

Community Engagement Fellows: Year 2 Community-Connected Class Requirement

This project is intended to help second year CEFs (Community Engagement Fellows) make explicit connections between their coursework and their community experiences. There are three steps to this assignment: first, reaching out to the faculty member teaching your selected course to let them know about the assignment and get their approval. Second, during the semester (typically at least past week five of the semester), meet with the faculty member to discuss the connections you are seeing between the course content and your experience at your community placement. Finally, at the end of the semester you will submit a reflection paper to the CEF Program Director and be prepared to discuss your insights with others during our final group meeting of the semester. In year two, you may also choose to expand upon your Community-Connected Class reflections to create a poster presentation for the Civic Engagement Symposium (held in April).

Below, you will find a template for faculty outreach (to be sent after course request) along with a reminder template (in the case, for example, that you get approval from the faculty member in early April, but will not meet with them until October), guiding questions for your discussion with the faculty member, and the criteria for the reflection paper assignment.

Faculty Outreach Email Template

Dear Professor _____,

My name is _____ and I am registered in your _____ class for the fall/spring [year] semester. I am a part of the Community Engagement Fellows (CEF) at Dickinson, a two-year internship working with a local nonprofit in the area. You can learn more about the program [here](#). As a part of our second year in the program, we are required to make connections between our coursework and our community experiences. I am hoping to use your class to meet my Community-Connected Class requirement. For this assignment, I would meet with you during the semester (at least a third of the way through the class) to discuss the connections I am seeing between the course content and my work in the community. At the end of the semester, I will write a reflection paper for the CEF program.

I wanted to reach out to you now to inform you of my assignment and that I hope to use this class as the course to connect with my work. Through CEF, I work at host organization, working primarily as/with (your main role at placement). I would appreciate your approval of using this course as a part of my assignment. Upon your approval, I will reach out again next semester to coordinate a meeting to discuss the assignment and connections between the course and my work through Community Engagement Fellows.

Thank you very much and I look forward to being in your class next semester!

Sincerely,

Your Name

Faculty Outreach Reminder Template

Dear Professor _____,

My name is _____ and I am in your _____ class. I reached out to you at the end of last semester about my work with the Community Engagement Fellows and my assignment to connect my coursework with community experiences. Now that I have spent some time in this course, I would love to meet with you to discuss the assignment and talk about how the course connects to my work at host organization.

I can stop by your office hours on _____.

(If office hours do not work, suggest additional meeting times) As I cannot make it to your regularly scheduled office hours here are some suggested times when I am available to meet: _____. Please let me know a time and date that would work for you.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting with you!

Sincerely,

Your Name

Guiding Questions for Faculty Meeting

Ahead of the meeting with your professor, consider these guidelines and guiding questions:

- Identify a concept from the class or reading that has relevance to something you have observed at your placement. Has your classroom knowledge changed your understanding of what is going on in the community? Has your community experience changed or strengthened your understanding of the concept from class?
- Are there additional topics or resources from class content that might be of interest based on your placement?
- What are the key takeaways from this class?
- How does the course content and service at my placement intersect/relate?
- What work/experiences from my placement do I see in the course content?
- How can I apply what I learn in this course to my work at my placement?

Reflection Paper Criteria

In this reflection paper, you will describe your placement (time in the field) and analyze your experience in the context of your community-connected class. You may choose to

discuss a specific incident or situation at your site, if one comes to mind – provide “thick” descriptions. Then, select at least three of the following questions to respond to:

- How does your experience relate to what you are studying in class?
- Did you confirm or challenge any of the theories and concepts you have been learning about?
- What did you learn about yourself this semester? (if you find this too broad, consider using a shorter time period – month, week, etc.)
- What did you learn about the people you are serving this semester? (Clients/guests of the organization, members of the organization, students)
- What did you learn about the community in which you are working? (Largely defined)

The reflection paper should be between 500-750 words and include at least one citation from course or related material. Questions about the assignment can be directed to the CEF Program Director.