

*2021-2022*

# Impact Report

Office of Academic  
Service-Learning

Creighton  
UNIVERSITY

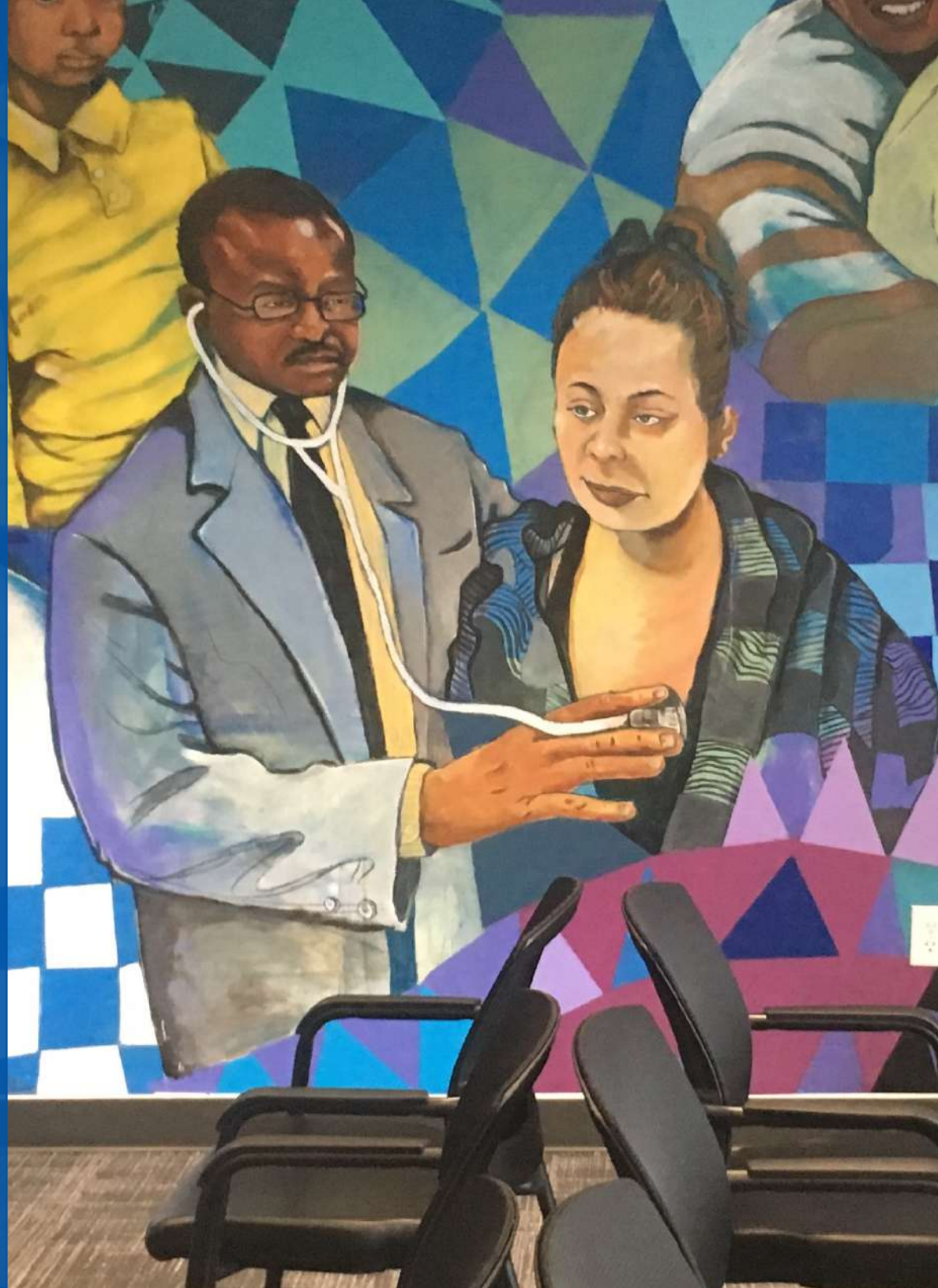
Global Engagement Office  
Academic Service-Learning





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# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

WELCOME FRIENDS OF THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC SERVICE-LEARNING TO OUR 2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT!



