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This document is intended to provide context and support for faculty and academic staff who are creating engaged courses, projects, and curricula.

In designing and developing your engaged learning and research course or project, please consider the following:

- **Learning outcomes**: What knowledge, skills, and values do you want your students to learn? What are they coming in with; what are you taking for granted; what will you consider failure if they leave without developing? Consider civic learning as well as disciplinary learning. Who do you expect them to learn from (you, community partners, experiences, peers)? Frame learning outcomes as SMART (specific, measurable, appropriate, rigorous, and timely).

- **Assessment**: How will you know what students are learning? Use assessment to determine if and how students are meeting learning outcomes; use it to understand the student experience and any unintended outcomes or impacts of the work. Assessments may be quantitative, qualitative, reflective, or creative; they may be oral, written, or multimedia. Many forms of reflective and integrative work are also valuable for assessment.

- **Student preparation**: Are your expectations clear? Have students done this kind of thing before? Are you intentionally providing the knowledge, skills, and perspectives they need to do what’s expected? Be explicit and provide scaffolding where you can. (“Critical reflection,” e.g., is often a new skill set for students, and they need guidance in what it means and how to do it.)

- **Syllabus design**: Are you articulating clear learning objectives? Are assignments and assessments pegged to those objectives? Are the values that undergird your discipline explicit or implicit in the course? Do your methods, assignments, and exercises maximize learning for all students? What role do you as professor play? What roles do your students play (i.e., how can you make best use of their perspectives and skills)?

- **Assignments/sequences**: Are assignments clear and laid out in an orderly developmental sequence? Are they designed to teach and invite demonstration of the learning outcomes? Are there integrative mechanisms to connect various assignments, encouraging students to understand the interconnectedness of issues? Do at least some assignments require reflective revision, ideally accompanied by student writing on what changed and why?

- **Reflection/analysis**: How do you empower your students to learn from their engaged experience? Critical reflection is the practice of making meaning out of experience and is a vital component of engaged pedagogy. See Engaged Cornell’s engaged learning and research Blackboard pages or contact Office of Engagement Initiatives staff for specific examples, definitions, and ideas.

- **Partnerships**: Why have you chosen engagement as a strategy in your course/project? Who are your partners, and how do you understand your relationship with them? What can you, students, and community partners learn and build together that you can’t separately? Consider principles of good practice in partnership, like reciprocity and collaboration. How are power and resources distributed across your partnership? Do partners always come to meetings on campus? Do you provide childcare? Cover transportation costs? Take care to work with not on or merely in communities.

- **Reflection/analysis**: First, do no harm. Assess risks: to your students, to your partners, to the communities at large. People can do great harm unintentionally, and thoughtful preparation is the best defense.

- **Assessment**: Explore and align the multiple interests of partners; set clear mutual expectations. Write down, together, agreed-upon interests, expectations, roles, intended outcomes, and timelines.

- **Student preparation**: Community partners do not get paid to teach your students. Why not? Always consider issues of fair compensation and reimbursement; consider how else you can help those who are helping you.

- **Reflection/analysis**: Pay attention to assessing the partnership as well as student learning from it.

- **Partnerships**: Tend your partnership as you would any thoughtful relationship, understanding that community partners are often overworked and underpaid.

- **Products and impacts**: What products do you hope for from this course or project? For whom are those useful? Who asked for them? Who is creating them? Who owns them? Deciding these things ahead of time is a valuable way to build partnerships (and, of course, good pedagogy). More importantly, not discussing these things risks confusing students and damaging partnerships. Understanding impacts is complicated, but talk about it. See what you hope for, and see what you think you can produce together.

- **Costs**: How will expenses associated with this course (e.g., travel, materials) be covered? Who is responsible for them, and how do costs affect the course’s viability over time?

- **Longevity, duration, and sustainability**: Your course may be bounded by a semester, but your partnership is not. Explore, with your partners, mutual interests; explore, with our staff, ways of meeting partner interests that exceed your own capacities. Multi-modal, multi-year partnerships with clear goals and outcomes can unite people across disciplines, methods, and (co-)curricula to meet joint interests. Short-term partnerships can be fine when they are what everyone wants. Bear in mind also that this course or project may invite engagement with just one piece of a larger initiative.

If your focus stretches beyond a single course to encompass a major, minor, or program curriculum you should also consider:

- **Curriculum design** (for majors, minors, and programs): What are the overarching learning outcomes for the curriculum? Are you framing the curriculum as an intentional set of developmental pathways? At what points are students acquiring, practicing, and demonstrating what they learn? What kinds of integrative mechanisms help them connect their learning across courses and experiences? How does the curriculum deepen not just their academic learning but also their personal, professional, and community-based learning?