

Project Based Learning

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Western is located on the lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton Peoples connected through four pre-confederation treaties: the London Township Treaty (Treaty 6), Longwoods Treaty (Treaty 21), Sombra Township Treaty (Treaty 7), McKee Purchase (Treaty 2), and the Dish With One Spoon Covenant Wampum. There is also a substantial amount of unceded land in the area we now call Southwestern Ontario. In the work that we do, we partner with communities within and beyond this area, and support students in engaging in experiential learning globally. We encourage students, faculty, and partners to research and understand the lands where they engage in experiences.

As an Experiential Learning team, we commit to working to dismantle colonialism by developing and honoring long-standing relationships with Indigenous community partners. We recognize that, historically, when universities have engaged with Indigenous communities for scholarly work, the process has been extractive and exploitative. We aim to support the disruption of the colonial relationship between Indigenous communities and our institution by focusing our work on partnerships and projects that are community-led and that prioritize reciprocity.

We commit to fostering a culture of inclusion for students in experiential learning, including taking action to remove systemic barriers that prevent or limit Indigenous students' engagement. We will create safe and positive experiences for Indigenous students by recognizing and respecting their diverse identities, cultures, languages, learning styles, and perspectives, as well as centering their interests and needs. We will support students in growing their understanding and appreciation of Indigenous communities through experiential learning, and by engaging with Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT BASED LEARNING ALLOWS STUDENTS TO TAKE THEIR SKILLS BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CLASSROOM AND INTO THE COMMUNITY.

Through Community Engaged Learning (CEL) courses and co-curricular programs, students partner with nonprofit organizations in the London region to tackle societal issues. Additionally, students enrolled in Industry Project courses partner with small- to medium-sized businesses in the London region on existing challenges to affect organizational change. At the heart of this work is the promise of collaborative problem solving, innovation, and mutually beneficial outcomes for students and partners.

This year, 6,637 Western students participated in Project Based Learning. They engaged in 1,274 projects and events developed across 245 partnerships from 131 organizations, both on and off campus. Most activities took place in person throughout the London area, with the incorporation of some hybrid formats for accessibility and efficiency, such as meetings, work sessions, and presentations. This flexible approach allowed our partners to choose which option worked best for them, whether out in the city, on campus, or online. Students and partners collaborated on semester and year-long projects that produced mutually beneficial outcomes and made a positive impact in the London community and in local industries.

We are so grateful for our community and industry partners' support, enthusiasm, and dedication in mentoring our students and contributing to the next generation of leaders in London.

"Our longstanding partnership with the Community Engaged Learning (CEL) program at Western University has been truly rewarding. Most recently, in the Together Against Online Crime project, CEL students supported us by designing and conducting a community impact survey that provided valuable insights into digital safety awareness among underserved groups. Their work helped us better understand the needs of our audience and improve how we deliver our programs.

This collaboration is a great example of how academic and community partnerships can lead to real, measurable impact. We deeply value CEL's commitment to social change and look forward to many more shared initiatives ahead."

Hetham Karky | *Rights & Responsibilities Awareness Initiative*

"Working in a cross-cultural environment pushed me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds. This experience has deepened my passion for cross-cultural communication and strengthened my desire to pursue a career in this field."

Promise Chen | *Experiential Learning in the Arts & Humanities*

CURRICULAR CEL

Curricular CEL involves students collaborating on a project, or fulfilling a placement, developed collaboratively with a community partner to create mutually beneficial outcomes that align with course curriculum. Students earn course credit while advancing the mission and goals of community organizations. This hands-on, practical experience in the community enables students to gain a deeper understanding of course content as it applies to local and global contexts.



3,284
students

36 CEL courses
across



10
faculties

1,239
projects



66,499
hours of engagement

179
community
partners

SELECT 2024-25 CEL PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- Advocated for wellbeing in the community by developing an online resource page and hosted a lunch and learn for Occupational Therapy students | Ontario Society of Occupational Therapy Retired Members Team | *Engaging in Occupation: Community and Population Level Practice*
- Created marketing campaign and surveyed food insecurity awareness; raised funds and collected donations for organization during Western Sustainability conference | Black Community Employment and Empowerment Services | *Project Management*
- Promoted and supported seed saving initiative by creating and sharing engaging digital content to increase availability of native plants impacting biodiversity and climate resilience in London | Urban Roots | *Environmental Health Promotion*
- Led grant-writing efforts to support urban Indigenous women's empowerment, cultural revitalization and storytelling, and Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching models | Nokee Kwe | *Feminist Activism*

"The Loeys-Dietz Syndrome Foundation Canada has had the privilege of working with multiple student groups through Western's CEL program. Each student has brought enthusiasm, creativity and new perspectives to our organization resulting in exceptional materials that are used by patients, medical professionals and researchers in the Heritable Aortic Disorder community. We are grateful for the dedication of these students and the ease of working with the program coordinator and course instructors. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Western."

