

Vassar College



Office of Community-Engaged Learning

A Guide for Students

CEL IN THE FALL + SPRING SEMESTERS

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Fall and Spring Community-Engaged Learning

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THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING

WHAT DO WE DO?

1. **Manage the fall, spring, and summer Community-Engaged Learning programs.**
 - a. *Curate opportunities.*
 - b. *Advise students on available opportunities.*
 - c. *Introduce students when applicable.*
 - d. *Facilitate paperwork required to register to receive credit.*
2. **Manage the summer Community Fellows program.**
 - a. *Invite projects from community organizations.*
 - b. *Facilitate programming.*
3. **Administer Community Engaged Intensives in the Humanities.**
 - a. *Work with faculty to create intensives.*
 - b. *Create community partnerships.*
4. **Help facilitate civic engagement on campus.**
 - a. [Vassar Votes](#)

OCEL MISSION

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE!](#)

The Office of Community-Engaged Learning builds reciprocal relationships with community organizations to provide students with experiential opportunities mentored by faculty that help them integrate and deepen classroom learning with real life experience. The goal is to empower our students to become engaged citizens while supporting the work of our partners and investing in the future of our community.

HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY?

HERE ARE 3 WAYS!

1

Community-Engaged Learning Program

Experiential educational opportunity paired with academic learning and cohort building.

For credit

2

Community-Engaged Intensives in the Humanities

click to read more!

Innovative learning opportunities that will complement more traditional courses by extending the humanities beyond the classroom.

