Community Engagement, URSCA & You

URSCA Summer Workshop - 2025

Who Am I?
Why this picture?

- Lisa Twomey - Associate Professor of Spanish; Director of Community Engagement and Integrative Learning
- Lover of new ideas and (not necessarily scientific) experimentation
- Dedicated to making learning meaningful
- Academy 120C – twomey@cord.edu

Opening story...

Berta y José Luis

Two individuals who state their life begins when their workday ends...

(What does this have to do with community engagement? Or research?)

Over the next 60-90 minutes, we will talk about:

- Warm up: Why is community engagement important in general and in the context of research?

- The main ideas:
  o What is Community-Based Research?
  o What is Civic Professionalism?

- Resources: How can you find support for your research and integrative learning projects at Concordia?

- Conclusion: Your ideas

My personal goal: to help expand/broaden how you think about research, community engagement, and your role as a future professional.

Before we start... don't forget the C in URSCA

- Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and **Creative** Activity

Write, then discuss:

1. **What** is your current research topic or area of interest? Or – what are you interested in researching in the **future**?

2. **Who** is affected by this issue or topic in the **real world**? Think broadly: individuals, communities, industries, etc.

3. **How** could your research/creative activity help solve a problem, raise awareness, or serve a community?

Why engage with the community?

(briefly)

Benefits of community engagement

- What are the obvious and less obvious benefits?

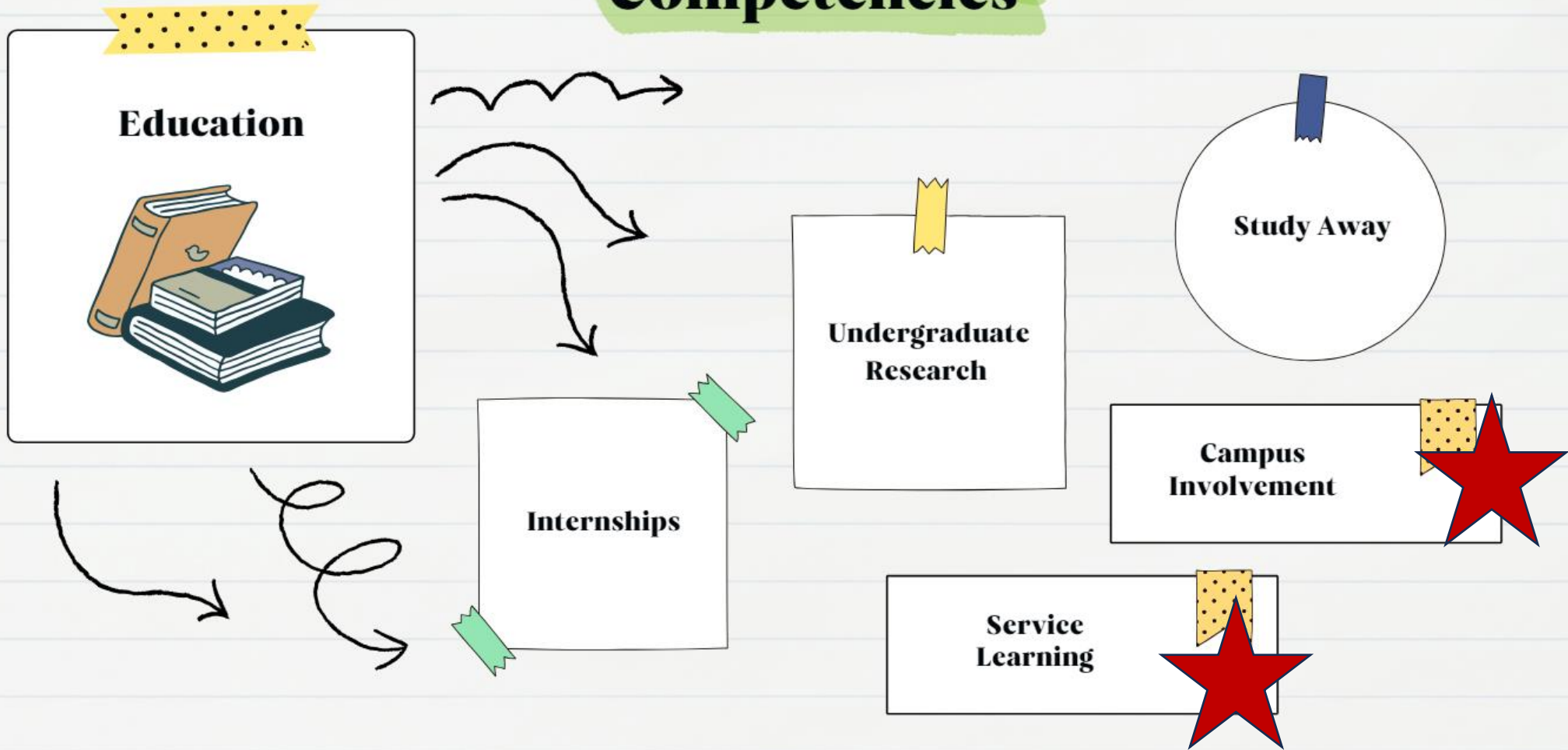- "Don't let your classes get in the way of your education."

