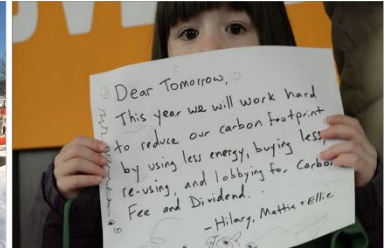




THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING



AY 21 ANNUAL REPORT



COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING at the UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT, AY21

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR, Fall 2021

As we prepare our report on AY21, we recognize how odd the time we are attempting to describe, and how difficult to convey the shifts in perspective and experience we have had, as community-engaged staff and faculty. So yet again, this report on the Office of Community-Engaged Learning (CELO) AY21 activities acknowledges loss of courses, the suspension of partnerships, and the stresses of the moment—and recognizes the ingenuity and persistence of community-engaged learning in this pandemic.

The pandemic significantly impacted our community-engaged course numbers in AY21. Travel courses were cancelled all three terms of the academic year; part-time lecturers' courses were cancelled for fall 2020; and many courses in which students work directly with youth were also cancelled this year, or ran without a service-learning component. Yet many faculty were able to continue: redesigning courses, finding new partners and placements, or adapting existing projects to a remote context. Our Civic Learning designation proved a valuable resource, allowing faculty to pivot to a community case study approach—or work with UVM-based partners—while still maintaining an explicit community engagement component. At least six faculty members turned their academic lens on COVID itself, providing students with meaningful ways to grapple with the pandemic's impact.

So we, too, pivoted. In recognition of our community partners' efforts to continue collaborating with us, CELO turned our awards entirely towards partners, offering 10 awards to outstanding community partners who demonstrated exceptional care and adaptation in unprecedented circumstances. We put our faculty awards on hold in honor to honor the partners' efforts, though we did showcase stories of creative adaptation from faculty in every unit with community-engaged learning at our annual awards event. Read on to hear their stories and the impact community engagement continues to have for our students.

Susan Munkies

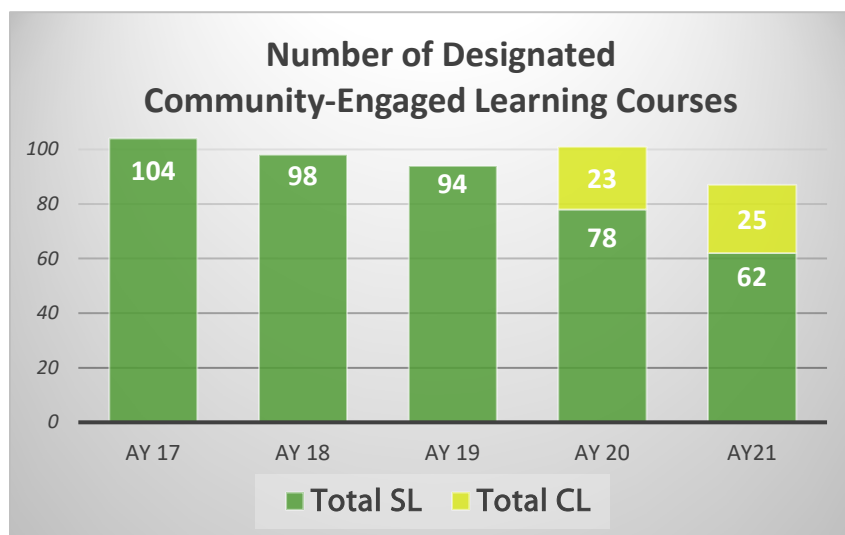


Community-Engaged Learning at UVM in AY21

The Community-Engaged Learning Office (CELO) is UVM's home for academic service-learning and civic engagement. Our goal is to support community engagement and active citizenship among our students through connecting them to communities and partners in Burlington and beyond.

The University of Vermont has a distinguished history of community-engaged teaching and learning. As the alma mater of John Dewey, and in his hometown of Burlington, UVM is committed to community engagement and experiential education as key foundations for citizenship. CELO continues in this tradition, supporting pathways for students to engage in communities throughout their time at UVM and beyond.

Specifically, we train faculty in community-engaged pedagogy, providing students with access to approximately 100 designated courses every year across disciplines and in almost every school and college (see graphs below). These courses work in partnership with many organizations: nonprofits, local government, small businesses, community associations, and more. Students in SL courses offer technical, logistical, educational, design, and clinical support to these groups. In so doing, students prepare for full participation in public life by deploying their academic skills within reciprocal community partnerships that address community-identified priorities.



87

Service Learning (SL) & Civic Learning (CL) courses offered university-wide

55

UVM faculty taught SL & CL courses

>16%

of UVM students took at least one SL course

147

community partners worked with students in SL courses

41%

of 2021 graduating seniors passed at least one SL course during their UVM career

Service Learning (SL) Courses

At UVM, the following course elements define service learning:

- A significant community-engaged component that responds to community goals & priorities, as identified by the community partner(s)—and which is tied to the course learning outcomes.
- Significant student interpretation & analysis (“critical reflection”) of the community-engaged activities.
- Demonstration of learning and caliber of work are the foundation of course assessment, not solely completion of service or project tasks.

Within these principles, however, *how* service learning is implemented varies widely in order to meet the needs of the partners.

Direct service, in which students are working directly with a client population, comprises roughly a third of service learning at UVM. Students work with a range of populations: tutoring in area after-school programs, such as the King Street Center, the O'Brien Community Center, the Boys & Girls Club; and with older adults at Cathedral Square, and the Residence at Quarry Hill. This spring, even during COVID, students were placed within school guidance offices, the UVM midwifery program, early childhood education centers, and the UVM child-life program (for hospitalized children and children of hospitalized parents).

Students may also conduct research driven by community partners' questions and needs, known as **community-based research** (CBR) or **community participatory action research** (CPAR). This proved a resilient—and responsive—mode for the pandemic, as AY21 saw an uptick in SL courses using the CBR/CPAR model.

For example, students in *Anthropology of Health & Healing* spent fall 2020 working on a research pro-

ject to explore older adults' experiences of the pandemic, particularly around social isolation. **Jeanne Shea** (right), who taught the course, designed the project collaboratively alongside her community partner at the state-wide organization SASH (Supporting Seniors at Home) designed the project collaboratively. Students conducted interviews with seniors in Chittenden County and in the Northeast Kingdom, analyzed the data to identify experiences with pandemic isolation and with SASH's services & programs.



Finally, **project-based (or consultant model) service learning**, in which students provide deliverables or professional-level projects for community partners, is the most common form of community-engaged learning at UVM, comprising half of all SL courses. In the past four years of **Jody Prescott's** (right) *Energy Law & Climate Change* course, for example, students have partnered with the Vermont Law School's Institute for Energy and the Environment researching legal issues related to renewable energy use, particularly among low-income populations. Kevin Jones at VLS' institute determines appropriate research projects for the students, and assigns a team leader for each project to supervise and guide the students throughout the semester. Students in turn produce deliverables in the team leaders' desired format, *and* turn this work into research papers for the course.



