

## **Faculty-CEF Partnerships: Some Notes and Reflections**

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There are many ways to shape the partnership between faculty and Community-Engaged Fellows. Here are some general thoughts to keep in mind in planning and implementing course projects, with the obvious proviso that it is in the very nature of this sort of teaching that unexpected challenges develop constantly and all plans are necessarily provisional!

- 1. Joint planning:** Spend some time, before the semester starts, think together carefully about the overall themes and goals of the course. 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. This early collaboration is key; it lays the foundation for the real faculty – CEF team effort essential to making this work well.
- 2. Contacts with community partners:** Determine who will make and sustain contacts with community partners. It does seem to work best when both faculty and CEF can be present together at the initial meetings with potential community partners. After that, it is good to be clear about who will follow up, and how often, with community partners. Ideally, your community partners will regard both the faculty and CEF as essential players.
- 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:** 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.) Try to anticipate on the time line the major work needed by the CEF, along with class projects and associated tasks (e.g. telephoning or otherwise advertising to community members, arranging for transport, planning a celebration or other event, enlisting other students on campus, designing reflection exercises, etc.) 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. **Weekly meetings:** Schedule regular weekly times to talk one-on-one. As the semester gets busier, there's always the temptation to put this off and rely on emails; but inevitably, meeting together helps both parties think through critical issues and challenges and anticipate upcoming problems. This is a great time to read together through student journal entries or reflective writing, and discuss what the students are actually learning and where the gaps or difficulties seem to be.

6. **Reporting:** Make sure the CEF writes up a detailed report on what she or he did in the course. This is useful for the CEL program and will be helpful for the faculty member in the future, when he or she needs to write letters of recommendation for the student.