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2014

#### Advancing Excellence in Community-Engaged Research Through a Faculty Learning Community

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## Advancing Excellence in Community-Engaged Research Through a Faculty Learning Community

#### Abstract

Presented at the annual meeting of the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement held September 29 - October 1, 2014

#### Keywords

CEnR, community-engaged research, research, community engagement, community, faculty, learning community

#### Disciplines

**Higher Education** 

#### Comments

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#### Advancing Excellence in Community-Engaged Research Through a Faculty Learning Community

Annual Meeting of International Association for Research on Service-learning and Community Engagement

September 29 – October 1, 2014

#### We are a premier urban, public research university focused on academic success.







Established in **1838** 

Located in Richmond, Virginia

More than **171,000** alumni worldwide





# The VCU population

» 31,288 students
» 100 countries represented in student population
» 11, 388 employees
» 2,170 full-time instructional faculty





#### **VCU's Mission**

As the premier urban, public research university in Virginia,

VCU's mission is to advance knowledge and student success through its commitments to:

- an engaged, learner-centered environment that fosters inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global setting
- research that expands the boundaries of new knowledge and creative expression
   and promotes translational applications to improve human health
- interdisciplinary collaborations that bring new perspectives to complex problems and mobilize creative energies that advance innovation and solve global challenges
- health care that strives to preserve and restore health for all people, to seek the cause and cure of diseases through groundbreaking research, and to educate those who serve humanity
- diversity that provides a climate of inclusion, a dedication to addressing disparities wherever they exist, and an opportunity to explore and create in an environment of trust
- sustainable, university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of the communities VCU serves in Virginia and around the world



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### **VCU's Quest for Distinction**

Theme IV: Become a national model for community engagement and regional impact

- Expand community engaged scholarship and service learning.
- Create university-community partnerships with a focus on the key targeted areas of:
  - K-12 Education
  - Access to Health
  - Economic Development
  - Sustainability



• Provide strategic leadership in addressing **sustainability challenges** through curricular and service innovations and green facilities and operations.



#### **Examples of Institutionalization of CE**

Community-engaged teaching, research and service has been added to the revised university **promotion and tenure** guidelines.

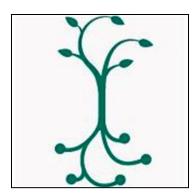
Key strategies in **university level initiatives**.

**Community service leave** (16 hours!)



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## **Recognition for Community Engagement**



Recognized as 1 of 40 top communityengaged institutions by the Carnegie foundation

President's Higher Education Service Honor Roll, with highest distinction





Recipient of a NIH's CTSA grant



### **Division of Community Engagement**

www.community.vcu.edu

#### Vision

• VCU is a community of engaged citizens, working together changing lives.

#### Mission

• The VCU Division of Community Engagement **mobilizes university-community partnerships** that generate innovative solutions to societal challenges and prepares the engaged citizens of tomorrow.



#### **The Context**

- Promotion and tenure policy change
- Advancement of community-engaged research (CEnR)

#### Partnership between:

Division of Community Engagement (Provost's Office) Center for Clinical and Translational Research (CTSA-funded)



# What is excellence in CEnR at VCU?



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## Faculty Learning Community (FLC)

- A cross-disciplinary group of 6 10 faculty who engage in an active, collaborative, and self-guided exploration of an identified topic.
- Prolonged exploration of an issue as "expert" learners in an attempt to
  - better understand the issue,
  - make modifications to their practice based on what they have learned and
  - promote better teaching and learning across the institution by sharing what they have learned with a wider audience (Cox, 2004).
- They are effective in:
  - building faculty competencies,
  - encouraging collaboration among faculty to support new institutional initiatives



- mission and purpose,
- curriculum,
- administration,
- connections,
- affiliated participants,
- meetings and activities,
- scholarly process, assessment, and
- enablers/rewards.



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- Goals for institution and FLC program
- Objectives for FLC



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 Which FLCs to offer (cohorts, topics, issues/opportunities)



- mission and purpose,
- curriculum,
- administration,
- connections,
- affiliated participants,
- meetings and activities,
- scholarly process, assessment, and
- enablers/rewards.

- Leadership and facilitation
- Criteria for membership selection
- Financial support



- mission and purpose,
- curriculum,
- administration,
- connections,
- affiliated participants,
- meetings and activities,
- scholarly process, assessment, and
- enablers/rewards.