3

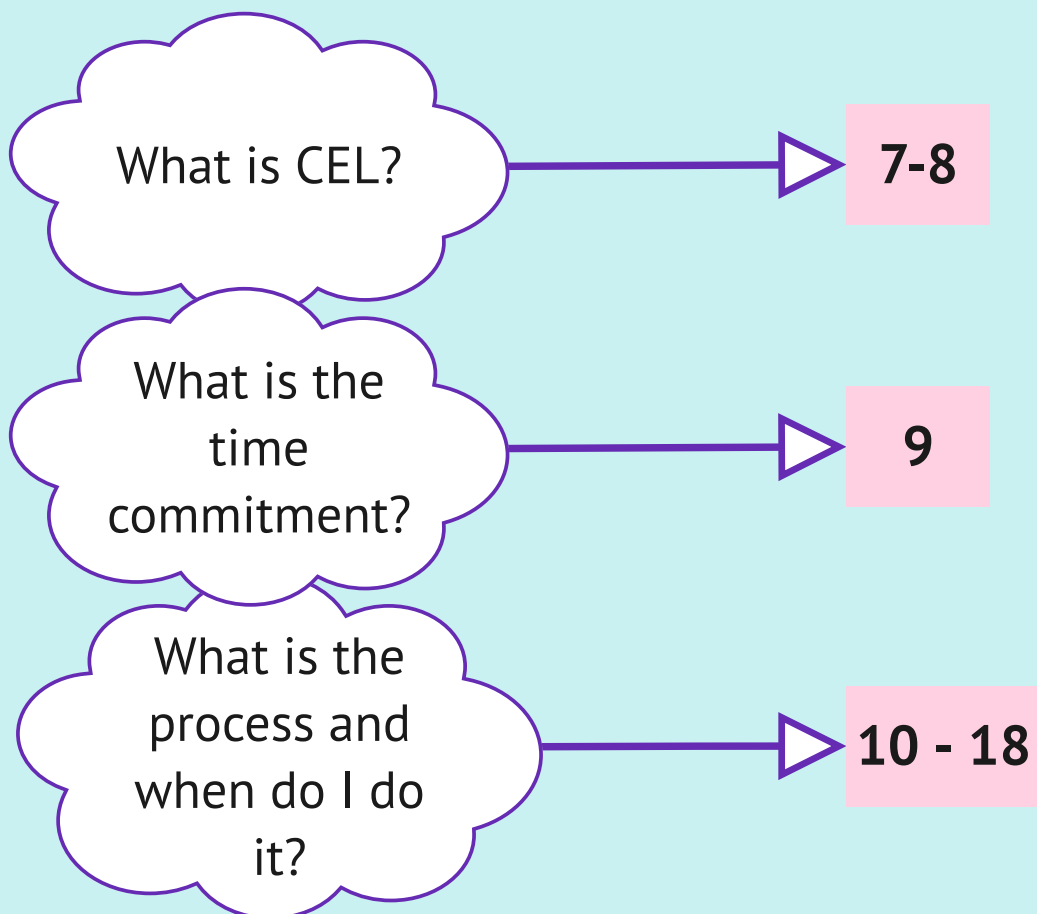
Community Fellows Program

Funded work alongside partner agencies to address pressing issues relevant to the wider community.

Not for credit

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING

CEL OVERVIEW



WHAT IS COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING?

AKA CEL

- Community-Engaged Learning is a semester-long experiential educational opportunity.
- Students work with an organization and supplement off-campus learning with academic work under the direction of a faculty sponsor.
- Students receive academic credit. Faculty take the agency's evaluation into consideration when assigning the student's grade.

WHAT TO EXPECT?

EXPERIENCE + REFLECTION + PROGRAMMING = CEL

EXPERIENCE

work with an organization



REFLECTION

academic work assigned by a faculty sponsor



PROGRAMMING

community-building conducted through OCEL

Internship

Volunteering

Practicum

Shadowing

Keeping a journal

Doing readings

Completing a final "integrative assignment" (paper, podcast, etc.)

