

## PRACTICE TIPS FOR CEL COURSE INSTRUCTORS

- 1. Joint planning with your CEF:** Early collaboration with your CEF is key; it lays the foundation for the real team effort essential to making this work well. Spend some time, preferably during the semester beforehand, thinking together carefully about the overall themes and goals of the course. Plot out the course time-line, projects, transportation and other logistics; discuss community projects. The integration of academic content and the community-engaged components is always challenging, and the more the faculty and CEF can think about these problems together, the better!
- 2. Early, ongoing contact with community partners:** If you haven't already made contact with your potential community partners, it's best if both you and your CEF can be present together at the initial meetings. (Ideally, your community partners will regard both you and the CEF as essential players.) After that, it's good to be clear about who will follow up, and how often, with community partners.
- 3. Time commitment:** Clarify how much time the CEF will spend in class. Faculty members have varied feelings about this: some don't find it necessary for the CEF to be present when the class is not talking about the community project as such; others prefer that the CEF be present at all class sessions, especially if they are hoping for continuous integration of the readings, academic discussion, and practical discussions about the community project. Consider the possibility of your CEF having her or his own "office hours" to advise students as they design their community engagement projects. This can not only help ensure successful projects, but provide the CEF with a significant autonomous role in the class. The important thing is to be clear about expectations.
- 4. Timeline:** Plot the course time-line as carefully as possible, laying out major work needed by you and the CEF, along with class projects and associated tasks (e.g. telephoning or otherwise reaching out to community participants, arranging for transport, planning a celebration or other event, enlisting other students on campus, designing reflection exercises, etc.) Develop a written time-line for the course, and make sure it is easily accessible to both the CEF and the faculty member (e.g., on LATTE). To be sure, this may need to be revised more than once during the semester; in fact, it is good to meet every few weeks to discuss specifically if and how the time-line should be reworked.
- 5. Expectations:** Clearly announce expectations about community involvement to prospective students in the Bulletin, syllabus and other information about the course. Further detail and emphasize those expectations, including time commitment required, on the first day of class and throughout the semester as appropriate. Introduce the CEF to the class, and explain the CEF's role to the class.
- 6. Maintain teamwork with the CEF throughout the semester:** Meet regularly and often. In addition to providing considerable logistical and administrative support, the CEF can offer valuable insight into student involvement and progress, assist in overseeing student project work, help maintain close contact with community partners, link with other students on campus, and much more.

7. **Sustainability:** Consider the sustainability of your community engagement component. Does it stand on its own, so it can just take place in the context of your class? Does it generate possible expectations on the part of the community that it will continue? Is that possible, either with in conjunction with further courses or in some other manner? These questions should be discussed with the community partner up front if possible.

8. **Reflection:** Give students plenty of opportunity to reflect on how their community engagement experience relates to their learning in the class. A wealth of useful reflection tools are available on the CEL website and elsewhere.

9. **Talk to others:** Faculty who have taught CEL courses are often an excellent and willing resource, with plenty of “lessons learned” to share.