As with community-based research, project-based learning increased during the pandemic, as a number of faculty and partners pivoted from direct service or research to projects that could be completed remotely. See below for more on COVID impacts.

Civic Learning (CL) Courses

In AY20, CELO introduced the Civic Learning (CL) designation, which allows faculty to choose between two levels of community engagement. This designation grew out of faculty concern that 1st- & 2nd-year students were sometimes unprepared for thoughtful participation in diverse settings or for fully professional deliverables or high-quality research projects. We drew on models already established in the Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE) Department, and created this designation, which allows students to develop needed skills and/or perspectives.

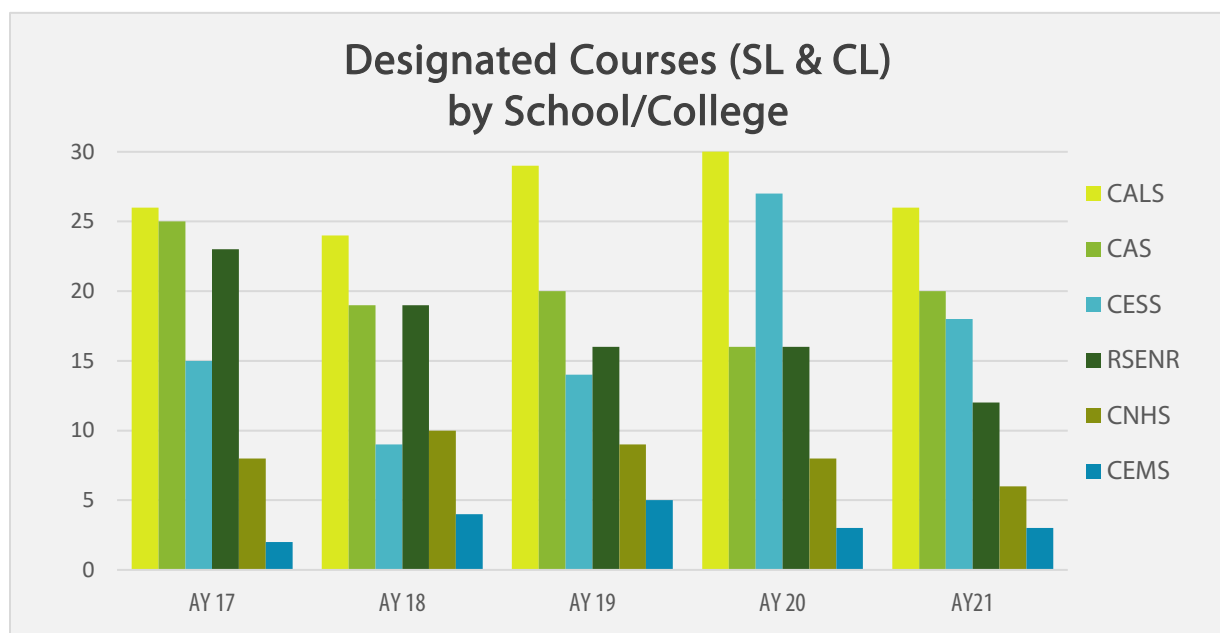
The CL designation has three possible formats:

- **Civic Foundations:** where students prepare for active citizenship and/or involvement in communities (see HDFS 001 profile below).
- **Community Exploration:** where students study a specific place-based case of broader issues, or become familiar with particular community stakeholder.
- **UVM Partnership & Service:** where students engaged in service-learning level activities, but on-campus with UVM-based partners.

The Civic Learning framework proved timely for this pandemic year, during which time many partner

organizations closed to volunteers in person, or streamlined their activities. Faculty were able to pivot to any of the three Civic Learning formats to maintain a community-engaged focus in the absence of external community partners. Overall, and in just the second year of the CL designation, 25 designated CL courses ran in AY21.

For example, in **Thomas DeSisto's** (right) CDAE capstone *Local Community Initiatives*, 4-student teams typically collaborate with businesses and organizations in the Old North End teams on community development projects. During COVID, Thomas instead invited students to identify communities of which they were already members, and to invite mentors and teammates from within those communities to design and implement projects. The students proved remarkably adept at identifying and inspiring key stakeholders to join them, and at designing projects that took advantage of the model's flexibility. He also noted that the students built bonding, bridging and linking social capital in this adapted version of the course.



Course Designation

All faculty working directly and reciprocally with off-campus community partners in their courses are expected to seek the Service Learning (SL) designation and meet the designation requirements set by the Faculty Senate. (The Civic Learning designation is optional.) CELO's Advisory Committee—comprised of faculty and engagement staff from every academic unit offering community-engaged courses—reviews course designation requests, ensuring that courses meet the Senate's

approved designation criteria. In so doing, we increase the likelihood of courses achieving fidelity to the best practices of community-engaged pedagogy, including reciprocity with community partners and respectful engagement with communities.

CELO modified the language of the designation criteria in AY21; the latest criteria can be found in the tables below.

Community-Engaged Learning Course Designation Criteria		
Designation	Possible Types	Criteria
Civic Learning (CL)	Civic Foundations Students prepare for civic participation, active citizenship and/or involvement in communities.	Credit-bearing course that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the common good, social inequality and/or environmental sustainability • Connects the civic or community elements to course learning goals • Includes student interpretation & analysis (“critical reflection”) of the course’s civic or community elements • Bases assessment on demonstration of learning, not solely completion of service or project tasks (if applicable)
	Community Exploration Students are introduced to specific communities, observe or participate in a community, and/or explore place-based cases of broader issues.	
	UVM Partnership & Service The course engages directly with UVM-based partners with projects or service, and/or includes small-scale off-campus service.	

Designation	Possible Types	Criteria
Service Learning (SL)	Direct & Indirect Service Students engage directly with organizations’ served populations or provide other services.	Credit-bearing course that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the role of the discipline in relationship to the common good, social inequality, and/or environmental sustainability • Includes a significant community-engaged component that responds to community goals & priorities, as identified by the community partner – and which is tied to the course learning outcomes • Includes student interpretation & analysis (“critical reflection”) of the course’s community-engaged activities • Bases assessment on demonstration of learning & caliber of work, not solely on completion of service or project tasks
	Project / Consultant Model Students produce deliverables for a community partner.	
	Community-Based Research Students engage in research driven by a community partner’s priorities.	

COVID impact on Community-Engaged Courses

As the Designated Courses table above demonstrates, COVID had a marked effect on the number of community-engaged learning courses in AY21; in all, 33 courses were directly impacted by the pandemic. Here we explore in more detail *how* courses were impacted and what choices faculty made.

25 of the 33 impacted courses were “lost” to the pandemic. Seven existing courses ran without the service-learning component, and 15 travel study courses with the SL or CL designations were cancelled outright. An additional two community-engaged courses were cancelled when part-time lecturers were not re-hired in the fall semester, and one internship service-learning course was likewise cancelled.

In addition to these 25 lost courses, eight SL courses were redesigned as Civic Learning for the pandemic. As Civic Learning, they still count towards our total of community-engaged courses in AY21, but the change in designation further indicates the challenges of maintaining service-learning partnerships during the pandemic.