Orientation

Cohort meetings

Engaging with EdGE online learning platform

WHAT IS THE CEL TIME COMMITMENT? OVER THE SEMESTER

0.5 unit of credit

=

Experiential Work

Minimum of 4
hours/week

+

Academic Work

Minimum of 30 hours
over the semester

+

1.0 unit of credit

=

Experiential Work

Minimum of 8
hours/week

+

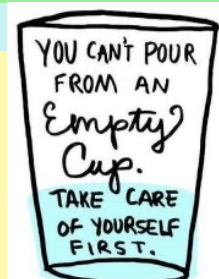
Academic Work

Minimum of 60 hours
over the semester

+

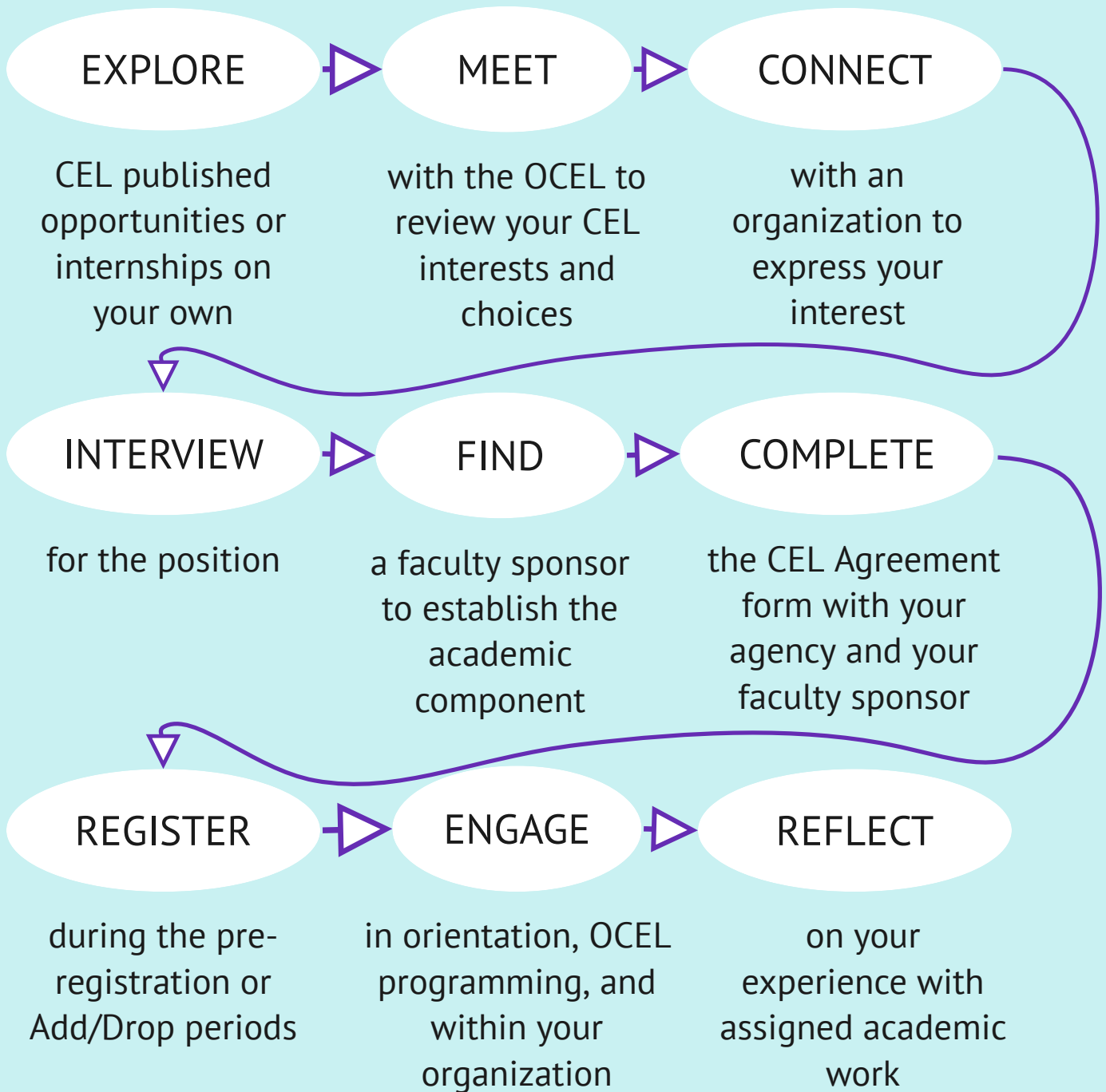
Attendance at orientation & cohort meetings during the CEL programs are required. Engagement with EdGE online platform is encouraged.

Please keep in mind that all CEL work is virtual in Spring 2021. Remember to prioritize self care when making a decision to commit to CEL.



WHAT ARE THE STEPS?

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN!



Not sure where to start? That's ok! The OCEL can help figure out what would be a good fit based on your interests.

EXPLORE

DECIDE WHAT AREA OF INTEREST WORKS BEST FOR YOU!

Explore CEL opportunities with our partner organizations, [here](#).

OR

Find an opportunity on your own.

[Complete the CEL Getting Started form.](#)

Research the organization to learn more about their mission and objectives.

Understand the requirements of the position, including responsibilities, duties, hours etc.

WHEN SHOULD I DO THIS?

Between pre-registration and the Add/Drop period.

Have you completed the
CEL Getting Started form?
[Click here to fill it out.](#)

MEET

SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH THE OCEL

Haven't found an opportunity as yet?

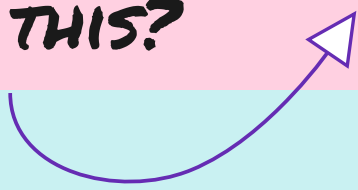
Make an appointment with OCEL Director, Dr. Lisa Kaul, [here](#), to discuss interests and generate a list of organizations that might be a good fit.

Already have an internship lined up?

Make an appointment with OCEL Assistant Director, Jean Hinkley, [here](#), to talk about your position.

**WHEN SHOULD
I DO THIS?**

*Between pre-registration and the Add/Drop period; **OR**, as soon as you have found a position.*



If you have an internship already, you can go on to the next page.

Sometimes the OCEL will connect you to the organization directly.

