

## Level 4 Courses - Demonstrating the Value of a CASL Education

A growing concern is the devaluation of the liberal arts education. To address this, the College has communicated its value to potential students, campus, and the community; however, a more effective strategy might be to show this value. *PBL may be an avenue for CASL faculty to display the value of a CASL education through the application of disciplinary knowledge in collaboration with other disciplines and academic units, and to engage CASL students in problem-solving for non-profit organizations, local communities, government, and business.*

To prevent the initiative from resulting in a series of disjointed PBL courses, flexible (and periodically adjusted) mini-themes would be used to organize sets of courses and to bring together different disciplines. For example, a *PBL Design* theme might include a course that draws upon art history, human factors psychology, and engineering perspectives to solve a design problem (CASL/CECS); a *PBL Applied Health* theme might include a course combining health policy, social psychology, and political science to examine a public health issue (CASL/CEHHS); a *PBL Big Data* theme might include content from statistics and communications, as well as marketing and management (CASL/COB). In addition, broader themes, such as *IDEA(L) City*, might be used to unite a variety of CASL disciplines (e.g., geography, sociology, environmental science, criminal justice, economics, history, literature, philosophy, languages, and linguistics), working in various combinations on course projects linked with urban environments and quality of life.

Such an interdisciplinary approach is likely to enhance flexible thinking and creativity, providing students with practice examining phenomena through multiple lenses. This approach prepares students for the workplace, where project-based work is common and interdisciplinary team membership is the norm. [Idea Lab](#) might be used to facilitate interdisciplinary projects and the [Office of Metropolitan Impact](#) is equipped to support faculty in developing and managing community relationships. However, greater acceptance of faculty team teaching and a campus culture that supports pedagogical engagement across units are necessary for the development of cross unit PBL courses.

Note: If this approach is considered by CASL, then discussion is needed among deans to determine if the development of cross unit PBL courses is a viable option. In addition, resources are needed to support such an effort. Although this approach enhances interdisciplinary learning, and forming connections within CASL, across campus, and in the community, it does not explicitly emphasize careers and career development. This approach focuses primarily on Level 4 PBL course development, which would require significant commitment in time and effort from faculty.

Please [provide feedback](#) to the task force.