

UW-Madison Shared Community Engagement Commitments

Purpose: The following commitments have been developed through feedback, conversation, and visioning with community partners, as well as faculty and staff doing community-engaged work at UW to consider what an engaged university actually looks like in practice. We hope these commitments can provide a shared orientation towards and understanding of community university engagement, its importance to the mission of the university, and the commitments it requires of us to meaningfully engage in such work.

Principle	Essential Questions
<p>Ensure you are making yourself accessible for community partnership and engagement.</p> <p><i>Don't always expect the community to come to you, but make sure they at least have the opportunity.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can community partners without preexisting university relationships easily contact you? - What opportunities exist for you to learn more about or get involved with community partners? - What resources do you have to support community engagement?
<p>Engage in authentic and mutually-beneficial relationships.</p> <p><i>These sorts of relationships should exist at all levels, from students to collaborators and partners.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are you ensuring your relationships are not transactional and exploitative? - How are you focusing on and prioritizing trust in relationships? - How are you equitably funding community partners? This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paying partners for their work in classrooms - Co-writing grants - Funding partners equitably - How are relationships valued over outcomes? - How do all stakeholders (students, community organizations, citizens, etc.) benefit from the partnership? - How do you plan to sustain relationships at the end of a project? OR How do you close-out partnerships in ways that ensure communities feel supported?
<p>Center community voice, priorities, and knowledge.</p> <p><i>Solidarity with communities asks that your</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What pathways exist for community partners to initiate and co-create projects? - What feedback loops do communities have to inform the partnership?

<p><i>work fit into the community's needs, not the other way around.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What projects are actually of interest to the community? - What opportunities exist to engage community partner(s) throughout the project? - How are you centering community knowledge and expertise? - Do community partners feel they can decline to participate in projects and still maintain good relationships with the university?
<p>Practice self-awareness and continual reflection.</p> <p><i>Consider what you are learning about yourself, others, and the world through this experience.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What assumptions do you or other collaborators have about the community? - How might your social identities or positionality impact how you perceive the community or are perceived by the community? - What additional learning or training might you need in order to best steward a project or partnership?
<p>Reflect critically on systems and social change.</p> <p><i>Move beyond ideas of helping toward ideas of co-evolving and co-liberating.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which systems or social issues inform the work with the community? - How does your project advance social change in a way that is useful to communities? - What does it mean to engage in partnership is intentionally antiracist and anti-oppressive? - How are you creating space for personal and collective reflection on these topics?
<p>Establish collaborative practices that ensure power sharing, flexibility, clear communication, and transparency.</p> <p><i>Efforts at the ground level permeate the culture of the partnership.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will decisions be made throughout the partnership? - Where and how can you be flexible and responsive? - How will results or outcomes be shared with those impacted? - Who gets to engage with the data? - Who gets to evaluate the success of the partnership and project?
<p>Organize around community assets and strengths to promote sustainable change.</p> <p><i>Seek to empower and uplift through your partnership.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How might the community already be organizing around issues that interest you? - What places, people, or resources exist within the community? - How are you centering community assets? This recognizes that community

	<p>work is often focused on deficits and problems; this can lead to burnout and overwhelm in communities while ignoring unjust systems and structures that lead to these challenges</p>
<p>Understand and research the community (its history, populations, interests, etc.) before engaging.</p> <p><i>Context is key after all.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How has the university historically interacted with this community, if at all? - What current events are impacting the community? - What history does the community have with the topic at hand?
<p>Honor knowledge and wisdom inherent within communities.</p> <p><i>Challenge traditional notions of what is considered valid knowledge.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are you practicing intellectual humility in your project? - How are you affirming the lived experiences of the community?
<p>Maintain flexibility and adaptability in your approach to engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will you adapt if and when challenges arise? - How can you create deadlines and systems that respect participants' humanity and complex lives?