***“A university that sees itself as a venture aimed at transforming society will gravitate towards the margins of society, i.e. to the people who are left out by the structures and interests that dominate in our world. Such a university will throw open its doors and windows to the people at the margins, who will in turn bring with them a new breath of life that will be source of life in abundance for what we are doing to try and transform the world.”***

- Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ

Since the Office of Academic Service-Learning opened its doors five years ago, it has aimed to help our students and faculty be in deeper relationship with people on the margins of society thereby bringing new breadth and depth to teaching and learning.

As we reflect on academic service-learning five years in, there are many notable transformations and accomplishments to highlight:

- The formation of the Engaged Learning advisory committee to guide and oversee the OASL.
- The creation of an academic service-learning course attribute designation and tracking system, in coordination with the Engaged Learning advisory committee and the Office of the Registrar.
- The implementation of faculty development programming and support systems to assist in integrating community partnerships into curriculum.
- The adoption of at least one designated academic service-learning course in all colleges and schools.
- The inclusion of academic service-learning as an example of demonstration in achievement in teaching in the 2021 University Faculty Handbook.
- Almost half of all undergraduate students graduating in AY 2020-21 having taken at least one designated academic service-learning course.
- Expansion of community partnerships locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

OASL's growth was not without its challenges, as the Covid-19 pandemic slowed the adoption of new academic service-learning courses. Innovative solutions to maintain relationships with community partners abounded at this time, with an increase in online and project-based community engagements. Many faculty continue to utilize indirect and project-based engagements as part of their academic service-learning courses, as you will see.

We look forward to deepening our support and offerings for faculty, and broadening opportunities for students to engage the world and critically reflect on their experiences. Despite the real problems facing the world in the 21st Century, we hope to continue to open our doors and windows to our local, regional, and global community so that we can all share in the abundance of life.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel X Walsh".

**Dan Walsh, MSW, MPA, BA'09**  
*Director, Office of Academic Service-Learning*







# Academic Service-Learning Turns Five

Although only a handful of Academic Service-Learning (AcSL) courses were available when OASL began in AY 17-18, five years later students are beginning to have a variety of options. Students can now find opportunities to engage with communities locally, regionally, nationally, and globally, through placements, projects, community-based research, and advocacy in almost all Creighton undergraduate, graduate, and professional colleges and schools. By AY 20-21, almost half (47%) of graduating seniors took at least one academic service-learning course.

To illustrate the breadth of experiences and depth of impact that AcSL experiences have provided students over the years, a recent graduate, Camryn Halboth, BA'22, offered to share her reflections.

### LIVING & LEARNING

One of Halboth's first experiences with academic service-learning was during her time in the Cortina Living Learning Community. "Cortina obviously focused on doing service in the community, so a lot of that was doing service and then bringing those experiences in conversations to class to think about ethics and philosophy and morality. And then, "how do we apply that in our community, and specifically here in Omaha? [...] we're talking about justice, what does that mean, how do we live that out?"

### GLOBAL LEARNING

Academic service-learning also engages students globally. While Halboth was enrolled in the Encuentro Dominicano program, she gained a deeper sense of global perspectives through reflection on her experiences with ILAC community partners in the Dominican Republic. "Encuentro is very centered around service. [...] learning about culture, learning about community, how to live with other people, and also thinking about how my actions in what I'm doing is impacting those around me."

This experience in the Dominican Republic was part of Halboth's studies in the Creighton's Global Scholars Program, a four-year educational and professional development program designed to immerse select students in a variety of

cultures for a rich academic, social and service experience that fosters global connections. "[I joined] Encuentro Dominicano because [...] it involves all of my interests of sustainability, traveling and Spanish."

### ADVOCACY

While some academic service-learning classes involve direct services, *ART 401: Empty Bowls Arts and Civic Engagement*, taught by Amy Nelson, MFA, is illustrative of how advocacy and justice can be integrated seamlessly into classroom learning. In has for over a decade raised tens of thousands of dollars for people experiencing homelessness by students making bowls that are sold at a fundraiser for Siena Francis House.





