VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning
Faculty Fellows Program 2021-22

The goal of the VT Engage Faculty Fellows program is to increase the prevalence of and quality of community engagement in the curriculum at Virginia Tech through curricular, faculty-led experiences in the areas of service learning, leadership education, and civic engagement. Selected Fellows will join other scholar-educators dedicated to integrating high-impact, ethical community-based learning experiences in their academic courses and programs. Fellows will receive financial resources and technical support from VT Engage during the one-year program (June 2021 to June 2022).

Background
Virginia Tech is committed to providing transformational experiential learning opportunities for students. Community engagement holds great potential to enhance pedagogical practice in a wide range of disciplines. Well-designed courses contribute to the development of students as future leaders in their disciplines and their communities by integrating informal communal and guided experiential learning. Through the coupling of community engagement and problem-based learning, these pedagogies present dynamic environments where students are able to innovate while gaining new perspectives and deepening their understanding of complex systems. Integrative learning initiatives can be strengthened by employing community engagement strategies at formative stages of course, sequence, and program development.

Program Overview
This program is an opportunity for new and experienced community engagement practitioners to participate in the collaborative design of intentional, learning-focused opportunities. The program includes support for faculty who are developing or significantly revising courses or curricular programs utilizing these pedagogies. Faculty Fellows will collaborate with community organizations to create or enhance mutually beneficial partnerships, build assessment strategies for student learning and community outcomes, and serve as community engagement ambassadors to the campus community. Fellows will present the development of their course and their findings to peers and will engage with broader scholarly and practitioner audiences.

Benefits of being a VT Engage Faculty Fellow
• **Focused Investment:** Individual faculty may request up to $13,000 in support of the development process or $26,000 for a team.

• **Partnership Development:** Fellows will have designated time to invest in local, regional, or global partnerships with nonprofits and/or government entities to create mutually beneficial community-based learning programs. Fellows will have
access to VT Engage networks of community partners and/or they can use their own connections to develop new relationships or enhance existing relationships with partners.

- **Learning Community**: Fellows will have opportunities to seek feedback and support from a growing body of faculty with expertise in experiential learning, community engagement, leadership education, civic engagement, and service programs. This diverse community can assist the Fellows as they strengthen courses, test innovative pedagogies, and collaborate on projects to advance the scholarship of engagement, teaching, and learning.

- **Increased Visibility**: VT Engage will showcase the community-based work of each fellow or team at key points during the project lifecycle. Fellows will have access to mini grants that may be used for course materials, professional development, conference registration, and travel.

**Eligibility**
This program is open to any full-time, instructional or Administrative/Professional faculty member at Virginia Tech. Proposed courses may be at the undergraduate or graduate level. Graduate students are not eligible. No previous VT Engage Faculty Fellows are eligible for this program. Applications will be accepted from individual faculty members or faculty teams. Interdisciplinary teams and teams from single departments are encouraged to apply. Team proposals should create community-based learning experiences across course sequences or curricula.

**Expectations of Fellows**
- Develop new community-based learning course(s)/program(s) or add substantial community-based learning elements to existing courses/programs. Courses/programs must be offered at least once in the program cycle and twice in the three academic years following course development.

- Meet monthly during the funding cycle with VT Engage and the Faculty Fellows cohort to discuss progress, challenges, and strategies.

- Establish a sustainable and mutually beneficial learning program with at least one community partner, typically nonprofit or government entities.

- Create an assessment plan to document student learning and community outcomes.

- Present about the project and/or course development at a conference or professional meeting focused on the scholarship of engagement, teaching, or
learning (e.g., Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy).

- Collaborate with VT Engage to publicize the project in appropriate outlets.
- Share experiences with developing and teaching a service-learning course with other interested faculty and future Faculty Fellows candidates.
- Submit a mid-term and final report to VT Engage documenting the results of course and partnership development relative to the original proposal and the proposed teaching schedule.

**Application Process and Deadline**
Applicants should submit the following materials in a single electronic document to the Faculty Fellows program manager, Catherine Cotrupi, at cotrupi@vt.edu by 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 15.

