ARTICLES AND UPDATES FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING AND ITS PARTNERS

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The Office of Community Engaged Learning (OCEL) has taken strides toward evaluating the language around which the office operates given the growth and development of courses, including the diversity of both designated and pilot courses across the curriculum. In an effort to be more inclusive of and more closely related to the excellent and varied work of faculty, staff, community partners, and students dedicated to growing engaged learning at Lewis and in the community, OCEL, formerly the Office of Service Learning, has decided that terminology focused on Community Engaged Learning (CEL) better describes the current work and learning objectives of academic community-based experiences.

Recent articles have raised the difficulties of avoiding paternalism when using the word “service.” While students often contribute a great deal to community partners with whom they collaborate in academic community engagement, they gain as much or more from their experiences and the relationships they build with agencies and community members. The language of CEL better reflects the mutuality of this endeavor, the collaboration necessary if course and community goals are both to be met, and the centrality of relationship in the holistic learning process within CEL.

To that end, the OCEL decided to make an official name change as of August 1st, 2017. This was done to reflect the modification in language and deepened understanding of CEL, and efforts were successfully made toward carefully selecting and proposing a more appropriate name for the office.

Additionally, the OCEL now has a new location on the third floor of the Lewis Learning Resource Center (LRC). Functioning as a part of CASE (Center for Academic Success and Enrichment), the OCEL strives to continue growing through our strong campus and community relationships.

With changes to the philosophical approach we employ in our work, this change in language will emerge in a variety of contexts. Some of the language within this newsletter has been adapted to better fit the description of CEL offered prior, but some language around service learning (SL) still remains. Not all topics, definitions, and resources related to service learning are entirely interchangeable with CEL. It is with that in mind that the OCEL will continue to clarify and communicate the terminology we will use in the future. We are excited to continue serving Lewis and the broader community as we experience these exciting changes.
DEEPENING PARTNERSHIP THROUGH LISTENING

LAURA WILMARTH TYNA, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

Throughout the history of the institution, Lewis University staff and faculty have leaned upon our community partners to provide guidance, advice, and expertise about how the institution can engage most effectively in the community.

Whether through University Ministry service, student organization philanthropy, or community engaged learning courses, these relationships have been essential to the growth of a multitude of community–based initiatives. In an effort to more deeply engage partners, Lewis University convened a formal Community Partner Advisory Board (CPAB), during the 2016–17 academic year. The group, which meets three times a year, serves as a “working partner in building [Lewis] University’s curricular and co-curricular community engagement activities by representing the voice of the community.”

Members include representatives from organizations which are regionally relevant, such as the United Way of Will County, agencies that serve a diverse array of needs (e.g., youth development and education, community health, food justice, creating safe communities), and partners which serve the Will County and Joliet region. Community Engagement Cooperative (CEC) members, who are on–campus representatives of offices which engage students in the community, also attend CPAB meetings to share ideas and build synergy with off–campus collaborators.

Now in its second year, the CPAB is beginning to tackle questions about the nature of partnership and what it means for Lewis to build relationships with community–based organizations. Through continued exploration of the topic, we hope to create recommendations which will assist both on and off–campus partners in working together more effectively to meet individual and mutual goals of Lewis and our community partners. We hope this will continue the growth of Lewis’ off–campus relationships, deepen student learning, and empowering more individuals to work toward justice in our communities.

**Community Partner Advisory Board**

- Dr. Christie Billups (Community Engaged Learning)
- Jake Demarais (University Ministry)
- Lou Anne Johnson (Community Lifeline Ministries)
- Ryan Lawrence (Heart Haven Outreach)
- Christina Martinez (Career Services)
- Sarah Oprzedek (United Way of Will County)
- Kathy Pecora (Will County Land Use)
- William Riley (Lewis Student)
- Mariza Rocha (Multicultural Student Services)
- Dr. Kurt Schackmuth (Mission and Identity)
- Brian Sisson (Athletics)
- Jake Smith (Community Engaged Learning)
- Pam Terrell (Catholic Charities)
- Laura Wilmarth Tyna (Community Engaged Learning)
- Steve Zlatic (University Ministry)
This fall, I began as an Assistant Professor in the Social Work Department and for lack of a better word, inherited a course designated as a community engaged learning course. SCWK 10000: Introduction to Social Work has been a service learning course for a few years within the Social Work Department. This course stands as an introductory course to social work majors but also as a general education course, so students enrolled have a variety of interests.