Halboth, who enrolled in the class towards the end of her undergraduate career, says that it is one of her favorite classes she has ever taken, as it incorporates art in terms of service and justice in a way that she never thought about nor experienced before.

Like many AcSL classes during the pandemic, faculty had to be creative in their approach to experiential learning. The outcome was meaningful experiences for students like Halboth. "It was special [...] because I took it during COVID season, and so we were unable to go to Siena Francis. Typically, that class would go to Siena Francis [...] But we still had people from Siena Francis come and talk to our class on Zoom about service-learning, about the organization, about homelessness in Omaha, and the impact that has on people."

Even in indirect service, students can see the real world impact they can have. "Making ceramics is really fun and really cool [...] But giving all [the bowls] away and knowing that it was for people in Omaha and not for myself [...] is a really beautiful process."

### PROJECT-BASED ENGAGEMENT

In her final semester at Creighton, Halboth enrolled in COM/EVS National Park Service class, taught by Samantha Senda-Cook, PhD. This course highlights project-based engagement and helps students understand how to meaningfully be involved in sustainability issues. Halboth says she was "still able to serve communities, serve national parks, and serve the United States

in a particular way without being in a specific community. And so just being able to use resources and knowledge and things that Creighton has taught me, we're able to give that back to national parks, so it's been cool."

Through all these different experiences, Halboth learned a lot about herself, about the Omaha community, about Dominican Republic, and about national parks. "It made me think about anything that I do—whether that's a job or an activity or hobby—I can use that to better my community and to serve in different ways."

### NOW WHAT?

AcSL has empowered Halboth to see that she can serve people not only as a college student, but in any professional field she may pursue in the future. "I can serve people with every job that I have and so it's allowed me to just be content."

Halboth has some words of advice for faculty interested in teaching academic service-learning classes: "It'll be a challenge, not just as a faculty member, but it also will challenge you as a person, but it will help you learn how to better serve the students that you work with."

In the end, Halboth reflected that learning about other people and cultures and communities is something that we often take for granted. "Service-learning gives us more space and time to think about those beautiful things."



# Theatre for Social Justice tackles Climate change



Amy Lane, PhD, has been teaching the Theatre for Social Justice for many years, partnering with many local and national organizations such as The Rose Theater, Project Harmony, and Heartland Workers Center. Dr. Lane reflected that “the best part for me was seeing students take their research which was often overwhelming or depressing and find ways to turn the issue into stories that could help inspire activism.

***“Most importantly, I think, was how the students found ways to infuse humor into a bleak topic. The humor lifted a heavy topic and inspired energy and action — it made the audience feel like they weren’t defeated, but that there was something they could do, even if a small step, to help address this issue.”***

**- Dr. Amy Lane, Associate professor of Theatre for Social Justice**

THR 467 Theatre for Social Justice students took on the important but daunting issue of climate change this past fall semester as part of the international event Climate Change Theatre Action 2021: A Green New Deal. Through Academic Service-learning, students partnered with The Arctic Circle, a climate activist group, as a Nebraska representative. Students explored many different aspects surrounding the climate crisis from politics to limiting meat consumption and from wildfires to ocean pollution. Students found topics that were personal and accessible and researched possible solutions. The class focused on advocacy and ways theater can be used to help educate and advocate for a central issue.

The public event included plays from several international playwrights commissioned by the Arctic Circle for this year’s event plus, original short plays by student playwrights Brayton Matuska, Madi Barker, Ellie Goecken, and Evan Peterson. The event culminated in an audience discussion with Edgar Romero Gonzalez and Makenna Medrano from City Sprouts and Nick McCreary from Creighton Office of Sustainability Programs.

By using satire, Ms. Barker said, “raised awareness for how politicians address climate change, and hopefully the audience was able to understand the government’s responsibility they have for the environment and what citizens can do to fix climate change.”