CONNECT

EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST TO THE ORGANIZATION

In your email, include:

- All required application materials.
- Address the contact person.
- State that you are a Vassar student interested in the opportunity for CEL credit.
- Specify which position you are interested in if there are more than one posted.
- Explain why you are interested in the position.
- Ask if you can set up an interview with the organization and suggest some times that you might be available.

[Click here to view the CDO resume guide](#)

WHEN SHOULD I DO THIS?

As soon as you have found a position you are interested in. Between pre-registration and the Add/Drop period.

Ask clarifying questions if the duties were different from the posted job description.

INTERVIEW

PLEASE NOTIFY THE OCEL OF THE OUTCOME!

At the interview, ask:

What are my duties and responsibilities?

Will my duties change over time?

Will I receive feedback? How?

How can I provide feedback and discuss my experience?

After the interview:

Ensure that you have received formal notification of the offer and that you know who your supervisor is.

Begin completing the CEL Agreement form (details on page 16)

If you decide against taking the internship, please inform the organization and the OCEL.

WHEN SHOULD I DO THIS?

As soon as you have found a position you are interested in. Between pre-registration and the Add/Drop period.

The faculty sponsor assigns and oversees your academic work.

You receive credit in the department of your faculty sponsor.

FIND

A FACULTY SPONSOR

Please find a faculty member who is willing to sponsor the academic component of your CEL work. Ideally, this would be someone you have taken a class with or someone whose research and teaching interests align with your experiential work. Your pre-major or major advisor can also serve as your faculty sponsor (instructor).

The OCEL can help you find a faculty sponsor. Please email
Dr. Lisa Kaul,
likaul@vassar.edu

You will fill out the CEL Agreement form together (details on next page!)

WHEN SHOULD I DO THIS?

You can start asking faculty members if they will be your faculty sponsor when you have secured your CEL position.

Not sure how to fill out the Learning Agreement Form?
[Click here to watch a how-to video.](#)

COMPLETE

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING AGREEMENT

Experiential Learning

Completed with your agency supervisor

Complete pages 1 and 2 together

Academic Learning

Completed with your faculty sponsor

Complete pages 2 and 3 together.

Email to
OCEL@Vassar.edu

WHEN SHOULD I DO THIS?

As soon as you have accepted your CEL role, you should start the Experiential Learning section with your supervisor; once you have your faculty sponsor, you can begin the Academic Learning section.

The CEL Agreement is due to OCEL@Vassar.edu by the end of the first week of when your CEL begins.

REGISTER

REGISTER TO RECEIVE CREDIT!

During Pre-Registration
with Special Permission
Form

During Add/Drop period

Your pre-
major/major
advisor and
faculty sponsor
must approve
CEL.

Select "This is Community-Engaged
Learning"

DEPT of Faculty Sponsor- 290 - **51**
(0.5 unit of credit)

OR

DEPT of Faculty Sponsor - 290 - **52**
(1.0 unit of credit)

**WHEN SHOULD
I DO THIS?**

During Pre-Registration or Add/Drop!

