



## **Faculty Community Engaged Learning Guide - Fall 2020- Spring 2021**

### **Introduction**

At Xavier, Community Engaged Learning represents the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, state/regional, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. Staying connected to our communities in virtual and remote ways either through official opportunities or through general care and concern is a way to continue to animate Xavier's mission, provide high impact learning experiences for students, and further grow faculty expertise with immersive and service learning pedagogy.

We make the recommendations below to contribute to the following strategies listed in the *Blueprint for Fall 2020*, under Section 4. Academics:

- (e). Support agile teaching and learning in preparation for remote teaching in the event that circumstances require it, in light of social distancing requirements, and to support students who might be in quarantine for part of the semester.
- (j). Explore expectations for remote/hybrid teaching and provide pedagogical resources to support these expectations;
- (m). Encourage programs to review program-specific policies and practices regarding internships, clinicals, and practicums (with accrediting bodies, as needed)

### **Guidelines**

For faculty planning to offer a course this fall that integrates immersive or service-learning, the following provides some considerations for the safe and effective implementation of this important aspect of your course whether instruction is remote, in person, or a hybrid form of engagement.

#### **I. In-person Engagement**

While there are several in person engagement recommendations herein that can be integrated while maintaining health and safety protocols, under no circumstances should students be obligated to participate in any in-person community engaged learning experiences that may compromise the health and safety of themselves and the communities engaged.

Xavier's campus protocol plans follow guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the State of Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Governor's office, COVID 19 Task Force, and our health partner, TriHealth. We recommend that all community engaged courses adhere to this protocol, however given the fluid environment around COVID-19, plans and policies concerning the virus may change with time, best practices and expert recommendations (XAVIER UNIVERSITY GUIDE FOR RETURNING TO CAMPUS Draft Plan p. 1).

Programs should ensure students that are engaging communities as part of their coursework are provided with adequate **PPE, supervision, and other protections** based on their risk. Faculty should consider the development of specialized plans for students who are at increased risk due to the occupational nature of their course engagement. Examples include health professional students and students engaged in out-of-classroom or community-based instruction and engagement. (Adapted from ACHA Guidelines "Considerations for Reopening Institutions of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era").

Faculty and staff that support academic programs that integrate community engaged learning should also consider adopting the following best practices:

- Conduct in person or virtual site visits with partners;
- Maintain pre-program orientation and update with student training related to COVID 19 exposure, and proper use of PPE;
- Community partner protocols for COVID 19 should be provided to the faculty/staff member, and student, and in return, University and program protocols should be shared with the partner.

Use of **community partner agreements**: While less utilized in service learning coursework, partner agreements are common in long-term practica and required internship programs that place students in communities with public and private organizations. Consult your College for proper protocol on when and how to use University approved agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOU). Any new agreements or MOU should be reviewed by your College and University legal counsel. Whether your course is contemplating in person or remote engagement, establishing **terms of engagement** is a best practice that identifies and documents the purpose and scope of course engagement, responsibilities of students, faculty, and partner, and the anticipated outcomes/expectations.

While **mentoring and tutoring** are popular forms of direct, in person community engagement offered via curricular and co-curricular service, public and private school districts are still working to resolve the logistics for in person instruction and supportive practices. What is initially clear is that visitor engagement in schools and nonprofits that offer these programs will be limited and may preclude academic or other partners that do not have existing ongoing, mutually beneficial relationships, or are not tied to required (federal and state) services that support student learning. However, courses that previously worked with schools can adapt to virtual environment.

For example, Cincinnati Public Schools plans to introduce a virtual tutoring support platform for the fall. Moving tutoring online can be a valuable, impactful way to support individual student success and permit Xavier students to continue to engage our community through a valuable service experience.

All Xavier students who volunteer/tutor in Cincinnati Public Schools should obtain a background check and badge (provided free on campus each semester through the Literacy Network), or in CISE (Catholic) schools, FBI checks and required online [Virtus](#) training. Currently, these trainings and requirements are still required for remote experiences, but should be supplemented with instruction on the protection of minors and vulnerable populations in online settings. It is recommended that virtual instruction, tutoring and engagement opportunities occur **during** the school day to increase access to reliable internet and technology resources, and instructor/staff supervision of the minor student at school.

**Communication:** Regardless of the level of students' out-facing community engagement, faculty should insure through weekly check-ins that there is ongoing, transparent faculty-student communication regarding health status and any changes in their ability to complete coursework and academic responsibilities. Faculty should also verify point of contact information with their partner to increase the ability to communicate information effectively and efficiently. This would also include sharing your email, office, and cell phone numbers.

**Tracking Time:** It is recommended that individual student volunteer hours and engagement should be tracked in a log maintained by students and shared with faculty on a weekly basis (as a Canvas assignment, for example). The log should include documentation of hours engaged (date and time), the type of engagement (in person or virtual), and the nature of the work or service provided and if possible, identification of partner or community members engaged.

