



# STONEHILL

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# COLLEGE

## THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

### Community Partner Handbook

WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITY STRONG



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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Community Partner:

Thank you so much for your interest in Community-Based Learning at Stonehill College. For many years Stonehill students, staff and faculty have served the Brockton, Easton, and Southeastern Massachusetts areas in many capacities. Recently, however, we've intensified our efforts to integrate community service and research with course curriculum to create community-based learning courses of the highest quality. Research shows that service learning and community research courses enhance student learning outcomes and inspire student passion for academic and civic engagement. None of this would be possible without the important work already being done by our community partners. We thank you for your willingness to allow our students and faculty into your organizations to work on your projects.

Our office's goals, however, are not only to improve student learning and faculty teaching, but to increase the positive impact on our community. For a while we had the impression that, all too often, our students and faculty got more out of community engagement than the community itself. While we feel good about the work we have done in general, we believe we can do much more and much better. We look to our community partners to help guide us as we recommit our efforts to make our local communities better places to live and work.

To that end, we have held community partner workshops and identified two particular areas for attention: diversity preparation for students and increased community partner participation in academic enterprises. To address these concerns, we designed a new diversity training workshop for students and we now hold an annual CBL summer institute that brings faculty, students and partners together to design new CBL courses. This year we continue to address the need to train our students better to serve as mentors for local youth. We realize we still have far to go in building the most dynamic and effective partnerships possible, but we believe our new direction towards creating stronger, more substantive and sustainable community partnerships has already been a success.

We look forward to working with everyone this year.

*Corey Dolgon*

Professor Corey Dolgon

Director, Office of Community-Based Learning



## WHAT IS COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING (CBL)?

Community-Based Learning is when students perform service-learning projects or conduct community-based research that not only benefits local needs but is designed collaboratively among community-based organizations, faculty and students.

Projects start with community needs and community knowledge. However, coursework such as readings, lectures, and discussions helps teach students' about the root causes of such community needs. Thus, action in communities leads to reflection, but class work guides reflection, leading to analysis and strategies for change.

Intellectual and practical engagement leads back to critically informed conversations with community partners. As students and faculty share analyses and strategies with community organizations, the production of knowledge and action becomes a democratically constructed set of understanding the world as it is, envisioning a world that could be, and designing the strategies and actions that might bring such a world into being. CBL at its best provides teaching, learning and partnerships inspired by the possibility of social justice.

## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING COURSE?

A CBL Course is a regular classroom course with additional hours creating and implementing projects or conducting research in partnership with a local community organization. At Stonehill, we have several CBL courses for students to choose from, spanning many different academic departments and subject matters. We also have Learning Community CBL Courses, where students take prerequisite courses and then exercise academic skills in a separate course that helps them understand the material in an action-based setting. The learning projects are designed by faculty in collaboration with the community to enhance the social impact of the work.

## WHY DO IT?

As a community partner, Community-Based Learning [CBL] can be extra work on your end. However, the rewards far outweigh the costs if we do it right. CBL is a quintessential way to link academics to action. CBL can make a significant community impact, but this only happens when we have partner support. Stonehill students receive real-life experience that stays with them beyond college. But community organizations can benefit substantially as well. Here are some quotations from community partners who participated in our first 3 year office assessment conducted by CommunityBuild, a community research agency:

*“Stonehill students help us serve more clients and meet community needs.”*

*“Students help ease staff loads and bring new ideas.”*

*“I will do anything I can to promote it; We’ve been blessed!”*

CommunityBuild summarized the following:

*“Community partners reported that CBL is bridging the disconnect between academia and community, supporting Stonehill’s mission and setting Stonehill apart. Community partners reported realizing organization benefits through CBL including learning experiences, reflection on operations and help for staff....Community partners are 100% committed to future work with Stonehill.”*

# THREE NECESSARY CRITERIA FOR ACADEMIC SERVICE-LEARNING

1) Relevant and Meaningful Service with the Community: Service provided in the community must be meaningful to all stakeholders. Serious collaboration must result in the community’s active role in defining what the students’ service activities will be.

2) Enhanced Academic Learning: The addition of relevant and meaningful service with the community must not only serve the community but also enhance student academic learning. The service (or research) and academic goals must inform and transform one another.