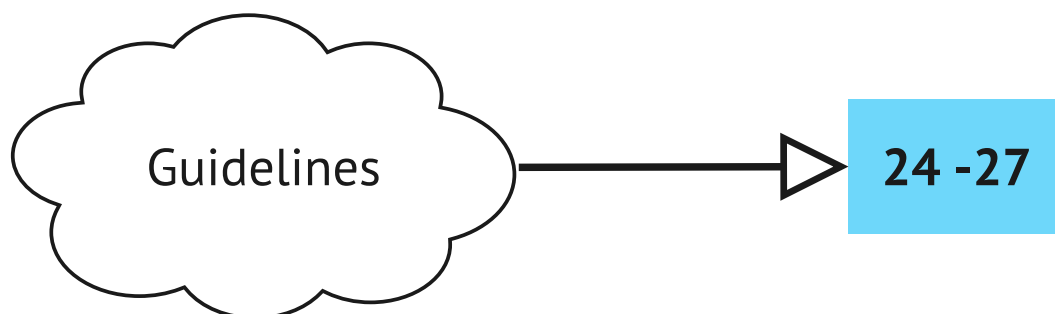
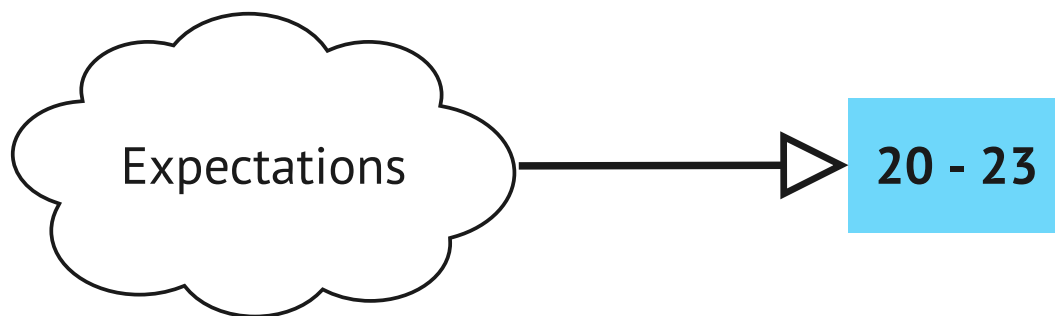
CEL CHECK LIST

HAVE YOU COMPLETED ALL THE STEPS?

- Explore opportunities.
- Meet with the OCEL.
- Complete the [Getting Started Form](#).
- Express interest to the organization.
- Interview for the role. Choose to accept, or keep looking.
- Notify the organization and OCEL of your decision.
- Find a faculty sponsor.
- Complete the CEL Agreement with your agency supervisor.
- Complete the CEL Agreement with your faculty sponsor.
- Email the completed CEL Agreement to OCEL@Vassar.edu
- Register to receive credit.
- Attend OCEL orientation and other programming.

ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR CEL!



EXPECTATIONS

** Learn about your organization's mission, workplace expectations, and the local area. **

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Ask your supervisor to clarify what information is confidential.
- Adhere to organization's standards of confidentiality.
- Sign a confidentiality waiver with your organization if needed.



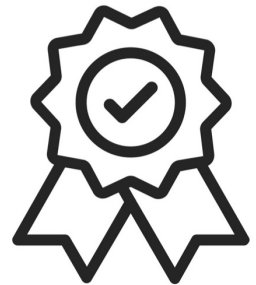
COMMUNICATION



- Acknowledge all emails; if you cannot respond with an answer, let your supervisor know that you will respond later.
- Clarify the timeframe in which you are expected to respond to communication.
- Uphold modes of communication and expected response time.
- Ensure all emails are addressed to a person and have a salutation.
- Seek feedback from your supervisor(s).

PROFESSIONALISM

- Familiarize yourself with any dress codes and dress in an appropriate manner.
- Be punctual and follow the agreed upon work schedule.
- Inform your supervisor if you will be late or unable to attend a meeting.
- Follow through with commitments.
- Do not conduct personal business during work hours or during meetings.
- Contribute new ideas and assert yourself in an appropriate, respectful, and tactful manner.
- Comply with policies and procedures.
- Should you have reservations or negative feedback, please first discuss in conversation with your agency supervisor and OCEL Director Lisa Kaul.



SOCIAL MEDIA



- Do not post images of minors, or others without their consent.
- Do not request or accept minors as followers on social media.

We uphold Vassar's Title IX policies.

Contact OCEL Director Lisa Kaul (likaul@vassar.edu) if you are facing any challenges in your workplace or if you have any questions or concerns.

EXPECTATIONS

WHILE PARTICIPATING IN YOUR CEL, WE ASK THAT YOU:

Maintain Confidentiality

Ask your supervisor what information is confidential.

Adhere to organization standards of confidentiality.

Sign confidentiality waiver if required.

Communicate Effectively

Acknowledge all emails in an agreed upon timeframe.

Uphold selected modes of communication.

Start emails with an address and salutation.

Seek feedback from your supervisor(s).

Social Media Etiquette

Do not post images of minors, or others without their consent.

