

Community Service-Learning Guiding Questions for Curricular Partnership Meetings



Meeting with community partners can set the stage for a more meaningful experience for students and the community. Meetings can clarify expectations, lead to shared goals, and establish a foundation for more in-depth projects. CS-L assists faculty members in:

- developing Service-Learning (S-L) goals that emerge from course learning outcomes;
- identifying potential community partners; and
- facilitating meetings between faculty members and possible community partners.

Discussing where community priorities and S-L goals align can be a rich and intriguing dialogue. The following questions are intended to uncover that potential alignment and determine the objectives and details of the project. CS-L is here to support you in every step of the partnership. Contact Mary Denlinger (denlinml@jmu.edu) or Steve Grande (grandese@jmu.edu) for additional resources and support as you engage in this transformative pedagogy.

Meeting Date: _____

Faculty Member's Name: _____

Course Name: _____

Community Organization(s) Name: _____

Community Partner(s') name, phone number and email: _____

Community priority, asset, and/or concern being addressed: _____

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: What do all stakeholders want students to learn from this Service-Learning course (academic content, professional application, service/social justice/civic engagement skills, leadership, etc.)?

- Faculty member discusses goals and objectives of the course, and shares course syllabus.
 - Community partner shares information about the history, mission, client-base, and goals of the organization; and a list of essential procedures and guidelines for working with the agency or organization.
-
-
-

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES:

- What do all the stakeholders (especially people working most closely with the service-learners) want the impact of the students to be in the community?
 - What are the unique capacities and strengths in this community and how might students amplify those strengths?
 - How might the concerns expressed by members of the community connect to larger societal concerns and/or the Sustainable Development Goals? <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
-
-
-

SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Describe the service-learning project(s) students will be involved in with the partner site(s). Consider the following types of engagement:

- **Direct** engagement involves person-to-person contact that directly impacts individuals. This type of engagement is typically site-based.
- **Indirect** engagement includes initiatives that increase the capacity of the community or organization at large. This type of engagement is usually project-based. Students may spend time on-site and partners may come to campus.
- **Research-based** engagement involves students collecting, analyzing and presenting information in partnership with community-based organizations or the community at large. It can take place on-campus, in the community, or a combination of both.
- **Advocacy** engagement allows students to utilize their skills to create awareness, educate others, and incite social change in local, national, or international communities. This type of engagement is usually issue-based and can take place on-campus, in the community, or a combination of both.

PREPARING FOR ENGAGEMENT increases the likelihood that there will be positive outcomes for all stakeholders. Since S-L design can vary widely, it is important to consider what type of preparation is needed and which activities will be the responsibility of the faculty member, CS-L, students or community partners. Some of these considerations may include:

- **Logistics**

- How many students will/can be connected with the community partner?
 - Is there a certain number of hours students are expected to serve?
 - Will students be working in groups?
 - How many students will it realistically require to complete the project?
 - Transportation? Parking?
 - What entrance should students use?
 - What dress code should students adhere to?
-
-
-

- **Dates**

- When will students begin and conclude their engagement?
 - What days and times are available?
 - Discuss any other important dates:
 - Academic schedule: <https://www.jmu.edu/registrar/academic-calendar.shtml>
 - In-class orientation date
 - Mid-semester check-in date
 - End of semester presentations, posters, evaluations, etc.
-
-
-
-

Supervision and Oversight

- What type of oversight will be provided by the community partner?
 - Who will supervise the students? Is there a backup supervisor?
 - How will the project be monitored? If a certain number of hours are expected, how will these be tracked?
 - What type of oversight will be provided by the faculty member?
-
-
-

• Communication

- What are the preferred titles, names and pronouns for supervisors and/or others with whom students may interact?
 - What language should students use? Avoid?
 - How should students and faculty contact the supervisor?
 - How should students communicate that they will be absent or late?
 - How should community partner(s) contact the faculty member?
 - What is the protocol for discussing any concerns?
 - What will follow-up and check-ins look like during the semester?
-
-
-

• Orientation and Training

- What requirement(s) do students need to complete before starting (i.e., fingerprinting, background check, TB test, vaccines, paperwork, etc.)?
- What types of orientation occur prior to service?
- Do the students need training specific to their role?
- When/where will the training take place?
- How will students be prepared to respectfully engage with the community?
Please note, CS-L can facilitate pre-reflection and/or share resources to prepare students for the following considerations:
 - Mission, history, background, clientele, etc. of organization
 - Local community information
 - Social issue education
 - Professional, personal, and cultural humility
 - Issues of racial inequality
 - Power and privilege dynamics

- Students’ identities and backgrounds influencing attitudes, behaviors, expectations, and assumptions
 - Confidentiality protocol, electronic device etiquette, ethical photography
 - Utilizing a strengths-based approach to address community needs
 - Regarding community partners as experts and co-educators
 - Ensuring dignity and respect for all involved
-
-
-

REFLECTION is an essential component of S-L pedagogy. Facilitating meaning-making from students’ experience engaging with the community partner not only enhances student learning, but is critical to the aim of mutual beneficial relationships. Reflection promotes more thoughtful and ethical engagement when it is formalized before, during, and after students engage with their community partner. Opportunities to participate in the “process of analyzing, reconsidering, and questioning one’s experiences within a broad context of issues and content knowledge” (Jacoby, 2014, p. 26) will support students in moving beyond their experience to more complex and systemic thinking. CS-L is available to facilitate reflection and/or provide resources and reflection questions for your course.

- What type(s) of structured reflection will be integrated into the course and/or site?
 - How will the partners be involved in designing, implementing, evaluating and benefiting from on-going reflection activities?
-
-
-

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION built into the initial design of the S-L project is essential so the impact on students, faculty, and the community can be measured and reevaluated throughout the current semester and in anticipation of future semesters.

- How will student learning and the value of the service to the community be assessed (e.g. presentations, evaluations, papers, etc.)?
 - How will stakeholders assess the partnerships and identify strategies for improvement? Will there be an end of the semester meeting?
 - How will information from these assessments and evaluations be shared with all parties involved?
-

