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May 16th, 9:45 AM - 11:15 AM

# Intro to Community-Engaged Research & Service Learning

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**Description**

Definitions of community engagement, research, and service-learning. Benefits of utilizing service-learning at VCU, such as increased graduation rate, building professional skills, addressing social problems, engaging faculty with community experts, and creating opportunities for faculty led community-engaged research.

**Location**

VCU ASPiRE, 835 West Grace Street, Richmond, Virginia

**Disciplines**

Civic and Community Engagement | Community-Based Learning | Community-Based Research | Higher Education | Service Learning

# Intro to Community-Engaged Research & Service Learning

May 16, 2017

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VCU Division of Community Engagement

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Term	Definition
Community	A group of people external to the campus who are affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, similar situation or shared values. Communities may share characteristics such as age, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.
Partnership	Sustained collaboration between institutions of higher education and communities for the mutually beneficial exchange, exploration, and application of knowledge, information, and resources. Examples are research, capacity building, or economic development.
Community Outreach	The application and provision of institutional resources, knowledge or services that directly benefits the community. Examples include music concerts, athletic events, student volunteers, public lectures, or health fairs.
Community Engagement	The collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in the context of partnership and reciprocity. It can involve partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems and serve as catalysts for initiating and/or changing policies, programs, and practices.
Community-Engaged Scholarship	The creation and dissemination of knowledge and creative expression in furtherance of the mission and goals of the university and in collaboration with the community. Community-engaged scholarship (CES) addresses community needs through research, teaching and service in a mutually beneficial partnership. The quality and impact of CES are determined by academic peers and community partners.
Community-Engaged Service	The application of one's professional expertise that addresses a community-identified need and supports the goals and mission of the university and the community. Community-engaged service may entail the delivery of expertise, resources and services to the community.
Community-Engaged Teaching/Learning	A pedagogical approach that connects students and faculty with activities that address community-identified needs through mutually beneficial partnerships that deepened students' academic and civic learning. Examples are service-learning courses or service-learning clinical practica.

# What is Research?

**“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”**

~Zora Neale Hurston 1903-1960

# What is Community-Engaged Research?

## **Collaborative Curiosity**

# WHAT IS COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH?

**WHO  
IS THE  
COMMUNITY?**

Community can be defined in many ways



Groups with shared characteristics



Organizations & Businesses



Geographic Areas

**WHEN  
IS THE  
COMMUNITY  
INVOLVED?**

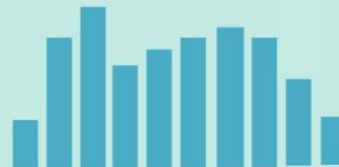
At any stage of the research process



Research Question    Research Design    Data Gathering    Data Analysis    Applying Findings

**HOW  
IS THE  
COMMUNITY  
INVOLVED?**

In varying degrees at any stage of the process



**WHY DO COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH?**



Diverse Expertise & Experience



Improved Quality & Validity



Timely Application



Relevance & Usefulness



Impactful Research

# What is 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>

	<u>Traditional Research</u>	<u>Community Research</u>
Goal of research	Advance knowledge	Betterment of community
Source of research question	Theoretical work	Community-identified problem
Designer of research	Trained researcher	Trained researcher & community
Role of researcher	Outside expert	Collaborator, learner
Role of community	Subject of study	Collaborator, learner
Relationship of researcher to participants	Short-term, task-oriented, detached	Long-term, multifaceted, connected
Value of research	Acceptance by peers (e.g., publication)	Contribution to community change
Ownership of data	Academic researcher	Community
Means of dissemination	Academic conference, journal	Any and all forums, media, meetings, community

(Strand K, et al. 2003)



# Benefits to Community and Academic Partners





# Introduction to Service-Learning



# What is service-learning?

## Credit-Bearing & Experiential

At VCU, service-learning is *a credit-bearing educational experience* that engages students in organized *service activities* and *guided reflection*.

## Reciprocal

The service benefits the community and, paired with reflection, enhances students' understanding of the course content and builds students' sense of civic responsibility.

