

Institutionalizing Engagement: The Power of Serendipity and Hard Work

University of Michigan-Dearborn
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 Office of Community-Engaged Learning

What is the Office of Community-Engaged Learning?

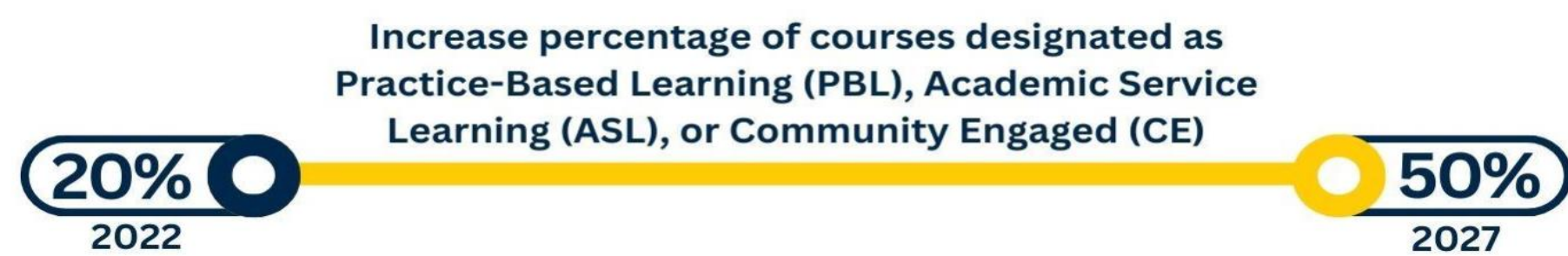


The Office of Community-Engaged Learning (OCEL) supports the University of Michigan-Dearborn's mission by cultivating faculty who are leaders in their disciplines, inspire their students, and care for their students' needs; creating and sharing pioneering interdisciplinary research that supports diverse sections of our economy, with an emphasis on work that serves the common good; making lasting local impacts by valuing the experiences, knowledge, needs, and voices of our business and community partners; and forging mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies. More succinctly, OCEL enhances the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus through supporting student success and retention, supporting faculty research, and increasing its own visibility across the campus and community. OCEL champions these priorities through advancing Project-Based Learning Courses, spearheading the integration of the Collaboratory system on campus, distributing community-based seed grants, and maintaining Carnegie Classification on campus.

Institutional Rebrand Under New Chancellor

Weaving engagement into the strategic plan - GO BLUEprint for Success

2018: Domenico Grasso appointed as Chancellor
 2019: Work groups assembled and thought leader sessions held
 2020: COVID-19 pause in strategic planning
 2021: Campus listening sessions, adoption of the *Boyer Model of Scholarship*
 2022: Mission re-developed to include *"mutually beneficial partnerships"* and *"lasting local impact"*
 2023: Chancellor Grasso re-appointed for a second term, GO BLUEprint for success and Key Performance Indicator Report published - *community engaged coursework included*



An emphasis on student experience and faculty research through the lens of local impact

Demographics from UM-Dearborn's 2023-24 Facts and Figures depict that an overwhelming majority of our students are from Michigan *and* stay in Michigan after graduation, meaning our commitment to hyperlocal engagement - the strategic organization of engagement efforts to advance community development within a bounded area (Dostilio, 2017) - is as, if not more important than simply sharing our time, talent, and resources.

The question leadership continues to grapple with is, "how do we uphold the Block M reputation while also setting our campus apart?". Tying together research excellence and community engagement forged campus-wide initiatives like Dreams in Practice and Urban Futures - two ideals that speak to the real-life application of curriculum to our immediate urban settings.



The transition from 3 to 4 credit courses - a win-win situation

"Wins" for faculty:

- Smaller course load, more time for research and service
- Ability to pursue bigger, more time-intensive grant funding opportunities



