Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement

The University of Cincinnati’s most distinguished and respected colleges are busy tearing down walls and breaking out of their "silos;" these colleges "get it"—they understand that students who cross borders, students who work and train cooperatively and collaboratively, learn more and are better prepared for employment after they leave our university. Our goal is to further break the entire university out of its silo. We believe the university that nurtures symbiotic partnerships between students, faculty, and the greater community in which the university is rooted, is stronger for it. We do not have far to go here: The University of Cincinnati is so close to its community that we can feel its heartbeat.

UC must further capitalize on the wonderfully rare confluence we’ve worked hard to become: We are proudly an Uptown, urban, research-extensive university. We are poised to nurture our community and to be enriched by our close ties to it. Not many research-extensive universities can make such a claim, and the Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement intends to help form community alliances and partnerships that will elevate both our university and our city.

As of the fall semester of 2014, the University of Cincinnati offers approximately 100 service learning courses per year. This accounts for every undergraduate college at UC, and we can report that SL is occurring in some of our professional schools. Over 3500 students are being given to apply their learning to the service of others, this under the guidance of close to 100 SL faculty. While these numbers are impressive, we are shifting now to become more sophisticated in the types of SL opportunities being offered.

Service Learning Collaboratory

The goal of this course is to provide students with the opportunity to explore Social Enterprise as part of an interdisciplinary team charged with completing a specific project for an external educational partner. These experiences will span a variety of industries/disciplines and will include a service learning focus. This course intentionally disrupts the boundaries between teachers,
learners, and community, and attempts to dissolve the dichotomy between for-profit and not-for-profit organizing.

**Where for-profit “thinking” meets not-for-profit “doing”**

The “Collaboration Laboratory” was the result of not-for-profit and service learning stakeholders (teachers, learners, and community members experimenting with different elements of collaboration. While collaboration is the hallmark of service learning, the “collaborator” opened-up new opportunities for “trying out” experimental approaches to connecting the campus to the community. ([www.uc.edu/propractice/service-learning/service-learning-collaboratory](http://www.uc.edu/propractice/service-learning/service-learning-collaboratory))

As part of the Service Learning Collaboratory, teachers, learners, and community members will:

1. Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively with a diverse, interdisciplinary team to successfully complete a project with tangible outcomes for a community organization;
2. Gain an understanding of various processes associated with delivering high-quality deliverables to external clients within a set timeframe; (such processes may include but are not limited to: market research and analysis, product design, campaign management, budget utilization, brand identity development, technology development);
3. Determine specific target demographics for special projects;
4. Demonstrate the ability to determine best practices for roll out and implementation of deliverables to target audiences;
5. Demonstrate the ability to clearly communicate ideas, designs, and plans to external clients;
6. Demonstrate the ability to apply discipline specific knowledge in a diverse group setting;
7. Demonstrate the ability to divide up a multi-faceted project by effectively delegating tasks to best utilize the strengths of the team members and other resources;
8. Demonstrate the ability to receive and respond to feedback from team members and clients;
9. Demonstrate a thorough understanding of social justice and activism - Possible addition: students will demonstrate the ability to utilize professional skills and resources to promote social justice and activism.

**Approach to Pedagogy**

This course will be taught through a variety of Constructivist Teaching Methods, including group discussions/presentations, collaborative learning, experiential application, and often with methodologies of the flipped-classroom. Very little material will be delivered through didactic lecture because it is expected that the majority of the learning in this class will occur through interacting with your peers, instructors, clients, and expert guests. Much of the class will be classroom and studio based with the opportunity to learn via electronic communication and site visits.
Key Characteristics of Service Learning Collaboratory

1. This course is offered in the Division of Professional Practice and Experiential Learning and under the Service Learning and Civic Engagement Academic Program (SLCE discipline code), although it may be cross-listed in other academic units.

2. This course is always co-facilitated by at least one ProPEL faculty member or supported via consultation with a ProPEL faculty member.

3. This course will always carry the Service Learning “S” attribute and the UC Forward/Transformational “T” focus, although other attributes may be used (pending the academic partner/client).

4. This course will always be evaluated via the course evaluation tool developed by the Division of Professional Practice and Experiential Learning. When applicable, this course will also utilize PAL 2.0 and/or I LEAP tools.

5. This academic partner/client for this course will always be an organization from the not-for-profit sector and/or an organization with a caused-based mission in the for-profit sector.

