

The curriculum committee adopts and affirms the Proposed CEL (Community-Engaged Learning) Course Guidelines

Community-engaged teaching and learning courses are closely connected to Juniata's mission to empower our students to develop the skills, knowledge and values that lead to a fulfilling life of service and ethical leadership in the global community. Community-engaged learning (CEL) courses result in benefits for students, as well as for the community and the college. All forms and models of community-engaged teaching and learning are expected to meet the standards of quality outlined below.

While all community-engaged learning is generally considered experiential, not all experiential service or volunteering is considered to be service-learning or community-engaged learning. CEL is thus recognized as both a pedagogy and a high-impact, experiential learning practice.

Because Community-Engaged Learning is an academically rigorous educational experience for students, at Juniata College, the curriculum committee will use clear criteria to assess whether or not a particular course fits with the definition and best practices outlined below by the CEL committee. A course at Juniata that follows a traditional service-learning model or any other community-engaged learning model may receive the CEL (Community-Engaged Learning) designation when the following criteria are demonstrated in the syllabus/course proposal:

- The syllabus makes clear how community-engagement is tied to the content and learning objectives of the course.
- Students engage in a reciprocal partnership with a community partner as part of the course and expectations for student engagement with community partners are clearly outlined in the syllabus.
- The process for preparing students to engage with the community partner and to work in the community is part of the course.
- The processes for evaluating and grading student's participation is clearly articulated in the syllabus (note: best practice in community-engaged teaching and learning is to grade the learning, not the quantity of service).
- Ongoing, systematic reflection and feedback, individual and/or group, is an element of course work and is used as a measure of student learning. Instructions on, and standards for, quality reflection are provided to students.

For further articulation of these concepts as they relate to course planning and development see below.

Constructing the CEL Syllabus

When applying for CEL designation, CEL course instructors are encouraged to consult with the Director of Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning in preparation of the syllabus and course proposal. In addition, instructors should also send the names of community partners to the Director of Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning as soon as that information is known.

The content of a CEL course syllabus should frame the community-engaged learning experience for students by featuring engagement with a community partner as a core theme of the CEL course. The syllabus should clearly state how community-engaged learning supports the course content and learning objectives. The syllabus should also make clear what is expected of students in their engagement to a community partner, and how community-engagement factors into grading and assessment of student learning.

If it is consistent with the learning objectives of the class that students are required to identify and build their own community partnerships, the course proposal submitted by the instructor should make clear how that responsibility connects to the learning objectives and what type of community organization will best meet the learning objectives of the course. The syllabus should indicate that students will be provided instruction for how to appropriately contact a community partner and reflect that students will receive preparation/training on best practices for building partnerships before making contact with a potential community partner.

Sarah Worley, Director of Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning

Best practice in community-engaged teaching and learning is to grade the learning, not the service, which should be stated in the syllabus and reflected in the course grade outline. Students should not receive a grade for completing some number of service hours but rather for the learning that happens because of the service and engagement as demonstrated by reflections, projects, and presentations.

Community-engaged teaching and learning is recognized as a high-impact practice by the American Association of Colleges and Universities. Instructors who request CEL designation for a course are encouraged to consider and incorporate the high-impact practice standards listed below with particular emphasis on ones marked with asterisks.

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES: EIGHT KEY ELEMENTS

- Performance expectations set at appropriately high levels*
- Significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time*
- Interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters*
- Experiences with diversity, wherein students are exposed to and must contend with people and circumstances that differ from those with which students are familiar
- Frequent, timely and constructive feedback*
- Periodic, structure opportunities to reflect and integrate learning*
- Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real world applications*
- Public demonstrations of competence

Ensuring Quality & Takin High Impact Practices to Scale (Kuh, O'Donnell, Reed)

Proposed Definition of Community Partner for CEL

For the purpose of Community-Engaged Learning, community partnerships can be formed with any local, regional, national or international organization for whom the partnership is both mutually beneficial and focused on purpose and process rather than activity and place. These partnerships may include, but are not limited to, schools (including Juniata), religious institutions, small businesses, big businesses, non-profits and community-based organizations. As Judith Ramaley states, "An ideal partnership matches up the academic strengths and goals of the university with the assets and interests of the community" (2000, p. 241). Community voice should be included at every stage in the course or project, when possible.