

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



2019-20 Annual Report

Introduction

This is the fourth annual report of the Office of Community Engagement (OCE) at Florida Atlantic University. It provides an update on the progress made toward the goals set for the 2019-20 academic year. It also presents information that hopefully you will find useful to foster awareness of FAU's commitment and accomplishments toward community engagement.

Community Engagement practices at FAU have achieved a new milestone. In January 2020, the Carnegie Foundation announced that FAU was one of 44 first-time U.S. colleges and universities to receive the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. The Classification has been the leading framework for institutional assessment and recognition of community engagement in U.S. higher education for the past 14 years. It reflects the commitment of our faculty, staff and students working with, learning from and contributing to the communities FAU serves locally, regionally and internationally.

Among our additional achievements, our community partners have increased to over 300, academic service learning hours reported increased by 46%, and we delivered 7 webinars in support of our engaged faculty.

We look forward to continuing our work with the different university divisions on deepening and strengthening mutually beneficial engagement with our communities.



Background

FAU has a long history of engaged learning, research, and service across our local and regional communities. Engagement is embedded and highlighted in the University's mission, vision, and strategic goals and is a strong and fundamental component of FAU's strategic platforms upon which the institution's pillars of excellence are built.

Community engagement at FAU is based on a distributed network of students, faculty, and staff from many divisions, departments, and units working with community partners to achieve mutual goals. As envisioned at FAU, this network model combines several aspects of distributed leadership and faculty governance. It recognizes the existing commitment and accomplishments of each of the University's divisions and the benefits of continued shared leadership and responsibility toward sustaining and strengthening the University's community engagement culture.

The OCE is charged with defining, identifying, and documenting the breadth and depth of FAU's engagement activities. The Office oversees the work of the Community Engagement Task Force as well as the Community Engagement College Liaison Committee. Additionally, the Office works closely with the Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning, the Center for Global Engagement, the Career Center, and the Division of Research to support faculty, staff, students and community partners in their engaged work.

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Key Accomplishments

Being awarded the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification designation has been the biggest accomplishment of the Office to date. It represents five years of dedicated work towards building a structure and a culture that supports and embraces community engagement. The Carnegie designation is a reflection of this work, which stems from our faculty, staff and students collaborating with, learning from, and contributing to the communities FAU is dedicated to serve locally, regionally and internationally.

The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification designation achieved is valid until 2026. To be re-classified then, we will need to provide evidence of how community engagement has become deeper, more pervasive, better integrated, and sustained on our campus. This means that obtaining the designation is not the end of the road, but the beginning of a path that will take us to a more focused, efficient, and intentional engagement with our community. To that end, we have started focusing efforts towards supporting faculty- and student-engaged work and towards a more efficient collection of data, as these have been identified as areas of continuous improvement by the Carnegie Management Team.

Particular accomplishments in these areas are presented as follows:

- Incentives and Awards
- Professional Development
- Academic Service Learning Data



Incentives and Awards

In looking to achieve last year's goals of increasing community-based teaching and research, the OCE established two new incentive programs for engaged faculty, staff, and students.

1. Academic Service Learning Project Grants

These grants were created to provide financial assistance to faculty teaching ASL courses and their students so they could successfully complete community-based projects that have the potential to significantly impact or solve societal issues. During AY219-20, we awarded six \$500 grants to the following faculty:

AY19-20 Academic Service Learning Project Grants Awardees
Daniel Meeroff – College of Engineering and Computer Science
Shane Eason – Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters
Dennis Palkon – College of Business
Susannah Brown – College of Education
David Kumar – College of Education
Peter Averkiou - Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine

Students taking these ASL courses were involved in developing projects for a variety of local organizations and non-profits. Examples of their projects include the development of a nutrition program for children, mentorship and tutoring programs for underrepresented youth, a STEM-focused community outreach, and a film festival with participants from all over the world, among many others. The impact these types of projects have on the community and on our students is recorded through students' reflections which were remarkably positive this year. As one student shared with us:

“(This year) We were able to showcase our festival to a global audience and allowed the filmmakers and their friends and family a chance to also be there for the festival.... viewers were able to chat during the festival and leave comments, most of which were overwhelmingly positive... It was a great experience to be able to gain feedback and chat with hundreds of viewers.”