Why engage with the community?

1. Achievement of personal growth
2. Enhancement of social responsiveness
3. Gaining interpersonal skills
4. Exposure to different cultures
5. Expanding theoretical knowledge
6. Gaining professional competencies
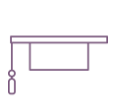
(Krueger et al., 2015, p. 163)

CAREER READINESS

Competencies for a Career-Ready Workforce **Overview**

Competencies

There are eight career readiness competencies, each of which can be demonstrated in a variety of ways.

- Career & Self Development
- Equity & Inclusion
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Leadership
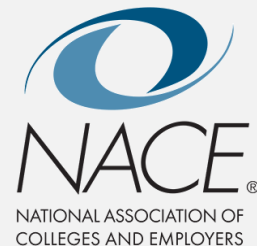- Technology
- Critical Thinking
- Professionalism

What is Career Readiness?

Career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management.

naceweb.org/ career-readiness- competencies

NACE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND EMPLOYERS

Community Engagement

And research, scholarship, creative activity

Community Engagement at Concordia

… enables students to integrate classroom learning with real-world contexts, practice skills necessary for engaged citizenship, and develop the mindset necessary to navigate a changing, diverse world (2023)

Community engagement at Concordia is centered on 4 things:

1. **Student Learning** – Promoting the cultivation of practical knowledge, civic skills, and vocational discernment
2. **Mutuality** – Respecting community wisdom, being responsive to community needs, and seeking equity and mutual benefit
3. **Commitment** – Stressing the importance of relationships and the building of long-term partnerships
4. **Flourishing** – Oriented towards contributing to the health and strength of the community – economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically

As scholars, what is your superpower in the context of community engagement?

Community-Based Research

CBR – What is it?

Community-Based Research is a **collaborative** and participatory approach to research that involves community members and organizations as **equal partners** in **every stage** of the research process, from defining the problem and writing the proposal to sharing the results. It is done *with* the community, **not** *on* the community.

(Arctic Institute of Community Based Research, https://www.aicbr.ca/community-based-research)

Key features:

- **Collaborative:** Researchers and community partners work *together* to define the questions, methods, and goals.

- **Action-Oriented:** The goal is not just to understand a problem, but to help address it or create positive change.

- **Mutually Beneficial:** Both the academic researchers and the community gain something—new knowledge, resources, solutions, or visibility.

- **Contextualized:** It values local knowledge, lived experience, and community expertise just as much as academic insight.

- **Ethical and Respectful:** CBR prioritizes relationships, trust, and ethical responsibility to the community throughout the research.

(Arctic Institute of Community Based Research, https://www.aicbr.ca/community-based-research)

Traditional Academic Research	Community-Based Research
Researcher defines the problem	➤ Community and researcher define the problem together
Conducted *on* people	➤ Conducted *with* people
Results often stay in academia	➤ Results shared with and used by communities
Researcher owns the data	➤ Data and insights are co-owned/shared

Examples

# Tufts University – Mapping Food Desserts

- Students partnered with local youth and city leaders to map access to healthy food.

- Youth helped conduct surveys and gather data.

- Maps influenced city policy on food access.

- **Impact**: Healthier zoning policies, youth empowerment & skill development

https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.tufts.edu/dist/8/8205/files/2019/05/Herman-Rachel_GIS101_Fall2018.pdf

MAPC

METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

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SEARCH

Search   GO

MAPC Partners with Tufts University on Food Access Mapping

Posted on May 25, 2016 at 4:36 pm. Written by Amanda Linehan

MASSACHUSETTS FOOD ACCESS INDEX
Food Access Along Driving Network (1 mile)
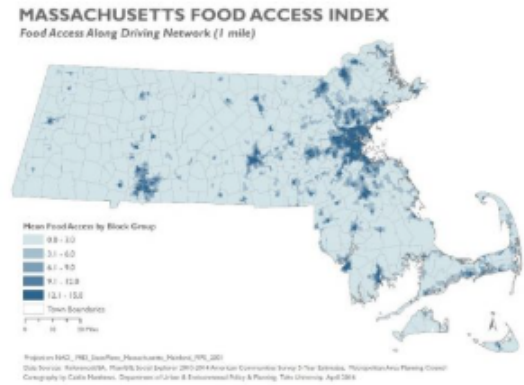
Staff from MAPC's Public Health and Data Services departments partnered with students from Tufts University this spring to analyze access to healthy food across Massachusetts. Food access is a fundamental element to healthy neighborhoods. Where communities face barriers to getting their grocery needs met, people are less healthy, and obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related illnesses are