6. The academic partner/clients will be vetted by a committee comprised of ProPEL faculty members and members of UC’s Service Learning Advisory Council.

7. Sponsoring this course is not a requirement for participation.

Content, Service, Reflection, and Assessment

Content - Instructional content in the Service Learning Collaboratory will:

1. Introduce students to research problems and community partnerships that address a significant need in our community, region, country, or the world.
2. Prepare students for service by studying theories and gaining academic knowledge relevant to the problem.
3. Prepare students for service by orienting them to the problem and the context in which they will work.
4. Use common readings and discussions to connect academic learning to service, vocation, leadership, civic responsibility, and social justice.

Service - Service in the Service Learning Collaboratory will:

1. Provide opportunities for students to express value commitments and disciplinary knowledge in an authentic, real-life setting.
2. Enable students to personally connect with people involved with the issue to which the service is directed. Ideally, this will include a relationship with persons directly affected.
3. Relate to programs with long-term commitments to the communities and issues they address.
4. Include sufficient contact time and duration to allow students to build relationships with people facing the issue and to develop deep understanding.

**Reflection** - Structured reflection in the Service Learning Collaboratory will:

1. Include students, faculty and community partners from multiple disciplines engaged in similar activities.
2. Explore the theories, structures and assumptions of students’ academic disciplines in the context of the service experience.
3. Help students to link their values and academic learning to other parts of the curriculum and co-curriculum.
4. Help students to evaluate their personal values and commitments.
5. Help students develop a sense of vocation and to think about integrating service with an occupation.

**Assessment** - Assessment in the Service Learning Collaboratory will:

1. Evaluate the experiential learning experience from the standpoint of all participating stakeholders (students, professors, guest experts, community partners/members)
2. Utilize the University of Cincinnati PAL 2.0 and I LEAP systems
3. Utilize the course evaluation as developed by the Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement
4. Be used to generate data-driven improvements to the overall structure of the course.

**ProPEL Support for Service Learning Collaboratory**

1. Experiential Learning Partnership Development
2. Experiential Learning Consultation
3. Experiential Learning Assessment
4. Experiential Learning Reflection
5. Experiential Learning ePortfolio
6. Experiential Learning Showcase

**What is Service Learning?**

According to the University of Cincinnati’s Service Learning Advisory Council: Service Learning (SL) is a specially designed learning experience in which students combine reflection with structured participation in community-based projects to achieve specified learning outcomes as part of an academic course and/or program requirement. By participating in academic community partnerships at the local, national, or international level, students gain a richer mastery of course content, enhance their sense of civic responsibility, and ultimately develop a more integrated approach to understanding the relationship between theory, practice, ideas, values, and community. ([www.uc.edu/sl](http://www.uc.edu/sl), 2008)
What is Social Entrepreneurship?

The social entrepreneur is a mission-driven individual who uses a set of entrepreneurial behaviors to deliver a social value to the less privileged, all through an entrepreneurially oriented entity that is financially independent, self-sufficient, or sustainable.” (Abu-Saifan, S., 2012. Social Entrepreneurship: Definition and Boundaries. Technology Innovation Management Review, 2(2): 22-27.)

The definition of social entrepreneurship should not extend to philanthropists, activists, companies with foundations, or organizations that are simply socially responsible. While all these agents are needed and valued, they are not social entrepreneurs.

Building on our proposed definition of social entrepreneurship, we propose boundaries to properly position social entrepreneurs in the spectrum of entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs operate within the boundaries of two business strategies:

1. **Non-profit with earned income strategies**: a social enterprise performing hybrid social and commercial entrepreneurial activity to achieve self-sufficiency. In this scenario, a social entrepreneur operates an organization that is both social and commercial; revenues and profits generated are used only to further improve the delivery of social values.

2. **For-profit with mission-driven strategies**: a social-purpose business performing social and commercial entrepreneurial activities simultaneously to achieve sustainability. In this scenario, a social entrepreneur operates an organization that is both social and commercial; the organization is financially independent and the founders and investors can benefit from personal monetary gain. ” (Abu-Saifan, S., 2012. Social Entrepreneurship: Definition and Boundaries. Technology Innovation Management Review, 2(2): 22-27)
Why Social Enterprise: the “Missing Middle”

As a country and global community, we stand at a unique inflection point. It appears that the world’s problems are outstripping our ability to address them, but what may be more accurate is simply that traditional institutions are no longer sufficient. (www.se-alliance.org)

Social enterprise is emerging as the “missing middle” sector between the traditional worlds of government, nonprofits and business. It addresses social concerns:

- **more efficiently than government**, which no longer has the mandate or resources to solve every social problem;
- **more sustainably and creatively than the nonprofit sector**, which faces declining funding streams and increased demands for innovation, proof of what works and collaboration; and
- **more generously than business**, which is mandated to place pre-eminence on shareholder returns, but is also realizing it can’t succeed in a decaying world.