Another marker of COVID's impact—beyond cancelled courses and dropped SL elements—was the starkly reduced number of *new* community-engaged courses offered during the pandemic. We saw only four new courses during AY21, where typically 10–12 new community-engaged courses are offered each year. Understandably, few faculty were willing and able to tackle the significant challenge of running a new pedagogy with external partners during the pandemic, and those that were sometimes had trouble finding new partners and COVID-appropriate projects.

At the same time, we were pleased that 62 SL courses still ran, in spite of the uncertainty surrounding face-to-face teaching and community engagement.

Many project-based courses continued remotely: with little additional alteration, RSENR's **David Kestenbaum** found partners keen to continue working with student groups in the *NR 206* senior capstone. Similarly, students in **Ben Dangel's** (right) *Public Communication Capstone* (CDAE) worked with partners eager for the public communication resources they provided, particularly as the pandemic stretched their capacity. While most partners needed to meet with students and faculty remotely, several were able to set up interview opportunities that met COVID guidelines, and the projects were able to continue successfully as planned. Project-model courses with defined deliverables remained surprisingly workable during the pandemic.



Direct service was harder to provide remotely, though not impossible. **Lisa Dion's** (right) *CS 192: Service-Learning in Computer Science* was able to restart in the spring of 2021, offering a Girls Who Code club for girls in middle and high school in Chittenden County.



Betsy Hoza's *Fit Kids* courses took a little more ingenuity: students switched from implementing and studying the results of the broader Fit Kids pro-

“Although pivoting to remote service learning was daunting, it was incredibly rewarding for the [UVM] students, and teachers [in community partner classrooms] were incredibly grateful for the resources they provided!”

— **Betsy Hoza**, *Psychological Science*
Fit Kids course Professor and program lead

gram at schools in Franklin and Grand Isle counties, to creating remote physical activity curricula that Head Start and classroom teachers could use in remote teaching. However, as Betsy notes, this switch also had long-term benefits: because the UVM students immersed themselves fully in creating quality products that community partner classrooms could use remotely, many of the resources they developed in the context of this remote class will continue to be used beyond the pandemic.

Some partners were unable to engage with our students remotely, particularly schools and afterschool programs, forcing faculty to scramble in order to

find new partnerships. HDFS Professor **Jackie Weinstock** worked tirelessly during the summer to find workable placements for her *HDFS 296: Field Experience* course—a two-semester capstone sequence. Some students were placed with UVM offices, while a few early childhood education facilities had enough need and capacity to accept students, even as most afterschool programs closed to all volunteers. Education faculty member Alysia Backman, meanwhile, was able to pair students with teachers in the Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative—who are already teaching remotely—to offer remote tutoring to students enrolled in these high school courses.



CONNECTING CULTURES PROGRAM WINS NATIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD

At a national level of recognition, **Karen Fondacaro** (Psychological Sciences) was a winner of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Community Engagement Scholarship Award—offered through the Engagement Scholarship Consortium, a national coalition of universities committed to public and engaged scholarship and holding the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement.

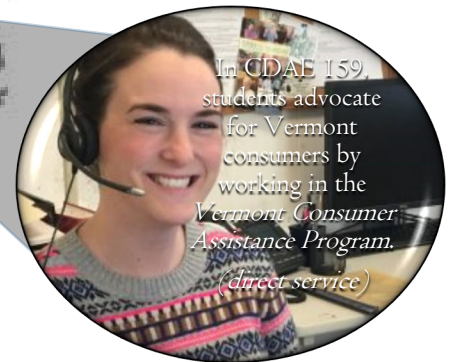
Nominated for her community-engaged research by Lisa Townson of the UVM Foundation and CELO Director Susan Munkres, Dr. Fondacaro was recognized for leading the *Connecting Cultures* program, which serves the refugee community through a clinical-science specialty service using a multidisciplinary, evidence-based model of mental health intervention. The program, which has served over 1,000 refugees and survivors of torture, works in close partnership with the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV), which serves all refugee communities, and other immigrant groups.

From this base of research and experience, Karen has founded New England Survivors of Torture and Trauma (NESTT). The network's overall goal is to provide a 'nest' in which survivors of torture receive integrated services in a culturally relevant, client-centered context. [Dr. Fondacaro's work was showcased](#) at the National Engagement Scholarship Conference in October 2020.

STATEWIDE REACH

number of partnerships by county, AY19-

AY21





COMMUNITY-ENGAGED FACULTY

Faculty in every school and college have chosen to teach using community-engaged pedagogies. Yearly, about 60 faculty members teach community-engaged classes, constituting a small but mighty cohort that over time reaches more than 40% of graduating seniors with a community-engaged course. What makes faculty take on this challenge? We found — through a survey in fall 2020 — that faculty value the pedagogy for its impact on student learning and on the students' commitment to, and level of engagement with, the course.

In an open-ended question, faculty indicated they appreciated SL courses for providing hands-on, theory-to-practice opportunities (46% of respondents), making a contribution to communities (44%), and for offering real-world relationships and connections to communities (42%). Fully 86% of responding faculty invoked at least one of these three themes. To learn more about the survey findings, see "Barriers for Faculty" below.

CELO also continued our longstanding Faculty Fellows program in AY21. Since 1999, over 220 faculty members have become Faculty Fellows for Community-Engaged Learning, joining a cohort of peers to learn about the core principles of—and methods for—community-engaged teaching. This year was no exception, with faculty joining us (on Teams) to consider the pedagogy, even in the midst of a pandemic.

Why faculty use community-engaged pedagogy:

"Providing students with opportunities to apply knowledge and skills to community-based initiatives."

"Service learning offers exceptional value for all involved: community partners, students, and myself. The ability to apply class-based knowledge to a real-world setting is without comparison."

"The ability to move beyond assignments for the sake of assignments and contribute to the needs of community initiatives/partners."

"The real-world social, political, and biophysical context of the work provides much of the learning that is necessary for the classes I offer. I could not possibly simulate these situations in a meaningful way."

"The opportunities for students to showcase their knowledge and skills while learning about the sometimes 'messy' world/challenges of public health."

— From Fall '20 Faculty Survey

Recognizing Faculty Adaptation

In typical years, CELO accepts nominations to recognize faculty whose community-engaged teaching exemplifies the best practices of the pedagogy, including collaboration, reciprocity, integration of experiential learning and a commitment to recognizing diverse perspectives as fundamental to effective community engagement. We typically offer awards for outstanding new faculty (usually teaching less than 5 years) and the Lynne Bond Award for Service-Learning Faculty, for faculty with many years of experience.

For AY21, given the disruption of typical partnerships during the pandemic and the challenges of securing nominations, we chose instead to celebrate the tremendous COVID adaptation efforts of community-engaged faculty as a whole, as represented by individuals from every unit who had demonstrated creativity and persistence continuing their community engagement. We showcased these faculty in our virtual Awards Reception in April 2020 (see sidebar). We were delighted to support and recognize community-engaged faculty who simultaneously craft powerful learning experiences for students while thinking deeply about community partnerships, and especially for their creative continuation of long-standing programs that continued to meet needs during COVID. Their creative work took many different forms, demonstrating a wide range of creative and timely course redesigns. A number of these stories are incorporated throughout this report, and others are acknowledged here.