3) Purposeful Civic Learning: The addition of relevant and meaningful service in, and to, the community not only serves the community and enhances student academic learning in the course, but also prepares students for active civic participation in a diverse democratic society.

\*Adapted from Service-Learning Course Design Workbook, Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning, Summer 2001.

## OFFICE OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING SERVICES

For Faculty	For Community Partners	For Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Presentations on CBL</li> <li>• Support with syllabi</li> <li>• Guidance in selecting and working with community partners</li> <li>• Coordinating site visits</li> <li>• Assistance with transportation, on a case-by-case basis</li> <li>• Information on upcoming service-learning grants and conferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Networking with faculty and other community partners</li> <li>• Student service-learning volunteers</li> <li>• Community-based research</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Resources in staff and faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to serve the community</li> <li>• Service-learning courses and research</li> <li>• Work-study</li> <li>• Option to continue service work at a specific site</li> <li>• Option to work on issues of advocacy in the Stonehill and Brockton communities</li> <li>• Opportunities to blog</li> </ul>

## WHO'S WHO ON AND OFF CAMPUS

At OCBL, we stress the importance of knowing who our community is both on and off campus. OCBL is a member of the Community Partnership and Engagement Committee: a group that meets to discuss how all of our offices (Into the Streets, Center for Nonprofit Management, Career Services, etc.) can collaborate in meaningful and effective ways. OCBL respects the many different offices and programs on campus that work with local partners.

### CAMPUS MINISTRY

**INTO THE STREETS [ITS]** ITS is a student-led program inviting other students to go outside the walls of Stonehill and “into the streets” of our local community, to see different cultures, to meet those who struggle in society, and to help those in need. Contact: Sarah Fontaine-Lipke [sfontainelipk@stonehill.edu](mailto:sfontainelipk@stonehill.edu).

**H.O.P.E.** Campus Ministry’s Alternative Spring Break Program. The H.O.P.E. program seeks to engage members of the Stonehill community in cross-cultural service immersion experiences and to challenge them to grow in love of God and neighbor. Contact: MaryAnne Cappelleri [mcappelleri@stonehill.edu](mailto:mcappelleri@stonehill.edu), ext. 1067.

### CAREER SERVICES

**INTERNSHIPS** maintains an online internship/job database, Career Connection, for students to search for hundreds of internship opportunities. In addition, the College utilizes a number of other online resources for students to search for regional and national opportunities. Students may do internships solely for experience or they may receive academic credit. Contact: Darcy Lynch, [dlynch@stonehill.edu](mailto:dlynch@stonehill.edu), ext. 1058.

**POST-GRADUATION SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES** Post graduate service organizations connect volunteers with communities in need, and provide living arrangements, professional development opportunities, stipends, or educational awards post service. Contact: Kris Silva, [ksilva@stonehill.edu](mailto:ksilva@stonehill.edu), ext. 1559.

**CENTER FOR NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT [CNM]** Support Services: CNM seeks to build the management and leadership capacity of community-based nonprofits. CNM focuses on enhancing critical management skills, while fostering relationships with and among diverse community-based organizations so that they may achieve their missions. Drawing on community and College expertise, CNM works closely with local organizations to identify and address a range of management and governance needs.

**DEVELOPING FUNDRAISING LEADERS INSTITUTE** Undergraduate interns train in fundraising and development through an intensive 12 week program, and become exceptional candidates for internship placements in fundraising programs at many nonprofits. Contact: Sarah Varadian [svaradian@stonehill.edu](mailto:svaradian@stonehill.edu), ext. 1856.

Ways The Community Can Support the OCBL:

### MEET & GREET

So you know you would like a community-based learning course to serve at your organization but don’t know how to reach faculty? Come by our office and say hi! We would love to meet with you and help find the right faculty partner. A consultation with CBL staff ensures that we will be able to fulfill your organization’s needs. We have a great resource library you are welcome to dig through. We also have an Open House for faculty and community partners at the beginning of every Academic Year so that our community partners have the chance to meet faculty in the hopes of creating potential courses.

## MEET WITH YOUR FACULTY MEMBER

OCBL will be happy to set this up for you if you have trouble. We advise our faculty members to meet with their community partners in order to best assess how the course itself can address the problems that occur within the community. It also helps to have that relationship with at least one person from the organization so that you are all on the same page in terms of needs from students through service and academics.

## MAKE SURE ALL STAFF INVOLVED IN PROJECT OR SUPERVISION IS AWARE OF CBL WORK

Sometimes the staff member from the community partner that meets with faculty may be different from those who supervise CBL students at their work site. Make sure you explain what the students are there for so that the staff can have a better understanding of what the student's role at the organization is.

## ENSURE RECIPROCITY!

Make sure you are getting your end of the deal filled. CBL is about helping fulfill the need of your organization so it is important to us that we are not putting a strain on your resources. Make sure you are communicating this to either our office, your faculty or the students serving at your organization.

## BE SUPPORTIVE BUT NEVER SATISFIED

Community organizations usually love having college students volunteer—at least that's what you tell us. 😊 But we can do better and we must! Fundamental social change will require that we all reflect and revise our work to meet the challenges our communities face. Please let us know [e-mail, phone, face-to-face] ways we might improve how our faculty and students engages with community service, research and action.



THE FIRST TOUR OF MARY BETH MEEHAN'S "CITY OF CHAMPIONS: A PORTRAIT OF BROCKTON" PASSES ONE OF THE SUBJECTS OF THE PHOTO INSTALLATION, ON MAIN STREET. STONEHILL COLLEGE OCBL PARTNERED WITH MEEHAN, ACQUIRING A MASSACHUSETTS FOUNDATION FOR THE HUMANITIES GRANT TO INSTALL THE PHOTOS, AND 10 MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM WEST JHS WORKED WITH STONEHILL STUDENTS IN AN URBAN SOCIOLOGY CLASS TO TOUR THE EXHIBIT AND MAKE THEIR OWN ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF BROCKTON TODAY.

## RESOURCES & SUPPORT

Our office offers many different workshops, retreats and institutes that we hold especially for the community partner's benefit. Community partners are welcome to attend faculty workshops if interested as well. In addition, we also make sure that we have a running list of resources available to you on our website.

### STONEHILL CBL RESOURCES & COMMUNITY PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES

For a complete list of our community partners and past and present CBL courses, please visit our website: <http://www.stonehill.edu/offices-services/community-based-learning/>

**WORKSHOPS** We host at least two workshops a semester specifically for faculty but are developing new workshops specifically for community partners. Please look for announcements on the website for our next upcoming workshops, but also contact us to suggest some possible subjects and areas to focus on! [cdolgon@stonehill.edu](mailto:cdolgon@stonehill.edu)

**RESEARCH SHOP** This year we hope to inaugurate our "Research Shop" encouraging community partners with research questions ranging from program evaluation and needs assessment to water testing and marketing research to seek out our support and resources. We will do our best to match research needs with appropriate faculty and students, as well as reaching out to other regional campuses when Stonehill can't provide necessary expertise.

**SUMMER INSTITUTE** The OCBL Summer Institute gives faculty an opportunity to team up with a community partner and student leader, and work closely with OCBL staff to design a new CBL course or revamp an already existing CBL course. Faculty apply to attend and receive a small stipend but we also have ways of compensating our community partners!

**WORKSHOP & CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION** These opportunities come up pretty often. If you are interested in serving on a panel, please let us know. In addition, if you and a faculty member are collaborating on a project and you would like to attend any conferences, we would be happy to assist you.

**ADDITIONAL OFFICE SUPPORT** We are always available for consultation. We constantly email Stonehill faculty about upcoming programs that we are supporting.

**OFFICE RESOURCES** Our office library is filled with books about Community-Based Learning—from general information to more discipline-specific texts. Feel free to come by and check something out. We are located in Duffy 114.



## ONLINE RESOURCES

Tulane Community Partner Handbook <http://tulane.edu/cps/community/upload/ACE-Partnerships-External-Handbook.pdf>

Sacramento State: Service Learning <http://www.csus.edu/cec/servicelearning.stm>

University of Wisconsin—Madison: Service-Learning and Community-Based Research  
<http://morgridge.wisc.edu/programs/servicelearning/index.html>

Service Learning [www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)

UMASS Boston: College of Public and Community Service <http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/about.html>

Building Community Through Service Learning: The Role of the Community Partner  
<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/44/03/4403.pdf>

Academic Outcomes Through Service-Learning (video) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwHHIreElbw>

Imagining America <http://www.imaginingamerica.org/>