As social needs continue to spike in light of shrinking government budgets, employment rolls, and social safety nets, social enterprise is emerging as a self-sustaining, market-based, business-like and highly effective method of meeting social needs.

In its early days, the social enterprise movement was identified mainly with nonprofits that used business models and earned income strategies to pursue their mission. Today, it also encompasses for-profits whose driving purpose is social. Mission is primary and fundamental; organizational form is a strategic question of what will best advance the social mission. Social enterprises produce benefits while reducing the draw on public and philanthropic funds. Their earned income streams supplant or replace grants and donations to produce a dramatically
higher ROI. For example, a nonprofit that earns 50% of its budget through its social enterprise is effectively matching every dollar of “public income” with a dollar of “marketplace income”, doubling the social return on investment of those public dollars. (www.se-alliance.org)

The Greater Cincinnati Service Learning Network and The Social Enterprise Alliance

Vision 2015 and Agenda 360 have partnered with Children, Inc to form The Greater Cincinnati Service Learning Network. The group has now established its Steering Committee and has begun to meet and formulate goals. This initiative builds upon the foundation laid by Children, Inc.’s strong Service Learning Program in Northern Kentucky and will link numerous community partners throughout the Greater Cincinnati region that provide service learning and community service programs involving students from kindergarten through college.

The postsecondary subcommittee of the GCSLN is currently embarking on a new inter-institutional initiative called Project Hope. Along with other area colleges and universities, the University of Cincinnati is focusing service learning efforts into the most underserved neighborhoods in the city. Our goal is nothing less than to change the world for the common good, and we will start right here in Cincinnati. As part of this work, we anticipate that social entrepreneurship (the Service Learning Collaboratory and similar courses at UC and other institutions) will play a major role in the project. The Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement is a member of both the GCSLN and SEA

Current Service Learning Collaboratory Courses

   Students will work collaboratively with a diverse, interdisciplinary team to develop tangible outcomes for a community organization, the Ali Center, in order to support one of their key initiatives called Generation Ali. By working in collaborative teams, learners will experiment with facilitators and guest experts to combine professional skills, servant leadership, and resources to promote social justice and activism.

2. Advanced Service Learning Collaboratory: Generation Ali (fall 2014)  
   This is the second phase of the initial pilot of the Service Learning Collaboratory. By working in collaborative teams, learners will experiment with facilitators and guest experts to combine professional skills, servant leadership, and resources to promote social justice and activism.

   This class concept comes from the East End Community who has been working with the Niehoff Urban Studio/Community Design Center on a district urban design plan intended to repopulate this flood prone neighborhood. This competition is modeled after the existing national ULI Hines Competition conducted annually for 3-4 person interdisciplinary teams to design a real estate development project on an assigned local site.
Upcoming Service Learning Collaboratory Courses

1. Service Learning Collaboratory: UCore7H and Project Hope
   To support the Seven Hills Center and buttress research efforts, a partnership with numerous stakeholders from the University of Cincinnati formed, which is now called “Ucore7H”. Ucore7H partners include Dr. Gwendolyn Yip-Ono – Community Philanthropist, Dr. Victor Garcia Division of Pediatric Surgery and Co-founder of CoreChange, Mr. Michael Sharp - Director for UC’s Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement, Mr. Liam Ream in the UC’s Division of Professional Practice, Dr. Gisela Escoe - UC’s Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, and Dr. Tina Whalen – Vice Dean of the School of Allied Health and many others.

2. Service Learning Collaboratory: Village Life Outreach Project
   Over the last ten years, we have led 19 service learning and volunteer trips to Tanzania with community leaders, professionals and students. Our community engagement model is to work in conjunction with local leaders from the villages of Roche, Nyambogo and Burere as they develop their own priorities and receive training to improve conditions. We have opened the doors to the first-ever healthcare center in Roche Village to provide basic healthcare to more than 20,000 villagers.

3. Service Learning Collaboratory: GreyScale Cincinnati

4. Service Learning Collaboratory: Wahala
Additional Resources


