

Center for Community Engagement

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020

(Revised September 2021)



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*The strategic plan is also available in the form of a spreadsheet. You can view that [here](#).

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INTRODUCTION

TCNJ's Center for Community Engagement (CCE) is the administrative home for the College's community engagement activities that integrate educational experiences with community service, student development, and civic participation. The CCE houses the Community Engaged Learning (CEL) Institute and Bonner Institute. Both Institutes educate students while simultaneously addressing community-identified needs through Community Engaged Learning Programs, Community Engagement Initiatives, Research & Evaluation, and three Bonner Programs: Scholars, Volunteers and AmeriCorps.

The Center transitioned from the Center for Community Engaged Learning and Research beginning in 2019 to clarify its role on campus and to distinguish between the work of the Bonner Institute and CEL Institute.

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING INSTITUTE

As the Community Engaged Learning (CEL) Institute, the CEL team manages different programs, coordinates initiatives, and facilitates research & evaluation. Community Engaged Learning is at the core of the Institute's work, which includes three components:

1. Relevant educational experience
2. Community-based activity that addresses a community-identified need
3. Reflective activity

CEL Objectives

- *Social Knowledge* - Identify the causes of significant social issues
- *Diversity of Communities* - Engage as part of diverse communities in culturally and contextually appropriate ways
- *Application of Knowledge* - Analyze and address social issues using disciplinary and/or course-based knowledge and skills
- *Systems & Structures* - Identify how systems of privilege and oppression affect individual and group opportunities and experiences
- *Civic Responsibility* - Actively contribute to sustaining and enhancing communities as members of local, regional, national, and global communities
- *Civic-Identity & Commitment* - Demonstrate goals to live a life of critically informed community engagement

* Modified from the AAC&U Civic Engagement Rubric

CEL Institute Programs

- *First-Year Community Engaged Learning (FYCEL) Experience* - First-Year Community Engaged Learning is a graduation requirement that brings the College's values to life, and introduces students to the culture of the campus. All first-year students are required to spend a minimum of eight hours learning about and addressing one of the unmet needs of the local or regional community. Students participate in a four-session introductory experience through IDS 103 in either the Fall or Spring Semester. The experience includes three class sessions of education/reflection and four hours of service. Content for the experience was developed and is delivered by TCNJ faculty and staff.
- *(Introductory) Community Engaged Learning (CEL)* - Community Engaged Learning includes a relevant educational experience based on the learning goals of the Center, a community-based activity that addresses a community-identified need and includes a reflection activity that helps students understand what they did, why they did it and what they can do next. CEL team has developed educational modules that address the CEL learning goals and modules for reflection activities that can be used in curricular or co-curricular experiences to enhance service experiences and make them CEL. In order to be designated CEL, experiences must address at least two learning goals, include 10 hours of service and a reflection activity. The CEL team can assist with community partner matching and implementation as needed.

- *Advanced Community Engaged Learning (ACEL)* - Advanced CEL, upper-level courses apply discipline-specific concepts and skills to address a community-identified need. These experiences are course-based, community engaged learning activities that complement the existing learning objectives of the course. Students have three opportunities to participate in ACEL:
 - *ACEL Designated Courses* - Faculty will work with the CCE to integrate CEL into specific courses and all students who enroll in that course will participate in the CEL experience. CEL Staff assist with project development, partner matching and implementation as needed. Each course must address three learning goals, include approximately 17 hours of direct or indirect service and include a CEL-related assignment.
 - *ACEL-by-Contract* - Students interested in integrating ACEL into non-designated courses may apply to complete an ACEL-by-Contract enhancement project. Students will work with the faculty member teaching the course where they would like to add ACEL in order to develop an enhancement that meets a requirement/assignment of the course and a community-identified need. Individual projects should meet the same requirements as a traditional ACEL course.
 - *Internships* - Students interested in completing a credit-bearing internship with a local community agency can enlist the help of the CEL staff to find a possible community partner and opportunity. Students interested should begin by talking to a faculty member in their field of interest and reaching out to the CCE for partnership help.

Community Engagement Initiatives

There are many projects students, faculty and staff participate in on campus that bring value to both our students and the local community. The CEL team assists with coordination and encourages cross-campus collaboration in community engagement work. CEL staff assist students, faculty, staff and partners with developing curricular or co-curricular service projects, finding and applying for external funding, and celebrating successes with the campus and the greater TCNJ community.

The CCE facilitates and supports the following community engagement projects:

- *Summer Community Leaders* - In partnership with NJ AmeriCorps, students can apply for summer internships with community partner agencies.
- *Capital City Youth Violence Coalition (CCYVC)* - In partnership with the NJ Office of the Attorney General, CCYVC aims to create a city where youth are safe through collaboration, coordination and the sharing of resources. Local stakeholders gather together to share their knowledge about policies, programs, services and best practices so they can make informed recommendations to municipal, county and state officials through the Youth Safety Playbook.
- *Connect Trenton* - In partnership with Princeton Area Community Foundation's All Kids Thrive Initiative and Trenton Public Schools, the Connect Trenton Coordinator works in Trenton's Ninth Grade Academy to help get students connected to local services to address barriers to student success.
- *Mercer County Reentry Task Force* - In partnership with Mercer County Human Services, the Task Force aims to build a safer and more just Mercer County through advocacy, awareness building, and collaborative action.