Before coming to Lewis University, I served as an Associate Professor in the Social Work Department at the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois. Therefore, I am no stranger to teaching this particular course and no stranger to service learning. However, there is a significant difference between service learning and community engaged learning. At the University of St. Francis, I would take students enrolled in the course to Catholic Charities Daybreak Center to prepare and serve breakfast to the residents in the homeless shelter. This experience, no doubt, challenged their thinking, exposed them to populations different from themselves, and forced them out of their comfort zone. While students reflected on this experience, it was a limited event, only occurring once or twice throughout the semester.

My inherited course this fall is so much more than service learning! This semester, my course is partnering with three community agencies: Community Lifeline Ministries, the Warren–Sharpe Community Center, and Loaves and Fishes Community Services. Community Lifeline Ministries has numerous programs, however students are primarily serving in the GEMS program, which engages youth in educational and recreational activities after school. Warren–Sharpe Center also has many programs which serve the community, however, students are primarily serving as mentors in the after school program. Loaves and Fishes Community Services works to end hunger by providing food and leadership in order to mobilize resources to empower people to become self-sufficient. Students are primarily serving in the food pantry by assisting shoppers.

All students enrolled in the Introduction to Social Work course have partnered with one of the three agencies and will serve a minimum of 25 hours over the duration of the semester working with the agency. While it is still fairly early in the semester, the partnerships have been going well. The students reported feeling overwhelmed at first with the additional task of having diverse academic obligations. However, once they began to get started, the feelings of being overwhelmed began to disappear. Particularly students who are partnering with Community Lifeline Ministries and Warren–Sharpe Community Center in the after school programs state that the children get so excited about seeing them, it feels worth the effort.

Students report they wish they had the time to go more often! This has been a transformational experience for me as well. Community engaged learning is truly a pedagogical tool in which the community becomes a partner in the learning experience (Mooney & Edwards, 2001). Thus, it provides a much richer experience for students. I was grateful to learn that the university places such an emphasis on serving one’s community. Not only are the rewards of community based learning and positive outcomes of students who take part in this type of learning well documented, but it seems this is a necessary piece in fulfilling the mission of the university and helping to develop the master learner.
The Chemistry Department is excited to be partnering with Will County and the Warren–Sharpe Community Center as a part of both our curriculum and undergraduate research experience. The chemistry department believes that the development of societally relevant research projects coupled with focused reflection related to the community will inspire students to continue into careers at the interface of science and service.

During the Spring 2017 semester, Dr. Theresa Bixby’s analytical chemistry and undergraduate research courses conducted a project to evaluate lead levels in the soil in various areas of Will County. These plots of land have either been converted or were to be converted to community gardens that aim to feed residents of Will County. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends soil for gardening to have lead levels of 400 ppm or lower, but this varies based on the plant type. Contamination typically occurs from lead based paints and a number of industrial sources. The Joliet area specifically has been exposed to significant lead levels due to large industrial presence and buildings with lead paint being demolished over the years. EPA Method 3050B has been proven to be an effective and efficient procedure to measure the lead content of soil.

Throughout the semester, 52 soil samples from seven different sites were measured for their lead content and a correlation between previous industry or demolitions is being evaluated.

After completion of this research, the hope is that methods for soil remediation can be developed and employed to make food production safer.
Community Engaged Learning (CEL) has been most useful in making the Managerial Communication course constructive and meaningful for the MBA students enrolled during the Fall 1 term. I am deeply appreciative of the support provided by Ms. Laura Wilmarth Tyna and Dr. Christie Billups of the Office of Community Engaged Learning (OCEL) and by my colleague, Dr. James Krejci, who is experienced in this instructional approach.

The class is partnered with the Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) for their community engaged learning. The purpose of their project is to apply stakeholder theory to develop the following for the NIFB:

A. A stakeholder analysis
B. A stakeholder map
C. Engagement approaches for the NIFB in relation to each major stakeholder group
D. A communication plan for the NIFB based on the earlier analyses.

Information about the focal organization and its stakeholders is necessary to carry out these activities. High-level NIFB staff members have been generous in explaining to students the organization’s operations and communication activities. Students have had multiple opportunities for contact with the NIFB including the following:

1. A visit from an NIFB staff member on the first day of class
2. The campus ENGAGE! event on Sept. 6
3. The NIFB Foodie 5K on campus on Sept. 9
4. A visit to the NIFB office in Geneva, IL on Sept. 28.

There is also extensive information about the NIFB posted on the course Blackboard site.

The course appears to be progressing well. Students are accepting and adjusting to this approach to learning. I sense that their appreciation for community engaged learning is increasing. The guidance provided by Lewis has been essential in providing students with this innovative learning experience.
Under the leadership of Principal Carol Albreski, Lewis partnered with a valuable community institution to enrich students and bring about a needed service and change at St. Andrew the Apostle School (center).