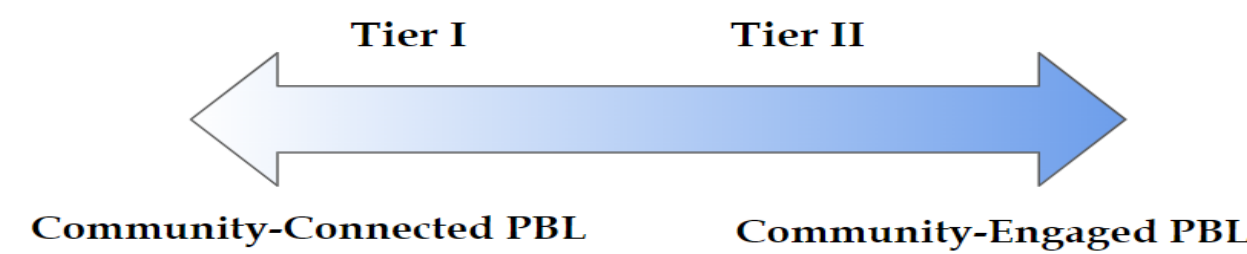
The Four-Credit Transition Initiative (Fall 2021) - an "organic" roll out as opposed to a top-down approach

"Wins" for students:

- Easier enrollment, registration, and matriculation
- Hands-on experience with real partners
- Higher grades (Dewsbury et. al., 2022)

How OCEL Responded

(P)-Based Learning and Community-Engaged Course Attributes - a better way to track engagement



Community-Connected Attribute:

- Initial touchpoint with community (field trip, guest speaker)
- Establishes a foundation for future partnership work
- Introduces students to community-engaged best practices

Community-Engaged Attribute:

- Longer, scaffolded project rooted in mutual benefit (policy assessment, communications strategy)
- Builds student capacity to understand the needs and perspectives of various stakeholders

Engaged research support - a success story

After receiving OCEL seed grant funds in 2022, Dr. John Chenoweth went on to secure \$107,000 in NSF funds to support his archaeological dig in partnership with the River Raisin National Battlefield Park and the City of Monroe, Michigan.



OCEL community-based research and projects qualify for seed funding if applications: 1) include a plan to pursue mutually beneficial outcomes with community partners; 2) prioritize student involvement; and 3) will be published, presented, or lead to larger projects in the future.

The argument for Collaboratory, a community-engagement database

In Summer 2022, a Rackham Doctoral Fellow comparatively analyzed Collaboratory and Salesforce using a points-based system (scan QR). The two systems were assessed based on the following: Support, CRM, Data Collection, Accessibility, Reporting, Implementation, Cost, Evolving Functions, Sustainability, Staffing, and Data Transferability. The analysis served as part of a successful bid to purchase Collaboratory in Fall 2022. Research also concluded that Collaboratory is the database that will most successfully institutionalize engagement on campus with:

- More interdisciplinary work
- Full transparency to the community
- The ability to inform campus decision-making and re-classification efforts
- Recognition of engaged contributions in and around campus



Key Takeaways & Aspirations

Leverage key campus players - streamline work for everyone and increase engagement across all functions of campus

- **Enrollment Management** maintains and develops K-12 partnerships
- **Institutional Advancement** manages foundation and corporate relations
- **Office of Research** funnels engaged grant opportunities to OCEL
- **Experience+** directs engaged student research projects to OCEL
- Sharing partnership networks and community engagement best practices with **Career Services**
- Developing and maintaining engaged course attributes with **Academic Success**

Explore creative ways to support faculty and students with limited resources - experiment with different approaches and modalities for knowledge sharing



Office Hours
Themed weekly sessions for faculty to engage with our work



Workshops
Educating faculty and students on best-practices for engagement



SURE
Supporting undergraduate student research



Seed Grants
Supporting community-based research projects to propel them to larger grants



Engaged Faculty Spotlight
Celebrating the work of our community-engaged faculty

Make full use of UM-Dearborn's Collaboratory database - increase the capacity of campus and community to engage with one another

Curate informational sessions to develop personalized buy-in



Connect community members and organizations to the University of Michigan system

Explore creative ways to increase grant funding



Pinpoint key content for storytelling for marketing and legislative reports

Build out a network of data liaisons

Supplement existing civic engagement initiatives

References

Dostilio, L. (2017). Neighbourhood emplaced centers: A trend within American urban community-university engagement. *Transform: The Journal of Engaged Scholarship*, Issue 1, pp. 26-40.
 Dewsbury BM, Swanson HJ, Moseman-Valtierra S, Caulkins J (2022) Inclusive and active pedagogies reduce academic outcome gaps and improve long-term performance. *PLoS ONE* 17(6): e0268620.