2. Community Engagement Project Grants

This new funding opportunity was designed to promote research and creative projects that support FAU's local and global communities. The projects supported through this program were guided by the principles of Engaged Research, ensuring "mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity." During AY219-20, we awarded ten \$1,000 grants to the following faculty:

Community Engagement Project Grants
Andra Oplalinski – Christine E. Lynne College of Nursing
Andres Ramirez – College of Education
Ayse Torres – College of Education
David Kumar – College of Education
Dilys Schoorman – College of Education
Jacqueline Fewkes – Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College
Jillian Powers – College of Education
Melanie Lorenz – College of Business
Serena Hoermann – College for Design and Social Inquiry
Susannah Brown – College of Education

While a few of these community engaged projects were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and had to be rescheduled for a later time, others had been completed or were under way when the quarantine began. The Office of Community Engagement will continue to support these projects during the next academic year as long as the funds remain available. It is during difficult times that collaborative work with our communities is most valuable. The following are a few examples of the community engaged work that was supported through these grants.

- *The Development of Computational Thinking Skills*

The purpose of this collaboration is to introduce a series of computational thinking (CT) and robot design activities to middle school students to determine whether the lessons improve the CT skills of the middle school students.

The lessons were developed in collaboration with the technology specialist and teachers at Saint Vincent Ferrer School in Delray Beach. This community engaged project resulted in the middle school students from St. Vincent entering the Philanthropy Tank contest and winning \$13k to develop an Idea Lab at the Hope Rural School in Indiantown. This school primarily serves children from immigrant families. The faculty's vision is that the project can be expanded to even more schools so that the middle school completers of this program can serve as mentors to help teach even younger children what they know about CT and robot design.



Teacher at S. Vincent School sharing robotics curriculum with middle schoolers

- *Mindfulness Skill Building*

Based on previous collaboration of mindfulness training and skill building with senior students at Deerfield Beach High School, leadership in the IB program worked with faculty to expand the training to the full International Baccalaureate program. The purpose of the training is to support the social and emotional well-being of the IB students by helping them develop skills to better manage the rigors of the academic program and future college experiences. Training activities included a 30 minute session with 20 IB faculty on how to incorporate mindfulness practices in the classroom for self-regulation and stress reduction and a 90-minute mindfulness seminar was conducted over 3 days for all IB students.

- *Urban Stories Festival*

This festival is a multi-day storytelling event celebrating West Palm Beach. It is a space for the community to share experiences, celebrate diversity, and find common ground.

In harmony with these goals, the festival also supports literacy. Short stories, poetry, rap, spoken word, oral histories, speakers, workshops, photography, music, dance, improv, and food allow participants to examine the city through the lenses of civic engagement, economic prosperity, environmental justice, safe neighborhoods and social equity. Five days of celebrations included the following highlighted events:

125 STORIES:

Celebrating the 125th birthday of the City of West Palm Beach, seasoned and amateur storytellers stepped up to the mic to tell shocking, funny, touching, and thought-provoking tales.



BIKE TOUR:

15 riders to experience five stories over five miles, visiting significant local landmarks and hearing stories on site in West Palm Beach and Palm Beach.



YOUTH FESTIVAL:

During a poetry slam workshop, youth wrote and performed on the spot. A professional artist led a mask-making story-building session and teens participated in an improv session.



Incentives and Awards (cont.)

In addition to the two newly established incentives, the Office of Community Engagement continues to recognize faculty and students for the work they do in collaboration with local, regional, national and global partners. During AY19-20, we distributed more than \$10k in awards to distinguished faculty and students.

Presidential Awards for Outstanding Faculty-Led Community Engagement

This year we received 25 applications for the Presidential Awards for Engaged Teaching, Research, and Service. The Community Engagement Liaison Committee and the UFS Honors and Awards Committee had the difficult task of selecting the awardees from this list of exceptional faculty who have continued to engage with our community in mutually beneficial activities. The recipients were announced during our virtual 2020 Honors Convocation in April. They received a crystal award, a \$2,000 cash incentive, and a \$1,500 grant designed to support the recipient's continued professional development in community-based activities.