1) **Proposal/Concept Paper** (<2,500 words), including:
   a. Course/program description to be developed or redesigned
   b. If team proposal, indicate why coordinated development is desirable.
   c. How will community-based learning pedagogies support specific student learning goals?
   d. How will you ensure that students will learn about the societal issues or social justice perspectives in depth and/or from multiple perspectives?
   e. How do you anticipate the course or program’s academic content and the community-based learning experiences will be linked?
   f. How will you structure this to ensure that students will learn the content more deeply or rigorously than if they did not participate?
   
   g. Vision for how the course/program will engage students and community partners
   h. Anticipated community partner(s)
   i. Proposed projects
      a) Clear and substantive need, issue, or initiative that the community or partner has identified and that contributes to the public good
      b) Anticipated support needed from VT Engage
   
   j. Connections to broader curriculum or university initiatives such as Destination Areas, Strategic Growth Areas, Pathways to General Education, Aspirations for Student Learning, etc.
k. Anticipated course/program development and offering timeline

l. Self-assessment
   m. Primary Barriers to Success
   n. What other expertise would be necessary for success (such as campus units, community partners, etc.)?

2) **Budget**: Individual faculty may request up to $13,000 in support of the development process or $26,000 for a team. Budget transfers to faculty members’ departments will be made in installments.

3) **Faculty Profile**: For each faculty member, provide a brief biographical sketch (1 page maximum) including any similar or related courses taught and level of experience with community-based learning.

4) **Letter(s) of Support from Department and Community Organizations**:  
   a. Each application must provide evidence of support from the department chair(s) associated with the course(s) and/or faculty member(s). Specifically, the letter should affirm departmental intent to offer the courses under development.
   b. Proposals should include letters of support from community organizations (if partners are identified).

5) **Additional Requirement for Teams**: For team applications, please submit the email address and telephone number for the team’s primary point of contact along with a list of courses and who will teach them.

**Proposal Evaluation Criteria**

- **Course/Program Proposal Quality**: The quality of course/program proposals will be scored based on the clarity of learning goals for students, the relevance of community-based learning pedagogy, the depth of the community engagement experience for students, and the vision for benefit to the community. Proposals that include active, ongoing student reflection as part of the course design are preferred, as are proposals that address assessment of student learning outcomes.

- **Community Engagement**: Points will be awarded based on the plan for involving community in the identification of community needs/initiatives, strategies, and outcomes presented in the concept paper. Proposals that identify authentic, meaningful roles for community members during the project are preferred, as are proposals that address assessment of community outcomes.
• **Feasibility and Sustainability:** Proposals deemed to have a high probability of implementation success will be favored—including departmental support, support from community partners, faculty/team, and consideration of ongoing costs. Proposals that explicitly address efforts to sustain the partnership will be favored—opportunities for continuing, post-course engagement between faculty, students, and community members are preferred.

• **VT Linkages:** Points will be awarded for proposals with clear linkages to broader and relevant university and college initiatives including, but not limited to: Destination Areas, Strategic Growth Areas, and Pathways to General Education. Additionally, proposals aligned with VT Engage’s core values will be favored.

• **Self-Reflection:** Faculty have a clear understanding of the supplemental coursework and reflection that will need to be integrated into the curriculum to support student learning and community-based pedagogies in connection to difficult and challenging societal issues. Has identified potential barriers associated with community engagement and discussed plans for support.

**Applicants will be notified of the status of their application by June 1, 2021.**

**Questions and Accommodations Requests**

All questions about the program or the application process can be directed to Catherine Cotrupi at cotrupi@vt.edu or 540-231-9186. If you are an individual with a disability and need an accommodation for any part of the application process, welcome! Please reach out to Catherine with any requests.

**About VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning**

VT Engage facilitates leadership, service learning, and civic engagement experiences that advance community priorities, contribute to student development, and embody Ut Prosim (That I May Serve.) Serving as a connection point between community and campus partners, we support community-engaged scholarship that advances community-identified priorities through ethical and sustainable action.