**Self-Directed Engagement:** Student self-directed volunteer engagement that emanates out of your course, internship, or research opportunity is not recommended as a best practice at this time due to difficulty in insuring student safety and supervision, and the ability to confirm any specific COVID 19 protocols. Instead, encourage students to work with established University partners (consult Eigel Center Community Partner database for a list of ongoing partnerships), or connect with student-based clubs that have community-facing missions and engagement and benefit from the guidance of Student Involvement and individual faculty/staff advisors.

## II. Remote Engagement

While it might seem less than ideal, the introduction of online technologies in community-engaged and experiential curricula is a developing, but well-supported pedagogy that can enhance course outcomes and expand the effect of engagement well beyond the classroom (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010). Online education has the power to bring students and ideas together from diverse geographic, cultural, social, and economic areas and utilizing it in support of community-engaged courses is growing in popularity with faculty.

Given the uncertainty of future outbreaks, we are primarily recommending integration of community engaged learning pedagogy through assignments that promote online engagement and strategic reflection, virtual opportunities, and additional opportunities that fulfill civic learning outcomes.

While in person engagement has significant benefits, do not rely on in person community engagement this fall for your course. Yes, this might seem counterintuitive but read on! If you desire to integrate some engagement with communities into your course, the following are recommended activities that are pedagogically sound, and will support student learning outcomes set forth for immersive and service learning experiences;

### **Planning**

First, some general recommendations for faculty considering curricular community engagement this academic year:

1. Work with the Eigel Center and a community partner to develop a mutually beneficial plan for the semester that focuses on rich experiences for both students and communities, nonprofits, and individuals. The Eigel Center is currently conducting a needs assessment with our longstanding partners to provide opportunities for your students to help serve essential needs during this time.
2. Invite community partners to join you for a remote class session or in person, as appropriate. Any interaction with community partners in classrooms, or in small groups of students within communities, should still maintain university protocols for teaching and learning.
3. Communicate with your community partners, ask how the current crisis is affecting the services they provide and consider shifting your resources to the areas where they most need support. You might find inspiration in how your students might alter their engagement in response. External organizations offering off-campus engagement opportunities may be asked to provide a workplace safety plan that is broadly similar to ours.
4. The health and safety of our campus community and those communities with whom we engage is a priority. We recommend planning for flexible and adaptive modes of providing students with the Xavier Experience (Covid-19 Task Force).

### **Course Attributes**

Last academic year, approximately **2,400** students participated in 154 Immersive (ILE) and Service (SERL) Learning courses taught by 108 faculty across **30** academic departments and programs. Each year faculty work with hundreds of community partners in collaboration to offer these experiences to our students and with some modifications and enhancements, this may continue.

Please insure that either the [Immersive \(ILE\)](#) or [Service \(SERL\)](#) Learning attributes (or both if applicable) is attached to your course by the Registrar. No committee review is required - Faculty or department chairs can send an email to the Registrar asking the appropriate attribute be added. Adding the attribute communicates the nature of the course to students, promotes the utilization insures that proper institutional assessment is occurring. Further, it also allows us to know which courses are currently engaging community so additional oversight and resources can be allocated to insure that

safe and appropriate student and community engagement occurs. The Eigel Center will support and consult with any faculty in their determination to add an attribute or execute their course.

**Immersive Learning (ILE)** incorporates an examination of social justice issues while immersing students in a community affected by systemic challenges and injustices. Prompted by observation, direct experience and reflection, students consider various worldviews and perspectives different from their own through direct interaction with diverse populations.

- **Immersive Learning Canvas Modules** are a great way to prepare students for immersive and community-based experiences, but also continue conversations online. Four adaptable modules are utilized to prompt critical reflection of issues related to immersion, including immersive learning terminology, identity and self-awareness, and an overview of frameworks that reinforce inequity. A faculty guide is available as a resource for ease of integration and inclusion of these modules in an existing course, as well as a pre- and post-assessment to provide an indirect measure of students' growth. Contact the Eigel Center for access to this resource!
- **Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)** is already a powerful tool that pairs students with peers internationally for dialogue around salient, course-related issues. In light of the global reach of this pandemic, it can also be utilized to bring students together for reflection and discussion about how the current crisis is affecting service and immersion issues in diverse settings.
- **"Social Justice Simulations"** co-created with community partners and faculty can create simulated experiences of systemic issues that affect marginalized populations.

**Immersive Learning Activities:** Transition short-term overnight immersive experiences to day excursions and experiences at local community collaborate locations that adhere to guidelines synergistic with the University. During the early fall and late spring, considering hosting activities (walks; presentations; reflection) outside when possible. The following consider a Combination of on-campus in person and virtual experiences designed to meet student learning outcomes:

- Zoom learning sessions
- Pre-recorded talks by diverse voices
- Virtual walks in international communities led by partners
- "Sit in" virtual sessions with community partners – attend meetings or cultural events "live."
- Serve as English language and cultural liaison during English language classes in Colombia at Jesuit University
- Invite Community partner remote teaching sessions

**Service Learning (SERL)** courses are credit-bearing experiences designed to benefit both the learner and the community served equally. Partners provide access and an opportunity to address civic and course learning outcomes, while students leverage their academic disciplines to elevate the impact of nonprofit and the communities they serve directly or indirectly via hands-on application of their coursework.