- Community within the FLC
- Partnerships (connections to other programs)
- Engagement (serving broader community)



- mission and purpose,
- curriculum,
- administration,
- connections,
- affiliated participants,
- meetings and activities,
- scholarly process, assessment, and
- enablers/rewards.

- Faculty or staff partners
- Student associates



- mission and purpose,
- curriculum,
- administration,
- connections,
- affiliated participants,
- meetings and activities,
- scholarly process, assessment, and
- enablers/rewards.

- Seminars
- Retreats
- Conferences
- Socializing



- mission and purpose
- curriculum
- administration
- connections
- affiliated participants
- meetings and activities
- scholarly process, assessment
- enablers/rewards.

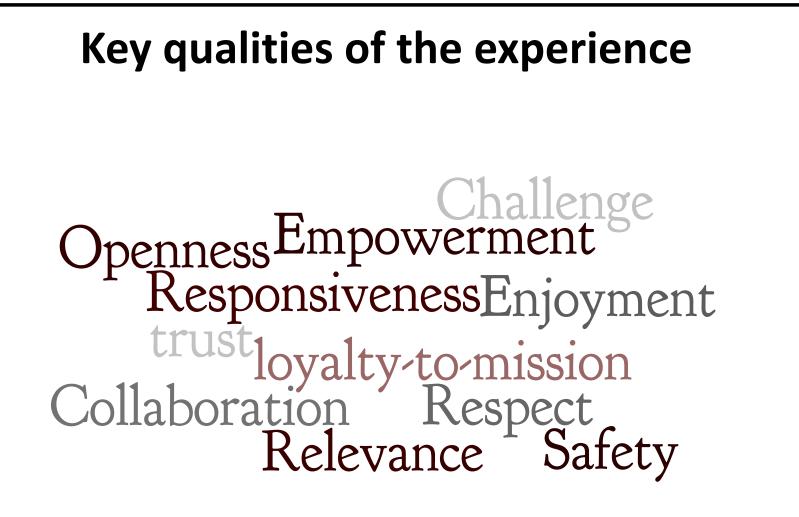
- Grounding in literature
- Outcomes
- Scholarship development/ Dissemination
- Assessment



- mission and purpose
- curriculum
- administration
- connections
- affiliated participants
- meetings and activities
- scholarly process, assessment
- enablers/rewards

- Release time
- Professional expenses
- Recognition





(Cox, 2004; Furco & Moely, 2012)



#### Additional characteristics of effective FLCs

- 1. goals are clear and consistent with faculty values,
- 2. members have opportunities to gain expertise and explore questions,
- 3. members perceive an institutional commitment to support the work of the FLC and
- 4. members see rewards for their participation in the FLC (Furco & Moely, 2012).



# What is **CEnR** and is our work CEnR?



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Make it rea

#### **Community-Engaged Research (CEnR)**

VCU's official definition states that CEnR is:

- "a collaborative process between the researcher and community partner that creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community.
- CEnR identifies the assets of all stakeholders and incorporates them in the design and conduct of the different phases of the research process."

For more definitions, see http://www.community.vcu.edu/files/2011/12/C ER-Definitions-with-References.pdf



#### What is **excellence** and who are we to decide?



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#### **Compendium of Case Studies**

Aim: Highlights high-quality CEnR at VCU

Format: Stand alone and together

Intended use: professional development, development of future scholars, telling VCU's story

Target Audience: Faculty, staff, students



**Excellence in Community-Engaged Research at Virginia Commonwealth University:** A Compendium of Case Studies Developed Through a Faculty Learning Community

Edited by Cynthia George, MSSW, Doctoral Candidate, VCU School of Social Work Graduate Research Assistant Center for Clinical and Translational Research and Division of Community Engagement





## Community-Engaged Research Institute

**Presented by** 

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**Center for Clinical and** 

Translational Research

www.cctr.vcu.edu



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#### **Next Steps**

- Evaluation
- Scholarship
- Continued advisory role



#### Thanks to the FLC Members

- Rosalie Corona, PhD, Associate Professor, Psychology, College of Humanities and Sciences
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- **Deborah Speece**, PhD, Professor and Associate Dean of Research, School of Education



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