- **Dr. Jacqueline Fewkes** - Presidential Award for Outstanding Engaged Teaching for having incorporated service learning into 6 different classes that she teaches where she encourage students to contribute to the local community, foster purposeful civic engagement, and provides an opportunity for reflection on first-hand experiences with the academic work created in the classroom.
- **Dr. Cheryl Krause-Parello** - Presidential Award for Outstanding Engaged Research/Scholarship for her passion to advance veteran-centered research through her multiple community engagement activities and her persistent scholarship directed to improve quality of life for the veteran community.
- **Dr. Melanie Acosta** - Presidential Award for Outstanding Engaged Service for her exceptional leadership and service to the school district of Palm Beach, community partners and the underserved students in South Florida.

Wave Community Engagement Award

The Office of Community Engagement collaborated with the Division of Research to grow the Wave program by supporting four additional teams of students participating in the competition. These teams developed projects to look at solving a problem within the community. They worked collaboratively with members of the community to achieve mutual goals. From these four teams, a DOR and CE committee selects an awardee team to receive a \$1,000 cash prize.

This year's recipient team project was the Eswatini Foot Bridge. This project was supported by Bridges to Prosperity (BTP) and Engineers in Action (EIA). The concept was to design and participate in the construction of a pedestrian bridge in a remote community in Southern Africa. The opportunity of having a pedestrian bridge increases prosperity, education and community development in remote areas cutoff from schools and markets by rivers. The project included the involvement of five FAU alumni, current students and members of BTP and EIA. During the 2020 spring break, the team went to Eswatini, a country that lacks of infrastructure to construct the bridge.



Professional Development

Our Office had set a goal of conducting three faculty/staff workshops in support of increasing the quality of community-based teaching and student experiences at FAU. We went a step beyond that commitment and developed and delivered seven webinars during the academic year. We had over 35 faculty and staff participate in the live webinars while many others enjoyed the recorded versions.

- Identifying & Implementing Community Engaged Learning Opportunities: Wednesday, September 25 @ 11 AM
- Neuroscience of Learning in Community Engagement: Thursday, October 24 @ 2 PM
- Developmental Sequencing in Community Engaged Learning: Monday, November 18 @ 10 AM
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion in Community Engaged Learning: Wednesday, January 29 @ 3 PM
- Tools for Self-Reflection in Community Engaged Learning: Friday, February 28 @ 10 AM
- Assessment for Community Engaged Learning: Friday, March 27 @ 11 AM
- Faculty Reflections on Community Engaged Learning: Wednesday, April 29 @ 11 AM

Feedback we received from participants was positive. Comments included:

“The content was rich and informative. Everything was covered.”

“The organizer was well prepared, the speakers shared valuable information.”

We have started discussion with the Center for eLearning regarding the development of a series of modules on Community Engaged Learning that could potentially be converted into a faculty certification program. We will continue to pursue this project once the Center staff becomes available again to attend to less pressing initiatives.

Academic Service Learning Data

Our collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs continues to yield one of our most significant accomplishments each year by increasing student engagement through Academic Service Learning experiences. With the continuous support of the Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning and the work of the College Liaisons, we keep increasing the number of academic service learning courses and the number of ASL reported hours. **Overall, reported ASL hours increased by 46% while number of students reporting hours increased by 37% during AY19-20.** This contrasts with reported increases of 8% and 11% respectively last year. Another related accomplishment was the significant increase of engaged faculty teaching ASL courses at 22% compared to last year.

Last year we started tracking ASL data by college and department, which has allowed us to identify specific needs and gaps. Even though we saw an increase in the number of ASL reported hours, the colleges of Education and Nursing reported a large decrease. This is not surprising since the students within these colleges were the most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic because of the locations in which they work, namely schools and hospitals. On the other hand, three other colleges (Design and Social Inquiry, Arts and Letters, and Business) reported increased hours of over 100%. Total ASL reported hours by College for each semester during AY19-20 are shown in the table below.

