# Partners and Benefits of Community-Engaged Learning

**OVERALL EXPECTATIONS FOR BOTH COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND FACULTY:**

- Community partners and faculty will work together to satisfy the relevant CEL elements, including reciprocal partnerships, benefit to the common good, and academic relevance. Community partners and faculty should view themselves as co-educators in training students to understand and address important social issues.
- Community partners and faculty should strive to provide CEL opportunities consistent with our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and justice.
- The Community Engagement Center will work with community partners and faculty to identify a shared scope of work that will be mutually beneficial.
- CEL students will engage in service on a consistent basis on direct service and/or project-based activities that further student learning and the mission of the community partner. Minimum hours to be determined by faculty members.
- Students, faculty, and community partners will adhere to university risk management and liability procedures.
- For CEL courses, faculty will assign academic credit for learning, not for service. Credit is earned through connecting the service experience with academic material through the reflection/inquiry process, rather than completing a specific number of service hours.
- For record-keeping purposes, students are asked to keep track of their hours and both faculty and community partners are expected to review and sign off on their online time logs at the end of the academic semester.

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**STUDENTS**

Students come from a variety of majors and departments to participate in CEL. The scope of work for students is developed collaboratively between the faculty member and the community partner and is outlined in a course syllabus and through a Student Learning Agreement (SLA). Students should be able to see when a course is designated as Service Learning (SL) or Curricular Community-Engaged Learning (CCEL) in the schedule of classes. They also learn that they are in CEL courses when their faculty members explain this component at the start of the semester.

**CEL benefits students in many ways:**

- Opportunities to deepen their understanding of academic content and apply it beyond the classroom
- Practicing critical thinking, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills
- Strengthening communication skills (both written and oral)
- Cultivating capacity to understand and address complex social issues
- Opportunities to develop empathy (understanding the experiences and situations of others)
- Experiences to strengthen resumés and/or graduate school applications
- Career exploration; professional networking resources and opportunities
- Opportunities to strengthen leadership qualities and skills

**FACULTY**

The Community Engagement Center works with faculty to help them integrate CEL into their courses. CEL benefits faculty in three important areas:

- **Teaching** – CEL augments faculty teaching by helping to "make real" the concepts discussed in the classroom. By connecting the classroom to the campus and local community, CEL can deepen a student's understanding of complex ideas and improve faculty teaching.

- **Research** – CEL can create opportunities for faculty to conduct research and evaluation and provides opportunities to overlap one's own scholarly agendas with a CEL experience. Faculty can also pursue collaborative research and grant-writing opportunities with CEL community partners.

- **Service (University and Community)** – CEL helps connect faculty to other faculty on campus, to campus-wide programs, and to organizations throughout the Sacramento region. CEL provides faculty with opportunities to address University needs and/or issues of social justice and civic responsibility through unique University-community and intra-campus partnerships.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

Community partner organizations play a significant role as co-educators for Sacramento State students through CEL. The list of our community partners can be found on our website.

The Community Engagement Center works closely with local non-profits, schools, businesses and government agencies to build long-term, sustainable partnerships that promote service and engagement for Sacramento State students, faculty, staff and alumni. Since one in 20 capitol region residents is a Sacramento State alumnus, our community partners are contributing to an educated and prepared regional workforce.

Community partners complement faculty teaching by linking community-based experiences with course-based learning. CEL students can work with organizations through direct service and/or project-based learning. CEL focuses on knowledge exchange, shared learning and capacity building. The engaged community partner values student/faculty involvement in the work of the organization, participates in planning activities, communicates limitations and expectations clearly, and provides necessary supervision/support for students.

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**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER (CEC)**

CEC's role is to facilitate connections between Sac State faculty and organizations in the Sacramento region. The bulk of organizations with whom we work provide services to underserved and/or underrepresented groups throughout the area. Together, we identify community needs and potential ways our faculty and students can work to respond to them.

In terms of partnership development, faculty can either bring partners to the CEC or the CEC can pursue partners on behalf of the faculty. Finally, community partners can come to the CEC in pursuit of connections with faculty.

The CEC assists with:

- Training faculty in CEL strategies and best practices through Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs);
- Bringing faculty and community partners together;
- Identifying program specific service and/or project needs;
- Initiating the Community Partnership Agreements between Procurement and Contract Services at Sacramento State and the community partner;

- Positioning community partner organizations to leverage resources at Sacramento State;
- Completing or working with faculty to complete a Site Assessment;
- Coordinating placement logistics for faculty members and students through an online platform, CEC Connect, that also helps us to track risk management components – liability and FERPA waivers and code of conduct forms for students. When signed, a FERPA waiver allows the community partner site supervisor to speak with a faculty member about a student's performance at a community partner site.