Some courses responded directly to COVID social distancing conditions, and addressed them head on. An example is the work of **Trish O’Kane’s** students in *Birding for Change*. To maintain their “Bird Buddy” mentoring relationships at Flynn, C.P. Smith and Hunt elementary schools in Burlington the students transformed themselves. At the suggestion of the partnering afterschool director, they became an “Elves Workshop,” who envisioned out-

FACULTY ACKNOWLEDGED FOR COVID ADAPTATION AT 2021 CELO VIRTUAL AWARDS

Alysia Backman

EDSC 215: Reading in Secondary Schools

David Conner

CDAE 250: Applied Research Methods

Meghan Cope

GEOG 186: Qualitative Research Methods

Ben Dangel

CDAE 120: Strategic Writing for Public Communications

Thomas DeSisto

CDAE 271: Local Community Initiatives

Lisa Dion

CS 192: Service Learning in Computer Science

Jason Garbarino

PRNU 121: Gerontology

Shana Haines

ECLD 205: Family, School, & Community Collaboration

Betsy Hoza

PSYS 268: Fit Kids Applied Research &
PSYS 281: Advanced Fit Kids Applied Research

Dave Kestenbaum

NR 206: Environmental Problem Solving & Impact Assessment

John Lens

CE 185 & 186: Civil & Environmental Engineering Capstone Design

Rachael Montesano

SPAN 111: Race, Identity, & Migrant Labor

Trish O’Kane

ENVS 295: Birding for Change

Cynthia Reyes

ECLD 296: ELL Practicum

Jackie Weinstock

HDFS 296: Field Experience



Marina Dardati '20 pitches her class on a scavenger hunt idea for Birding for Change. Says Marina, "I had an experience I couldn't have gotten in any other class." (Photograph by Andy Duback)

door clues-based games. Weekly, the UVM students created site-based activities for their mentees that could be done without direct contact with their UVM mentors, developing skills and place-based ecological knowledge. Trish's goal was for the class to continue to meet the outdoor learning and play objectives their community partner identified as high priorities for the elementary students, while ensuring that her students could meet course own learning outcomes at the same time.

Other faculty turned their lens on COVID itself, the service and civic learning pedagogy proving adaptable to take on the immediate impacts of the pandemic. **Rachael Montesano** switched her course's designation from Service Learning to Civic Learning for AY21. Typically her *Spanish III: Race, Identity and Migrant Labor* class works with programs supporting migrant dairy farm workers in Addison County. She maintained the course's units on migrant Latino labor throughout history and developed sections where students explored the immediate impact COVID was having on dairy-farm workers in Vermont.



Other faculty were able to develop COVID-responsive research. **Shana Haines** (left) in Education redesigned her *Family, School, & Community Collaboration* course to directly ad-

dress COVID's impact on connections between refugee families and schools. Returning to meet with families interviewed in previous community-based research conducted by Shana and **Cynthia Reyes** (bottom left), also in Education, they found a willingness to share their experiences during COVID with the school district, with the goal of developing culturally responsive policies and engagement.



David Conner's *Applied Research Methods* course partnered with UVM's Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL), investigating questions of community-building and belonging in remote teaching. Students in the class identified the tension between the effect on community-building of students keeping cameras off and the equity issues in requiring cameras to be on, then conducted interviews with peers around this tension. This collaborative research contributed to CTL's understanding of the issues, resulting directly in a blog post on the issues raised and a CTL workshop for faculty on the nuances of camera policies. CTL staff let us know that the findings continue to be commonly referenced both internally and externally as they support faculty doing remote teaching.

Meghan Cope (right) turned her *Qualitative Research Methods* class towards documentation of UVM student life during the pandemic—working with Prudence Dougherty & Chris Burns in UVM Special Collections to both analyze collected materials from the 1918 flu pandemic as well as contribute their own findings and artifacts from today. Students documented the experience of student life, and campus landscapes, using mixed methods and drawing upon the historical materials. They then developed recommendations for social supports, and ways of organizing physical spaces that could combat social isolation on campus.



"We appreciate faculty creativity and effort in response to pandemic conditions, which made teaching already challenging. Even in these circumstances, you worked overtime, re-mapped your activities to your learning goals, re-committed to your partners and gave students opportunities they otherwise would have missed. Thank you."

— *Susan Munkres*
Speaking at the '21 CELO Awards Reception

Identifying Barriers for Faculty

The new Academic Success Goals for UVM clearly articulate our commitment to the land grant mission through community-engaged teaching and learning, among other activities. In particular, Academic Success Goal 3.3 specifically calls for an increase in community-engaged courses.

To understand how we might support this call, we undertook our first comprehensive survey of faculty who have taught service-learning courses, inquiring about what has drawn faculty to continue the pedagogy, and particularly if they have stopped teaching, what were the obstacles they faced. In fall 2020, all faculty who had taught at least one service-learning course in the past 10 years were asked to participate. Of the 119 faculty receiving the survey, 65% responded by completing the instrument. We gathered valuable information about the conditions for faculty teaching community-engaged courses.

As described above, faculty value the pedagogy for many reasons. One faculty member explained that service-learning "gets faculty outside the Ivory Tower bubble which is deeply enriching for research purposes and citizenship" while others identified the value they feel in making a contribution: "I definitely felt personally satisfied because I did help, even if in a small way, the communities I live in."

Many enjoy the work with community partners, particularly when long-term relationships develop. And faculty find that students work harder, engage

more fully, learn more deeply, and experience benefits of connecting to Burlington and surrounding communities, to each other, and to future employers. Obviously, COVID was a real challenge for faculty — and although it was not the main emphasis of the survey, several commented about the obstacles the pandemic created. With cancelled courses and cancelled SL service and projects, the number of faculty teaching SL dropped to 55 faculty, from a pre-pandemic 5-year average of 64.4.

The biggest challenge experienced by faculty was the workload involved. While a number of previous SL faculty had stopped teaching because of taking on administrative roles, workload was the most commonly invoked challenge. Most faculty receive no additional supports for teaching an SL course compared to another course; only 20% of respondents reported receiving any supports specific to an SL course, such as undergraduate TA's, reduced class sizes, or greater than 1.0 CE in their workload. These types of supports were most common when the faculty member was teaching a course where the department had created the course as a requirement for the major or program and was committed to staffing it as such. They were mostly absent among faculty who were teaching service-learning as a personal pedagogical choice (80% of the sample).

With this data, CELO is initiating conversations around workload among SL faculty, and with administrators about how to support faculty in implementing our Academic Success Goals.

Supporting Faculty during COVID

CELO supports faculty to use community-engaged pedagogy through consultations, workshops, and a signature Faculty Fellows for Community-Engaged Learning program, developed over 20 years ago as

the first fellows program at UVM. Faculty who are accepted as Fellows spend six months meeting as a cohort, discussing key issues in the pedagogy and designing a service-learning or community-engaged component to one of their courses. Roughly half of all program alumni still at UVM are using service-learning pedagogy on a regular basis.

