Located between the City of Lockport and the City of Joliet, the Fairmont Community is an unincorporated part of Will County that is home to about 2,500 residents. If you drive there directly from Lewis, it takes about 12 minutes to get from the entrance of campus to the Fairmont Community Center, at the heart of the neighborhood, depending on traffic on the bridge into Lockport.

The community consists of homes built in a variety of styles, some well kept and others in disrepair, interspersed with vacant, undeveloped lots and some abandoned homes. Fairmont has struggled to attract investment and, according to an April 2012 report commissioned by the County “in many ways has been left behind by the growth which has occurred in other parts of Will County.”

Staff in the Office of Community Engaged Learning first became familiar with Fairmont during the spring of 2017 after Kathy Pecora from Will County Land Use invited Laura Wilmarth Tyna to visit a church working with youth in the neighborhood. It took some time to figure out how to collaborate, but this semester a more significant relationship has been forged with Fairmont. This has especially resulted from engagement with the Fairmont Community Partnership Group (FCPG), an organization of residents trying to seek change in the community led by DeLinda Herod.

This spring, two classes are partnering with Fairmont, with a third on the horizon this summer:

1. Peace Studies Capstone – Students of Dr. Christie Billups are partnering with Will County, the FCPG, and Lockport Park District to support work in the Fairmont Food Pantry, to evaluate the natural spaces in the community, to clearly identify vacant homes, and a variety of other tasks.

2. Strategic Management – Students in Dr. Jim Krejci’s course are working with the FCPG to assist them in developing a strategic plan for the organization so that they can prioritize their work.

3. Community Service Experience – This summer, social work students in Dr. Lorri McMeel’s course will continue partnering with many of the organizations and entities as established through the Peace Studies Capstone course.

There is a strong, grass-roots effort to get organized in Fairmont, under the leadership of the FCPG and staff in Will County Land Use, along with significant opportunities to collaborate. The Office of Community Engaged Learning hopes to continue growing this important relationship with Fairmont in the years to come.
COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH: SCHOLARSHIP INTEGRATED WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING STAFF

Community-based research (CbR) is a form of community engagement described as "a partnership of students, faculty and community members who collaboratively engage in research with the purpose of solving a pressing community problem or effecting social change" (Strand, et al, 2003). Community agencies, leaders and members are seeking answers to challenging questions; in response to these questions and in relationship and collaboration with the community, faculty and students are invited to employ research methods to gather, examine and analyze data in search of responses, actions and/or policies that will bring about greater equity and justice in the community. These collaborations provide opportunities for students who are seeking greater understanding and application of their learning that may create real-life responses to human dilemmas related to their field of study. Through community and academic cooperation, a win-win of learning and social change becomes possible.

Emergent CbR is already happening in various disciplines at Lewis University. Examples are found in disciplines as diverse as Sociology, Chemistry and Business Administration. In Applied Sociology, taught by Dr. Tennille Allen, students are working with a Joliet church that is celebrating 150 years of history to gather, appreciate and share the stories of its founders, families, and fellowships. Members of the Chemistry Department (Drs. Teresa Bixby, Daniel Kissel and Jason Keleher), in cooperation with students and faculty in Environmental Science, are working with the Will County Land Use Office and Joliet non-profit organizations to address toxic soil in a community interested in expanding its urban farming capacity. Chemistry students have been sampling and analyzing soil in order to imagine pathways and solutions toward soil remediation and safer gardens, playgrounds and neighborhoods for people on Joliet’s southeast side. Through the Strategic Management class taught by Dr. Jim Krejci, advanced business students have partnered with a variety of area organizations in order to study, innovate and strategize toward efficacy and success in their endeavors to serve certain populations or community needs. Numerous other academic areas are exploring the potential for this vital form of community engaged learning, such as Political Science, Peace Studies, and Community Health.

