Suggested guidelines for community-engaged learning courses and related events during the university’s online operation period due to the spread of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus):

1. The health of students, faculty and staff is of paramount importance. During the time that the university has moved courses online, students will not be required or encouraged in any way to physically go to the spaces outside the university to work with community partners. They may be able to continue to work with the partner remotely, but this is likely to require effort that you will have to weigh against the benefit, both for students and for partners.

2. In some cases, projects may be re-imagined so that students can continue to engage virtually with the community partner. The needs of the community and the community partner will change as the situation evolves, and their academic partners (you and your students) will need to be sensitive to the fact that they may well re-prioritize activities and not be able to communicate as often with you and your students.

3. To the degree possible, students can reflect on work already accomplished and re-orient their academic engagement with the community work. You may ask them to substitute online projects for in-person engagement, and you may also re-focus parts of your course to substitute different activities for the ones your students would have had to complete with the partners. For example, you may ask them to read and analyze case studies of community-based work similar to the work they have been doing. There may also be tasks supportive of the community partners that can be performed virtually.

4. Continue relationships and communication with community partners so that future student engagement can be as robust as possible. We are all in the same situation, and they will be figuring out their needs as we go along.

5. This is an extreme case of the need for flexibility in community-campus partnerships, and as such, also provides many opportunities for learning and new knowledge creation. Try to remember key principles of such partnerships to the degree possible: collaboration, reciprocity and mutual benefit, intentional and respectful communication. Keep these in mind as you adjust your expectations with the partners and the students.

Contact for Community Engaged Learning:

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