Do not request or accept minors as followers on social media.

Title IX

We uphold Vassar's Title IX policies.

Contact OCEL Director Lisa Kaul (likaul@vassar.edu) if you are facing any challenges in your workplace or if you have any questions or concerns.

EXPECTATIONS

WHILE PARTICIPATING IN YOUR CEL, WE ASK THAT YOU:

Practice Professionalism

Familiarize yourself with appropriate dress codes.

Be punctual and follow the agreed upon work schedule.

Inform your supervisor if you are unable to attend a meeting.

Do not conduct personal business during work hours or meetings.

Contribute new ideas and assert yourself in an appropriate, respectful, and tactful manner.

Comply with policies and procedures.

Should you have reservations or negative feedback, please first discuss in conversation with your agency supervisor and OCEL Director Lisa Kaul.

GUIDELINES

**adapted from Michigan State University's Service Learning Toolkit*

RESPECT

- Be willing to examine where knowledge is produced.
- Affirm that "local" knowledge is as valuable as "expert" knowledge.
- Commit to understanding the history, culture, norms, and values of the organization you are working with and the communities they serve.
- Acknowledge the strengths and assets of everyone.
- Do not focus on the "deficits."
- Ask clarifying questions if need be.



KEEP AN OPEN MIND & DISCOVER

- Accept that not everything will be known upfront.
- Embrace multiple possibilities.
- Abandon the "one right answer" approach.
- Make meaning out of seemingly mundane tasks.
- Be willing to be changed through the process of engagement.



SHARE

- Be willing to collaborate on the work and in taking credit.
- Communicate in ways that work for both the academy and the community.
- Interrogate the idea of "helping."
- Be willing to cede power and acknowledge privilege.
- Learn about the context before offering a "solution."



REMAIN CURIOUS

- Be curious and observant.
- Listen actively and deeply.
- Take the initiative.
- Assume responsibility for your learning.
- Examine your fears and concerns.



BE FLEXIBLE

- Be willing to improvise.
- Acknowledge that it will take more time and interactions than initially expected.
- Embrace ambiguity and uncertainty.
- Do not be rigid about what should happen, when, and how, and by whom.



ADAPT

- Be willing to try new ways of doing things (take the agency's capacity into consideration while offering solutions.)
- Be willing to understand a situation from another person's perspective.
- Acknowledge that you may not be able to predict outcomes.

GUIDELINES

MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CEL!

Respect

Be willing to examine where knowledge is produced.

Commit to understanding the history, culture, norms, and values of the organization you are working with and the communities they serve.

Affirm that "local" knowledge is as valuable as "expert" knowledge.

Do not focus on the "deficits."

Ask clarifying questions if need be.

Keep an Open Mind & Discover

Accept that not everything will be known upfront.

Abandon the "one right answer" approach.

Embrace multiple possibilities.

Make meaning out of seemingly mundane tasks.

Be willing to be changed through the process of engagement.

GUIDELINES

MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CEL!

SHARE

Be willing to collaborate on the work and in taking credit.

Interrogate the idea of helping.

Communicate in ways that work for both the academy and the community.

Be willing to cede power and acknowledge privilege.

Learn about the context before offering a "solution."

REMAIN CURIOUS

Be curious and observant

Assume responsibility for your learning.

Listen actively and deeply

Examine your fears and concerns.

Take the initiative

GUIDELINES

MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CEL!

BE FLEXIBLE

Be willing to improvise.

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ADAPT

Be willing to try new ways of doing things (take the agency's capacity into consideration while offering solutions.)

Be willing to understand a situation from another person's perspective.

Acknowledge that you may not be able to predict outcomes.

CEL PROGRAMMING

CONNECT WITH OTHER CEL STUDENTS

Orientation

28

Cohort
meetings

29

EdGE Platform

30 - 34

ORIENTATION

TO HELP PREPARE YOU FOR CEL

The OCEL will schedule orientation during the beginning of the semester.

You will also have an orientation with your organization!