To enrich the conversation at Lewis about this engaging method of teaching, learning and community collaboration, Dr. Howard Rosing, Director of the Steans Center at DePaul University, was invited to share some innovations happening between DePaul University and the communities with which they partner. He spent the day at Lewis on March 15, 2018. Two sessions were offered for faculty in order to share successes and explore possibilities. The Office of Community Engaged Learning aims to accompany faculty and community partners toward more CbR collaborations to enrich student learning by partnering with agencies who are fostering just actions and policies in the area.
This semester in Dr. Justin Delacour’s American National Government, students work with Will County Habitat for Humanity, which helps low-income residents to purchase and rehabilitate homes. In the process of working with Will County Habitat for Humanity, students learn first-hand about how federal housing policy impacts local housing projects. Student engagement with Will County Habitat for Humanity meshes well with what students learn about the federal government’s social policies.

Students in Dr. Steven Nawara’s State and Local Government class have partnered with the Will County Forest Preserve in order to gain first-hand knowledge of the workings of a local governmental body. This spring, students have signed up for a variety of community engaged learning projects including identifying and removing invasive species, environmental management of the forest preserve sites, and collaborating with the Isle a la Cache Museum in Romeoville.
The Study Abroad Office is pleased to work with partner institutions and Lewis University faculty to offer community engaged learning opportunities for Lewis students around the world. Two such program locations are the semester and summer programs in San Jose, Costa Rica and Galway, Ireland.

Students participating in the San Jose, Costa Rica program can participate in community engaged learning opportunities while studying Spanish and taking other courses in either Spanish or English toward their degree requirements. Coordinated by International Studies Abroad (ISA) in partnership with Veritas University and local organizations, students can participate in community engaged learning courses in a range of areas, including community health, education and literacy, youth development, sports and leadership, and environment and conservation. During their time in Costa Rica, students are taken on a variety of excursions around this diverse country. In order to provide more opportunities for language learning and integration with the local community and culture, students live and eat with local families as part of the program. Students may participate in these opportunities in Costa Rica during the summer or during either the Fall or Spring semesters.

The National University of Ireland in Galway (NUI–Galway), Ireland offers Lewis study abroad students a special credit–bearing opportunity to engage with the local Galway community. Literacy and Learning in the Community, offered in either Fall or Spring semesters, is a combination of lectures about literacy acquisition, reflective seminars, and service at an after school program focusing on literacy at a local elementary school. The course can be taken as one of the courses that they take at NUI–Galway while studying toward their Lewis degree. Students live in residence halls and study alongside their Irish classmates, while getting a unique window into Irish culture through their community engaged learning experience.

To learn about these and other opportunities, please visit the Lewis Study Abroad website (www.lewisu.edu/studyabroad) or contact the Director of Study Abroad, Chris Swanson (swansoch@lewisu.edu, 815–836–5993)
The Fall 2017 semester saw two new accomplishments for community engaged learning projects in MKTG 47000 – Marketing Strategy: it was the first time the course had been offered during the fall semester, and the first time we saw a 100% success rate with our partners for Community Engaged Learning projects. Working with 22 students and five partners, The Center for Disability Services, Community Lifeline Ministries, Crisis Line of Will & Grundy Counties, Habitat for Humanity–ReStore, and the Veterans Assistance Commission of Will County, we undertook five community engaged projects that all resulted in effective outcomes for our community partners.

While we have generally had success with the projects in this class, this is the first time across three semesters, five sections, and 23 projects that all of the projects delivered strong results. The first causal factor for our 100% success rate was the first implementation of a new program matching a Community Engaged Learning Facilitator (CELF) with my class. Alison Green, who had previously been a student in the class and has extensive experience with non-profit organizations like Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Will County and the Green Earth Institute, was a great partner throughout the semester.

For Fall 2017, I also implemented changes to the project timeline, including a kick-off event that brought all five partners to campus to meet with the students in person at the very start of the projects. Having the partners on campus is always a great opportunity, but having them on campus specifically at the opening stage of the projects turned out to be very beneficial for the students and the project deliverables.

