

**Community-Engaged Teaching**

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

**HANDBOOK**

**Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in partnering with a Washington University community-engaged teaching (CET) course. Also known as service-learning, distinguishing features of CET include targeted learning activities in a community context, faculty oversight, and course content and assignments connected to activities in the community. The University houses over 80 CET course across all disciplines.

**About the Gephardt Institute**

The Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement promotes life-long civic engagement and sustained community impact through community engagement initiatives at Washington University. The support of CET courses and programs is an integral strategy in support of this goal. The Institute provides consulting, technical support, and resources to faculty developing and implementing CET courses.

**About CET**

CET courses provide students with the opportunity to engage with community-based organizations to tackle issues and support programming that connects to their academic course work. Students gain experience and insight into how academic learning impact real word issues while creating partnerships between the University and the community. Community organizations gain energy, insight, and knowledge of students who are studying skills and issues related to the needs of the organization. CET enhances academic learning, encourages civic engagement, builds partnerships between the University and community agencies, and promotes sustained community impact.

We appreciate your involvement in CET at Washington University. By partnering with a course you are providing students with valuable experiences in service and learning. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at [gephardtinstitute@wustl.edu](mailto:gephardtinstitute@wustl.edu).

**Community-Engaged Teaching Overview**

**What is Community Engagement?**

Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

-Carnegie Classification’s Definition for Community Engagement

**What is Community-Engaged Teaching?**

It is a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection, as students…seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves. In the process, students link personal and social development with academic and cognitive development.

–Eyler & Giles (1999)

**Core Principles of Community-Engaged Teaching**

1. Reciprocal partnership and mutual benefit to all participants
2. Open and intentional communication
3. Cultural humility and self-awareness
4. Balancing community needs and pedagogical goals
5. Respect for the history of organizations, partnerships, and university-community relations
6. Reflection on the part of students and community partners
7. Assessment and evaluation of student learning and community impact

**Core Components of Community-Engaged Teaching**

1. Faculty oversight
   1. Faculty ensures that CET activities are mutually beneficial to the community and students’ learning.
   2. Faculty ensures that students have the resources, skills, and knowledge necessary to engage in community contexts.
   3. Faculty are available to community partners to discuss projects.
2. Targeted learning activities in a community context
   1. Faculty and staff work with community representatives to develop experiences or projects that connect to the learning objectives of the course and support the mission or programming of the organization.
   2. Students draw on course content to achieve the goals of the community engagement.
3. Course content and assignments connected to activities in the community
   1. Courses include readings and assignments that provide students with skills and knowledge that applies to community engagement.
   2. Course content and assignments provide students with the opportunity to make connections and critically analyze how the academic component and community components of the course align.
   3. Course content and assignments provide students with opportunities for structured reflection on their community experience.

**Expectations of Community Partners**

**Remember students involved in CET service are learning.**

Students in CET courses are connecting the service component of the course to the academic component if the course. Students may ask questions about the organizational structure, the client population, and systemic issues facing organizations to integrate their learning.

**Provide an orientation**

Students should be given a good, structured orientation to your agency, staff, and clients and should be familiarized with the mission and philosophy of your agency.

Tips for Providing a Successful Orientation

A thorough orientation should make students feel confident and knowledgeable about their roles and duties at your agency. The orientation should include the following, if applicable:

* A tour of the facility.
* An introduction to staff and directors.
* A review of rules, regulations, and policies (topics such as parking and safety should be discussed).
* A discussion of the duties and responsibilities of the student.
* An explanation of the communication structures.
* A discussion of the Board of Directors and attendance at a Board of Directors meeting.

**Ensure students have adequate supervision**

The relationship between supervisor and student is vital to achieving the goals of the community-engaged teaching partnership. As a supervisor, you may be the student's first contact with serving in his/her community. Alongside their academic learning, students will develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to achieve project goals and understand the role of volunteer service in community-based organizations. The supervisor is considered to be a partner in the student's education during his/her experience.

Tips for successful supervision

* Set realistic expectations. Remember that you will have to be aware of the semester schedule and adapt accordingly (offer training sessions during the early part of the semester and expect students for only 10-12 weeks at the most).
* Develop a communication plan with students. The communication plan should include key points of contact, a reporting timeline, and best methods for communication.
* Develop a work plan for students including work plan and hours.
* Ensure students have the access to the information they need to complete the project.
* Hold students accountable for their work.
* Help students understand their experience. Discuss challenges and successes; be open to questions about the organization, community, and client population.
* Acknowledge students contributions to your organization: celebrate successes, thank students for their contributions, and let them know how you will use their work.

**Contact Information**

Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement

Danforth University Center, Suite 150

Washington University in St. Louis

Phone: 314-935-5599

Fax: 314-935-6609

E-mail: gephardtinstitute@wustl.edu

Matthew Bakko

Research Manager and Instructional Specialist

Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement

Phone: 314-935-8182

Email: matthewbakko@wustl.edu