Lindsay Parsons

Project Coordinator, Loeys-Dietz Syndrome Foundation Canada

NEW & ONGOING INITIATIVES

NEW! IMPACTLAB LONDON

Along with the City of London and London's post-secondary institutions, Community Engaged Learning at Western launched ImpactLab London, a new pilot program that builds upon the success of CityStudio London, engaging students in developing ideas related to the City's strategic priorities. Together, students in select courses at Western University, Huron University, King's University College, and Fanshawe College co-created projects around the common strategic theme of talent retention in London, allowing them to apply their knowledge and skills to contribute meaningfully to the city's future.

30 Master of Public Administration students at Western examined municipally led interventions related to student retention in Canada and beyond and they developed a research report and summary presentation with findings and recommendations | Political Science 9913: *Public Administration*

INNOVATION WORKS

The CEL team has maintained their on-site space at Innovation Works, where they are co-tenant members. It is a unique gathering space for community organizations and members to come together and share ideas, best practices, and experiences. We are very fortunate and appreciative to have Innovation Works and the Pillar Nonprofit Network as longstanding partners.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Our Community Engagement Student Coordinator is a student leader who assists with planning and executing Orientation Serves, Western Serves Network, and Impact Experience. They work closely with the CEL team to design, promote, research, and support year-long co-curricular CEL programming. We would like to thank this summer's Community Engagement Coordinator, Donya Babanezhad, for her leadership and contributions to fostering community engagement during her term. We would also like to welcome Kate Radcliffe as the new Community Engagement Student Coordinator for Summer 2025. With program development and community outreach well underway, we would like to thank Kate for her continued dedication to connecting community partners with the Western community.

"I am pleased to reflect on my enriching experience during my placement at Louise Arbour French Immersion Public School as part of the JA Program Delivery through Impact Experience. This opportunity allowed me to engage with students actively, facilitating their understanding of essential economic principles, career planning, and financial literacy. I am deeply grateful to Western for providing this valuable opportunity. This initiative has allowed me to apply my knowledge in a practical setting while making a meaningful impact on students' learning journeys. I look forward to utilizing these experiences to further contribute to the field of education."

Student Participant | Impact Experience

CO-CURRICULAR CEL

ORIENTATION SERVES

1,391 students **15** partners **3,478** hours of engagement

As a part of Orientation Week, the CEL team collaborated with 15 community organizations to host the 8th annual Orientation Serves (OServes) event on Saturday, September 7, 2024. Over 1,300 first-year students participated in volunteer activities that fostered their connection to the local community and facilitated meaningful relationships through collaborative short-term projects. Participating in volunteer work during their first week at the university allowed students to establish a sense of belonging and recognize the significance of community involvement. We extend our gratitude to the exceptional organizations that provided these enriching experiences, and to the more than 400 Orientation Volunteer Leaders (Sophs) for their excellent leadership during the event.

VOLUNTEER FAIR

295 students **32** partners

On November 12, 2024, our Volunteer Fair connected over 30 community partners with nearly 300 students. This event highlighted the variety of volunteer opportunities available to students in the London region. A wide range of community partners showcased the unique volunteer opportunities at their organizations and provided education about their organizations' dedication to advancing positive social change. We would like to thank our community partners for not only enhancing the experiences of our students, but also for their contributions to community development.

WESTERN SERVES NETWORK

909 students **25** opportunities showcased

The main purpose of the Western Serves Network (WSN) is to connect over 900 passionate Western Students with nonprofit organizations in the broader London community. In doing so, the WSN promotes an awareness of community needs and issues while emphasizing the practical importance of co-curricular experiential learning. In collaboration with Nokee Kwe, the Western Serves Network created over 100 dreamcatchers for the community. Additionally, through the Western Serves Network Newsletter, 25 volunteer opportunities available in London and the surrounding area were showcased. Through a plethora of volunteer opportunities and events, students are given the chance to share their perspectives and ideas, develop transferable skills in high demand, and contribute to the mission and vision of partnering organizations.

