

## **Suggested Best Practices and Values for Community Engaged Learning (CEL) and Community Based Learning (CBL) Partnerships**

Bucknell University is committed to forming and sustaining long-term, reciprocal partnerships that provide opportunities for critical reflection for students, support community-identified priorities, and have a positive impact on the region.

We recognize that community partnerships are dynamic and continuously evolving; nevertheless, we recommend a core set of shared values that guide this work. These values include an emphasis on open communication, reciprocity, and an asset-based approach.

### **Shared Values**

#### **Open and intentional communication**

Partners and faculty/staff practice open communication by being transparent and easily accessible, both celebrating success and supporting one another when challenges arise.

#### **Reciprocity**

Together, each works to build partnerships in the community that are mutually beneficial by supporting community identified priorities and deepened learning for students.

#### **Asset Based Approach**

Together, partners seek to approach the partnership from an asset-based perspective. It is important that each values the history of the community, lessons learned and builds on assets by approaching collaboration with a strengths-based mindset instead of a deficit-based mindset. Each side acknowledges the expertise the other brings to the partnership.

#### **Co-education** (most likely 300/400 level courses)

In partnership, supervisors and SUSL staff work as co-educators, working alongside students over their four years of engagement. Every experience is intended to challenge and deepen our student's understanding of themselves and the community in which they engage.

#### **Cultural Humility**

A commitment to lifelong learning and critical self reflection as well as recognizing and challenging power imbalances for successful partnerships. All partners acknowledge that they have gaps in their knowledge and expertise and commit to approaching each other with curiosity and the mindset of "I don't know what I don't know".

**Suggested Checklist for Partner & Faculty working with a Bucknell Course:**

- Partner and faculty agree on level of engagement for the project (i.e. is this a level 100 class that provides more of a volunteer/one-time support or this is a 400 level project with a deeper level of engagement and project).
- Clear expectations for students, role of community partner and faculty are co-created before students begin work.
- Partner and faculty set intentional times for check-ins to discuss challenges, successes and problem solving.
- Partner and faculty agree on the type of feedback partner provides to students. This will depend on the level of the partnership.
- Partner and faculty agree on type of feedback each provides to the other, with the intention of providing feedback that is honest and aimed to provide strategies for improvement

**Suggested checklist for Community Partner**

- Provide an on-site supervisor for the students working with the organization.
- Supervisor weekly or bi-weekly meetings with student(s) for upper level courses.
- Thorough orientation to agency, staff and background of population served.
- Check-in calls or meetings with faculty once a month or as needed/as agreed upon.
- All necessary materials for student projects provided, unless otherwise agreed upon.

**Suggested checklist for Faculty:**

- Provides appropriate training for students before they begin working with and in the community. This may include:
  - cultural humility training
  - reading and reflecting on community demographics
  - reading and reflecting on community needs assessments
  - Asset based community engagement training
  - Soft-skills training (how to answer the phone, how to communicate professionally, how to ask questions, how to be resourceful, etc.)
- Faculty guides students to support community identified priorities, not what students *think* are community priorities.
- Faculty provides space for critical reflection on students' collaborations with partners and encourages students to integrate the values of community engaged learning into their behaviors.