Community Engagement

Student Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation necessary to contribute to the <u>civic life</u> of <u>communities</u>.

The Value of Community Engagement

Community engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and <u>socially beneficial</u> to the community; it prepares students for their public lives as citizens, members of communities, and professionals in society. Through the process of community engagement, students gain experience participating in multiple types of civic action and skills, and they are given the opportunity to integrate their academic learning with direct action and involvement. In addition, community work encourages students to interact with different types of people who may be a part of the work, such as teammates, colleagues, community/agency members, and those served or collaborating in the process. In this way, students develop collaborative skills and enhanced perspectives that will serve them throughout their lives.

Supporting Skills

1. Students will provide evidence of direct engagement with the community.
2. Students will demonstrate an ability to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.
3. Students will identify the impact of their engagement on the community.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the value of engagement with communities on the individual.

Course Content Criteria

1. Courses in this category have, as a central focus, the study of social and community needs, the fulfillment of these needs, and the tools through which to meet them, as well as reflection on the impact of involvement.
2. Courses in this category deliver information about the community with which the student will interact and/or prepare students to interact with the community (this can be done by the group or agency, not necessarily the instructor).
3. Courses in this category require students to complete a minimum of 10 hours of <u>direct engagement</u> in a community, in addition to a minimum of 15 hours of planning, work toward the engagement project, and support of the engagement project.
4. Courses in this category contain a sustained reflection on the role the student has played, how his or her actions have impacted the community, and what the experience taught the student.
5. Courses in this category include an assessment assignment that requires students to demonstrate each of the skills in the Community Engagement Assessment Rubric (below). This assessment assignment should be one of the following: an objective exam, an essay question on an exam, an essay, or a research paper.

Glossary

1. **Civic life**: The public life of the citizen beyond the sphere of the family and the immediate social circle. Civic life emphasizes the affairs of the community and nation.
2. **Community**: A group of individuals with common characteristics or a common background in areas such as culture, religion, ethnicity, and/or socioeconomic status. A community may also consist of individuals with diverse backgrounds, but who live in the same geographical area. For the purposes of this requirement, a community is a group outside the student's normal social or occupational circle.
3. **Direct engagement**: Engagement that involves personal contact with, at a minimum, several members of the selected community rather than just a single member. It also involves taking an active role in facilitating dialogue, gathering information, providing evidence-based guidance, and/or undertaking hands-on work on projects, rather than passively receiving information from community members.
4. **Socially beneficial**: Involving a positive outcome that applies to the community served rather than (or in addition) to the individual providing the service. When involved in community engagement, students must consider how their individual actions may advance or deter the ethical, political, or social interests of the communities they serve.

Experience Criteria

Students may apply to fulfill the CE requirement through a co-curricular activity. These criteria apply to experiences that meet the CE curricular requirement and describe the characteristics of the experience, the steps a student must follow to petition the experience for approval, and the number and types of assignments students must submit to satisfy the requirement.

1. Students must obtain pre-approval for any activity used to satisfy this component. Approval must be obtained prior to the start of the activity.
2. Students must submit independent, third-party, verification of participation in the approved activity, by a supervisor or other authoritative individual, who is not a blood relation.
3. Students be involved in 15 hours of underline engagement work, including planning, work toward the engagement project, support of the engagement project, and direct engagement with the community, with a minimum of 10 hours of direct engagement with the community.
4. The engagement with the community must be such that it provides a tangible benefit to the community in question.
5. Students who matriculate at SMU as first year students must begin and complete all community engagement experiences after matriculation at SMU.

6. Students who matriculate at SMU as transfer students may petition Community Engagement experiences completed after high school graduation but prior to matriculation at SMU.
7. Students fulfilling Community Engagement through an activity must submit either samples of work completed during the course of the activity that demonstrate the required supporting skills or a written reflection of approximately 1000 words that responds to the following prompt:

Please describe in detail the activity you used to complete the Community Engagement requirement. In your reflection, answer the following questions. How did you, through this activity, work collaboratively to meet a community need? What impact did your service have on the community you served? What impact did your service have upon you personally, and what have you come to understand, through your service, about yourself and those you served?

Community Engagement Assessment Rubric

Supporting Skills	Exemplary 5	Accomplished 4	Developing 3	Beginning 2	Absent 1
Provide evidence of direct engagement with the community.	Provides clear and compelling evidence of direct engagement with the community.	Provides somewhat detailed evidence of direct engagement with the community.	Provides some evidence of direct engagement with the community.	Provides little evidence of direct engagement with the community.	Provides no evidence of direct engagement with the community.
Demonstrate ability to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.	Demonstrates superior ability to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.	Demonstrates ability to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.	Demonstrates some ability to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.	Demonstrates little ability to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.	Demonstrates no ability to collaboratively work across and within community contexts and structures to achieve a civic aim.
Identify the impact of the student's engagement on the community.	Clearly identifies, in detail and with sophistication, the impact of the student's engagement on the community.	Identifies, in broad terms, the impact of the student's engagement on the community.	Identifies, in broad terms and limited detail, the impact of the student's engagement on the community.	Partially identifies the impact of the student's engagement on the community.	Is unable to identify the effects of the student's engagement on the community.
Demonstrate an understanding of the value of engagement with communities on the individual.	Demonstrates sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the value of engagement with communities on the individual.	Demonstrates clear understanding of the value of engagement with communities on the individual.	Demonstrates some understanding of the value of engagement with communities on the individual.	Demonstrates little understanding of the value of engagement with communities on the individual.	Demonstrates no understanding of the value of engagement with communities on the individual.