Working Together: Forging Campus Community Partnerships Through Community-Based Research

A Guide for Community Partners, Faculty, and Students

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- Many Thanks to Debbie Ng who designed the template for this document.
WHAT IS COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH?

Community-Based Research (CBR) is a collaborative and mutually beneficial enterprise between academic researchers (professors and students) and community that has as its goal social action and social change for the purpose of achieving social justice. The community partner organization work with faculty in all stages of the research process, which typically lasts the course of a semester (about 4 months) and can involve a selected number of students or an entire class.

CBR is an opportunity to build bridges between Washburn University and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that serve the greater Topeka community.

Some examples of successful CBR partnerships between colleges and communities are:

- **University of Denver students partnered with La Clinica** to conduct a 6-month evaluation of the Reach and Teach Program, a program designed to familiarize women with La Clinica’s breast and cervical cancer screening services. The research team made recommendations for improvement, which were integrated into next year’s program and positive findings were used in grant proposals.

- **Students at Princeton University partnered with the New Jersey Environmental Federation.** Students studied reductions in pollution and other benefits from shutting down local generator incinerators. Students also researched current air emissions and recommended ways to increase composting, recycling and source reduction as alternatives to incineration.

- **Students from the University of Louisville partnered with the local history society** to conduct archival research with a focus on identifying individuals, buildings, and geographical sites of importance to the history of African Americans in the Louisville metropolitan area.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH?

(1) Community-Based Organizations:

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are nonprofit organizations, public agencies, or small grass-roots groups organized for any number of purposes, such as providing services to those in need, advocating for the disadvantaged or oppressed, empowering people who are disenfranchised, alter structures that limit opportunities and generate poverty, violence and suffering, and those that ally themselves with such efforts. Partner CBOs are generally located in close proximity to Washburn’s Campus.

(2) Learning in the Community (LinC): Washburn University’s Office for Community Service and Service Learning

The institute of LinC is Washburn University’s center for community service and service learning. It involves more than 100 students each year in course and community based service projects. The Institute serves as a centralized hub for community service/service learning opportunities as well as a catalyst for new community service initiatives at the college.

(3) Faculty

Community based research is a cross-disciplinary approach to incorporating service learning and community service into the curriculum of courses irrespective of major.

The following are but a few examples of disciplinary based Community Based Research initiatives:

Examples:

Art-- Partner with local agencies to construct murals and other community-based art projects

Criminal Justice-- Partner with local agencies to implement victim-offender mediation programs

History-- Partner with local neighborhood groups to collect oral histories

Nursing-- Implement, with community partners, local health screenings

Sociology-- Work with local agencies to mediate community based social problems
WHY PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH?

For Community-Based Organizations

CBOs confront enormous challenges as they labor on society’s most complex problems -- often with inadequate resources. Community agencies often need information as part of their efforts to make needed changes: improve their programs, attract new resources, understand their target populations, and contribute to a social agenda aimed at improving the lives of people in their community. Students provide new ideas, research skills, time and talent to produce research of benefit to the community.

For College Campus Faculty

Community-Based Research is an approach to learning that inspires faculty to develop creative and tangible research projects that offer students “real world” experiences that support course learning objectives and that provide direct benefit to the community.

For College Students

College students who participate in Community-Based Research have a rare opportunity to gain competencies in research design and practice, marketable skills, and an understanding of the nonprofit sector, while gaining a rare opportunity to engage with community members and contribute to the Topeka community.
WHO BENEFITS FROM COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH?:

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<tr>
<th>Benefits to Agencies</th>
<th>Benefits to Students</th>
<th>Benefits to Faculty</th>
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<td>* Agencies have the opportunity to share their knowledge and community organizing skills with college students. * Through the process of designing and completing a community-based research project, the agency gains data and research that they can use in a number of ways such as: -- Leveraging existing resources to apply for funding -- Identifying a known or unknown community issue -- Informing and enhancing programs and delivery -- Sharing the information with community members and other partners</td>
<td>* Students apply what they are learning in class in a way that has “real world” benefit. * Students develop research competency skills. * Students are exposed to larger social issues and are participants in civic engagement. * Students learn about the nonprofit sector.</td>
<td>* Faculty have the opportunity to guide students in a unique research process that allows students to apply theory to practice * CBR motivates students by engaging them in active learning * CBR invigorates the curriculum by infusing an exchange of ideas and different ways of learning * Participating in CBR broadens a professor's ties to the local community and may support other research interests</td>
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COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH: STARTUP PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR SEMESTER PROJECTS (Approximately 6-7 months)

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**Step 1:** May/ December  
LinC staff meet with faculty to discuss course learning objectives and help identify potential partner agencies.

**Step 2:** June – July/ September  
LinC staff (and/or faculty) contact potential partner agencies to identify possible projects.

**Step 3:** July -August / December  
LinC staff work with faculty and agency staff to identify the research design and method. Faculty meet with community partners and Memorandum of Understanding is signed.

**Step 4:** September – November/ January – April  
Students, supported by faculty and in partnership with the agency, collect data.

**Step 5:** December/ May  
Students and faculty share the research results with the community partners.

**Step 6:** December/ May  
All participants evaluate process and make recommendations for future improvements.
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<th><strong>Partner Agency</strong></th>
<th><strong>LinC</strong></th>
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<td>☐ Designates a point person for community-based research and has the capacity to accommodate students conducting research.</td>
<td>☐ Broker and manage the expectations and partnership between agency, students and faculty to assure that the research maintains the highest standards and benefit to the agency and community it serves.</td>
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<td>☐ Commits to working with Washburn faculty and students throughout the research process, typically for an entire semester (4 months).</td>
<td>☐ Draw up MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) and contracts.</td>
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<td>☐ Provides their expertise, knowledge, and data to inform the research process.</td>
<td>☐ Oversee timeline, communications, logistics, and student schedules.</td>
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<th><strong>College Students</strong></th>
<th><strong>Faculty</strong></th>
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<td>☐ Commit to developing the highest quality research project possible.</td>
<td>☐ Link academic curriculum and theory to a context of larger social issues.</td>
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<td>☐ Respect and values the knowledge of the agency and community members.</td>
<td>☐ Develop parameters of CBR component, in collaboration with community partners.</td>
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<td>☐ Guide students through the research process, monitor the collection and analysis of data, and the reporting of findings to the community partners.</td>
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Community-Based Research
Community Partner Agreement

We agree to enter into a Community-Based Research project for the duration of the

Course Title: _______________________ Number of Students:__________

Project Title & Description: ___________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Research Outcome(s): _______________________________________________

Community Agency Representative

Name & Title: _____________________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________________________
Phone: ________________________    Email: ___________________________
Signature: _______________________________  Date: ________________

Washburn University College Faculty Member

Name & Title: _____________________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________________________
Phone: ________________________    Email: ___________________________
Signature: _______________________________  Date: ________________

LinC Institute for Community Service and Service Learning

Name & Title:  Rick Ellis, Ph.D.  Director LinC
Address: __________________________________________________________
Phone: ________________________   Email: ____________________________
Signature: _______________________________  Date: _________________
Community-Based Research
Student Agreement

I agree to enter into a Community-Based Research project for the duration of the
__ Fall 2007 Semester (August 18, 2007 – December 7, 2007)  
__ Spring 2008 Semester (January 22, 2008 – May 9, 2008)

Course Title: _______________________  Professor: __________________

Community Partner Agency: __________________________________________

Project Title & Description: __________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Research Goals:

Name: _________________________  Major/ Minor: _____________________

Phone: ________________________  Email: ____________________________

Signature: _______________________________  Date: _________________