TIPS FOR STUDENTS ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITY REMOTELY

Community engaged learning (CEL) courses are an opportunity to serve community while earning course credit. These tips will help you to successfully complete a community-identified project in an online CEL course.

PLANNING & RESEARCH

- Manage your time and plan ahead. Students in project-based CEL are expected to dedicate a minimum of 2-3 hours per week to their project.
- Research the organization to prepare for your CEL role. This is particularly important without an in-person component. (E.g., get to know the organization through their website, mission and vision, any resources highlighted on the project proposal form).

TEAMWORK & PROBLEM SOLVING

- Employ effective teamwork and problem solving skills (see below Student Guide to Community Engaged Learning Appendix C – Tips for Effective Group Work).
- Consider establishing a team agreement for working together virtually (Example).
- Appoint a team lead who will communicate with the community partner to ensure effective, organized, and efficient communication.
- Complete the Expectations Agreement (see below) together during your first meeting with the community partner to ensure that mutual expectations in terms of the project scope, communications plans, and the intended deliverables are clear at the beginning of the project.

COMMUNICATION & PROFESSIONALISM

- Communicate with your community partner on a regular basis (see below Student Guide to Community Engaged Learning Appendix B - Tips for Professional Communication).
- Demonstrate video conferencing etiquette. Dress professionally. Ensure that you have a clean, work-appropriate background and attend the meeting from a quiet area that has minimal noise and distractions. Zoom's virtual background feature is an easy way to ensure privacy and eliminate background distractions. Western backgrounds are available!
- Be mindful of privacy/confidentiality. Consider the privacy guidelines for online tools, e.g., Zoom is Western's preferred platform and Western Technology Services has outlined the following privacy considerations.
- Be punctual and reliable (e.g., be on time for meetings and meet scheduled deadlines).
- Ask questions – you are not expected to know everything! Make sure you have a clear understanding about the organization and particularly your role within it.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING & REFLECTION

- Demonstrate empathy and respect diversity.
- Exercise patience – this may be the first time for some using new online tools.
- Reflect on the meaning of the experience to you personally, intellectually, and with respect to citizenship.

RESOURCES

- Student and Community Partner Expectations Agreement
- Student Guide to Community Engaged Learning
- Keep in touch with your course instructor and the CEL team (cel@uwo.ca). We are here to support you!

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