Review expectations & guidelines

Meet other students doing CEL

Learn about the online EdGE platform

COHORT MEETINGS

TO LEARN FROM OTHER STUDENTS

The OCEL will schedule cohort meetings during the semester.

Talk about your experience.

Learn what other students are working on.

Reflect on your assumptions at the beginning of your CEL.

EDGE PLATFORM

A UNIQUE LEARNING PLATFORM FOR CEL

EdGE: a nonprofit global network of social impact organizations, volunteers, learners, donors, and doers working since 2004 to build relationships and raise consciousness.

GOALS:

Connect students with one another

Demonstrate what **unique projects** students have worked on in the past & are currently working on

Foster **community** within the CEL cohort

Reflection on your experience.

Provide a **professional platform** for students to share their work with future employers, graduate schools, etc.

EDGE PLATFORM: Dashboard

AKA HOMEPAGE

How do I engage? Where do I start?

Begin by creating your profile (instructions will be emailed to you.)

1

READ

2

RESPOND

3

REPLY

omprakash EdGE

Mentee Manager 2020-2021 Vassar Office of Community Eng...

2020-2021 Vassar Office of Community Engaged Learning

Home Chat

Hello Jean! Your EdGE Overview:

Welcome to OCEL!

Please keep an eye on this space for announcements about upcoming Zoom calls. [See here \(Unit 1, Slide 2 within the Classroom\)](#) for an orientation to this space.

When to Contact OCEL?

Unit 3 Response | overdue

Recently, you've been @mentioned by:

No one :(Try @mentioning others and maybe they'll @mention you back! :)

Observations You:0 | Avg:0

Comments You:2 | Avg:0

Responses You:1 | Avg:0

Share Stories You: 0 | Avg:0

Open Classroom

Open Directory

Share Stories

Cohort Activity:

Frances Rippey a day ago Blog Post | View...

Schmitz days ago Unit 3 Response | View...

Clarissa Hyde 2 days ago Unit 3 Response | View...

Clarissa Hyde 2 days ago Blog Post | View...

Pia Tate 3 days ago Unit 3 Response | View...

Pia Tate 3 days ago Final Capstone | View...

Kevin Llaguno 3 days ago

VIEW COHORT DIRECTORY

Search member

ONGOING CHATS

ONLINE

GROUP CONVERSATIONS

Create or edit a group

OFFLINE

VASSAR

To begin: click "Open Classroom"

EDGE PLATFORM: Classroom

WHERE THE READINGS ARE LOCATED!

READ

The 4 units include reading/viewing materials.

Click "R" to view response prompts.

The screenshot displays the Omprakash EdGE platform interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Omprakash EdGE logo on the left and a user profile icon on the right. Below the navigation bar, the main content area features a large heading "Welcome to Vassar OCEL!" and a paragraph of text. To the right of the main content, there is a sidebar with various chat options and a search bar. The interface is designed with a dark purple and teal color scheme. An orange arrow points from the "Unit 1" dropdown menu to the "READ" text above. Another orange arrow points from the "R" in the navigation bar to the "Click 'R' to view response prompts." text above. A third orange arrow points from the "Next page" text below to the right arrow in the main content area.

Next page

EDGE PLATFORM: Response prompts

REFLECT ON THE READINGS

RESPOND

Click "+" to add your response!

What did the unit materials make you think about?

How do they relate to your CEL?

The screenshot displays the omprakash EdGE interface. At the top, it shows the user's name 'Mentee Manager' and the course '2020-2021 Vassar Office of Community Eng...'. The main content area is titled 'Unit 1 Response Prompts' and contains the following text: 'Having reflected on the Unit 1 content, please respond to **one or more of the prompts below.**' followed by a list of five prompts: 'How do you understand your agency as a learner?', 'How can we treat CEL as praxis?', 'What does community mean to you?', 'What challenges do you anticipate facing as you engage with the community?', and 'What do you hope to get out of this experience?'. Below the list, it says 'After submitting your response, please visit the Roundtable and comment on at least one other student's response. (You could resonate, ask a question, suggest...'. On the right side of the interface, there is a 'Chat' panel with a 'Roundtable' icon and a 'Cohort Chat' section. An orange arrow points from the 'Roundtable' icon to the 'Roundtable' text in the yellow callout box at the bottom.