## Three Key Ingredients.

In essence, service-learning involves:

- Community service
- Curriculum connection
- Reflection

# VCU Service-Learning Course Designation

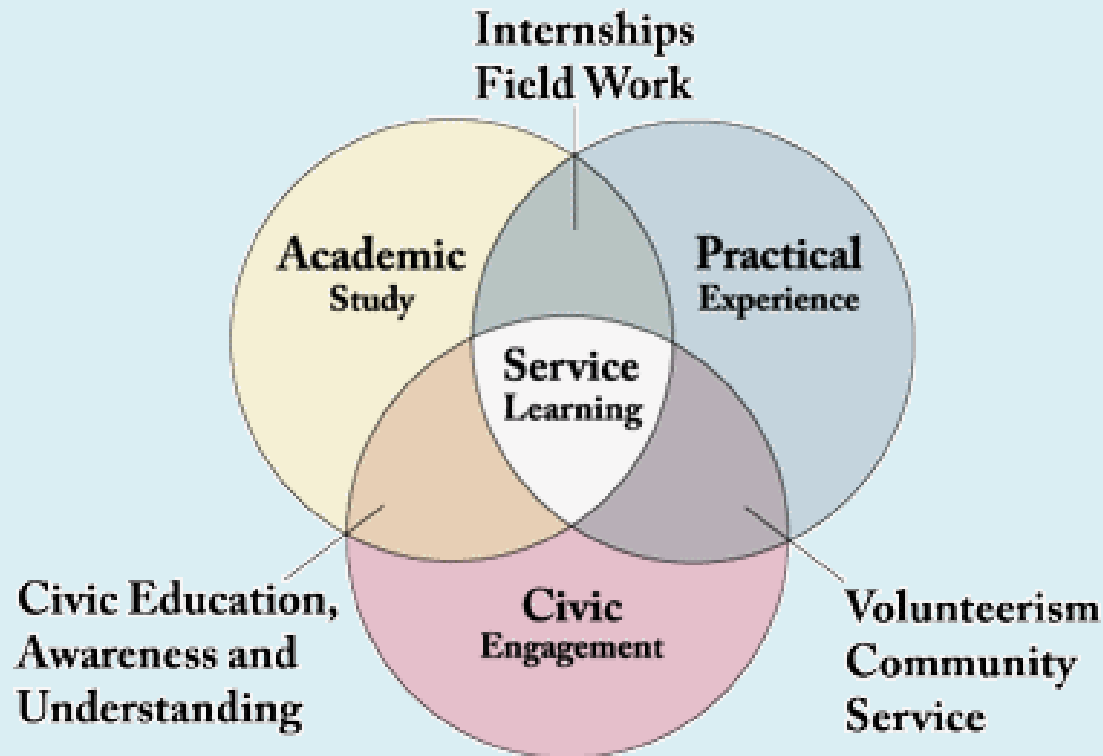
Approved service-learning classes at VCU are listed as a “SRV LRN” class in the VCU Course Schedule and recognized as service-learning in Banner. Classes must meet quality criteria to be approved.

## Criteria for service-learning classes:

1. Each enrolled student must complete a minimum of 20 hours of direct or indirect service.
2. Students must engage in planned reflection activities/assignments that connect the students’ service experiences with the academic content of the class.
3. The service must meet a community-identified need.

*Increasing student enrollment numbers in designated service-learning classes is a Quest goal!*

# How is service-learning different from other forms of experiential education?



University of Oregon Service-Learning Program, 2012.

# Top 5 reasons why VCU supports service-learning

1. Service-learning class enrollment increases student graduation rates (Lockeman & Pelco, 2013).
2. Service-learning addresses social problems in the local metro Richmond region.
3. Service-learning builds students' professional skills, including teamwork and intercultural competence.
4. Service-learning engages faculty members with community-based experts.
5. Service-learning opens opportunities for faculty to do community-engaged research.

**This year at VCU,  
more than 3,500 students participated  
in nearly 200 service-learning classes.**





# How to designate a course as Service-Learning

Only the Service-Learning Office can designate a class as SRV LRN, and only designated classes are recognized by the Provost's Office as service-learning.

**To have a course designated as an official service-learning class, instructors should:**

- Ensure that the course meets the minimum requirements for VCU service-learning courses.
- Complete a brief online *Service-Learning Course Designation Form*.
- Submit their syllabus to the VCU Service-Learning Office.

Approved classes retain the service-learning designation for 3 academic years. After 3 years, instructors can renew the designation by submitting an updated syllabus and course designation form.





For more information, visit:  
[www.servicelearning.vcu.edu](http://www.servicelearning.vcu.edu)