Additionally, I utilized a version of a Design Sprint (http://www.gv.com/sprint/) that challenged each project team to spend a week working to “put their client organization out of business.” I had the Design Sprint built into the project timeline from the start of the semester, but the actual topic of the exercise came out of conversations with my CELF, Alison Green, and an effort to more effectively connect the students to the partners and their work.

Finally, throughout the project and with the help of the Office of Community Engaged Learning, the students participated in two Group Reflection Circles – one at the mid-point of the project, and the second after all of the presentations had been delivered near the end of the semester. These Group Reflection Circles offered a great mechanism for the students to internalize the project outcomes and share their personal reflections on working with the partner organizations and the people they serve.

For the Spring 2018 semester, I have added a third Group Reflection Circle to the project timeline, but otherwise continued the adoption of the elements that factored into last semester’s success. My hope is that we’ll be sharing news of another 100% successful semester in the next newsletter!
This Spring semester, the College of Education Methods of Social Studies class has partnered with the Valley View School District Secondary Transition Experience Program (STEPS). STEPS serves young adults with disabilities, ages 18–22, by preparing them for careers, post-secondary education, and independent living. During this semester, four STEPS students have joined the Methods of Social Studies class one day a week for the entire semester.

The main goal of this community engaged learning experience is to foster peer-to-peer relationships in an academic setting. On the preservice teacher candidates’ side, the aim is to recognize that they share many more similarities than differences with their STEPS peers and to be immersed in an environment of more diverse ability than they may have experienced in their K–12 schooling. On the STEPS students’ side, the aim is to build social awareness skills and academic competence for students who are considering higher education.

While socialization is always a present goal, the academic content is also differentiated to meet the learners’ strengths, interests and needs. The students work in small groups both to create the standards-based activities and also to participate in the learning activities. Together, the class is creating lessons and assessments focused on current events, history, geography, civics, and economics. In addition, the groups are collaborating on creating mini-service learning projects that can be facilitated by STEPS students in their home school. Since it is only the mid-point of the semester, it is too early to determine how this experience will impact both groups of learners, but the interim feedback has shown a positive benefit within both groups.
Have you ever questioned how you can be a healthier version of yourself? Many people seek better health, but are unsure of how to become healthier. Lewis University senior nursing students seek to assist individuals with this question through a program called Salsacize. Salsacize is a program created by the Lewis University College of Nursing and Health Professions for individuals who seek care at the Will-Grundy Medical Clinic in Joliet, Illinois. The Will-Grundy clinic is a not-for-profit organization that provides free medical and dental care to individuals who do not have health insurance. Physicians, dentists, nurses, and other health professionals volunteer their time and expertise to provide free health care services to the eligible individuals in Will and Grundy counties.

In accordance with the clinic’s mission, Salsacize provides patients with health-care services geared toward health promotion. A group of nursing students worked to assess the health-care population in the Will-Grundy area to zero-in on the health-care needs of the population. A plan was then developed to incorporate both blood pressure and blood sugar screenings, fun exercise routines, and educational sessions for the participants. Upbeat, positive music is played while the nursing students coach the Salsacize participants on proper stretches, dance routines, and easy-to-follow exercises. The exercise portion attempts to provide an enjoyable and easy way for participants to improve their physical health. The exercise routines are developed based on the health and preferences of the participants. The second half of class focuses on nutrition education.

One of the biggest topics of discussion is nutrition. Many participants voiced their concerns regarding poor portion control and lack of knowledge regarding healthy food options. Therefore, the Lewis University nursing students customized the educational content to teach participants about portion control, healthy substitutes for favorite foods, and the importance of fueling one’s body properly. Another area of education included improving the participants’ understanding of common diagnoses such as Diabetes and Coronary Artery Disease. Through handouts, posters, and other visual presentation, the participants are taught about proper management of their diagnosis. This includes educating participants on the meaning of the diagnosis, proper diet, self-assessments, pertinent lab values, and further management of living with a health condition. Participants of Salsacize gain knowledge, skills, and the proper attitude to continue healthy living after the Salsacize event is over.