***“Utilizing theater to advocate for climate change is a creative, necessary, and integral part of social justice, since theater has the ability to connect with audience members in a unique and powerful way, which then encourages folks to become educated and aware.”***

**- Madi Barker, Creighton Student**



# The Give and Receive of Service Learning

The path to knowledge is many and varied. The more traditional avenue is classroom-centered, through reading and discussion, lectures and exams, research papers and projects. Internships and practicums are another option for augmenting formal education.

This autumn, however, 18 Heider business students enrolled in the course Practicum in International Development took an even less-traveled route when they spent fall break in the Dominican Republic.

Practicum in International Development is a service-learning class taught by Lance Frazier, PhD, associate professor of management; Charles Braymen, PhD, CFA, associate professor of economics; and Dustin Ormond, PhD, associate professor of business intelligence and analytics. Open to all majors within the Heider College of Business and all levels of study (though most are juniors and seniors who have completed their core business classes), it encompasses technology and business development and entrepreneurship.

In the eight weeks leading up to the DR trip, half of the class focused on learning the technology central to the BlueBox Program, a nonprofit educational program established by Braymen and Ormond. It centers on technology that houses inexpensive mini-computers capable of disseminating open-source materials to anyone with a cell phone. Students distributed this technology, along with tablets, to schools in the DR and trained teachers in their use.

A trip highlight for Annie Trettel, a senior finance and international business double major and Spanish minor from Kearney, Nebraska, was delivering a BlueBox and tablets to a local school. The hospitality the group received was profound, she says. The mayor, parish priest and school leadership greeted the Creighton contingency, and the principal even teared up while making her acceptance speech.

"I was really touched by how much this technology meant to the school and their students," Trettel says.

In the weeks leading to the trip, the other nine Practicum in International Development students did a deep dive into the principles of business development in preparation for their work with Chronic Care International (CCI). Their goal was to help develop business plans for sustainable,



The lessons learned, though, far exceeded these tangible tasks.

For senior economics and management (social entrepreneurship track) double major and philosophy minor Taylr Bahr, these lessons included the importance of intentionality and living in the moment, the need to appreciate business viewpoints different from his own, that work and service is a form of prayer and that being humbled is actually a good thing. Perhaps most importantly, says the Burlington, Kansas, native, he discovered that the marginalized in our world are not simply recipients of our largesse but are often teachers and unselfish givers of profound gifts.

"Prior to this trip, I think I mostly thought of the poor as not having much to give me. I always had the perspective of 'what can I give them?' It is good that I have always felt called to give to the poor, but failing to recognize all the wonderful things they are able to give me was very naïve," Bahr says. "The Dominican people we met within the CCI campos gave us their hearts, minds and souls. They gave us their everything in that moment. They gave us hugs at the end of our discussions, and for all these things, I am eternally grateful."

Founded in 2010 by Omaha physician and Creighton faculty member Chuck Filipi and his daughter-in-law Linda Filipi, Chronic Care International addresses such persistent conditions as diabetes and hypertension in developing countries. Creighton alumnus Hans Dethlefs, BS'87, a family medicine physician at One World Community Health Center, serves as president.



Four times a year, Dethlefs leads teams to the DR to conduct clinics and work with CCI patient associations that educate fellow Dominicans on chronic health issues. During one of these trips, he met Frazier, who was teaching a section of the service-learning semester abroad program, Encuentro Dominicano. Dethlefs presented an idea he had been mulling over: engaging Heider students to work with CCI and its vibrant patient associations to develop business plans to help fund CCI's life-saving programming. Frazier readily agreed.

"It was great seeing ways that our work (through the BlueBox Program) would positively impact the educational experiences of Dominican students and provide resources for the teachers. At CCI, the patients were open to the student involvement and enjoyed the interactions that they had with the students," says Frazier, who called the trip a "transformative experience for Creighton students."



"I think the students appreciated knowing they could use their knowledge and skills to make a difference but also recognize that any one group can only do so much to address systemic issues like chronic poverty," he adds.

Trettel believes her education is empowering. She says in the past she struggled with the guilt of her good fortune, and coming in close contact with such extreme poverty, uncommon in the U.S., can often make observers freeze up or block the situation from their minds.