IMPACT EXPERIENCE

41 students **4** partners **1,148** hours of engagement

Western's signature Reading Week program, Impact Experience, empowered students to engage in their local communities through acts of service in the 2024-2025 academic year. Throughout the program, students learned to apply their skills and knowledge learned in the classroom to solve various community challenges. Examples of student projects included: promoting financial literacy to London students by partnering with Junior Achievement Southwestern Ontario (JA); creating signage plans for youth in the City of St. Thomas through STEAM Education; creating marketing resources for the Ontario Centre for Talent Development; and creating an event to bring people with and without developmental disabilities together at L'Arche London. These projects are wide ranging and demonstrate the breadth of challenges Western students are equipped to face using their education.

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING PARTNERS

Thank you to our community partners—your time, mentorship, expertise, and enthusiasm is greatly appreciated. These incredible learning opportunities would not be possible without your partnership and dedication. Partnering organizations are listed below, and those in **bold** partnered with more than one course, project, or event throughout the year.

519Pursuit

Active Minds, University Students' Council, Western University

Alzheimer Society of Ontario

Alzheimer Society Southwest Partners

Amabile Choirs of London, Canada

Art 4 All Kids

Black at Southwestern Ontario

Black Community Employment & Empowerment Services

Brain Tumour Foundation

Canadian Cancer Society

Canadian Federation of University Women

Canadian Health Information Management Association

Changing Ways

Cheshire Independent Living Services

ChildCan

Children's Health Research Institute (CHRI)

Community Counselling London

Community Living London

Crafting for a Cure

Crafting for a Cure, University Students' Council, Western University

Dale Brain Injury Services

Daya Counselling Centre

DermEffects

Elgin Ontario Health Team

Embroiderer's Guild, London

Epic Recovery

Every Canadian Counts

Families First CAPC, SLNR

Family Service Thames Valley

FHSSC Dream Team

Friends of the Gardens

First-St. Andrew's United Church

Gamespeed Data

Gender Equality Coalition of Ontario

Human Environments Analysis Laboratory

Hutton House

Inclusive Anatomy

John P. Robarts P.S.

Junior Achievement South Western Ontario

Kids Kicking Cancer

L'Arche London

Let's Talk Science

Clinical Research Unit, London Health Sciences Centre

LIFE*SPIN

Loeys-Dietz Syndrome Foundation Canada

LOLA Bees

London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership

London Bicycle Cafe

London Black History Coordinating Committee

London Community Hebrew Day School

London Cross Cultural Learner Centre

London District Renewable Energy Cooperative

London Environmental Network

London Pro Musica Choir

London Research Information Outreach Team

Louise Arbour French Immersion Public School

Medical Science Community Outreach

Melanoma Canada

Middlesex London Food Policy Council

Middlesex-London Health Unit

Middlesex-London, Elgin Ontario Health Team

MINDS of London Middlesex

mindyourmind

Motionball

Museum of Ontario Archeology

Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration

Muslim Wellness Network

Nokee Kwe

Ontario Centre for Talent Development

Ontario Institute for Cancer Research

Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists Retired Members Team

Oxbow Public School

Public Health Ontario

PHSS

Quintin Warner House

ReForest London

Residence & Campus Life, King's University College

Rights and Responsibilities Awareness Initiative

Saint T

Salthaven Wildlife Rehabilitation & Education Centre

Salvation Army, Centre of Hope

Salvation Army London Citadel

Saunders Secondary School

Sclerocare

Seniors With Skills

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Hubs

SHAD Canada

Single Women in Motherhood

Social Democracy Party

South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre

Southpoint Klite Festival

Start2Finish

STEAM Education Centre

Stem2Stern

The Insitute for Community Sustainability

Thames Valley District School Board

TIME Program, London Health Sciences Centre

Type Diabeat It

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

Urban Roots London

Waterloo Regional District School Board

Well Spring London

Western University

Black Students' Association

Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion

Centre for Translational Cancer Research

Faculty of Health Sciences

Peer Leader Program

Purple Hands

Recovery Addiction Awareness Day

Schulich Dentistry

Western Heads East

Western Libraries

Western Sustainability

Westover Treatment Centre

YMAP Program London, YMCA of Southwestern Ontario

YMCA of Southwestern Ontario

CEL RESOURCES

CEL FACULTY COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

To support the work of CEL faculty, the CEL team fosters a Faculty Community of Practice (CoP). The CoP connects throughout the year to discuss challenges and successes, share CEL resources, and explore themes related to CEL pedagogies, best practice, and learning outcomes.

