Building Community Partnerships
Cornell Alumni Leadership Conference
February 26, 2021

Mike Bishop, director student leadership
Sarah Hazlitt, program associate
Small group facilitators
Roadmap

- Community-engaged learning and public engagement
- Partnerships nuts and bolts
- Small group conversations
- Aspects of exemplar community partnership building
- Continuing the conversation and support of students
Community-engaged learning (CEL) at Cornell is just what it sounds like: learning that takes place in and with communities. In community-engaged learning, community partners are equal players, and projects are created, developed and carried out collaboratively with students from the start.

These powerful partnerships – the very heart of community-engaged learning – create opportunities to research, teach and learn at home and around the world.

CEL projects and programs can look very different, but they all share four important elements. They:

1. Address a specific community interest, problem, or public concern;
2. Include working with and learning from a community partner;
3. Connect and integrate community-engaged experiences with educational content; and
4. Include structured, documented critical reflection.
Who is in the “room”?
What brings you here?
Which issue of public concern captures your attention?

- Access, Equity and Justice
- Arts, Media, Communication and Design
- Children, Youth, Seniors and Families
- Culture, Language and History
- Economic Vitality and Entrepreneurship
- Education
- Energy, Environment and Sustainability
- Food and Agriculture
- Health, Nutrition and Medicine
- Law, Government and Policy

Talia Bailes ’20, founder of Ballet and Books, leads a class at Ithaca’s Southside Community Center in 2019
Partnerships: One-time, Immersion, Episodic
Partnerships: Committing
Partnerships: Connecting the Dots
Small group conversations

- Why do we partner with community organizations?
- What are ways to build trusting relationships/bridge difference?
- How can connecting with community organizations support students in feeling a sense of belonging and wellness?
Thank you to our small group facilitators!

Daniel Mansoor - Eng '79 Johnson '80
Jeremiah Grant Jr – A&S ‘17, Programs Associate at Bezos Family Foundation
Amber Aspinall - Alumna '17
Bukola Anifowoshe - CALS '19, Project Coordinator at Oxfam; 2021 Pickering Fellow
Charis Benjamin - A&S '16
Chenab Khakh - CALS ’20
Conor McCabe - CALS ’18
Imani Majied - '19
Luria Greene - Eng '19, PhD student in Biological and Environmental Engineering
Nixon Ricardo Arauz - CALS ’13
Sandra Oyeneyin - Media Production Professional
Tenzin Dechen - CALS '18

Katherine McComas - Vice Provost, Engagement and Land-Grant Affairs
Richard (Rick) A Evans - Director Engineering Communications Program
Jamila Michener - Associate Professor of Government
Susanne Bruyere - Professor, Disability Studies, Director, Yang-Tan Institute on Employment & Disability
Colleen Kearns - Program Manager, Environment & Sustainability
Gabrielle Smith – OADI
Mar Perez - Senior Coordinator, Crisis Management
Melissa Bazley - Associate Director, Engineering Career Center
Mia Ferraina - Public Service Careers Coach
Richard Kiely- Senior Fellow, Program Evaluation, OEI
Thank you to our small group facilitators!

Amanda Wittman - Associate Director, Community-Engaged Curricula and Strategy, OEI
Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman - Engaged and Experiential Learning Coordinator, Department of Global Development
Joy Das - Program Manager, Student Leadership
Karel Hilversum - Director, Cornell Team and Leadership Center
Linda Barrington - Associate Dean, External Relations and Engagement, SC Johnson College of Business
Taylor Bouraad - Residence Hall Director
Aaliyah Brown - A&S '23, Engaged Ambassador
Ailen Salazar - A&S '21, Engaged Ambassador
Aisha Conte - A&S '23, Engaged Ambassador
Alessandra Cruz - HumEc '22, Engaged Ambassador

Canaan Delgado - Eng '22, Engaged Ambassador
Emily Desmond - A&S '21, Engaged Ambassador
Emily Walton - A&S '22, Engaged Ambassador
Isabel Dawson - Eng, Engaged Ambassador
Krinal Thakkar - A&S '23, Engaged Ambassador
Lesly Gissell Zhicay - ILR '23, Engaged Ambassador
Millena Yohannes - A&S '22, Engaged Ambassador
Olay Ajayi - ILR '23, Engaged Ambassador
Ashley Loke - CALS '22
Lassan Bagayoko - 22, Engaged Ambassador
Patrick J. Mehler - ILR '23, President of Cornell Votes & Scheinman Conflict Resolution Club
Amber Haywood - 21, Engaged Ambassador
Basirat Asabi Owe - HumEc '21, Engaged Ambassador
Not simply a focus on results

Healthy results cannot happen without healthy process and healthy relationship.

Relationship and process are themselves vital dimensions of success. If you invest six months with “nothing to show for it” but trusting relationship, you’re winning.

This whole idea is generally countercultural both in Western society and in higher education.

From the Interaction Institute for Social Change
Principles of Good Partnership

1. Serves a specific purpose
2. Has agreed upon mission, values, goals, outcomes and processes
3. Considers their environment to be a principle of their design, evaluation and sustainability.
4. Characterized by reciprocity, trust, inclusion and commitment.
5. Builds on strengths and assets, while also addressing partners’ needs
6. Balances power and shares resources among partners
7. Establishes principles, roles, norms and processes with input and agreement of all partners
8. Prioritizes clear communication to cultivate flexibility, empathy, mutual listening, safety and understanding

9. Gathers and shares feedback from all stakeholders for continuous improvement

10. Takes time to develop and evolve over time

11. Shares the credit for and benefits of all accomplishments.

12. Has clear exit plan and process

13. Values multiple kinds of knowledge and life experiences.

The above is adapted from and combines three sources:


“Ten Principles of Successful Community-Campus Partnerships” in Kerry Strand et al., Community-Based Research and Higher Education (2002)

Campus-Community Partnerships for Health “Principles of Partnership”:

“Closing” thoughts

- Networks of relationships
- Humble, respectful and persistent communication
- “Could we explore how we might work together?”
- Sharing your story of self
- How would you enter someone’s home?
Calls to action

- Announcing launch of our OEI-AAD alumni community-engaged learning survey!
- Support undergraduates in a community-engaged learning experience through your Cornell volunteer role
  - Connect with your nearby Cornell Club, Class Council, or college-based alumni association if there is one
- Advise/Mentor students through CUeLINKS (ensure your profile includes “positive social impact”)
- Cornell Giving Day is coming March 11
- Support AAD-OEI in moving forward a shared CEL agenda (complete our survey)
Thank you!

Want more? Have questions? Be in touch!
communityengagedlearning@cornell.edu

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