- **E-service-learning** (electronic service-learning) holds massive potential to transform both service-learning and online learning by freeing service-learning from geographical constraints and by equipping online learning with a powerful and much-needed tool to promote engagement. Existing mentoring/tutoring partnerships can move online, or one on one with technology. “Placements” may include those service opportunities that can be completed exclusively in a virtual environment;
- **“Indirect” service-learning assignments** allow student-related course work to happen outside of the service site, remotely, to deliver tangible work product that benefits the work of the nonprofit or community partner. Often these can be capstone or project-based experiences already integrated into your syllabus, or take the form of research and writing assignment.
- **Exposure to Communities** engaging in SERL and ILE courses can be accomplished through safely distanced community walkabouts led by engaged leaders, nonprofit organizations, and University staff.

### **Resources for remote community engagement and service learning**

If your course typically involves localized community engaged learning, there are still many ways to do meaningful things for the common good or directly with others in a virtual way. Have students read [How to Get Involved with Virtual Volunteering](#) (includes opportunities with the Red Cross, United Nations, and the Smithsonian) (Consult [Virtual Volunteering](#) for ideas with national and international interest).

Additional resources available to students include:

- [Build Your Career by Volunteering Online – Goodwill Industries](#)
- [9 Places to Volunteer Online – Do Something.org](#)
- [25 volunteer jobs to do online – Operation Warm](#)

### **Indirect Service/Remote Project Ideas**

- Zoom tutoring, mentorship, interaction or enrichment.
- After school enrichment programming including storytelling;
- Adopt a family – engaging remotely with the family of mentee;
- Online language, employment, citizenship preparation, cultural dialogue
- Interviews/surveys with community members via nonprofit research.
- Create marketing, social media content, or other print materials for future use
- Researching grant opportunities
- Assist in communications with their students/clients/residents
- Conducting virtual or phone-based educational supports for youth and adults
- Conducting background research or gathering best practices or other information your partner could find useful

- Assisting in any assessment, evaluation, or feedback processes via phone or web-based services
- Work with small business start-ups via Zoom.

### Examples of [Virtual Assignments to Support Community Engaged Learning and Reflection](#):

- Leverage the recorded knowledge of community partners and leaders to heighten students' consciousness about their service partner's work and its challenges – review newspaper accounts, community messaging, websites, social media posts, community council minutes, television interviews, etc.,
- Explore online University, State, and Federal resources that may examine community issues addressed in the course and community – prepare a list to share with your community partner(s);
- Utilize nonprofit annual reports, neighborhood development plans, oral history projects, and websites to expose students to community originated strategies and tactics that address issues supported by the course. Have them reflect on how their service can support these strategies and tactics;
- Examine student's personal definitions of community service through the development of reflective papers and other exploratory assignments that encourage them to contemplate overall civic and community engagement within an emergency setting;
- Create a listing of grant opportunities that may be applicable for their organization;
- Support organizations to remain connected to the clients and communities they serve. Have students conduct remote interviewing current/past clients about their experiences, impact of the organization on where they are today;
- Create a resource folder of activities for after-school programming for K-12 graders;
- Have students create "How To" videos to assist older residents with using technology to stay connected and support well-being during isolation.

[Eigel Center](#) staff are available for individual consultation and to support ongoing integration and assessment of these experiences. Please also consider us a resource for your students as they work to continue their engagement with your course and our communities.

### Compliance

The following are compliance considerations for a course that may plan to integrate limited community engagement, or some in person engagement through speakers, neighborhood walkabouts, and one-on-one, or small group engagement. Any University guidelines regarding off campus in person activities will be compliant with protocols provided by the following organizations and should be followed by students and community partners:

- [State of Ohio](#) and specific [College and University guidelines](#)
- CDC
- Xavier University [COVID-19 Task Force](#) Guidelines
- Related Community Organization protocols

CDC guidelines include helpful protocols for personal protection and prevention on and off campus, and sufficient communication that informs and educates members of the campus community on the University's plan, including any requirements for personal protection and prevention, and available resources for assistance. If your course has limited, direct engagement you should plan on sharing CDC best practices as part of any preparation.

Community partners that visit campus to address students as part of their community engaged preparation or orientation should also be provided University guidelines including required social distancing in academic buildings.

If your class contemplates off-campus engagement, the University provides waivers that advise and address risk and require a student's signature (or guardian if a minor). The type of Assumption of the Risk (AOR) waivers appropriate for related community engaged activities are as follows:

- [AOR 101 On-Going Experience](#) (1-on-1 or group based, applicable to service learning courses that engage directly with community).
- [AOR 103 Day Trip Experience](#) and [AOR 102 Overnight Experience](#) – Domestic and International (Applicable for Immersive Learning off-campus (multiple off-campus experiences))