We were thrilled to receive enough applications to create a full cohort for Faculty Fellows for 2021 (see sidebar). With the opportunity to take

it online, we invested in significant revision to the program, creating resources which will continue to benefit Faculty Fellows in future years (see example below).

CELO also engaged much more directly and continuously with faculty teaching community-engaged courses than in the past. We spent the summer of 2020 developing COVID guidance for faculty, consulting on university policies on experiential learning, and both publicizing and translating these for service-learning circumstances. With input from our Advisory Committee, guidance included how to maintain and/or adjust partnerships, redesigning course goals and learning outcomes, and alternative modes of service learning and community engagement.

Additionally, we convened meetings for faculty and partners, helped solicit partners for faculty, offered last-minute course re-designation when partners cancelled, and spent time helping faculty brainstorm adaptations to changed circumstances.

FACULTY FELLOWS FOR COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING, AY21

Ben Dangel

Community Development &
Applied Economics

Jen Garrett-Ostermiller

Center for Teaching &
Learning

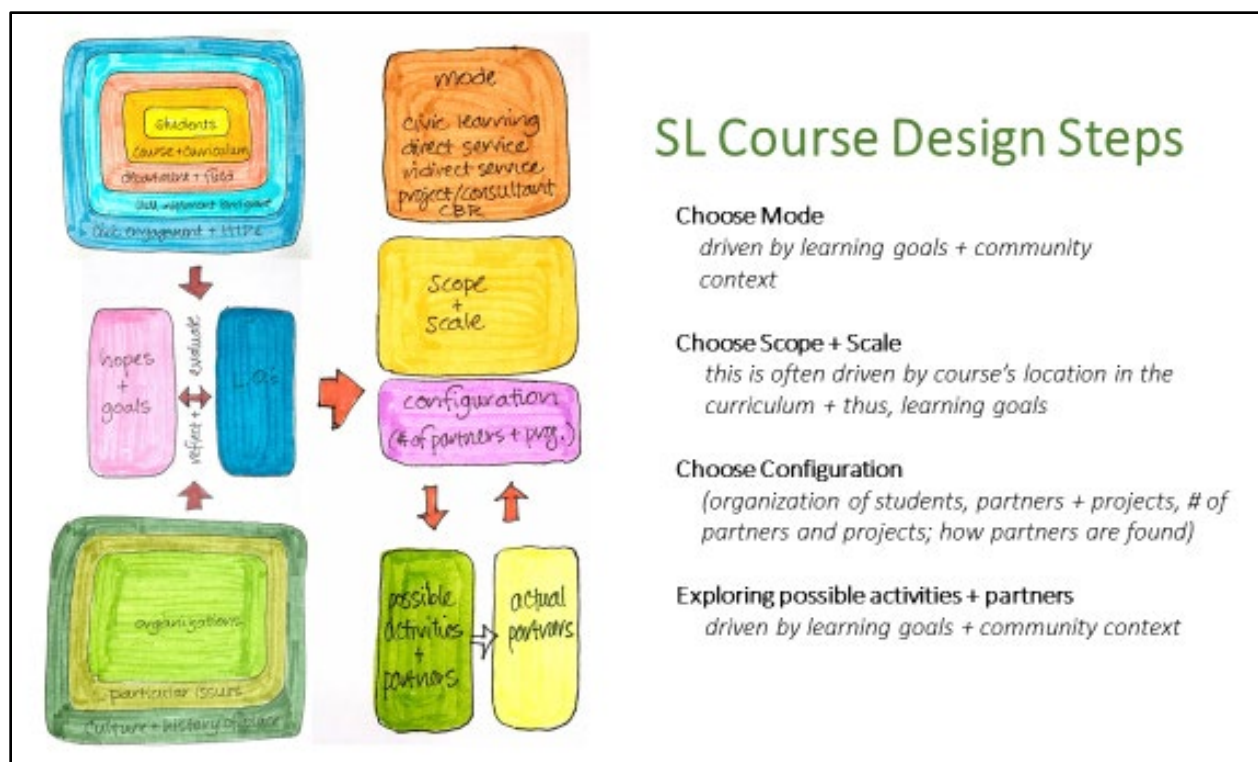
Courtney Giles

Civil & Environmental Engineering

Lauren MacKillop

Education

Libby Miles





STUDENT IMPACT

Service-learning courses are powerful opportunities for students because they combine so many of the elements of high-impact educational practices, and they often provide students a window into different worlds and ways of being. Service learning necessarily involves relevant *real-world application of academic knowledge, interactions with peers and faculty about substantive issues, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning*; it can often involve *public demonstrations of competence*, and *experiences with diverse populations and unfamiliar circumstances* (Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013). All of these elements contribute to the significance of the pedagogy on student engagement and learning, which is well documented both nationally and at UVM—and demonstrated powerfully in the student and alumni stories below. It also gives students the opportunity to experience Vermont outside the campus bubble and to connect with advocates, organizers, leaders and professionals in their areas of interest. Students express appreciation for these opportunities, and we often hear that they wished they had encountered service-learning courses earlier in their time at UVM.

Meaningful Engagement

While the main focus of our work is supporting the development and delivery of these courses that reach so many students (41% of AY21 graduating seniors had taken and passed a service-learning course), we also offer and support additional opportunities for students to take their community engagement beyond the course. Every year, 5-10 students work through CELO as **Service-Learning Teaching Assistants (SLTAs)**, supporting faculty in existing service-learning courses. They serve as important resources for faculty; their roles include coordinating service experiences, facilitating and/or grading reflective assignments, and helping project manage students and/or groups on deadlines and deliverables, all while offering advice and a student perspective on course design and the progress of service projects and experiences.

Either for a stipend or for academic credit, SLTAs work up to 5 hours per week on the community-engaged portion of the course, and participate in a weekly training and discussion with their fellow TAs and with CELO Program Coordinator Tom Wilson. They consider reciprocity, principles of

community partnership, models of social change, effective practices for academic reflection, their own positions and identities, and the potential significance of community engagement.

“Students dig deeper when they are working for more than just a grade. Having a real-world audience and a project with consequences changes their perception of the work they are doing from mere busywork to work that can make a difference for those outside the academy.”

— UVM Community-Engaged Faculty Member
From Fall '20 faculty survey

In AY21, eight SLTAs supported courses in four school and colleges. Their work helped students placed in the field in early childhood classrooms and youth services organizations; connected student research to public health nonprofits, informing their practice; and supported the creation of environmental education materials.