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (COE): RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS THROUGH SUMMER SCHOOL**

**DR. DEB AUGSBURGER, PROFESSOR OF LITERACY, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

In response to conversations with Principal Carol Albreski, the Lewis University Reading & Literacy program partnered with St. Andrew the Apostle School in Romeoville to provide a reading-intensive summer school for 52 students this summer. Ms. Albreski is working to bring about significant changes to support literacy at the school, which did not have a summer school program in place, or a school library. Under her leadership, a school library was created in a portable classroom over the summer, and a partnership with the Lewis Reading & Literacy program was started.

Lewis faculty and students created and ran the summer school program and raised money and book donations to contribute to the library. The summer school program involved several graduate students, faculty members, and other volunteers. Children in grades K through 8 participated in reading enrichment activities, including word games, reading to others, writing activities, and dramatic performance. The program was provided free for families at St. Andrew the Apostle School, as well as children in the surrounding community, June 6–29.

The Lewis University College of Education provided a book for each child to bring home and keep to foster reading. The program was structured and developed by Lewis University professors Dr. Joyce Hayward and Dr. Deborah Augsburger, and assisted by Dr. Paula DiDomenico of Leyden High School in Franklin Park. Other faculty volunteers included Dr. Jennifer Buss and Dr. Mary Fisher. Four graduate students from the Reading and Literacy program were the core teachers for the group; they were assisted by other graduate student volunteers from the Elementary Education and English as a Second Language Teacher Preparation programs, and an undergraduate student majoring in Special Education.
This past June, 20 nursing students, two faculty members from CONHP, Dina Schreader and Ellen Renna, and one faculty member from Point Loma Nazarene University School of Nursing in San Diego, California, traveled across the pond to compare and contrast the United States and Ireland’s health care systems and the educational curriculum of nursing students. The trip fulfilled many objectives for a required Professional Development course including identifying political trends that impact diverse populations’ access to culturally congruent health care.

A full day was spent at the National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway School of Nursing where students met with the faculty to learn about the training of nurses in Ireland and a brief history of the Irish health care system and its impact on the world. Courtney Carter, a senior nursing student on the trip stated “Before we left for our trip, we learned about different health care systems around the world. It was one thing to read and learn about the positives and negatives of those systems, but to be over in Ireland and see how their healthcare directly affects their citizens is something completely different.”

The group also toured a local public orthopedic hospital and outpatient facility in Galway where they discovered that Irish nursing students spend much more time at the bedside working long shifts for clinical rotation and get paid to do it. One of the notable differences in the hospitals for Sara Halm, a senior nursing student, was the lack of being able to handle pediatric emergencies. Pediatric patients would be airlifted to Dublin for emergencies.

“I have always lived in the Chicago suburbs and we always have a wide variety of specialty hospitals available to us. I just have never thought about what a family would do in that situation. I guess the parents really have to rely on their instincts then, whereas here, parents can take their child to the emergency department without hesitating,” said Halm.

Students discovered quickly that nursing students in Ireland would graduate specialized in a particular field, chosen before university studies, as opposed to America’s generalist nurse approach. Nurses in Ireland have a choice of one of four specialties to be trained in: Medical Surgical, Mental Health, Pediatrics, or Midwifery.

The tour continued north and students toured the simulation labs of Queen’s University at Belfast School of Nursing, and it was discovered that not much was different between the curriculum in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. One of the highlights of visiting Queen’s University was that Lewis students were given the opportunity to meet with their current nursing students and engage in global learning.

Finally in Dublin, students attended a forum entitled, The Future of Healthcare Policy in Ireland. A leader in the Social Democrats of Ireland was the keynote speaker addressing the reform of the social care system while ensuring equal care, and discussion ensued on ideas and concerns about the government funding for reform.

“It was eye opening to compare the differences between the health care policies and practices in the United States and Ireland. I was able to see some of their policies were beneficial and some were negative in comparison to our health system,” said Neil Kelly, Junior CONHP student.

This experience allowed the students to delve deeper into Ireland’s culture and history as well as fulfill the community engaged learning outcome of becoming a self-reflective person in order to gain an understanding of local and global communities.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COOPERATIVE (CEC)
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT, UNIVERSITY MINISTRY - SOURCE OF LIGHT

JAKE DE MARAIS, COORDINATOR OF MINISTRY SERVICE, UNIVERSITY MINISTRY

“No all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”
St. Teresa of Calcutta

University Ministry’s weekly service outreach program, “Source of Light” (SOL), is continuing to move forward with new ideas and new partner organizations. SOL is an avenue at Lewis for students to engage in community service. The added dimension to these service outings is that there is always some sort of prayer/reflection piece incorporated into the outing. The hope is that by providing participants with the opportunity to think about their own spiritual journeys and how their faith/spirituality intertwines with serving their local community, they might have a deeper, more profound experience of serving.