Salsacize is a fruitful opportunity for patients of the Will-Grundy Medical Clinic to learn and grow in knowledge regarding living a healthy lifestyle. Lewis University nursing students are proud to provide their time, skills, and knowledge to enhance the well-being of individuals in the area.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COOPERATIVE: BASKETBALL CAMP WITH COMMUNITY LIFELINE MINISTRIES

JAKE DEMARAIS, COORDINATOR OF MINISTRY SERVICE, UNIVERSITY MINISTRY

On Thursday January 25th, 2018, the Lewis University women’s basketball team took a short trip down to Community Lifeline Ministries (CLM) in Joliet, IL to sponsor a “Night of Basketball.” In a collaborative effort with University Ministry and CLM’s weekly program, "Sons of Thunder", the basketball team spent a couple of hours teaching basketball skills, sharing stories, and of course having a blast with over forty children ranging in age from 4–14 years old! This all came about through a couple conversations between head coach Sam Quigley Smith, Jake DeMarais, and Lou Ann Johnson of Community Lifeline Ministries. This night provided a great example of an outstanding partnership between Lewis University and our community partner, Community Lifeline Ministries.

"Sons of Thunder" is a program that runs every Tuesday night at CLM where kids ages 4–18 stop in to play basketball, games, activities, and partake in a short Bible/prayer time. Since the fall semester, University Ministry has partnered with the staff to provide some extra “supervision” and “mentorship” for the younger children on Tuesday nights, since they don’t always have the opportunity to use the gym while the “big” kids are around! So, when Coach Quigley Smith approached DeMarais about any opportunities for her team to be involved with the local community, a bell went off! After some more phone calls, the night was set up aimed at providing the younger children with an opportunity to engage in activities on the gym floor with Lewis basketball players.

One of the best quotes from the night comes from a 7 year old participant, “How is she soooo taaaallll?!” when referring to Lewis sophomore forward, Morgan Glatczak. It was a great, energizing, hopeful night was enjoyed by the young children, the Lewis student-athletes, and both communities in general. Hopefully, this is only the beginning of CLM and Lewis hosting more events in this partnership.
COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING FACILITATOR HIGHLIGHT

ALISON GREEN, COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING FACILITATOR, MARKETING STUDENT

Community Engaged Learning Facilitators (CELFs) are an extension of the Office of Community Engaged Learning (OCEL). CELFs are passionate students who interact with their assigned course as peer leaders collaborating with a faculty mentor. They assist in class projects, help students in the class engage with the community, provide insight and recommendations to the professors and OCEL, and connect with community partners to assure their expectations are met. CELFs have the opportunity to explore their role as community engagement leaders and learn how to continue growing and actively engaging with the community. In many ways, our role is as liaison between the variety of constituents with which the OCEL strives to collaborate.

I have participated as a CELF for the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters, being one of the students to pilot the program. Currently, I facilitate a few of the project-based courses offered within the College of Business. The students in these courses work directly with a community partner to create hands-on projects, such as marketing or business plans. As a marketing student who has experience providing business assistance to nonprofits, I have been able to effectively guide students through their projects while helping them understand the positive impact of their work.

Students are exposed to social issues and the benefits of community engagement through the lens of their project partner. In-class exercises, such as design sprints and reflection circles, challenge students to critically think about the issues facing their community partner. This form of engagement creates a stronger relationship between the student and partners, in turn, outputting more successful projects. Throughout the semester, students also learn how to work professionally with clients and create effective materials in a real-world setting. As students grow their business skills, so do the partners. Community partners gain important insights from the student projects they can implement far beyond the time frame of one or two semesters. This exemplifies the mutual benefit toward which the OCEL works.

As a CELF, I hope to inspire students to choose a career in non-profit development or management. There is an obvious need for young talented business professionals in the non-profit market. Community Engaged Learning projects are more than a catalyst to assist partners but also the impetus for students to carry Lewis University’s Lasallian values into the world after they graduate.