Click "Roundtable" to view peer comments & responses.

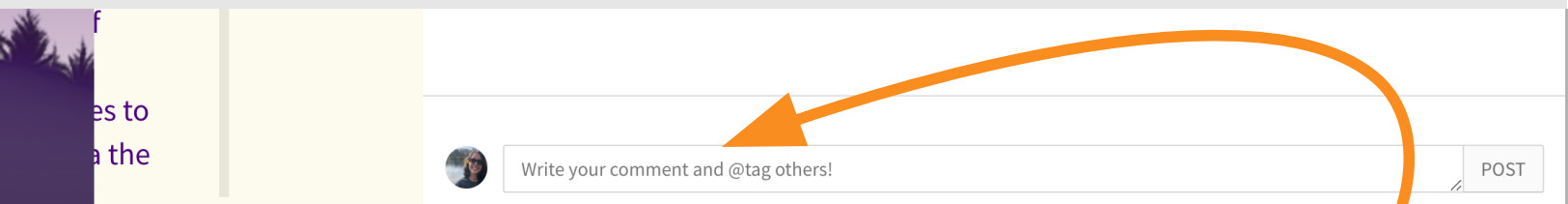
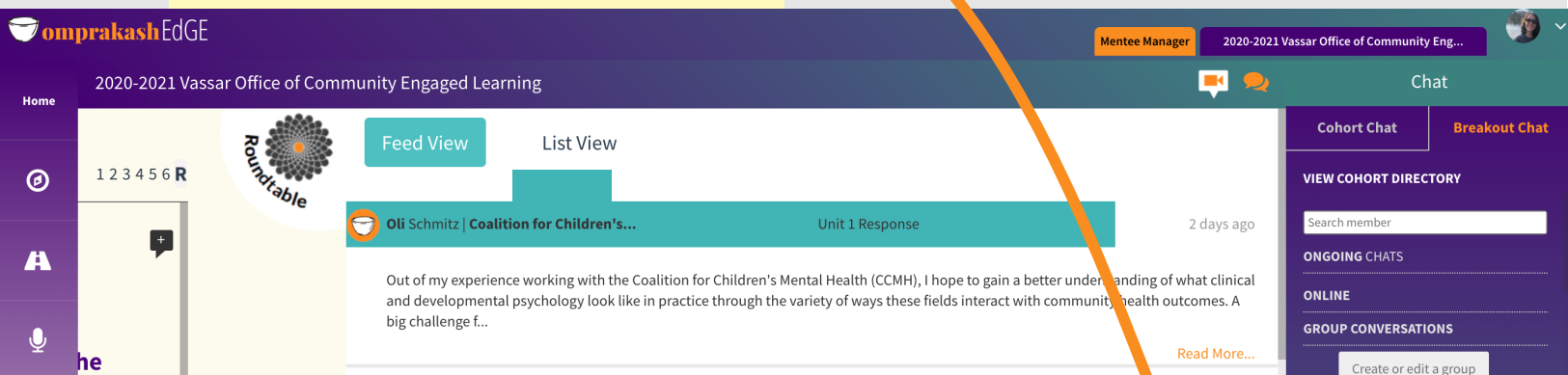
EDGE PLATFORM: Commenting

CONNECT WITH YOUR PEERS

REPLY

Click "Read More" to view peer responses.

What did the unit materials make you think about?



Reply to your cohort members' responses by commenting on their posts.

QUESTIONS?

CONTACT LIKAUL@VASSAR.EDU



[Vassar College Office of Community-Engaged Learning](#)



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WHAT OTHER OCEL PROGRAMS CAN YOU GET INVOLVED IN?

[COMMUNITY FELLOWS PROGRAM](#)

[SUMMER CEL](#)