Guilt, however, is an unproductive emotion. She says she now feels something different — "energized" and "motivated."

"This experience in the Dominican Republic has taught me a new way to face this uncomfortable feeling," Trettel says. "Instead of freezing, I walked away with a game plan, an idea to use my education and resources to make positive change. My Creighton education taught me I don't need to be helpless in situations like these or embarrassed by the education I am able to receive. It's a tool to better the lives of others, however I can."

Bahr concurs. He admits that, at first, he was unsure of how to act in the batey populated by Haitian immigrants. He didn't want to overstep boundaries or treat the children like "subjects of a 'poverty vacation,'" he says. Then his initial guilt gave way to a feeling of responsibility. Helping to establish sustainable businesses in the DR and increasing educational opportunity in the bateys reaffirmed his desire "to work in public policy and advocate for poor and vulnerable populations" and join the Jesuit Volunteer Corps or serve as an Amate Fellow through the Archdiocese of Chicago after graduation.

Upon their return to campus, the students presented four potential venture ideas to CCI stakeholders: making cleaning supplies, creating a photocopy business, selling chickens and/or chicken eggs and selling water filters to the local communities. The photocopy and water filter businesses were chosen, and students spent the rest of the semester developing business plans for the two ventures.

"Safe drinking and cooking water is an expensive commodity in the campos around Santiago, and water filters would provide a solution to a larger community issue, as well as bringing revenue to CCI clinics," says Trettel, who, along with her classmates, conducted profitability analyses using data and research that CCI patient associations gathered to build a business proposal for the sale of water filters.

"I can definitely say this is the best class I have ever taken at Creighton," Trettel says.

*"I think the students appreciated knowing they could use their knowledge and skills to make a difference but also recognize that any one group can only do so much to address systemic issues like chronic poverty."*

*- Dr. Lance Frazier, Associate Professor of Management*



# Neuroscience Program holds 'Brain Day'

Creighton's neuroscience program held the first Creighton Brain Day in early February 2022 when 15 local high school students spent the day on campus with Creighton neuroscience students. Creighton's neuroscience program is an official regional site for the National Brain Bee, a competition for students ages 13-19 to promote the study of the brain. All participants took a written test, toured the physics, chemistry, and biology/neuroscience labs, conducted a sheep brain dissection, and were wired into electrodes to read electrical activity from complex movements of their eyes.

Creighton's neuroscience students who are members of Nu Rho Psi, the National Honor Society in Neuroscience, spoke with the high school students about their research throughout the day. The final event of Brain Day was a competition to determine the top participant, eligible to compete nationally at

the National Brain Bee on April 9, 2022. After 20 rounds of oral examination, Deeksha Sridher, a senior from Millard North, was awarded first place. Omaha Central students Madeline Galloway and Marcus Sherrod were awarded second and third places, respectively.

This year's Brain Day was supported by the Dr. George F. Haddix President's Faculty Research Fund awarded to Dr. Gwen King, PhD, Assistant Professor, and Dr. Annemarie Shibata, PhD, Professor. They are hopeful that this can become an annual event to grow knowledge about the brain across Omaha and promote STEM students' knowledge and excitement for advance neuroscience study.

***The Brain Day project recently received academic service-learning designation for the course NES 498***



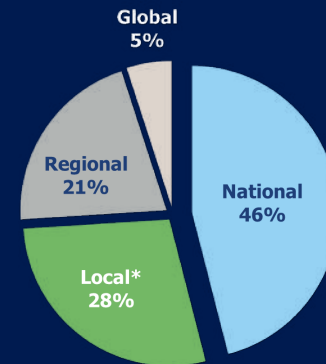
# Academic Service-Learning by the Numbers



**1,416 students**  
*847 unduplicated*



**28,320 service hours**  
*direct and indirect*



**60+ Community  
Partnerships**



**36 faculty**

Adam Sundberg  
Amy Lane  
Amy Nelson  
Amy Rogge  
Andrea Thinnes  
Angela Lederach  
Anne Ozar  
Ashley Fecht  
Bobbi Greiner  
Brian Kokensparger  
Carol Zuegner  
Catherine Fox