2021 SIMON FAMILY PUBLIC RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Brianna Borch, Food Systems

“Identifying Key Pollen & Nectar Resources
for Vermont Honeybees”

Faculty Mentor: Samantha Alger (Plant &
Soil Science)

Community Partner: Vermont Beekeepers
Association

Anitra Conover, Global & Regional Studies

“Food Provider’s Toolkit for Working with
New Americans in Vermont”

Faculty Mentor: Pablo Bose (Geography)

Community Partner: Vermont Food Bank

2021 SIMON FAMILY RESEARCH AWARDS

Eliza Callahan, Art History

“Underrepresented Artists and Their Work”

Faculty Lead: Kelly Di Dio (Art & Art
History)

Emma Frank, Nutrition & Food Sciences

“Regional Social Cohesion, Collective Ac-
tion, and Food-Related Volunteerism in Re-
sponse to Food Insecurity Associated with
COVID-19”

Faculty Lead: Farryl Bertmann (Nutrition
& Food Sciences)

Olivia Mauro, Secondary Education

“Staff and Student Surveys to Measure the
Efficacy and Use of Restorative Practices”

Faculty Leads: Mika Moore, Colby
Kervick, Bernice Garnett (Education)

Lyndsey Parrott, Cmty & Int’l Development

“10-year Anniversary of Tropical Storm Ire-
ne’s Impacts on Vulnerable Populations”

Faculty Lead: Kelly Hamshaw (CDAE)

Community-engaged student leadership is not lim-
ited to service-learning courses, however, as some
students choose to continue engagement work with
community partners during the summer. The **Simon
Family Public Research Fellowship** fully supports
five currently-enrolled students to engage in com-
munity-based research projects with a community
partner and a faculty member. These projects follow
the principles of participatory action research — a
close analogue to service learning, where the re-
search embodies principles of reciprocity. Students,
partners and faculty design collaborative research to
address community priorities and goals, and stu-
dents implement the research project during the
summer with the support of the faculty mentor. Pro-
jects may be partner driven, or they may be part
of a broader faculty-led project with community
partners.

In the pandemic spring of 2020, CELO and the Of-
fice of Fellowships, Opportunities & Undergradu-
ate Research (FOUR) recognized that the pan-
demic was causing severe disruption to both stu-
dents and community partners and that, as a result,
very few applications would be submitted for the
Simon Fellowship. Together, we envisioned a new
program—the **Simon Family Research Award**—
where faculty could apply for funding to support
students to join community-engaged research pro-
jects that were already underway. We actively re-
cruited faculty doing community-engaged scholar-
ship and supported them to pursue this opportunity
for collaboration with students.

Our outreach was extremely successful, so for
AY21, we again offered this option, yielding four
Research Awards initiated by faculty, as well as two
Public Research Fellowships driven by student ap-
plications. Projects included building a toolkit to
increase food security among New Americans, mon-
itoring the effectiveness of restorative practices in
Burlington schools, reassessing Tropical Storm
Irene’s impacts on vulnerable populations 10 years
on, and mapping key Vermont pollinator habitats
and resources (see sidebar).

STUDENT & ALUMNI SNAPSHOTS

Click photos to read more about each student.



**ANITRA CONOVER '22,
GLOBAL STUDIES**

As a research assistant to Prof. Pablo Bose, and as an intern with the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV), Conover has been gathering information from hundreds of New Americans about their access to nutritious, culturally appropriate foods and experiences with food assistance programs. Together, Conover and Bose are working to identify best practices and policies that might help bridge the gap between meals served to resettled refugees versus meals consumed. "These surveys and these interviews aren't just contributing to scholarship on food insecurity. They're to benefit the participants in a very immediate sense," she says.



**JESSICA TAYLOR '20, COMMUNITY &
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Jess connected with the organization 1% for the Planet as part of her service-learning project in *CDAE I66: Community Entrepreneurship*. She subsequently applied for a Development Internship position there, providing research on environmental giving and philanthropy, which progressed into her current role of Administrative & Executive Coordinator upon graduation. "I'm really enjoying learning about the operations of a small-scale nonprofit. I like seeing how social initiatives are played out and it's cool to see all the pieces come together," she says.



**ROWAN HAWTHORNE '21,
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

Rowan worked first as a student and then as a teaching assistant in the community-engaged *Vermont Legislative Research Service* course, in which Political Science students conduct policy research work for Vermont legislators. That experience, highlighted by the opportunity to testify in front of the House Committee on Education, led to her current role as Legislative Committee Assistant in the Vermont Legislature. "I get to be in Vermont, fostering more connections and helping support the citizen legislature," she says.



**AMIE SCHILLER '15,
WILDLIFE & FISHERIES BIOLOGY**

Amie is Stewardship Coordinator with the Minnesota Land Trust. Among her community-engaged projects at UVM, Amie worked with state and local partners and coordinated more than forty students in RSENr service-learning courses to collect ethnographic, landscape, and architectural data about nine village greens, culminating in her Vermont Village Greens Report. "My service-learning experience combined technical, data, and writing skills with the human dimensions of working with a team and organizing students, all of which helped with my future jobs," she says.

Pathways from Community Engagement to Career

Community engagement at UVM — whether in service-learning courses, working as a teaching assistant, or conducting community-based research as a Simon Fellow — can have profound effects on students' time at UVM and on their future trajectories. We help them make the connection between these experiences and their possibilities explicitly while they are students, and then savor their successes in later years.

Since AY16, CELO has offered **transferable skills workshops** within service-learning courses, tailored to the particularities of each course. These workshops require students to identify and communicate key skills that they have gained in the service-learning work that will transfer to other fields, workplaces, or settings. Under COVID, these workshops moved online, allowing CELO staff to record them for more widespread distribution.

"Students increase their engagement and learning of new material and methods because they know their work valued and needed by the community partner. It's important that they conduct their methods correctly and relay their findings clearly because there are real impacts on their partner and the members of their organization. I also am committed to our land grant mission and this is one way UVM can be of service to our region"

— *UVM Community-Engaged Faculty Member*
From Fall '20 faculty survey

We've found that students often need this kind of explicit support to identify the larger implications of work done in service-learning courses, and to effectively articulate what they have gained. These lessons can be particularly significant in cases where a service-learning project has encountered obstacles: rather than be discouraged about perceived failures, this workshop encourages students to understand qualities of creativity, perseverance and adaptation that they may have developed, which are key skills in contemporary work. Structuring opportunities for reflection and analysis deepens the learning experience considerably.

Recognizing Students

We offered our Student Leadership in Service-Learning Award in AY21, with **Sarah Stevens** as the recipient. Sarah was the Service-Learning TA for *ANTH 174: Culture, Health, & Healing* course in Fall 2020, taught by Jeanne Shea.



Sarah helped students to interpret and make meaning of their experiences, and to connect them to the intended course learning goals. She worked with Jeanne to design prompts for critical reflection assignments, and rubrics for providing feedback to students. With sixty students in the course, this assistance was especially valuable. She also

helped with logistics for the five service-learning quality improvement research projects, including setting up remote interviews for the student groups in each project.

At their best, experiences in service-learning courses lead to additional opportunities—as this one did—such as further community-based research, developing greater transferable skills and a wider network of colleagues for students. Sarah's own interests were sparked by one of the projects, which led to an independent study with Prof. Shea working on data from interviews with Support & Services at Home (SASH), a federally-funded program supporting older adults to age in place. Sarah developed the project with Melissa Southwick, one of the community partners profiled below.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Partnering with community-engaged learning courses affords local organizations—in particular those with limited resources or capacity—the opportunity to think about their work through a new lens, engage soon-to-be professionals in their work, and move forward initiatives that might otherwise languish. Particularly during the pandemic, when resources were more stretched than ever, partners received vital support and a connection to UVM resources, while providing meaningful learning opportunities for our students.