COLLEGES	Summer 19	Fall 19	Spring 20	Total
COLLEGE OF NURSING	700	-	1,963	2,663
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE	-	-	1,436	1,436
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE	270	240	-	510
COLLEGE FOR DESIGN & SI	25,208	78,741	72,232	176,181
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & CS	-	14,960	22,662	37,622
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS	41,922	8,853	9,328	60,103
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION	904	58,637	36,611	96,152
COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS	1,200	1,703	1,434	4,337
HONORS COLLEGE	810	1,032	406	2,248
TOTAL ALL COLLEGES	71,014	164,166	146,072	381,252

Goals for 2020-2021

Goal 1. Increase Community-Based Activities

Growing our program continues to be our priority. In addition to continuing our support and encouragement to faculty and staff to engage in community-based activities, we plan to establish new mechanisms for collaboration that support our community partners. To this end, we have identified the following targets:

Targets:

- Conduct three community focus groups with different constituents
- Develop a community partner resource portal within our website
- Increase number of lower level courses designated as ASL by 10%
- Hold interdisciplinary research meetings with community-engaged researchers
- Implement a Staff Service Award to encourage community engagement at the staff level

Goal 2. Improve Data Collection Methods and Mechanisms

In order to better understand FAU's contribution to the community, it is necessary to capture real-time, accurate data. We have worked on developing better data systems in various areas around the university, but we know that there is data we are not capturing. To reduce this gap, we will work on the following:

Targets:

- Align colleges' annual reporting with the needs of the OCE reporting for Carnegie
- Create a quarterly report to highlight community-engaged work
- Pilot a Canvas ASL reporting feature for faculty to enter data
- Include community-oriented student learning outcomes (SLO) within all programs in the university assessment database

Goals for 2020-2021 (cont.)

Goal 3. Increase University Exposure as an Anchor Institution

The OCE is committed to advancing the anchor mission of the institution through the development and implementation of strategies that align institutional resources and business operations to the needs of the community.

Targets:

- Procure 10% of total goods and services from minority/women-owned businesses within the Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin counties.
- Work with the Small Business Development Center to create support systems for minority/women-owned businesses
- Develop procurement policies that encourage local expending

Goal 4. Enhance our Communication Channels and Information Availability

Collecting community engagement data is only part of our job. We should utilize that data to create a narrative that better positions our institution and highlights its strengths. We will continue to update our website and create new media channels to better tell our story.

Targets:

- Improve our website interactive dashboard and GIS partners map
- Create videos that highlight local and global CE projects
- Publish the FAU Carnegie Community Engagement application
- Develop a searchable database for CE published research

Acknowledgements

The staff of the Office of Community Engagement is continuously supported by many members of our FAU family. It is because of their invaluable assistance that we are able to achieve so many accomplishments each year. We thank them all, and particularly the following individuals:

The Community Engagement Task Force

- James Capp - Assistant Provost, Academic Operations & Planning
- Nori Carter - Director, Students Services & Campus Life, Davie
- Meghan DeFord - Assistant VP, Institutional Advancement
- Jane Gerlica - Program Manager, Financial Affairs
- Margaret Goodlin - Computer Applications Coordinator, IEA
- Andrea Guzman Oliver - Associate VP, Student Outreach & Diversity
- Andrew LaPlant - Coordinator, Board Operations
- Luis Perez - Assistant VP, Research Communications
- Constance Scott - Director, Local Relations, Financial Affairs
- Brittany Sylvestri - Assistant Director, Public Affairs

The Community Engagement College Liaison Committee

- Charlotte Barry - Professor, College of Nursing
- Christopher Beetle - Associate Professor, College of Science
- William Bosshardt - Professor, College of Business
- Susannah Brown - Professor, College of Education
- Peter Cruise - Adjunct, College for Design and Social Inquiry
- Wendy Hinshaw - Associate Professor, College of Arts & Letters
- Aaron Hackman - Associate Director, Academic Service Learning
- Dan Meeroff - Professor, College of Engineering & Computer Science
- Nirmala Prakash - Assistant Professor, College of Medicine
- Jacqueline Fewkes - Professor, Honors College