Best Practices, Principles, and Values for Community Engaged Learning at UD

Co-Educators

- Share teaching responsibility between course instructor, community partner, and community members.
- Model together life-long learning for students and each other: "we are all teachers and we are all learners."
- Share the commitment to educating current leaders and creating future leaders.
- Share course syllabus with community partners and include their voice in creating the syllabus.
- Use teachable moments as part of the experiential learning process.

Commitment

- Place value on long-term relationships - balance short-term involvements with long term solution needs.
- Share expectations of time, supervisory roles, and commitment in the relationship.
- Be honest about interests, intentions, and motives. Be realistic so false hopes are not created.
- Celebrate successes and address challenges together.
- Strive for genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment to community partner and/or issue being addressed.

Compatibility

- Discuss values and beliefs; find commonalities as a basis for partnership.
- Be creative and flexible in aligning course objectives with community partners' diverse needs.
- Consider vulnerable populations and necessary student training, development, and learning that is needed.
- Select students that are interested/passionate about issue being addressed.
- Minimize distinction between student's community learning role and classroom learning role.

Humility and Empathy

- Encourage a space of constructive conversations and balanced advocacy and inquiry; listening and learning.
- Prepare students to view all roles, projects, and placements as valuable learning opportunities.
- Acknowledge and accept misunderstandings - use them as learning moments.
- Encourage students to reflect on their actions, roles, impact, and relationship in community.
- Include community voice throughout to impact students' cultural understandings and level of humility.
- Consider if we are unjustly sending students (or ourselves) as "experts."

Human Dignity

- Amplify community voice and constantly assess priorities and needs.
- Work "with" community partner, not "for."
- Reflect upon the systematic impact of our work: are we challenging status quo and stereotypes?
- Advocate for the rights of all people to ensure equal opportunity and fair access to resources.
- Interrogate structures of inequality, question the distribution of power, and seek to develop authentic relationships among all partners.

Impactful

- Make building the capacity of communities to realize their own goals a priority for project ideas and implementation.
- Contribute to community change; individual projects are in the context of broader community needs.
- Demonstrate personal investment and carefully consider projects that are meaningful to all.
- Build the partnership upon strengths and assets, but also address areas that need improvement.
- Integrate the project into course content, showing the relationship between the project and course goals.

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Mutual Benefit
- Value both the impact on community and impact on student learning.
- Avoid undue burden on community - ensure all involved gain from the situation.
- Equitably share resources and information to benefit everyone's participation.
- Discuss desired benefits and frequently check on mutuality of the partnership.
- Strive to avoid duplication of efforts.

Open and Clear Communication
- Co-outline expectations, roles, responsibilities, policies, and outcomes.
- Work together to provide appropriate orientation and ongoing training to sustain the process.
- Have knowledge of each other's programs and mission.
- Seek ongoing feedback and clarification.
- Establish and maintain clear, consistent, and high-quality communications.

Preparation
- Frame course using values, awareness, skills, and knowledge.
- Provide information on office/organization etiquette and professional behavior.
- Discuss ethical issues.
- Prepare students for learning in an experiential manner and from those in the community through relationship building.
- Have students learn and reflect on cultural humility, empathy, and "respect."

Reciprocal Partnerships
- Co-create and share partnership and project goals that are mutually beneficial.
- Co-create expectations, outcomes, design, assessment, and reflection.
- Focus on long-term, community identified goals, even with short-term project.
- Balance power among partners and enable resources among partners to be shared.

Reflective
- Establish and use reflective practices among all partners (faculty, community, and students).
- Share facilitation of reflection with community partners.
- Use reflection as a tool for assessment and evaluation of parntership.
- Use reflection to consider next steps for individuals, groups and community.
- Co-support students in connecting the social, historical, and political context of issues.

Respect and Promote Diversity
- Co-develop process and content goals related to diversity; structure training experiences using these goals.
- Support students in cultural identity development, understanding personal worldview, working across difference, building respectful relationships across difference, and analyzing how their personal experiences impact the work.
- Recognize, share, and incorporate differences to strengthen relationships.
- Respect, encourage, and appreciate world views and value systems of others (in and out of classroom).

Right Relationships
- Build relationships on trust and respect through constructive conversations.
- Use compatible communication methods: face to face supplemented by written communication.
- Bring in and validate the practical wisdom of community voice (service recipients and nonprofit partners).
- Use asset-based language.
- Value the mutually accessible story-telling of all partners, and include all in decision-making about use of resources.