



January 28, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

We have been asked regularly, by both faculty and administrators, for some advisory definitions of community-engaged faculty work based on our experience supporting such work here and our research on and participation in national conversations on community engagement in higher education. We know that many UR faculty undertake what we consider community-engaged work, though this may not be the language they use to describe their work. As a result, the time, energy, and skills necessary to conduct community-engaged work may go unrecognized and/or unsupported. We offer these draft definitions as a resource to generate dialogue as faculty consider ways to discuss, name, and reward community-engaged teaching, scholarship, and service.

Over the past several decades, University of Richmond faculty and staff have demonstrated a broad and deep commitment to intentional community engagement. For example, the Jepson School of Leadership Studies requires a community-engaged course for majors and has done so since its founding; the Law School supports several clinics in which students practice their legal training locally; Robins School accounting students staff a robust Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Site at UR Downtown; SPCS has exhibited a long-standing commitment to educating adult learners; and Arts & Sciences faculty have established a growing catalog of community-based learning classes for undergraduates. Just in the past academic year, 59 A&S faculty offered 109 community-based learning courses. Increasingly, faculty across the five schools are also producing public and community-engaged scholarship, generating new knowledge that serves a public good. As teachers and as scholars, faculty at UR have engaged with communities in Richmond, across the United States, and abroad in creative and impactful ways.

At the CCE, we seek to support this commitment to community engagement, facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise when needed, and help faculty align their engagement with their pedagogical and scholarly or creative aspirations. As the number of faculty undertaking community-engaged teaching, scholarship, and service has increased over the past decade, it has become all the more important to establish consistent language with which to describe, understand, and recognize this work.

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Below you will find suggested definitions of key terms in university community-engagement. The adoption of this resource is ultimately a matter for faculty governance as community-engaged work continues to expand on campus. The terms we present here are intended to support deliberate conversations among faculty colleagues about how community-engaged faculty work is defined, recognized, and valued. CCE staff have also prepared a [memo](#) summarizing recent literature on the links between community-engaged teaching and scholarship and a thriving and inclusive community.

The terms we present below do not represent distinct, immovable categories, but instead are frequently interrelated. In our observations here at UR, community-engaged faculty activity often occurs as a series of related and purposeful activities that build on and from one another. For example, a faculty member's community involvement may begin as community-based learning or community-engaged service. As collaborations deepen, opportunities for community-engaged scholarship may emerge. Clarity between the various types of community-engaged faculty activity described here can allow for greater recognition of the commitment and expertise each requires, as well as the methods used and outcomes expected from each.

We offer these key terms in a spirit of collaboration and support, and expect to revisit and to revise them in light of departmental and community discussions through the appropriate governance and community-wide venues. If you or your department would like additional information or resources, please contact us. In addition, we invite you to share with us the results of your discussions and any feedback you may have about these definitions. We are eager to hear your perspectives.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Sylvia and Amy in cursive script.

Sylvia and Amy

Dr. Sylvia Gale, *Director, Bonner Center for Civic Engagement*  
Dr. Amy Howard, *AVP, Community Initiatives and the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement*



## Key Terms and Definitions for Community-Engaged Faculty Activity at UR<sup>1</sup>

The following draft terms are offered to help our campus community think about the ways community engagement and other forms of community activity can be documented in the context of faculty work. To define and situate community-engaged faculty activity we have to first establish a definition of community engagement, and distinguish it from other useful forms of activity in the community.

### Community Engagement and Community Outreach

**Community engagement** describes a spectrum of activities that occur in the context of a reciprocal collaboration between University students, faculty, and staff and partners in our larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources.

The purpose of community engagement is to link University knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors in order to enrich curriculum, teaching and learning; enhance scholarship, research, and creative activity; prepare educated, engaged leaders and community members; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

Not all university-related activities in a community may be best characterized as community engagement; some more accurately fit an outreach paradigm. **Community outreach** emphasizes the informed sharing of the University's expertise, resources, and services with individuals, groups, organizations, and/or the public in general.

The purpose of community outreach is to cultivate civic participation, to extend liberal arts learning to communities beyond campus, and to be a good neighbor.

*(Terms continued on next page)*

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<sup>1</sup> The following sources were useful in developing these terms: [Carnegie Classification for Institutional Community Engagement](#); Imagining America's [Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University](#); [UNC-Greensboro](#); [Southern Utah University](#); [Kennesaw State University](#); [Slippery Rock](#)



### Community-Engaged Faculty Activity

The categories below refer specifically to faculty work. These categories are not distinct and immovable, but rather are often interrelated and can occur simultaneously, building on and from one another.

o **Community-based learning** refers to a broad spectrum of curricular activity that connects students to communities for the purpose of deepening learning. Community-based learning can include a variety of modes, including but not limited to service-learning; collaborative projects with community partners; clinical education, student teaching, and internships; bringing community collaborators into the classroom; and study trips and immersive engagement with community experts. Across these modes, community-based learning activities further learning by: providing context for conceptual course content; providing an opportunity to apply course methods with an intent to deepen learning; and supporting critical thinking. Some community-based learning classes engage students in community activity as a component of the class; others integrate community engagement across the entire class.

When community-based learning classes fulfill pedagogical and community needs in a context of partnership and reciprocity, they may be better termed **community-engaged classes**. Community-engaged classes require a deep level of commitment from faculty and from community partners, and encourage collaboration among faculty, students, and community members in order to generate new knowledge and further the learning of all involved.

o **Public scholarship** is scholarly and/or other creative activity that emerges when faculty use their expertise in order to create new knowledge that serves a public good extending beyond the academic purpose of the work. Public scholarship encompasses different forms of making knowledge about, for, and with diverse publics and communities; the emphasis of public scholarship is on disseminating the work to new audiences and/or in new ways.

When faculty engage their expertise with the expertise of community stakeholders in order to co-create new knowledge that serves a public good extending beyond the academic purpose of the work, it is called **community-engaged scholarship**. Through a coherent, purposeful sequence of activities, both public scholarship and community-engaged scholarship yield artifacts of public and intellectual value, invite peer collaboration and review from a broad group of relevant experts, and are presented in a form that others can use, test, and build upon.



o **Community-engaged service** is faculty activity relevant to a faculty member's profession and discipline, that involves the exercise of the faculty member's professional knowledge or abilities, supports the University's mission, and contributes to a public purpose. Faculty may provide community-engaged service in a variety of ways, from authoring op-eds to providing leadership in or making contributions to community development activities. Community-engaged service differs from service to the university community or to one's professional community in that it is oriented towards community organizations or purposes. It differs from consulting in that the activity is not undertaken for financial gain.

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