Guidelines for Community-Engaged Learning

from the Academic Community Engagement (ACE) Collaborative
of the University of Rochester Community Engagement Steering Committee

Background

The University is committed to equitable and mutually beneficial engagement with communities beyond campus—local, regional, national and international—as essential to its academic mission. Toward that end, the University upholds the following guidelines to ensure that academic community engagement activities are undertaken in a respectful, equitable and effective manner. These guidelines should serve as a tool to determine which activities comprise community-engaged learning, and to assess the quality and effectiveness of these efforts.

In 2020, the University was recognized with the Carnegie Foundation's elective classification in community engagement for its broad and sustained efforts. That recognition was grounded in the Carnegie Foundation's definition of community engagement: "Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (https://public-purpose.org/initiatives/carnegie-elective-_____). The University is committed to maintaining and enhancing the quality of its engagement with communities beyond campus.

Community engagement at the University takes various forms. Faculty members and students partner with community collaborators to design and teach courses (community-engaged teaching and learning). Faculty members also undertake research in close collaboration with community partners (e.g. community-based participatory research). In other instances, community engagement takes place in co-curricular settings, such as through student organizations (including fraternities and sororities), athletic teams, and faith communities. It also encompasses civic action through active participation in democratic processes, including non-partisan efforts to register, educate, and mobilize students to vote.

Community engagement at the University is coordinated centrally through the University's Community Engagement Steering Committee, which is co-chaired by Peter Robinson, vice president of government and community relations, and Mercedes Ramirez-Fernandez, the Richard Feldman vice president of equity and inclusion. The Academic Community Engagement Collaborative operates as a sub-committee of the Steering Committee. It is co-chaired by Theresa Green and Glenn Cerosaletti, and includes representation from across the University, including students and community partners. It aims cunicltuning

Community-engaged Research," with input from the Medical Center's Community Advisory Council. These include:

- Long-term engagement
- Mutual benefit

- Mutual respect
- Shared findings
- Enhanced community capacity
- Shared responsibility
- Evidence-based
- Collaborative from start to finish*
- Responsive to community priorities and perspectives*
  *These guidelines apply specifically to community-based participatory research.

(https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/community-health/engagement-research/community-engagement/guiding-principles-for-community-engaged-research.aspx).

The University's Center for Community Engagement has articulated the following guidelines that complement the above principles. Community engagement should encompass…

" **R** to community needs and assets: In the spirit of Asset Based Community Development, engagement should focus not only on the deficits of the community, but also build upon its assets.

" **S** : Community partnerships should be maintained as long as both parties agree to continue them, and not be undertaken in a passing manner and abandoned at the end of a course, a research project, or a grant.

" **D** Community engagement should seek to be trans formational for all involved rather than superficial or transactional.

" **C** There should be coordination among various divisions and departments at the University that engage with the community, as well as with existing efforts in the community.

" **G** Community engagement should be strategic and focused to achieve transformational effect.

" **A** : Community engagement should be aligned with the academic and operational strengths of the University and partner organizations.

" **P** Students, faculty and staff should be adequately prepared to engage effectively and respectfully with the community, understanding the historical context that has given rise to acute racial and socioeconomic disparities locally as well as globally.

" **C** : Community-engaged teaching and research should include critical reflection to help understand and contextualize the engagement.

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The University maintains a list of all faculty engaged in teaching community-engaged courses or conducting community-engaged research in order to facilitate rapid identification of the faculty, students, and community partners involved, as well as for promotional and reporting purposes. This will be overseen by the Vice Provost for Academic Administration and the Committee on Academic Planning, in concert with the Academic Community Engagement Collaborative, a sub-group of the University's steering committee for community engagement.

The University designates a course as "community-engaged" when it meets all of the following criteria:

- The course content exposes students to issues of inequality, unmet needs, and untapped assets in the community.
- Course material is taught in collaboration with one or more non-academic community partners
- Coursework contributes to mission and needs of non-academic partner organization(s)

Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, in recognition of the important role that community engagement plays in the educational mission of the University and the mutual benefits of community-engaged learning to our students and community partners, the University has prioritized community-engaged curricular activities as an essential part of coursework, and both in-person and online activities are permitted using guidelines adapted to ensure the health and safety of members of the University community as well as commu

distance) as well as other rules or guidelines established by the community partner organization should be provided to instructors and students prior to arrival and must be adhered to. Any community partners with whom students and other members of the University community will interface should either be vaccinated against COVID-19, masked, or both.

Any community-engaged research activities should adhere to the URMC Coronavirus: Guidance for Researchers. COVID-19 guidance for Human Subjects Research includes precautions to protect members of the community from risk of exposure to COVID-19 during the research process.

All activities should be in compliance with the travel guidance provided by the University's COVID-19 Resource Center. RTS is a viable transportation option among others supported by the University's Office of Parking and Transportation. Visit the RTS COVID19 updates website for latest guidance and rules for riding the bus.

Additional Resources and Support Available
If you have questions or suggestions about how to pursue community-engaged academic work at the University, please contact Theresa Green or Glenn Cerosaletti. The Center for Community Health & Prevention and the Center for Community Engagement provide useful resources for those undertaking this important work, as well as other departments around the University. Resources are also available through Community-Campus Parternships for Health and through Campus Compact.