

Thinking about the Faculty – TA relationship...

The Community Engaged Learning Teaching Assistant Program

In general, it is up to the Faculty member and the teaching assistant to determine the nature of their working relationship. Past teaching assistants, faculty, and coordinators do have a few suggestions, however, to make your partnership more successful.

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** try to decide early on what role the teaching assistant will play in the course – will the TA be:
 - Introducing the concept of CEL to the students?
 - The primary contact for the community partner(s)?
 - The leader of the service-learning aspect of the course? Or the co-facilitator of the project along with the faculty member?
 - Leading discussions?
 - Designing reflection activities?
 - Reading / grading papers?
 - Playing a role in aspects of the course not directly related to the CEL project?
 - Attending all course sessions? Attending all CEL related projects/meetings, etc.?
- **Communication:** How will the TA and the Professor communicate with each other? With the class? How often will this happen?
- **Evaluation / Assessment:**
 - How will you *grade* student performance? Think about meeting at the very beginning of the semester so that you are on the same page: What are you looking for in student work? How will you communicate those expectations to students in the class? Plan to do at least one evaluation together.
 - How will you evaluate the success of the partnership? Do you plan to have a written or verbal evaluation? If so, what questions will you ask? Can thinking about those questions in advance help you to design your partnerships / project more effectively?
- **The Partnership:** let us once again emphasize presenting a clear front to the partners when it comes to communication:
 - Who is responsible for creating the partnership(s)?
 - What is the *timeline* for the partnership? In relation to the course?
 - Is there an agreement that should be worked out with the partners? Who is party to that agreement?
 - Who will be their main contact?
 - How can they address concerns?

- **The Course:** Think about how the CEL and the academic curriculum are blended... think about who is responsible for different aspects, and try to avoid separating the two as independent entities.
 - How does the CEL fit into the goals and learning objectives of the course?
 - How will CEL be a part of the overall course – how will the student experience make its way into the classroom?
 - Are there specific learning goals for the CEL that you have agreed you want to accomplish? (skill sets, knowledge, etc.)
 - Are there things students may need to learn before they participate in the CEL experience? If so, how are you going to work those into the class?
 - Group dynamics?
 - Successful communication skills?
- **Resources/Tools:** Are there resources/articles the TA and professor should be sharing with each other right from the beginning? Course related? CEL related?
- **Most importantly, are you on the same page?**