**CSU Community-Engaged Learning Initiative**

**Overview**

**PURPOSE & BENEFITS**

For 27 years, community-engaged learning (CEL) has contributed to high-quality student learning across the CSU and currently CEL directly advances the CSU’s long-term goals of eliminating equity gaps for students. In alignment with Graduation Initiative 2025, the Chancellor’s Office charged the CSU Center for Community Engagement (COCCE) to lead an effort (the Community-Engaged Learning Initiative) to improve data collection and identify the spectrum of community-engaged learning courses taking place across the CSU. As a result, the Chancellor's Office has instituted two common systemwide “attributes” for community-engaged learning courses. This CEL Initiative is possible due to systemwide collaboration and financial support from California’s Call to Service (CCS) initiative.

The accurate information collected through this Initiative will enable the CSU to better support all forms of community-engaged learning. This process provides several benefits:

1. It provides an opportunity for **faculty to reflect** upon their courses, affirm effective practices, and identify potential changes or improvements.
2. It furthers the CSU’s efforts to **better measure the strength of service learning** as a high-impact practice, documenting the characteristics of service-learning courses that differ from other forms of community-engaged learning. (Diagram - coming soon)
3. It **increases the CSU’s understanding** of effective practices that contribute to high quality student learning.
4. It enables the CSU to **accurately identify and support** other forms ofcommunity-engaged learning courses beyond service learning.

**THE ATTRIBUTES**

The Chancellor's Office has instituted two system-wide course “attributes” based on the [CSU Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) Taxonomy and Definitions.](https://thecsu.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/CSU-CCECampusResources/Shared%20Documents/CSU%20Community%20Engaged%20Learning%20Initiative%20-%20Campus%20Resources/CSU-CEL_Taxonomy%26Definitions_Campusvs_1-26-22.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=Q9dB61) The taxonomy outlines the essential elements of community-engaged learning courses within a spectrum of implementation practices. The attributes are:

1. The **Service Learning (CSLI) attribute** is one type of CEL which must include **all six** essential elements from the CEL taxonomy.
2. The **Curricular Community-Engaged Learning (CCEL) attribute** is another type of CEL which refers to a broad array of courses that have **some type** of community--engaged assignment built around reciprocal partnerships that enhance student understanding, the outcomes of which benefit the common good.

**THE PROCESS**

### Campus service-learning/community engagement (SL/CE) Offices will ask faculty teaching courses that have been traditionally identified as community-engaged or service learning to complete the Community Engaged Learning Tool (CELT). Faculty will complete a separate CELT for each CEL course they teach, and the attribute is applied based on the faculty member’s responses about their teaching and community partnership practices. Courses will include a wide variety of departments and course models.

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### The CELT should be completed at a minimum every **five years,** but it may also be completed anytime there is a significant course change (i.e., new CEL course developed, significant revisions to the CEL course or change in faculty member teaching the CEL course).

Both the faculty member and the service-learning/community engagement (SL/CE) office will receive email notification of the CEL Tool submission and the preliminary attribute identified. If more discussion is needed, the SL/CE office will reach out to the faculty member. Otherwise, the SL/CE office communicates with campus CMS staff to update the course attribute in the student information system.

If a faculty member receives an unexpected attribute, they may use this as an opportunity to connect with the campus SL/CE office. Because this effort is focused on a systemwide perspective, campus designations may differ slightly. The campus will decide if a different attribute is warranted by reviewing the survey responses, the course taxonomy, and any campus policies or definitions.

**REPORTING & USING THE INITIATIVES’ FINDINGS**

Campus SL/CE Offices and the COCCE will utilize this information to provide on-going support to faculty, students and the CSU’s community partners. Some suggested ways are to formalize course identification processes on campuses where one does not exist; provide topics for faculty workshops and roundtable conversations about community engagement; identify faculty experts and provide topics for faculty or university research.

Timely, consistent, and accurate data will strengthen the CSU’s understanding of community-engaged curricular activities through the system and our ability to effectively assess the impact of community-engaged learning on student learning and on faculty scholarship and workload. This will enable the CSU to better explore how to transform the culture, policies and practices of our reward systems to recruit and retain faculty doing and interested in community-engaged learning.

See [Faculty Frequently Asked Questions](https://thecsu.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/CSU-CCECampusResources/Shared%20Documents/CSU%20Community%20Engaged%20Learning%20Initiative%20-%20Campus%20Resources/CSU%20CEL%20Initiative%20%E2%80%94%20Faculty%20FAQs%20.docx?d=wadec187701c04eeaae9dc23301c26895&csf=1&web=1&e=bEi8an) for more information.

**Contact Information:** For additional information about the Community-Engaged Learning Initiative, please contact your [campus Service-Learning/Community Engagement office](https://www.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/community/center-for-community-engagement/Pages/where-we-impact.aspx)