SCHOLARSHIP@WESTERN

CEL has a public repository on Western Libraries' Scholarship@Western site to publish students' final deliverables from CEL courses. This open-access platform showcases valuable contributions that students have made within the London community and the important work that CEL partners engage in. The site enables students to publicize their work, while exemplifying possible achievements for future partnerships and projects. CEL currently displays 43 articles, 2 presentations, and 12 reports, with the total number of downloads exceeding 8,244 and continually growing.

CURRICULAR CEL FACULTY

The following is a list of the instructors who taught CEL courses in the 2024-2025 academic year, with their course titles.

We would like to express our thanks to the faculty members who integrated CEL into their teaching, creating opportunities for students to apply their learning and contribute to the important work of our community partners.

FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES		
Dr. Barbara Bruce	Arts & Humanities 4490X	Experiential Learning in the Arts & Humanities
Dr. Angela Borchert	Intercultural Communications 2500G	Bridging Classroom and Community: Languages and Cultures in Action
Dr. Ana García-Allén	Spanish 1030	Beginner Spanish
	Spanish 2200	Intermediate Spanish
	Spanish 3300	Advanced Spanish
Dr. Tricia Johnson	Studio Arts 3672A	Embroidering with the Guild
IVEY BUSINESS SCHOOL		
Dr. Diane-Laure Arjaliès	Business 4620	Business Impact Assessment
CONTINUING STUDIES		
Janis Wallace	Marketing 6013	Advanced Marketing Strategies
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING		
Dr. John Makaran	Mechanical and Materials Engineering 4499	Mechanical Engineering Design Project
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES		
Dr. Tara Mantler	Health Sciences 2700A	Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescents
Dr. Denise Grafton	Health Sciences 3240B	Environmental Health Promotion
Dr. Anita Cramp	Health Sciences 4205	Health Promotion in Practice*
Dr. Carri Hand	Occupational Therapy 9652	Engaging in Occupation: Community and Population Level Practice
FACULTY OF INFORMATION & MEDIA STUDIES		
Jeremy Copeland	Master of Media in Journalism and Communication 9503	Shoot for the Heart - Harnessing the Power of Video Storytelling
Dr. Melissa Adler	Media, Information & Technoculture 2025B	Research Methods for the Digital Age
Dr. Sandra Smeltzer	Media, Information & Technoculture 4999	Media & the Public Interest Practicum
SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY		
Dr. Alison Allan	Biochemistry 4955E	Community Engaged Learning and Research Skills in Translational Cancer Biology
Dr. Sarah McLean	Medical Sciences 4995E	Community Engaged Learning and Research Skills in Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences
Dr. Nicole Campbell	Medical Sciences 9603	Community Engaged Learning Rotation
DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC		
Dr. Laura Curtis	Music 3812A/B	Music Education in Community
FACULTY OF SCIENCE		
Dr. Graeme Taylor	Biology 4920F/G	Seminar in Biology
Laura Reid & Bryan Sarlo	Computer Science 1033A/B	Multimedia and Communication
Dr. Christina Booker & Kristen Zinger	Integrated Science 3002A	Science in Your Community
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE		
Annas Alimorad & Ajit Unnithan	Management and Organizational Studies 9330	Project Management
Dr. Dan Bousfield	Political Science 3201G	International Law
	Political Science 3210F	Canada-US Relations
	Political Science 3390	Politics of AI*
	Political Science 3510G	Decolonizing Politics
Dr. Riley Hinson	Psychology 4873E	Addictions: Theory and Research
MULTIDISCIPLINARY		
Associate Deans	Scholar's Electives 4400Y	Scholar's Electives Capstone Course

*New course

INDUSTRY PROJECTS

Industry Project courses connect students with small- to medium-sized businesses as consultants on existing challenges in order to affect organizational change. Students earn course credit while addressing the operational challenges or needs of a local small- to medium-sized business. This hands-on, practical experience within an industry setting enables students to gain a deeper understanding of course content as it applies to local and global contexts.


1,626
students

14 courses
across

 **5**
faculties

 **16,320**
hours of engagement

15
projects

15
industry
partners

INDUSTRY PROJECT FACULTY

The following is a list of the instructors who taught Industry Project courses in the 2024-2025 academic year with their course titles.

We would like to express our thanks to the faculty members who incorporated industry projects into their teaching, creating opportunities for students to apply their learning, and contribute to the important work of our industry partners.

FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Dr. Barbara Bruce	Arts & Humanities 3380Y	Introduction to Community and Professional Practices
Dr. Benjamin Hill	Philosophy 2082A	Introduction to the Philosophy of Food

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING

Dr. Michael Boutillier	Chemical and Biochemical Engineering 2221B	Fluid Flow
Kevin McGuire	Integrated Engineering 4499	Interdisciplinary Design Project
Dr. HaoTian Harvey Shi	Mechanical and Materials Engineering 3348A	Manufacturing Processes
Dr. John Makaran	Mechanical and Materials Engineering 4499	Mechanical Engineering Design Project

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Dr. Ashley McAlpine	Master of Data Analytics 9160	Business Skills
	Statistical and Actuarial Sciences 4960F/9860A	Business Skills

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Dr. Wes Kinghorn	Geography and Environment 2144A/B	Geography of Tourism
Dr. Mike Dove	History 3813E	Public History
Dr. Bonnie Simpson	Management & Organizational Studies 3395	Global Sustainability Practices in Marketing
Dr. M. Blair Evans	Psychology 2660A	Introduction to Industrial Psychology

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Dr. Joseph Turnbull	Analytics and Decision Sciences 4294G	Analytics Consulting Project
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INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Thank you to our industry partners—your time, mentorship, expertise, and enthusiasm is greatly appreciated. These incredible learning opportunities would not be possible without your partnership and dedication.

Arva Flour Mills	Filthy Revena Vintage	KEGO Corporation	The Green Window
At Your Service for Seniors	Goparity Canada	KONNEXIO Inc.	The London Bicycle Café
Better Together	GreenTech Painting	Maglin Site Furniture	Ukrainian Pierogies Inc.
Carriff Canada	Hetek Solutions Inc.	The City of St. Thomas	

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (UN SDGS) PROJECT TAGGING

We tag projects across the Project Based Learning portfolio according to their alignment with the UN SDGs to demonstrate to students, community & industry partners, and the Western community the reach and impact of these local-level projects and their interconnectedness with broader global sustainability targets.

Percentage of projects associated with each UN SDG:

1. NO POVERTY	2. ZERO HUNGER	3. GOOD HEALTH & WELLBEING	4. QUALITY EDUCATION	5. GENDER EQUALITY	6. CLEAN WATER & SANITATION
20%	17%	55%	39%	22%	8%
7. AFFORDABLE & CLEAN ENERGY	8. DECENT WORK & ECONOMIC GROWTH	9. INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, & INFRASTRUCTURE	10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES	11. SUSTAINABLE CITIES & COMMUNITIES	12. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION
3%	14%	8%	43%	25%	12%
13. CLIMATE ACTION	14. LIFE BELOW WATER	15. LIFE ON LAND	16. PEACE, JUSTICE, & STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17. PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	
15%	0%	6%	20%	18%	

“Community Engaged Learning at Western is a wonderful support for instructors who want to work with community partners through teaching. I use community engaged projects in an Occupational Therapy course I teach, and students and partners are very positive about the impacts of this work. The students develop so many skills that they can apply in the future, such as communication, creating collaborative plans, negotiating differences of opinion, assessing the strengths and needs of a community organization, making connections between inequities in communities and systemic factors, and making change that can promote equity. I love this part of teaching and seeing the contributions that students can make to our community.”

Dr. Carri Hand | *Engaging in Occupation: Community and Population Level Practice*

“It would have taken tens of thousands of dollars in consulting contracts to generate comparable research. When do you get the opportunity to have 500 educated people weigh in your problem? We would not have been able to replicate this on our own.”

Andrew Hunniford | London Bicycle Café (via [Western News](#))

“As a small not-for-profit charity, Nokee Kwe relies on community volunteerism as one of the most valuable resources they can tap into. The CEL groups from Western bring enthusiasm, fresh ideas, and essential support that significantly benefit our organization’s mission.

Working with student volunteers provides cost-effective support, as they offer crucial assistance without the financial burden of hiring additional staff. This allows us to allocate resources more efficiently, while still achieving goals.

Collaborating with such dedicated and passionate teams has been a truly rewarding experience. I deeply appreciate the time, effort, and enthusiasm that everyone brings, regardless of the task.

**THE STUDENTS’ COMMITMENT
TO LEARNING AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT IS INSPIRING,
AND I AM GRATEFUL TO BE
PART OF SUCH MEANINGFUL
OPPORTUNITIES.”**

Deb Armstrong | Nokee Kwe