Unsurprisingly given the challenges of community engagement in a pandemic, we had fewer partners to SL & CL courses than is typical (158 partners in AY20 to 146 in AY21), as well as a more limited statewide reach (3 fewer Vermont counties enjoyed service-learning partnerships). Happily, though, the drop-off was not nearly as significant as initially feared. In part, this is due to the tenacity of faculty in creatively building and maintaining partnerships for their students, but also speaks to a remarkable level of adaptation and resourcefulness from the partners themselves. To honor these tremendous efforts by our community partners, CELO decided to dedicate our 2021 Awards to their COVID response (see below).

Other notable community partnership trends included a large increase in the number of new community partners—40% of AY21 partners were working with UVM courses for the first time, whereas that number is typically around 20%. A number of factors may be contributing to this change, among them the need for organizations stretched thin by the pandemic finding creative ways to extend their limited capacity. We plan to keep an eye on this trend, but our expectation is that the high number of new partners this year was largely a pandemic-related aberration. We also saw an increase in the fraction of partners that were internal to UVM (21%, as compared with a 15% average over the past five years), which is likely due to a combination of necessary COVID-imposed changes to community-engaged courses, as well as more faculty taking advantage of the CL designation option.

Overall, we were extremely gratified and impressed by the commitment our community partners demonstrated to UVM courses and students, as well as the meaningful work accomplished by our students on behalf of the many communities to which UVM is connected. More than ever, it seems, the collaborative efforts of our students and partners provided a vital connection in disconnected times.

*Sticker design by CDAE 224: Public Communications student
Giovanna Lowry, part of her team's fundraising campaign for a
dam removal project on the Jailbranch River in Washington, VT.*



Recognizing Community Partners

This year service-learning community partners had to adapt as much as faculty to changed circumstances. They, too, had to shift to remote programming and remote engagement with students, while still offering feedback, engagement and meaningful learning activities. Partners had to consider whether an internship or project could even be done remotely, redesign entire projects and, in some cases, manage COVID protocols and precautions to allow students to participate directly. And while UVM students certainly provided a vital link and necessary resources for some organizations, the commitment of our partners was never more demanding than during this past year.

For example, **Kaelyn Modrak**, Program Manager of the Learn Earn and Prosper (LEAP) Program at RESOURCE VT, was particularly effective in designing and implementing the SL project for a student

group in the *CDAE 120: Public Communications* course. In March 2020, Kaelyn quickly pivoted to remote collaboration, organizing safe and socially-distant interview opportunities with young program participants in the LEAP Café, which formed the basis for the profile deliverables created by the CDAE students (example of a finished profile at left). The partnership

has now expanded to an additional LEAP Café, and one of the students from the class was hired to work at LEAP directly from the service-learning experience.

Just as group projects and deliverables required significant adjustments in the face of COVID, so too did service-learning internship placements present particular challenges. As Associate Director of the Sara Holbrook Center, **Melissa Pennington** (right) found ways for students to continue remotely and meaningfully as interns in Spring 2020. With the effort that required, all recruitment for this academic year's students and placements stopped. Yet despite the shortened timeframe over the summer for students to apply for the Fall semester, interview, and then be placed, Melissa was able to not only take students when many other agencies paused SL partnerships, but she actually expanded the number of students working with Sara Holbrook.



In taking these students, Melissa helped to ensure that UVM's *Mentored Clinical Internship* program could continue during this pandemic year, and gave students invaluable opportunities to develop new programs—or enhance existing ones—to meet the widely varying and unique needs posed by the pandemic.

As recognition for these and many other extraordinary efforts by our community partners during the pandemic, we chose to focus our annual awards ceremony on some of the many partners that went above and beyond to help students and faculty continue their community-engaged work. The result was our **2021 Community Partner Awards for COVID Response**.

Take a peek into the life of Overlook Café Operator Lindsey!



FALL 2020

"My job is meaningful"

Lindsey, smiling in front of the beautiful brick wall on the Overlook Café balcony.

LINDSEY MOSHER: OVERLOOK CAFE OPERATOR

Walking into Overlook Café, you're met with a warm smile and greeting from Overlook Café Operator, Lindsey Mosher.

The Overlook Café is part of the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) which recruits, trains, and places self-entrepreneurs who are legally blind as operators of vending facilities located on federal and state properties.

Lindsey is a charismatic young professional originally from central Maine. Lindsey was diagnosed with her visual impairment at a young age, and it has worsened over the years. She made her way to Burlington to study transpersonal psychology, with a focus in mindfulness.

Her life changed when the Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired connected Lindsey with the BEP and Learn, Earn and Prosper (LEAP) Programs.

In a moment in her life when she was choosing to say "yes", Lindsey said "yes" to an AmeriCorps position with LEAP, and not long after, "yes" to the position of Operator of the Overlook Café.

"We aren't just a café that serves food, we're a job training site for people in the community to learn job skills. We train and serve people who are blind and visually impaired, single parents, schools, Department of Labor and more."

Read on for snapshots of some of the partners highlighted at the awards reception.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SNAPSHOTS

2021 CELO Awardees for COVID Response



MARTI CHURCHILL

Chief of Midwifery, UVM Medical Center

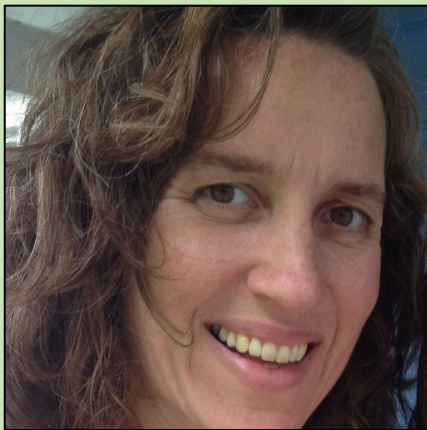
Marti worked closely with an HDFS student whose career aspiration is to be a birth doula, but almost wasn't able to get an internship because of COVID-19. Marti went above and beyond, including finding remote work for the student during the medical records shutdown last fall, and helping her return to the hospital in January where she has been able to support birthing women.



HEMANT GHISING

*Education Counselor, VSAC &
Bhutanese community cultural liaison*

Hemant supported collaborative community-based research conducted with refugee families on their relationships with schools during the pandemic. He engaged in outreach to the families, setting up interviews, providing interpretation when necessary, and finally served as a cultural expert as students identified questions and themes within the interview data. Without this help, the service-learning project would not have been possible.



MEREDITH HOISINGTON

Guidance Counselor, Integrated Arts Academy

When several students particularly wanted experiences in the area of counseling, but were unable to find any placement willing to accept them as undergraduates during the pandemic, Meredith, generously accepted and supported them. She found ways to involve the students remotely when they could not be in the field, and was able to help them navigate difficult COVID protocols to come to the school and work directly in classrooms.



KEVIN JONES

*Professor & Director of the Institute for Energy
& the Environment, Vermont Law School*

Kevin has worked for years with UVM students on research projects around real-world legal issues related to renewable energy use among low-income populations. Even as he and his team were juggling their own pivot to remote work at Vermont Law School, Kevin remained in contact with the students to guide them, and offered guest lecture presentations with feedback to students on Teams on short notice.