KNOW A STUDENT THAT WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE LEADER, AND ENJOYS BEING INVOLVED? LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUR CELF PROGRAM!
FALL 2018 DESIGNATED COURSE LIST

Marketing Strategy (MKTG 47000.001, 002)
Dr. James Oakley
Analyzing an industry and its companies in detail, and drawing on all aspects of marketing theory, students learn to develop and present a comprehensive marketing plan.

Cultural Diversity and Intergroup Relations (SOCI 29000.005)
Dr. Jennifer Buntin
The primary goal of this course is to give students an understanding of the roles that race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability play in the social inequality experienced within the United States.

Intro to Social Work (SOCW 10000.001, 002)
Dr. Gretchen Hoge, Dr. John Halloran
This course includes the historical development, diversity of services, key concepts, professional values, orientation, ethics and standards of social work. Students will have an opportunity to engage in service learning through assisting and “shadowing” professional staff at selected agencies.

Introduction to Professional Writing (ENGL 30000.001)
Dr. Jennifer Consilio
Intro to Professional Writing teaches the rhetorical principles, writing and design skills necessary for producing effective business documents, using both individual and collaborative projects, working with real organizations in professional contexts.

Strategic Management (BSAD 46000.001, 002)
Dr. James Krejci, Dr. Jeff Trask
Students use all the knowledge acquired from prior business courses, coupled with new strategic-management techniques learned, to chart the future direction of different organizations.

State & Local Government (POLS 21000.002)
Dr. Laurette Liesen
This course will examine state and local governments in the United States. Students will partner with a local government agency or local charity that works with local governments.

Field Experience 1: Community and School Immersion (ELED 20000.001) Ann O’Brien
This course helps develop pre-service teachers’ abilities to view the total picture of the teaching profession.

Methods and Content of Teaching Social Studies (ELED/SPED 35400.001) Dr. Elizabeth Sturm
This course focuses on instructional strategies, resources, national curriculum standards, and the Illinois Learning Standards and CEC standards for social studies.

Supervisory Management (BSAD 38000.001, 002)
Dr. James Krejci
This skill-building course stresses supervisory competencies: self-assessment, time and stress management, creative problem solving, motivation and performance, conflict management, power and influence and team building.

ST: Community News and Informations (COMM 33000.001) Dr. Tracy Hemmingway
Students learn theory and get practice in writing, preparing, and filming various forms of informational and promotional material used in public relations, such as news releases, fact sheets, blogs, media kits, and backrounders.

Foundations of Peace Studies (THEO 25000.001)
Dr. Jim Burke
This course provides an overview of peace studies which examines human conflict and its peaceful transformation. Drawing from Catholic social teaching’s imperatives, the emphasis will be on acquiring a just peace lens in order to do social analysis through service learning and civic engagement.

Computer Infrastructure Capstone (CPSC 49300.001, 002)
Dr. Khaled Alzoubi
This course will require students to incorporate knowledge from other core computer science courses to design, implement and test a networked computer system.

American National Government (POLS 20000.002)
Dr. Justin Delacour
The primary objectives of the course are to provide students with an understanding of the key foundations and characteristics of the United States’ political system.

Software Systems Capstone (CPSC 49200.001, 002)
Dr. Cindy Howard
This course will require students to incorporate knowledge from other core computer science courses to design, implement, and test a large scale software project.

Practicing Faithful Justice (THEO 26700.001)
Dr. Christie Billups
This course will explore justice as understood through the lens of Christian teachings. Engaged with the community through service learning, the course will examine social realities related to incarceration and the prison system and practical responses to address a variety of concerns affecting today's marginalized and oppressed persons and communities.

ST: Community Engaged Learning Leadership Seminar (POLS 30601.001) Laura Wilmarth Tyna
This course provides an engaged learning and leadership development experience through the Office of Community Engaged Learning. Acceptance to this course is contingent on successful application and interview. Contact wilmarla@lewisu.edu for further information.

For questions or more information: contact Dr. Christie Billups, billupch@lewisu.edu, 815–836–5829.
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