Charles Braymen  
Christopher Mihalo  
Cody Sasek  
Cristina Pop  
Daniel DiLeo  
Danielle Keller  
Diane Uchimiya  
Erin Blankenship-Sefczek  
Erin Johnston  
George McHendry  
Jill Harman  
Katelyn Cherney

Kelly Gould  
Lance Frazier  
Laura Finken  
Margarita Dubocq  
Marisa Welch  
Mary Watson  
Maya Khanna  
Peggy Rupprecht  
Samantha Senda-Cook  
Thomas Purcell  
Vicki Bautista





ACADEMIC SERVICE-LEARNING EMBEDDED IN

**29 Undergraduate Course Sections**

AND

**19 Graduate/Professional Course Sections**

College of Arts & Sciences.....	52%
School of Pharmacy & Health Professions.....	23%
Heider College of Business.....	8%
School of Medicine.....	8%
School of Dentistry.....	4%
School of Law.....	4%



**The frequency of students graduating with a bachelor's degree who earned credit in at least one AcSL course has continued to increase over the past three academic years.**

By AY 20-21, **almost half (46%)** of bachelor's degree graduates had taken at least once class.



# Student Learning Outcomes

*In a post-semester survey, students self-reported on outcomes resulting from their academic service-learning experiences:*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>CRITICAL THINKING</b>				
I was able to synthesize information from my service experience with various examples, facts, and theories from my class.	57%	43%	0%	0%
I was able to identify approaches to solving the problem, along with its limitations and implications, addressed by the class.	57%	39%	4%	0%
I was able to analyze and draw conclusions about societal problems in terms of social justice through examples, facts, or theories from my class.	61%	35%	4%	0%
<b>IGNATIAN VALUES</b>				
I felt a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and commitment to public action.	52%	43%	4%	0%
I was able refine my vision for serving the common good in my future work as a community leader, a global citizen, and a professional in my career field.	61%	35%	4%	0%
I was able to understand social justice implications of policies and identify opportunities to promote social justice as they relate to class content.	65%	30%	4%	0%
<b>DELIBERATIVE REFLECTION</b>				
My understanding of class content was deepened and my points of view were broadened.	57%	30%	13%	0%
My perspectives have changed significantly through reflection.	26%	57%	17%	0%
I was able to recognize morally relevant features of the social problem(s) being addressed in the context of the course content.	61%	35%	4%	0%
<b>GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES</b>				
I was able to explain the relationship between culture, social experience, human identities, and systems of power across different contexts / worldviews.	57%	35%	9%	0%
I was able to interpret my experiences with an unfamiliar community from perspectives other than my own worldview.	65%	26%	9%	0%
I was able to identify my own social cultural rules and biases and am analyze intercultural experiences from more than one worldview.	61%	35%	4%	0%
<b>COURSE ENGAGEMENT</b>				
The service experience made me more interested in the course content	68%	26%	5%	0%



# The Office of Academic Service-Learning



## ABOUT

Academic service-learning (ACSL) is an experiential educational strategy that integrates community service into academic courses so that learning is enhanced and community partners receive concrete benefits. Students study, serve and reflect on their experience in order to deepen their appropriation of knowledge.

The Office of Academic Service Learning (OASL) connects academic courses with community partners to enhance academic learning, meet community-identified needs, and foster global perspectives through engagement and reflection. Whether you are a student, faculty member, or community partner, the OASL is here to help you find opportunities to serve and learn in the community.

The OASL is guided by the Engaged Learning Committee. ACSL courses are approved through the Engaged Learning committee, an interdisciplinary team of faculty and community partners that have expertise in the field of academic service learning. This common application ensures essential criteria for ACSL have been met and a clear approval process cycle with curricula assessment and outcomes identified.



## GOALS

- ✦ The Creighton campus and community together in partnership share resources, address community-identified needs and help to educate students to become faithful and engaged agents of change.
- ✦ Every student engages in academic service-learning courses during their time at Creighton.
- ✦ Every school, college and program includes academic service-learning courses.
- ✦ Faculty are recognized and incentivized for teaching service-learning courses, especially in the rank and tenure process.