This semester, SOL is attempting to revitalize its student participation through two new initiatives. First, these opportunities are more diverse in the type of service work. The five main partner organizations range from feeding the hungry in a couple different ways to stewarding the environment to simply being present to the elderly or young children in need of good role models. Students have participated in the packing of food at Feed My Starving Children in Aurora as well as serving dinner to some of those who are homeless in Joliet at Morningstar Mission. A more intentional partnership with the Will County Forest Preserve is being developed. And students continue to engage in playing bingo with the elderly at Our Lady of Angels in Joliet.

SOL’s newest partner organization, Community Lifeline Ministries (CLM), has perhaps been the greatest success in growing student involvement and helping create an opportunity to build relationships between students and patrons at the service site.

Every Tuesday night, a group of 5–7 students drive to CLM to help mentor/supervise/teach anywhere from 25–30 young children ages 6–12. This partnership, still in its early stages, has been a great success in instilling the desire to return for the Lewis students involved and has provided the opportunity to build relationships with the young children at CLM. The Tuesday night program "Sons of Thunder," which was originally intended for high school boys, has grown over the past couple years to include a large number of younger kids as well. This has created a staffing situation for CLM, but with the help of the Lewis students, they are excited to continue to offer the program for the younger students. With a core group of enthusiastic, committed Lewis students, this community engagement opportunity has begun to turn into a great ministry of presence to those kids every Tuesday night.

This leads to the second new initiative: amping up recruitment to make more students on campus aware of the opportunities to serve in our surrounding communities. SOL has a core group of student leaders who are in charge of driving the van to and from the community sites and leading the small group’s prayer/reflection time. These core leaders recently met and came up with several new ideas for recruiting including using social media more and engaging more person-to-person techniques, such as sign-ups after Sunday mass or on the way to and from classes. The great hope is that, as these core leaders spread the spirited energy to engage in community service through SOL activities, more and more students will "catch the energetic spirit" and join in, not only in the SOL service activities but also in community engaged learning classes, and even more importantly, in their lives after they move on from Lewis into their future home communities.

“Yesterday is gone, tomorrow is yet to come: We have only today — let us begin.”
St. Teresa of Calcutta
COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING FACILITATOR HIGHLIGHT

CHEYANNE LINGO, COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING FACILITATOR, SOCIAL WORK AND PEACE STUDIES STUDENT

This year, the Office of Community Engaged Learning (OCEL) has begun a program that engages potential student leaders and those interested in civic engagement, and utilizes them in a classroom setting. The Community Engaged Learning Facilitator (CELF) program is a course taken after faculty recommendation and OCEL interview, and involves a student leader working with a community engaged learning (CEL) faculty member to bridge the gap between classroom and community partners. CELFS serve as a liaison for peers, faculty and partner organizations.

A Community Engaged Learning Facilitator takes on many roles throughout Lewis University. CELFs create a bridge of communication between students and partners. The partners have set out guidelines on what they want the students to do at their locations, and CELFs make sure the students are aware of the goals. The CELFs become a contact for the students if they have any questions regarding their community engagement experience. The questions may range from getting contact info for the partners to something as simple as designating someone to drive them to and from the location. We want to make sure the partners and the students have an experience that will benefit both. The students should take a critical thinking approach while volunteering with the partner locations. They should think about why the partnership has been created, and what they can do to help more. The partners will be able to benefit from the feedback the students give. We want to motivate the students to be excited about their community engagement.

CELFs also communicate with the faculty at Lewis University. While working with the faculty, we are communicating to make the community engagement enjoyable for the students and partners. We make contact lists of all the students in the class, discuss future reflection assignments, talk about final projects, and brainstorm about what could be put in the curriculum for future class offerings. Each CELF has a different experience with the faculty member they are working with, but we all are making sure there is communication between everyone participating in the CEL process.

Being a CELF has taught me many things about community engagement. The things I have learned will be shared throughout the university as I make community engagement more known. Community engagement is a very important aspect of my life. It makes the world a better place, and I am happy to raise awareness on all of the opportunities students have to get involved.

Name: Cheyanne Lingo
Major: Social Work, Peace Studies
Minor: 
Year: Sophomore
CELF Course: Foundations of Peace Studies
Career Goal: Social work in a high school setting, veterans rights and well being advocate

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!
Standards and CEs for Social Studies.

This course focuses on instructional strategies, resources, national curriculum standards, and the Illinois Learning Standards and CEC standards for social studies.

Methods and Content of Teaching Social Studies (ELED/SPED 35400.001) Dr. Elizabeth Sturm

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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