their site, providing liability protection for faculty and USU. During the application process, community partners also define their community needs and proposed priority projects that can be matched with courses. Through this process, information about potential community 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 CEL component into their course(s) should contact CCE staff, who can provide them with a list of Community Partners that have completed MOUs and proposed projects. Faculty who are interested in working with a partner who does not have a completed MOU can also contact CCE and our staff will walk the partner through the MOU process.
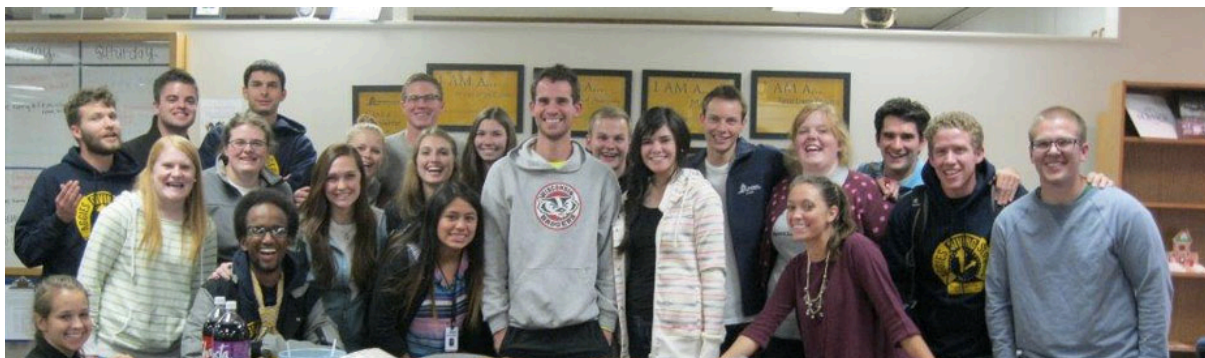
COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING AT USU

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 CEL courses. Students who have completed CEL courses often share that these courses provide an opportunity to learn practical skills, experienced deeper learning, and increase civic responsibility – developing their sense of responsibility to apply knowledge attained at USU to the greater good. "I learned that application is completely different than just planning something," one student responded in course assessments. "Getting out there and doing things and coming into contact with people who aren't your professors makes school a completely different experience." Additionally, almost 88% of students planning to take future USU courses stated that because of their CEL course experience, they would seek out additional CEL designated courses. CEL student learning objectives aim to provide opportunities for all CEL students to build Civic Knowledge, Civic Skills, and Civic Responsibility.

Community-Engaged Learning (formerly Service-Learning) courses have been designated in the course catalog since 2014. Student transcripts list CEL courses, so students can easily identify which courses they completed tied course content to community-identified needs. Community-Engaged Learning courses can be identified by the "CEL" at the end of a course title on the semester course listing.

PROCESS OF CREATING A CEL COURSE

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

With the rollout of the CBI Partnership in Fall 2016, all CEL courses will be implementing an updated partnership process, aimed to better foster relationships, set clear goals, and agree to roles and work expectations prior to the start of the class. Through this 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 CEL course. The CEL program will also keep a list of Community Partner project proposals, to be used to match courses with community-identified needs.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING PROCESS

1. **Course Matching** – Community Partners and Faculty should check with the CEL 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 good match.

2. **Designation Form** – Faculty are required to complete and submit a CEL Course Designation Form to acquire the CEL course attribute. This form can be completed at any time, but we ask for it by the end of the second month of the semester to have courses listed in Banner prior to student registration. For the online CEL course designation form, https://cel.usu.edu/faculty/celcourseform

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. SOW forms 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 an overview of the community issue or challenge, agency background, and goals of the project.
5. **Mid-Semester Check-In** – A scheduled mid-semester meeting provides structured time for faculty and community partners to discuss progress, determine if any SOW changes are necessary, and address any challenges or concerns.
6. **Assessment** – After the completion of the semester and the project, community partners, faculty, and students complete a short survey to provide feedback, discuss impact, identify areas for improvement, and share accomplishments.

DESIGNATING A COURSE AS COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING (CEL)

Once a project is matched with a course, a CEL designation form should be completed. The form will request basic information including course information, details on CEL, and community partner particulars. 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 S-L course offerings under each subject will be listed

> 'The biggest success of Service-Learning is having the opportunity to apply the course material in a way that would help someone else'

MINI GRANTS

Faculty who teach CEL designated courses are eligible to apply for CEL mini grants to cover costs associated with the community engagement 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) and May 15th (for Fall semester). At this time, mini grants are not available for summer courses.

REQUIREMENTS OF COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING

There are a diversity of Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) courses and projects. However, all CEL courses at USU do have some similar structural requirements. The requirements of teaching a CEL course are outlined below.

INCORPORATION OF CEL ELEMENTS IN SYLLABUS

- ***Meaningful Service Activity-*** CEL is not adding "volunteer" activities to a course. It is the integration of community-based work and classroom learning so that students can apply knowledge and skills learned in class to meet real community-identified needs. **The students' learning experience is measured and graded through reflection activities**.
- ***Reflection*** – Reflection is an essential element of a CEL 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 ways, depending on instructor preference. Some common forms of reflection include journal writing, discussion questions, or classroom/small group discussions.

COURSE DESIGNATION FORM

A designation form can be found on the CEL website. In order for a course to be listed with the CEL course attribute, the instructor must complete and submit the course designation form and receive approval from the CEL Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC). The FAC provides instructors with feedback on how they can improve the CEL component of their course

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

 A key component of high-quality community engagement is reciprocal partnerships between faculty and the community partner(s). The community partner can be an agency or organization serving the local, state, national, or international community. In all cases, the community project should be defined by the community partner in collaboration with faculty. CEL courses should model reciprocity, providing learning opportunities for students, teaching and research opportunities for faculty, and needed work for community partners.

ASSESSMENT

Community Partners, Faculty, and Students will be required to complete assessments at the end of each semester. Assessments measure community-engaged learning outcomes. Assessments will be sent out in the final weeks of each semester to all students completing CEL courses. Assessments are conducted through Qualtrics or faculty can request physical copies.

SCOPE OF WORK (SOW)

Prior to the start of the semester, community partners and faculty are encouraged to 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 signed document. Scope of Work forms can be found in the 'resources' section of the CEL website.

RECORDING HOURS

Students will be required to record their service hours in AggieSync. A training for students can be arranged at the start of the semester to ensure students are properly recording hours completed. Faculty can request a final report of students' hours completed through the CEL program for grading, research, or class reporting.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The CEL program aims to develop civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic responsibility among students. CEL courses help accomplish these outcomes, and the end-of-semester assessment measures student growth in these 3 areas.

RESOURCES

Additional resources are available for faculty interested in developing CEL courses on the USU CEL website: https://cel.usu.edu/

Some of the essential resources found on the website are listed below. If questions remain, the CEL Program Coordinator is available for additional support in the matching of faculty with community needs and development of syllabi.

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 the community partner providing an introduction prior to the community-based project, it is important that students receive training on professional behavior and expectations when working with community partners. This information can also be found on the CEL website under resources.

TIPS AND PITFALLS TO COMPLETING A DESIGNATION FORM

This document outlines the essential elements of a high-quality CEL course.

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.