## MISSION

We connect academic courses with community partners to enhance academic learning, meet community-identified needs, and foster global perspectives through engagement and reflection



## VISION

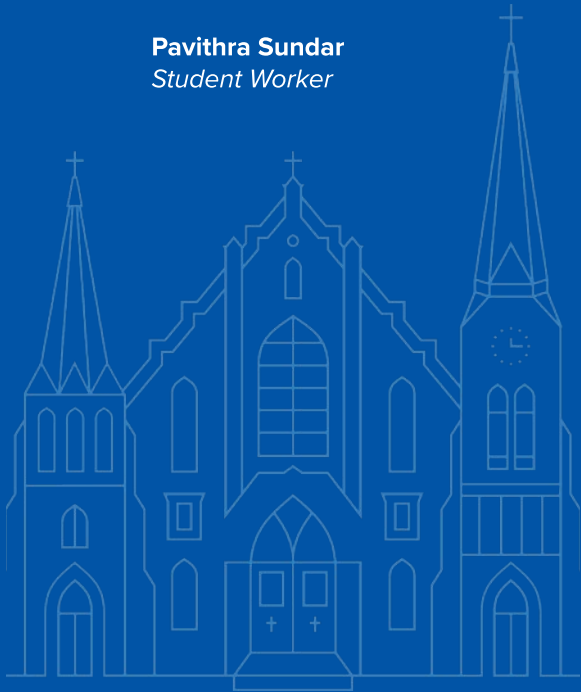
To create a campus culture that integrates teaching and learning through a commitment to service, civic engagement and positive social change which is highly valued, practiced, assessed, and recognized

# The Office of Academic Service-Learning

## Staff

**Dan Walsh, MSW, MPA, BA'09**  
*Director*

**Pavithra Sundar**  
*Student Worker*



## Engaged Learning Advisory Committee

**Alex Rödlach, SVD, PhD**  
*Professor, College of Arts and Sciences*

**Becca Huju**  
*Program Manager, Schlegel Center for Service and Justice*

**Colette O'Meara-McKinney, EdD**  
*Associate Dean, School of Dentistry*

**Debra Ford, PhD**  
*Associate Professor, Graduate School  
Associate Vice Provost, Center for Faculty Excellence*

**Guy McHendry, PhD**  
*Associate Professor, College of Arts and Sciences  
Interim Director, Magis Core Curriculum*

**Jennifer Jessen, EdD, RN, CNOR**  
*Assistant Professor, College of Nursing  
Executive Director, Center for Interprofessional Education, Practice, and Research*

**Kathleen Flecky, OTD, OTR/L**  
*Associate Professor, School of Pharmacy and Health Professions*

**Margo Minnich, DNP, RN**  
*Assistant Professor, College of Nursing*

**Paul McGreal, JD**  
*Professor, School of Law*

**Stacey Menzel Baker, PhD**  
*Professor, Heider College of Business*

**Theresa Townley, MD, MPH**  
*Associate Professor, School of Medicine*

**Vicki Bautista, EdD, NBC-HWC**  
*Assistant Professor, School of Medicine*





# Faculty Development Opportunities

## ***Available On Demand:***

### *Academic Service-Learning Online Seminar*

This online seminar reviews best practices, identify tools and resources, and offer reflections to assist faculty in creating academic service-learning (AcSL) courses. Over the course of 12 modules, participants will understand key aspects of AcSL pedagogy, including teaching in online settings. Interested faculty can complete all modules to receive a Certificate of Completion.

Enroll Today

## ***Coming in the 2022-23 Academic Year:***

### *Academic Service-Learning Fellowship Program*

OASL will be offering a year-long fellowship seminar to support faculty in designing academic service-learning courses. Stipends will be awarded upon program completion. Updates coming soon.

## CONTACT US

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For more information, visit us at:

<https://my.creighton.edu/geo/academicservicelearning/>

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Global Engagement Office  
Academic Service-Learning