COMMUNITY
LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP

PROGRAM ELEMENTS (page 1-3)
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PROGRAM ELEMENTS

While each local Community Learning Partnership program develops it own elements, the following outlines what the core staff of existing programs in our national network identify as most effective toward meeting our goals:

ACADEMIC ELEMENTS

1. **Degree or Certificate.** The program offers a degree or credit-bearing certificate in Community Change Studies or a specific change-agent field, such as community organizing, social justice leadership or community development.

   Recommended: The degree or certificate is 'stackable' meaning the credits can transfer to other academic institutions, including 4-year degree programs. This helps to sustain academic rigor while establishing the community college credential as one component of a more extensive career pathway.

2. **Core Courses and Cross-Disciplinary Options.** Each local program develops it own set of core courses that all students need to complete in order to obtain the degree or certificate. In addition, students complete courses offered in a range of departments throughout the academic partner institution, so that they can pursue the learning that best reflects their goals. Core courses reflect the following:

   a. The CLP vision, mission and values.
   b. An introduction to the basic knowledge and skills needed for the field of focus, including the core change-agent knowledge and skills identified by the CLP network.
   c. Students' cultural and community experience.
   d. Interactive, engaging teaching approach.

3. **Applied Learning Opportunities**. The program and core courses include opportunities for students to learn on the ground and experientially. Examples of applied learning include the following:

   a. **Internships.** A student commits to spend a specified amount of time in a structured field experience. A staff member of a community partner establishes goals with the student, supervises and evaluates the student's work, and coordinates with an academic instructor, who may participate in goal setting and who helps the student process the learning. The student may or may not receive a stipend.

   b. **Field Assignments.** A student engages in a specific project activity with a community-based organization to fulfill a class assignment, such as assisting with an outreach activity or observing a community meeting.

   c. **Course-Based Projects.** Students enrolled in a course take on different tasks related to a community-based project, under the direction and supervision of a classroom instructor.

   d. **On-Campus Projects.** A student works on campus initiative, such as a student club or a student-led advocacy campaign.

   Recommended: Instructors who are working with the students on applied learning have community-based relationships, knowledge of the issues and experience in guiding reflection on experiential learning. Learning in the field and in the classroom is coordinated and relevant.

STUDENT SUPPORT ELEMENTS

1. **Cohorts.** The academic program offers courses that include study, action and reflection opportunities with a core peer group and core program faculty.

2. **Peer Support Relationships**. The program includes opportunities for students to build relationships of support with one another. Examples include engaging in small group work, forming reflection groups, mentoring one another and networking with other students for professional development. This element particularly acknowledges the importance of relationship building and networking for career development, and the need for students to strengthen or learn those skills.

3. **Coaching.** Faculty with experience in the core course areas, offer one-on-one professional development support to students, as needed, such as goal setting and relationship bridging.

4. **Advisory Services.** Programs engage with the college and community-based services needed to support students to stay in the program, graduate and move on to the next steps in their career pathways.

Recommended: A mix of these support elements is essential. At the same time, this aspect of the program varies a great deal, based on the specific situation and how the program evolves over time.

COMMUNITY-BASED ELEMENTS

1. **Community Partners**. The program includes staff and leaders of community-based organizations with clearly designated roles in developing and sustaining the program, such as formal advisory boards or other structures. Community partners provide adjunct faculty, trainers and mentors for the program. The organizations and their representatives are stakeholders in the students' success, including potentially hiring them.

2. **Network of Local Relationships.** The program cultivates other resources in the community, such as training or leadership programs, or civic engagement opportunities, offering a network of skills-building approaches and relationships for students on the pathway to a community change career.

3. **National Network.** The program is also part of a national community through the CLP network, with its wider range of information, tools and people for supporting program graduates.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

While each local program develops it own outcomes, the following outlines what staff of the existing programs in our national network identify as most effective toward meeting our goals. These outcomes in knowledge, skills and attitudes draw from our direct experience, and also reflect the findings in our job profile: *Listening. Building. Making Change. Job Profile of a Community Organizer* (2013):

1. **Knowledge.** Students gain an introduction to the history of social change; the dynamics of power; social systems; and strategies for creating change. The following are some examples and recommendations, to the extent they are relevant to local programs, for the knowledge needed to be an agent of change:

   a. History, theories and approaches of community organizing.
   b. Community economic development.
   c. Researching community needs and issues.
   d. The structures of public policy, including nonprofits and government agencies and how local, state and federal governments work.
   e. Understanding power, privilege and oppression, including the history, dynamics and equity issues of race, ethnicity, culture and class.
   f. The basic concepts of social, economic and political systems, such democracy or socialism.
   g. How others have transformed social and political structures, locally and globally, to make the world a more equitable place.

2. **Skills.** Students gain an understanding of the importance of skills for communication, power analysis, reflection, leadership, teamwork, civic engagement and relationship building. The following are some examples and recommendations, to the extent they are relevant to local programs, for the skills needed to be an agent of change:

   a. Listen and communicate effectively.
   b. Think critically.
   c. Analyze the dynamics of power, oppression and inequity, interpersonally and in society, in order to change them.
   d. Reflect on one's own cultural and political influences and perspectives.
   e. Facilitate group discussions.
   f. Practice effective leadership.
   g. Recognize and be able to foster leadership skills in others.
   h. Engage in teamwork.
   i. Practice cultural competence.
   j. Cultivate relationships as part of being an agent of change.
   k. Engage effectively in civic and community life.
   l. Impact on social structures.

3. **Attitudes.** Students gain the opportunity to develop how they see and interact with the world, from the perspective of someone who can make a difference. The following are some examples and recommendations, to the extent they are relevant to local programs, for the attitudes needed to be an agent of change:

   a. Awareness of self, including being able to identify ones skills, learning style, social and emotional influences, strengths and interests.
   b. Social identity, including the dynamics of race and ethnicity, diversity, equity, class and gender.
   c. An understanding and owning of one's own history and struggles.
   d. The importance of being self-reflective.
   e. One's interdependency with others.
   f. Awareness of the characteristics of change-agents, such having a sense of integrity and accountability, being open and willing to change, able to take initiative and a willingness to ask for help.