

Community Engagement

Students take an active role in their education when community engaged learning combines civic involvement with coursework and reflection. Mutually beneficial to the student and the community, engaged student learning occurs in a variety of ways such as service hours, community-based research, advocacy and activism projects, and fully integrated service-learning experiences.

As a form of experiential learning, community engagement:

- “is developed, implemented, and evaluated in collaboration with the community;
- responds to community-identified concerns;
- attempts to balance the service that is provided and the learning that takes place;
- enhances the curriculum by extending learning beyond the classroom and allowing students to apply what they’ve learned to real-world situations; and
- provides opportunities for critical reflection.”

(Seifer, S. D. and Connors, K. “Faculty Toolkit for Service-Learning in Higher Education.” Learn and Serve America)

Center for Civic Engagement

- Connect faculty and students to local non-profits and community partners
- Work with faculty to match community opportunities with course work objectives
- Give class presentations on our office, service opportunities, and volunteer etiquette and professionalism
- Provide resources from community engaged learning practitioners
- Advise students one-on-one on service placements and opportunities

Examples: Community Engagement at the College of Charleston

SPAN 400—Service-Learning: Hispanics in the United States | Professor Silvia Rodriguez-Sabater

In this course, students serve critical roles in the community by working with local Spanish-speaking populations as tutors and translators in schools, health clinics, social services, and other settings. Through their 45 hours of service, students have the opportunity to not only practice their Spanish language skills but to also see how issues of identity, culture, and immigration occur at their service sites and with their clients.

Bonner Leader Program—Center for Civic Engagement | Stephanie Visser

The Bonner Leader Program is a service-based outreach program that provides College of Charleston students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills while engaged in an effort to make a difference within the local community. Students dedicate 300 hours of service to a local community organization each year in addition to planning service trips, leadership development, and education and awareness programming.

Tech for Africa—Students in Free Enterprise | Professor David Desplaces

Students in Free Enterprise raise funds to invest in technology for elementary schools, and in the education and empowerment of elementary students in Cameroon. During a ten-day experiential learning trip to Cameroon, students deliver and install the technology as well as teach in the local communities about entrepreneurship, environmental sustainability, and business ethics.

Online Resources

Center for Civic Engagement— <http://blogs.cofc.edu/volunteer/service-learning/getting-started/>

Campus Compact—<http://www.compact.org/resources-for-faculty/>

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse—<http://servicelearning.org>

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health—<http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/guide.html>