



UNI Office of Community Engagement <community.engagement@connect.uni.edu>

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January 2022

Welcome - Dr. Julianne Gassman, Director & Professor

Greetings and welcome to the UNI Office of Community Engagement's inaugural newsletter. I'm delighted to have your attention for a few minutes to introduce you and familiarize you to how what we do can benefit you. The purpose of our office is to provide support for strategic partnerships between UNI and the community. We believe our collective work in partnership with the community can best prepare UNI graduates to become civic-minded professionals, launching successful careers and caring, engaged citizens that contribute to the betterment of society.



The power of our work can best be illustrated through a story. I once attended a presentation by a class of UNI students who shared reflections of their service-learning project in their course. One student admitted their disappointment when they learned there was a community-based project required in the course. They didn't want the "messiness of the world" to impact their learning - they just wanted to learn. This project required students to design a job preparation curriculum for local refugees and their mentors through the EMBARC mentorship program. During the final presentation, the student that was initially frustrated shared that working on the project was a great experience and stated "It was the first time I've seen my place in the world." We support students in seeing their place in the world - both professionally and equally as important, civically. Bringing

the messiness of the world into our work can be challenging, time-consuming and confusing on how to begin. We/Our office is here to help.

This newsletter is scheduled monthly and will serve as a way to keep you informed, provide helpful resources as well as share calls for award nominations and scholarship/fellowship information. Much of the content focuses on support for faculty and staff and providing programs to ease the community partnership building process and project development. Additionally, we will share opportunities for students that can be passed along. The Cedar Valley is rich with opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to engage in meaningful work as a part of what we do. Together we can help every student to “see their place in the world” by bringing the world into the fabric of the UNI experience.

Highlighting Community Engagement



We kicked off our year with one of our largest events, Back Packin’ the Dome. This event was held on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a national day of service. Our office partnered with the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, the Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley, and the Panther Pantry (located at UNI). Volunteers from all over Iowa joined us in assembling backpacks for the North East Iowa Food Bank’s Backpack Program. We had over 1,000 volunteers join us and together we packed 47,808 backpacks. This [article](#) showcases the power of partnerships.

Get Connected

The Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley is on

campus!

Located in Maucker Union, Mondays & Thursdays 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. If you or a student is looking for volunteer opportunities in our community, the Volunteer Center is the place for you to get connected and explore opportunities!



Presentation - Student Groups: Forming Community Partnerships

Join us on Wednesday February 9th, 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m. in Maucker Union! The Office of Community Engagement and the Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley are partnering to offer a presentation on how to develop meaningful partnerships and co-create projects that benefit a local nonprofit/organization and serve the purpose of your student group. All student groups, residence halls, Greek life organizations or any other student group are invited to attend.

Board Match: UNI's Board of Directors Matching Program

UNI Office of Community Engagement in partnership with the Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley can assist faculty, staff and students in finding a nonprofit organization for which to serve on their board of directors. If you are interested in serving on a local nonprofit's board of directors, but not sure how to get connected, we can assist you and if needed provide training (2 hrs) on the responsibilities expected of a board member. For more information, [click here](#).

Service-Learning

Service-Learning Course Designation

The deadline for fall 2022 courses is Friday February 11, 2022. If you are teaching a course with a service project embedded, please consider applying to have the Service-Learning (SL) designation on your course. The SL designation supports instructors in implementing best practices in the classroom and allows students to intentionally seek out courses that include a high-impact practice, a feature proven to be significantly beneficial for students of all backgrounds. To learn more and apply [click here](#).

Service-Learning Institute

UNI's Service-Learning Institute will be offered again this May 2022. Watch InsideUNI and upcoming newsletters for details.

Funding & Awards

Campus Compact call for nominations

The Office of Community Engagement is coordinating award nominations for the Engaged Campus Awards. UNI is only able to submit one nomination per award category. Please use the google form below to submit nominees for consideration. Iowa & Minnesota Campus Compact Engaged Campus Award Categories:



- Alumni Leadership Award
- Community Collaboration Award
- Emerging Innovation Award

For more information and to nominate a group or individual, please complete the following google form by Monday, February 14th: [https://tinyurl.com/](https://tinyurl.com/IAMNCampusCompactAwards)

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Scholarships and Fellowships

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Veridian Community Engagement Fellowship - Applications due Friday, February 25, 2022. The purpose of this Fellowship is to encourage faculty to engage with community partners to better the community in a manner that also enhances their teaching and scholarship. For more information, [click here](#).



Congratulations to UNI students Max White, Katie Suddarth, and Abby Carver on receiving Spring 2021 Robert and Yvonne Koob Fund for Student Community Engagement Scholarships. These students will be completing internships at nonprofit organizations in the Cedar Valley and Des Moines areas.

Congratulations to Dr. Elaine Eshbaugh and their project Dementia Friend's and Dr. Francesca Soans and their project with KGGB Radio for being awarded Veridian Community Engagement Fellowships! These faculty members will complete their projects during the Spring 2022 semester. To learn more about both students and faculty projects [click here](#).

Events

Explore-A-Ganza - Monday February 7th, 3:30-5 p.m.; UNI Commons Ballroom. The Nonprofit Explore-A-Ganza, hosted by the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, will allow students the chance to network with local nonprofits in a "speed interviewing" format. This event is an excellent opportunity for students to learn about internship, job, and volunteer

opportunities that local nonprofit organizations have to offer. For questions, please email Emily Churchill at kubeceaa@uni.edu or Kristina Kofoot at kristina.kofoot@uni.edu.

Register Here

Spring Blood Drive - Friday February 18th, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; Wellness and Recreation Center, Lower Lounge. Sign up to donate blood and save up to 3 lives by [clicking here](#).

Volunteers on Tap - Wednesday March 9th, 4-6 p.m.; SingleSpeed Brewing Co. Waterloo. This event is hosted by the Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley! Stop by and chat with over a dozen community organizations planning events for the upcoming year. Volunteers are needed to serve on committees, provide leadership, and support event planning.



Community Engagement Celebration Day - Friday April 22nd, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center. UNI faculty, staff, and students are invited to showcase their community engagement work. Whether it is through courses, research, student organizations, volunteering or professional service, we want to celebrate you! More information and registration coming soon!

Cedar Valley Green Competition: Solving Sustainability Problems

Iowa Waste Reduction Center, John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, and the Office of Community Engagement is hosting a program to find innovative ideas to reduce waste going to landfills. This will be a competition where teams will pitch their ideas to reduce waste. There will be \$500 for the best pitch, and the chance for an investment of \$5,000 for the best, implementable idea. Dates and times: March 8th - 4:30-7 p.m. (hands-on

workshop); March 24th - 4:30-6:30 p.m. (hands-on workshop ; April 7th - 4:30-6:30 p.m. (optional pitch feedback); and April 22nd - 5-7 p.m., final pitch. This is a campus/community event inviting all faculty, staff, students, and community members to participate. More information and registration coming soon

For more information and for a full list of events [click here](#).

In Other News

Inside Higher Ed - [*What Is Engaged Scholarship and How Can It Improve Your Research*](#)

This month, an essay by Kristen Slack focuses on the value of community-engaged scholarship.

The Way Forward Podcast - [*In a Time of Wicked Problems, Education Wicked Students: A Conversation with Paul Hanstedt*](#). Paul discusses the consequences of the pandemic for teaching and learning and the opportunities it opens for “creating wicked students.” They discuss the changes needed in educators and institutions.

For more information visit: <https://engagement.uni.edu/>

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