This analysis ranks food store types and farmers markets, and uses walksheds of ¼ and ⅛ mile, and

SEARCH

Search   GO

RECENT POSTS

- Ready for Summer Heat: MAPC Launches Cool Communications Campaign
- Coming Together for Compassionate Care: Region 3 HMCC Hosts Conference to Address Homelessness Through Collaborative Action
- Hurricane Season 2025: What Cities and Towns Can Do to Prepare Beyond the Basics
- 2025 Annual Council Meeting: Celebrations, Crucial Conversations, and Continuance
- Governor's Energy Affordability Bill Summary H.4144

CATEGORIES

- Community Engagement
- HMCC

https://www.mapc.org/planning101/tufts-food-access-mapping/

University of Michigan & Detroit Communities: Water Quality & Housing Justice

- Investigated effects of water shutoffs on health.

- Community helped design surveys and analyze results.

- Data used in advocacy, court cases, and media.

- **Impact**: Raised awareness, supported policy change, and gave residents voice and agency.

- Research continues today

Detroit's legacy of housing inequity has caused long-term health impacts – these policies can help mitigate that harm

CATEGORIES

Select Category   **FILTER**

RECENT POSTS

- Health Management and Policy graduate connects family legacy to public health mission
- HIV stigma research highlights barriers to care in Wayne County communities
- Expanding public health messaging for firearm safety: A path forward
- Where healthcare and sustainability intersect: The fight against medical waste

ARCHIVES

Select Month   **FILTER**

https://sph.umich.edu/pursuit/2024posts/detroits-legacy-of-housing-inequity-has-caused-long-term-health-impacts-these-policies-can-help-mitigate-that-harm.html

Concordia College?

- There are several examples of courses that have a community engagement component! Some are doing community-based research.

Civic Professionalism

Or: on being a "Citizen Professional"

What is civic professionalism?

The practice of connecting your professional skills and knowledge to civic purposes, using your career to serve the public good while also pursuing personal and professional success.

Civic professionalism is the idea that your professional work isn't just about making a living; it's also about contributing to the **public good**.

Boyte, H. (2008). "Against the Current: Developing Civic Professionals." *Liberal Education*, 94(4), AAC&U.

Professional expertise and civic responsibility come together to ask:

- How does my work matter to the world?

- How can my work help make the world a better place?

Key features of Civic Professionalism:

- Purpose beyond self: It's about contributing to the community, not just achieving personal success.

- Collaboration: Often involves working **with** community members, not just for them.

- Reflection: Requires thinking critically about your role, your impact, and your responsibilities.

- Identity: Are you Berta/José? Or is your professional identity integrated in some way with your personal/civic identity?

Reflection & Discussion

1. **What** is your current research topic or area of interest? Or – what are you interested in researching in the **future**?

2. **Who** is affected by this issue or topic in the **real world**? Think broadly: individuals, communities, industries, etc.

3. **How** could your research/creative activity help solve a problem, raise awareness, or serve a community?

Broaden your idea of your research…

- Are there any Community-Based Research projects that might be worth pursuing?

and/or

- How can you blend your knowledge / skills / expertise in your field with civic activity. In other words, how are you / can you be a Civic Professional?

How ya gonna pay for that?

Integrative Learning Activities Fund

Funding is available for:

- Campus vehicle use, supplies, fees, and other costs directly tied to integrative learning projects that advance student learning

- Both course-based and non-course-based activities that align with integrative learning objectives

- Domestic Breakaway trips during Fall and Spring Interim

- Projects connected to approved PEAK experiences, which will receive priority consideration

- Environmentally responsible initiatives that align with the college's sustainability goals

ILA funds will not be granted for:

- Faculty or student stipends

- Guest speaker stipends (see the Visiting Scholars Grant from Academic Affairs for speaker funding)

- Food, unless it is essential to achieving the integrative learning objectives of the experience

- Air travel, in accordance with the college's sustainability goals

- Expenses incurred before funding approval—requests must be submitted before the event, purchase, or activity.

https://cobbernet.cord.edu/directories/offices-services/community-engagement/il-funding-request/

¡Ojo!

Faculty or staff must request ILA funds!

Students should have an advisor that can do this for them!

One last idea…

Feed and nurture your experimental mindset. That is a superpower.

Questions or want to chat?

twomey@cord.edu

Reference

Kruger, S., Nel, M., & van Zyl, G. (2015). Implementing and managing community-based education and service learning in undergraduate health sciences programmes: Students' perspectives. African Journals of Health Professions Education, 7(2), 161-164.