CAROLINA LUCAK

*Garden Education Manager,
Vermont Community Gardening Network*

In past partnerships with Carolina, students have worked on one community garden site, but with a doubled course size and the pandemic, she engaged four different sites, which allowed students to choose from a greater array of design projects. Carolina visited the sites herself, presented them remotely to the students, remained available for questions, and provided feedback at the mid-point of the design process. With this additional work on Carolina's part, the COVID adaptation actually expanded the range of services students were able to provide.



MELISSA SOUTHWICK

Statewide SASH Director, Cathedral Square

Melissa collaborated on the design of a research project to explore older adults' experiences of the pandemic, particularly around social isolation. The students conducted interviews with seniors in Chittenden County and in the Northeast Kingdom, analyzed the data to identify experiences with pandemic isolation, and the degree to which they were connected with SASH services & programs. Melissa's commitment provided UVM students with valuable opportunities to connect their coursework in medical anthropology to the experiences of older adults and SASH workers.



ALI WALTIEEN

Child Life Program, UVM Medical Center

Ali was able to create an internship for a student that was passionate about the field of Child Life, which encompasses offering psychosocial supports for hospitalized children and children of hospitalized parents. She provided opportunities to learn from a range of Child Life specialists and professionals in the hospital, even when it was not safe for the student to be physically present in the hospital. As conditions evolved so that it could be done safely, two other specialists were willing to take on the student in the spring based on her experience the previous semester.



SYNDI ZOOK

SASH Coordinator, Cathedral Square

Partnering with SASH, UVM nurse practitioner students were completing yearly wellness assessments of older adults in their homes. In November, the day after the in-person wellness assessments began, they had to suddenly move to Zoom when numbers began rising, especially given that many of the students were also working in hospitals. Syndi knew every resident's technological capacity, and organized those who were able to participate on her own office computer to complete the wellness assessments.

Partner Benefit & Community Impact

It's common in the field of service learning to measure engagement through the number of “service hours” contributed by students; at times, even those hours are translated into a monetary amount through assignment of a federally designated hourly wage to volunteering. In CELO, we reject that transactional approach to understanding impact: we recognize that partners *and* students gain from reciprocal partnerships, and that the impacts are not always immediately visible.

We ask partners about how they have played a role in shaping the partnership, and what the impacts of partnering have been. The benefits partners perceive are not always the ones that we expect. While there are often concrete outputs—tutoring hours provided in afterschool programs, engineering designs created and delivered to partners—the ideas, relationships, and connections created through service-learning are often just as valued.

Community partners consistently surprise us with what they articulate as the benefits of working with UVM students. They welcome our students for the disciplinary knowledge they bring to the deliverables they provide, and for their labor and reflective engagement, but they also appreciate being educators and contributing to the next generation of professionals.

And as with all partnerships, the impact can be felt by all constituencies and even on the surrounding community. Faculty members can transform partners, working with partners can challenge faculty, doing service-learning influences students, and the results of their work contributes to community-identified priorities over time.

Service-Learning Partnerships by Issue Area, AY21

Issue	AY21
Environment/Sustainability	20%
Community & Individual Health	18%
Education	13%
Youth	10%
Anti-Poverty	5%
College Access & Success	5%
Local Food Systems	4%
Aging	3%
Community & Economic Development	3%
Women's Empowerment	2%
Arts	2%
Criminal Justice	2%
Refugees & Immigrants	2%
Animal Welfare	<1.0%
Housing/Homelessness	<1.0%
Hunger	<1.0%
Transportation	<1.0%
Other	10%

(note: this measures semester-level partnerships,

“I’m so impressed with the depth of this work. This [natural resources assessment] will help us immediately with our decision making and the projects we prioritize, and will serve as a model that can be replicated in conservation districts across the state.”

— Lauren Weston, District Manager
Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District
(partnered with NR206: Environmental Problem-Solving)



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING

Meeting the Mission

CELO's work is primarily to support faculty to create and sustain community-engaged courses, and to elevate these courses, partnerships and projects. We also advise departments seeking to integrate and scaffold community engagement across the curriculum, with intentionality. But we also serve as advocates for the pedagogy at the institution as a whole. We collaborate routinely with the Humanities Center, FOUR (Office of Fellowships, Opportunities & Undergraduate Research), the Office of Engagement, UVM Service Network, the Career Center and Internship Coordinators, as well as outreach & engagement staff from the Schools and Colleges, to integrate community engagement principles of respect and strengths-based perspectives, reflective engagement, and reciprocity.

CELO MISSION

Our mission is to ensure that community-engaged learning becomes deeper, more prevalent and more strategic at UVM, helping us to fulfill UVM's land-grant mission while providing transformative and real-world learning experiences for students.

This past year, much of our work included supporting faculty to understand and comply with institutional guidance around COVID. As we look ahead to the integration of community engagement into the Catamount Core General Education requirements (see below), we plan to remain vigilant to ensure faculty have the supports they need to engage with community members reciprocally and sustainably. And we continue to elevate and recognize our outstanding faculty, students and partners with our own awards, through the Provost's Office, and through nominations to regional and national awards for excellence in community engagement and engaged scholarship.

Global Citizenship GenEd

In AY21, CELO Director Susan Munkres worked with an ad-hoc committee to develop the Global Citizenship General Education requirement, which incorporated CELO's proposal for a community engagement general education requirement. The resulting requirement is one of two "pathways" to fulfill Global Citizenship, titled Becoming a Global Citizen; it emphasizes skills and capacities for citizenship. Susan additionally consulted on the learning outcomes for this pathway, which includes outcomes aligned with community-engaged learning as it is defined and understood at UVM. We are glad for the integration of community engagement into the "Catamount Core" and look forward to working with faculty, curriculum committees and units generally to support the integration of existing SL and CL-designated courses into general education as appropriate.

Amplifying Our Impact

CELO's work aligns directly with the Academic Success Goals laid out by President Garimella in AY20. Service-learning is one of the 10 documented "high-impact educational practices" (Kuh 2008) that UVM aspires to make available to all students. In supporting this pedagogy, we contribute to a meaningful and impactful UVM education—one that is now recognized in the Cata-mount Core. We contribute to faculty professional development, not only through supporting community-engaged pedagogy, but through letters of support for RPT, providing service opportunities on our Advisory Committee, and engagement with the broader world of engaged scholarship and scholarship of engagement.

We elevate UVM in this realm, and lay the groundwork for our ongoing successful applications to earn the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement (see below). And, of course, we concretely prepare students for future citizenship and participation in public life through a diverse menu of academic community engagement opportunities, directly supported by our office.

Carnegie Classification

UVM is one of only 359 institutions nationally that currently hold the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, an optional designation earned by institutions in recognition of their commitment to—and institutionalization of—reciprocal and transformative community partnerships & engagement. We have held this designation since it was first created in 2006. This Classification honors the diligence and commitment of engaged faculty, staff and students at UVM.



"Community engagement describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity."

— *Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement*