



I. Executive Summary

Community Engagement (CE) is central to the mission of VCU and the College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS). The advancement and integration of CE in teaching, scholarship, and service is an important goal for CHS. Many faculty and staff in CHS engage in activities that support community engagement. This report describes these activities. CHS faculty reported on CE activities in their 2021 annual report. CHS staff responded to an elective survey about their CE activities over the previous 12 months. The themes and activities identified can be helpful as faculty, staff, and CHS leadership consider ways to strengthen involvement in CE.

61% of faculty reported participating in some CE. Across teaching, research, and service, faculty reported the highest CE activity in service; 47% reported engaging in at least one service-related community engagement activity. CE in service was followed by teaching (36%) and then scholarship (26%).

Faculty provided community service in various ways. Many faculty presented or volunteered at a local organization or school. Others were members or leaders of nonprofit boards, including school boards. Several faculty volunteered in organizations that promoted wellness and social justice. Faculty were involved in several CE teaching activities. These activities included supervising VCU students in community settings (e.g., teaching experiential learning classes and coordinating field placement), mentoring local students, giving talks at a local school or organization, and serving as a judge. CE scholarship activities included conducting research in collaboration with community partners and doing community-based participatory research. Other faculty provided CE scholarship by delivering consultations to community organizations and participating in media interviews. Four academic units in CHS had over 50% of their faculty involved in CE scholarship.

Staff responded to a CE survey during the summer of 2022. 53% indicated that they volunteered for an organization that addressed community needs during the past 12 months. 36% reported using some or all of the 16 hours of VCU community service leave within the past 12 months. CE activities included volunteering for a non-profit (e.g., food pantry, transportation for refugees, toy drive). Several staff members were involved in local schools, worked with youth, and served as a member or leaders on a board.

Recommendations from faculty annual reports and staff survey are to (1) Continue to capture community engagement in faculty annual reports to gauge how CE efforts align with university and college CE goals; (2) Consider ways in which faculty and staff can be responsive to identified community needs; (3) Some Humanities and Social Sciences units had a high percentage of CE scholarship and an exploration of how CE scholarship can be structured and supported in these units (and others) is warranted; (4) Many faculty are engaged in CE teaching, and a survey of what resources and supports are needed to encourage CE teaching would be helpful; (5) Only 36% of staff used community service leave and greater awareness of and encouragement to use this leave is needed; (6) Engage CHS's community advisory groups in discussions regarding findings from this report; and (7) Explore options for a Community Engagement Hub or Center.

II. Introduction and Background

Community Engagement (CE) is core to VCU and the College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS) as articulated in VCU and CHS's mission, goals, and objectives. See [CHS Strategic Plan](#) (undergoing revision) and [VCU Quest](#)

2028. CHS's CE goals are to integrate students within the community, provide transformative learning experiences for students, impact the community through scholarship and creativity, and enhance community partnerships, engagement, and impact which can only be accomplished by CE activities of faculty and staff.

Many faculty and staff engage in activities that promote and strengthen community engagement and CHS is developing a mechanism to consistently document these activities. The purpose of this report is to describe CE activities in CHS that were self-reported by faculty and staff. CHS faculty were asked to report on CE activities in teaching, scholarship, and service in their 2021 annual report. See Appendix A for the language used on the faculty report form. The report form provided examples of CE in teaching, scholarship, and service. Staff were administered a survey in the summer of 2022.

CE teaching, scholarship, and service activities were extracted from the faculty's annual 2021 reports and compiled into a database. The information was collected for each faculty member, sorted by unit and type of activity (e.g., teaching, scholarship, and service). When information was not reported for a specific category, "NR" (No Response) was indicated. Report forms were reviewed for 391 faculty, which comprise 95% of the faculty in CHS. These data provide a snapshot of faculty-reported CE activities. Staff community engagement was assessed via a survey administered during the summer of 2022. The survey was sent to all staff in CHS and 35 staff responded; a response rate of 27%.

This report details faculty and staff self-reported CE activities and does not capture all CE activities engaged in by faculty, staff, and students in the College.

III. CHS Faculty and Unit CE Activities

Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 show the percentage of faculty that reported engaging in CE activities within CHS. Data was gathered from term and tenure-track faculty who submitted annual reports for CY 2021, totaling 391 reports. Across all three categories, 61% of faculty reported participating in at least one CE activity (Figure 1). Across teaching, research, and service, faculty reported the highest CE activity in service; 47% of faculty reported engaging in at least one service-related community engagement activity (Figure 4). CE in service was followed by teaching (36%) and then scholarship (26%).

Figure 1: Faculty Community Engagement in CHS, Any Category

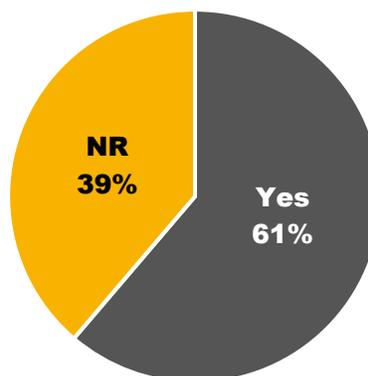




Figure 2: Faculty Engagement in Teaching

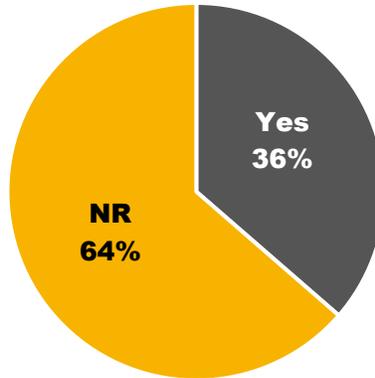


Figure 3: Faculty Community Engagement in Scholarship

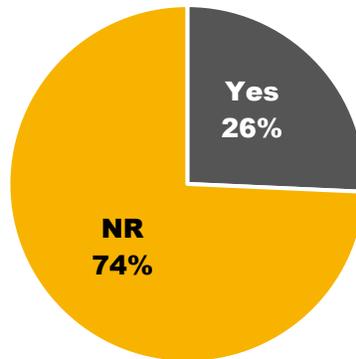


Figure 4: Faculty Community Engagement in Service

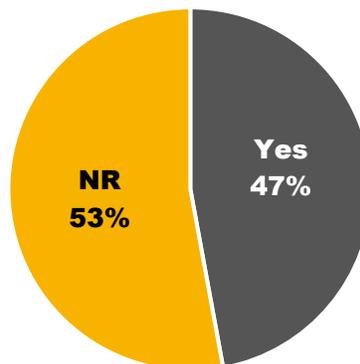


Table 1 (below) shows the percentage of faculty who reported at least one CE activity in CY 2021 in teaching, scholarship, and service, and overall for each unit. The majority of units had faculty who reported CE activity in at least one area; percentages ranged from 19% to 100% of faculty, with an average of 61%. Twelve units had 50% or more of faculty report any community engagement activities, and 6 had over 70% reporting CE activities. Humanities and Social Science units were more likely to report any CE than STEM units. The exceptions were

Biology and KHS.

All CHS units reported some CE service, which had the highest rate of CE activities of the three categories; 7 units had over 50% of faculty report CE activity in service. Unit CE teaching activity ranged from 0% to 73%; three units had over 50% of faculty reporting CE in teaching.

Unit CE scholarship ranged from 0% to 55% of faculty. In four units (African American Studies, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, Psychology, and Sociology), 50% or more faculty reported community-engaged scholarship.

Table 1: Reported CE Activities in CHS Units

Unit	# of Faculty	Teaching	Scholarship	Service	Any CE #	Any CE %
African American Studies	4	25%	50%	75%	4	100%
Biology	40	45%	20%	33%	25	63%
Chemistry	35	23%	11%	29%	17	49%
English	32	22%	22%	41%	16	50%
Forensic Science	10	30%	20%	40%	4	40%
Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies	10	40%	50%	80%	7	70%
History	24	38%	29%	42%	14	58%
Kinesiology and Health Sciences	15	47%	20%	40%	8	53%
Mathematics and Applied Mathematics	43	21%	16%	28%	16	37%
Philosophy	8	13%	0%	63%	5	63%
Physics	21	33%	14%	29%	10	48%
Political Science	17	41%	29%	76%	13	76%
Psychology	46	61%	52%	61%	39	85%
Robertson School of Media and Culture	24	63%	25%	50%	20	83%
Sociology	11	73%	55%	55%	9	82%
Statistical Sciences and Operations Research	16	0%	0%	19%	3	19%
World Studies	35	46%	23%	43%	23	66%
Total Faculty (% avg.)	391	36%	26%	47%	233	61%

IV. CE Faculty Themes and Sub-themes in Teaching

Community-Engaged Teaching Activities

A review of faculty report forms indicated several teaching themes for community engagement activities (see list below). Most community engagement activities were under the theme of teaching, mentoring, and supervising VCU students in community settings (e.g., taught experiential learning classes and coordinated or supervised field placement). Several faculty engaged in teaching and mentoring local students. These activities included mentoring local high school students, giving a talk or lecture at a local school, and serving as a judge for a science fair. Several faculty reported teaching activities in the local community, including presenting to a local or international community group and giving a public talk. Some faculty were involved in teaching a course or workshop to diverse learners in the community. Others provided leadership on local community initiatives and expertise to community organizations. Note: some of these themes overlap with those in the scholarship and service categories.

1. Teaching, Mentoring, and Supervising VCU Students

- Served as coordinator of an internship program, field placement, and liaison with community agencies
- Taught experiential learning class
- Students were engaged with or visited community sites as part of their course requirements
- Supervised independent study and student research activities for students placed in community settings
- Incorporated lectures from community members in the course curriculum
- Connected students to local employment and internship opportunities
- Supervised or engaged students in local social justice and related events
- Involved students in the work of local groups (e.g., Virginia War Memorial)
- Supervised students (primarily graduate students) who provided expertise and service (e.g., program evaluation, mental health, fitness) to community organizations and residents
- Supervised students in hands-on experiences in media projects, including communication and advertising campaigns

2. Teaching and Mentoring Local Students, Outside VCU

- Mentored students attending local schools
- Gave lectures or talked to a class at a local school
- Served as a judge or expert for local school fairs and competitions (e.g., science fair, career day)
- Served as an expert and collaborated with local teachers in curriculum development
- Presentation at pipeline or discipline-specific program for students
- Coordinated summer or after-school programs for youth
- Worked with students from a community college or HBCU
- Taught in a dual-enrollment program

3. Presentation to Local and International Groups and Audiences

- Presented at a local community group or organization
- Presentation to a local group in celebration of diverse history and culture (e.g., Latinx Heritage Month)
- Presentation to local professional groups (e.g., teachers, healthcare workers)
- Organized VCU events that specifically targeted community participation
- Presentation to national and international groups

4. Public Education

- Gave a talk at a public event
- Gave an interview to media in line with expertise
- Expertise shared through public testimony with local governmental officials

5. Teaching and Training for Other Learners

- Taught a course, seminar, or workshop for diverse learners (e.g., seniors) within a community setting or virtual
- Led book discussion for community group

6. Leadership and Participation in Community Initiatives

- Engaged in initiatives and programs indigenous to the community (e.g., East End Cemetery Collaborative)
- Participated in programs that met underserved community needs (e.g., breast cancer survivors)
- Leadership and membership on local boards and organizations (PTA, school board member, advisory committee)

7. Provide Expertise to Community Organizations

- Provided consultation, expertise, and service to governmental entities and local community groups in areas of expertise
- Served on an advisory board



Community-Engaged Scholarship Activities

While fewer faculty reported community-engaged scholarship as compared to teaching, several themes emerged: two CE scholarship themes involved conducting research in collaboration with community partners and doing community-based participatory research (CBPR) (see below). Some faculty provided consultation to community organizations in their area of expertise. Others had their scholarship featured, or they were interviewed about their scholarship. A few faculty were involved in disseminating information to the public via social media or podcasts. Also, a few faculty engaged in professional development around community engagement.

1. Conduct Research in Collaboration with Community Partner/s

- Data collection with community colleague
- Co-wrote a proposal arising from a community-identified need with a community organization
- Research focuses on improving outcomes for communities, especially among minoritized populations
- Conducted research and designed curriculum and programs for improving healthcare outcomes
- Conducted surveys and interviews on behalf of community group
- Convened community advisory board for research
- Provide additional services and resources to community members involved in research projects

2. Community-Based-Participatory Research

- Included community members as Co-PI on grant applications
- Trained students on how to conduct CBPR
- Co-authored papers and presentations with community members

3. Provided Expertise to Community Organizations

- Presented a talk, workshop, or seminar on research/scholarship to government agencies/community organization
- Developed policy briefs and worked with policymakers and advocacy organizations
- Supported community organizations in grant writing and other areas of expertise (e.g., program evaluation)
- Participated in lecture series
- Provide professional services to community organizational clients
- Research led to the discovery of methods and procedures to improve education, health, and other outcomes

4. Interviewed (or Featured Scholarship) in Media Outlet

- Media coverage of research
- Interviewed by media on scholarship

5. Dissemination of Scholarship to Community in an Accessible Way

- Social media
- Books
- Podcasts
- Websites
- Maintain a free database
- Translation of scholarship from one language to another

6. Professional Development in Community Engagement

- Attended conference on CBPR
- Attended webinars, lectures, and talks on community engagement

Community-Engaged Service Activities

Faculty provided community service activities in various ways (see below). Many faculty presented at a local

organization or school or volunteered in a local organization or group, such as at a museum. Others were members or leaders of nonprofit boards, including school boards. Several faculty volunteered in organizations that promoted wellness (e.g., helping with COVID-19 vaccinations). Other faculty were members of social justice organizations, engaged in activities at faith-based institutions, or contributed by being a judge or reviewer at a professional society. A few disseminated information via media and conducted artistic performances in the community. Finally, a few faculty were on university task forces or committees related to community engagement.

- 1. Presentation at a Local Organization or School**
- 2. Volunteer or Leader in Local Organization or Group**
 - Volunteer in a local organization (e.g., museum, poll worker, historical society)
 - Led local youth groups (e.g., scouts)
 - Volunteer at an organization that serves populations in need (e.g., Afghan refugees)
 - Volunteer for an animal well-fare organization
- 3. Member or Leader of a Local Non-profit Board or School Board**
 - Served on local non-profit board
 - PTA leadership position
 - Member or leader of a neighborhood association
- 4. Volunteer to Organizations or Groups that Promotes Health and Wellness**
 - Helped with vaccinations
 - Worked at health fairs
 - Worked at Food Bank
- 5. Member, Leader, or Advocacy for Social Justice**
 - Member of social justice organization (e.g., NAACP, Side-by-Side)
 - Advocated for social justice through committee work
- 6. Led or Participated in Program at a Faith-based Institution**
- 7. Serve as a Judge, Reviewer, or Advisor to a Professional Society (e.g., Natural History Museum) or Organization**
- 8. Disseminate Information via Media**
 - Podcast
 - Interviews
 - Public website
- 9. Department, College, or University Service related to Community Engagement**
 - Promotion and Tenure Task Force
 - Advisory Committee
- 10. Artistic Performance or Presentation in Community**

V. Community Engagement Among Staff

Community Activity Themes Reported by Staff

A survey about community engagement activities was administered to staff during the summer of 2022. 35 staff responded, representing 27% of 130 staff. Staff who responded represented the majority of units in CHS. Staff are awarded with 16 hours of VCU community service leave each year. 36% of respondents reported using some or all of this leave within the past twelve months. 53% indicated that they had been involved in community or civic activities in the Richmond metro community in the past 12 months. Participants reported engaging in a variety of community activities.



The themes generated from staff responses are listed below. Most respondents indicated they volunteered for an organization that addressed community needs. These activities, for example, included volunteering for the Salvation Army for a toy drive, working in a food pantry, and helping to provide transportation and tutoring to refugees. Several staff members were involved in local schools and worked with youth (e.g., scout leader). Other staff served on the board or in a leadership position within a local organization.

1. Volunteered for Organization that Address Community Needs

- Local food pantry
- Organization that helps refugees
- Salvation Army
- Lighthouse Literacy Project

2. Worked with Local Schools

- Advised high school students on majors
- Judge for high school competitions
- PTA

3. Served on a Board/Council or Leader of an Organization

- VMFA council member
- James River Writers board
- Elections

4. Worked with Youth

- Boy Scout leader
- Girl Scout leader

5. Participated in Community Social Justice Movements

- Participated in community protests
- Attended meetings

6. Volunteered for Animal Welfare Organization

7. Volunteered for Neighborhood and Civic Events

- Neighborhood cleanup

VI. Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Most (61%) faculty engaged in one or more CE activities. The amount of community engagement among faculty varied from unit to unit, with the majority (n=12) of units having 50% or more of faculty engaged in CE in teaching, scholarship, or service.

Almost half of the faculty reported some CE service (47%). CE service most frequently reported by faculty included volunteering for organizations that address community needs (e.g., working at a local food pantry), volunteering at a local school, or volunteering for an organization that promotes health and wellness. Several faculty were members of local non-profits while others advocated for social justice.

Over a third of the faculty reported some CE teaching. Many faculty members supervised students in field placements or experiential learning classes. Several taught or mentored local students, while others presented to local organizations, gave a talk at a public event, or provided consultation to community organizations.



26% of faculty conducted CE scholarship. CE scholarship included conducting research in collaboration with community partners, working in partnership with community organizations to do community-based participatory research, providing expertise to community organizations, and disseminating scholarship outside of traditional mediums. Notably, in four units (African American Studies, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, Psychology, and Sociology), 50% or more of the faculty were involved in CE scholarship.

53% of staff who responded to a survey indicated that they had provided community or civic activities in the Richmond metro community in the past 12 months. These activities included volunteering for organizations that addressed community needs, working in local schools, serving on a board, and working with youth.

In summary, the findings show the majority of faculty and staff in CHS reported some CE, although CE varied by unit and type. One limitation of these findings is that they are self-report, and faculty may have engaged in activities they did not report. While most units had staff that responded to the survey, the overall response rate was relatively low at 27%. Thus, findings may only represent the sentiments of some staff. Since the survey was optional, perhaps staff involved in CE were more likely to answer.

Recommendations

Several recommendations follow from faculty annual reports and the staff survey.

1. Continue to capture community engagement in faculty annual reports to assess what faculty in CHS are doing and how these efforts align with VCU and CHS CE goals.
2. Both faculty and staff reported a relatively high degree of CE service. Further consideration of how faculty and staff can be responsive to identified community needs warrants further investigation.
3. Some Humanities and Social Sciences units had a high percentage of CE scholarship. An exploration of how CE scholarship can be structured and supported in these units (and others) is warranted.
4. Many faculty are engaged in CE teaching. However, this can be increased, especially considering VCU REAL requirements. Therefore, a survey of faculty needs to support and encourage CE teaching is recommended.
5. Only 36% of staff used community service leave awarded by VCU. There are many worthwhile initiatives and activities in the community that can benefit from the expertise of CHS staff. Greater awareness of and encouragement to use this leave is needed.
6. Engage the Community Advisory Committee (CHS's internal committee) and the Community Action Council (CHS's external advisory committee) in discussions and further recommendations regarding strengthening CE based on findings from this report.
7. Given the amount and range of CE activities among faculty and staff, explore options for a Community Engagement Hub or Center.

This report was prepared by Faye Belgrave, Associate Dean for Equity and Community Engagement, and Kelsey Cappiello, Executive Assistant to the Dean. Appreciation to Anita Nadal, CHS faculty fellow in community engagement for her support of this report and her leadership in facilitating community engagement.



Appendix A: Community Engagement Questions on Annual Report.

List any community-related **teaching** activities. These may include supervising students in experiential learning courses and REAL activities in community settings, presentations, and engagement with students, teachers, and others in local schools and other organizations, mentoring local high school students, presentations and workshops to community groups, attendance of community members in VCU hosted talks and presentations (see list for additional examples).

List any community-engaged research and **scholarship** activities. These may include including community partners as co-authors of papers and grants, conducting community-based-participatory research, conducting antiracist research, attending a presentation or presenting at a conference on the topic of community-engaged scholarship and research, translating and disseminating research findings to community audiences in an accessible manner (see list for other examples).

List any community-based **service-related** activities. These may include serving on advisory boards for local organizations, volunteering for a community organization, coaching a local team, linking community residents to programs and resources at VCU, attending and participating in civic and community events, and media interviews (see list for other examples).