- *Choice Neighborhoods* - In supporting the work of the Trenton Housing Authority, CCE will be assisting with the Choice Neighborhoods initiative to assess the needs and interests of residents.

Research and Evaluation

The CEL staff assesses and shares outcomes of the FYCEL and ACEL experiences and supports faculty in research, data collection, grant application and publication of CEL projects. Students and faculty have assisted with research and evaluation projects for community partners on topics such as gun violence, youth development and violence prevention, youth engagement, mentoring, domestic violence and many more.

BONNER INSTITUTE

Program Overview

The Bonner Community Scholars Program is a four-year student and community development program that provides participants with opportunities to enhance their own skills while promoting positive change.

Learning Outcomes

For eight semesters Bonner Scholars engage in the program with the following learning outcomes in mind:

- *Civic and Community Engagement* - Develop an understanding of how and why organizations, individuals, and partnerships between stakeholders can often build the capacities of communities.
- *Social Justice* - Develop the ability to identify, analyze, and address social injustices.
- *Structural and Systemic Change* - Develop the ability to identify, analyze and address systemic and structural contexts that produce injustes and to work with others to create systemic and structural change.
- *Personal and Professional Development* - Develop the ability to identify and achieve personal and professional goals.
- *Diversity of Communities and Culture* - Develop an understanding and appreciation of the value of people and cultures different from their own.

Service

Bonner Scholars serve at a matched community partner site in one or more of the following areas:

- Direct service
- Research & information gathering
- Curriculum, program or lesson plan development
- Outreach, communications, organizing, public relations
- Training, technical assistance, conference & meeting services
- Policy analysis, issue awareness-forums, legislative updates
- Resource development, fundraising

Training & Education

The Bonner Institute integrates the exploration of the Bonner Common Commitments and learning outcomes into student work in various ways, including reflection activities, trainings, film screenings, discussions, and coursework.

Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- *Freshman Seminar* - First Seminar Program (FSP) 162-09: Social Justice: Theory, Problems & Practice.
- *Bonner Meetings* - Bonner Scholars participate in bi-weekly educational meetings that aim to enhance insight on issue areas and responses to social injustices.
- *Service Trips & Cultural Opportunities* - Bonner Scholars are offered a series of educational opportunities to increase their knowledge of democracy, citizenship, as well as their ability to experience and engage with different communities locally and globally.
- Expectations and experiences are scaffolded, in the context of community service, engagement, and within students' academic and co-curricular learning. At the core of this model is the opportunity for students to work intensively with a community partner over each semester, often supplemented by full-time summer internships.

Bonner Volunteers

A number of Bonner community partners welcome additional volunteers. TCNJ students who volunteer alongside Bonner Scholars are called Bonner Volunteers (B-Vols). B-Vols are able to serve on a regular or occasional basis, and often assist with large projects or last-minute needs. Bonner Volunteers are instrumental members of our site teams, and often apply to the Bonner Community Scholars programs after serving with us for a year.

PROCESS

Through a series of meetings over several months, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) collaboratively created this current strategic plan. Beginning in February 2020, the CCE engaged in discussing the reconstruction of the strategic plan created in 2016. Working from the previous plan, the Center's staff meticulously sorted through past goals, determining which were achieved and which we want to continue to pursue. Lori Johansson (Research and Operations Coordinator) conducted research into methods and models for strategic planning. The Center decided on Cascade's framework as a model to create our strategic plan. (<https://www.executestrategy.net/>) The leadership team of the Center, comprised of Brittany Aydelotte (Director of Community Engaged Learning Institute), Althia Muse (Director of Bonner Institute), Katherine Kahn (Program Manager of TCNJ Bonner Community Scholars), and Megan Teitelbaum (CEL Manager), reviewed the proposed process for the planning and created a timeline for the meetings. The Community Engaged Learning Council also advised the Center on ways to approach the new strategic plan throughout the research period.

The CEL Institute and Bonner Institute conducted meetings with their teams throughout the Spring 2020 semester and evaluated the past goals from the previous plan. From May through September 2020, the CCE staff participated in strategic plan meetings and individually completed assignments for feedback as part of the process. The Center's faculty fellow, Dr. Robert McGreevey engaged in these meetings with essential guidance as chair of the Community Engaged Learning Council, offering the perspective of faculty. Staff updated the Center's mission with more appropriate language with the Center's current goals and aspirations. Using information from the staff meetings in the Spring, the staff next conducted conversations around the goals of the Center. Each staff member completed assignments previous to the meetings to capture individual staff's thoughts on what the Center should prioritize. The assignments were the basis for each meeting, driving a dynamic conversation and aiding in the deliberations. We agreed upon four focus areas to concentrate our efforts to achieve sustainable success.

After determining the focus areas, the Center held a virtual meeting in June 2020 where we presented the original draft of the mission and focus areas to stakeholders, including community partners, faculty, and staff. With their feedback, we then created the objectives, projects, and key performance indicators (KPIs) through a similar approach of meetings and assignments. This procedure ensured the inclusion of both individual opinions and collaborative agreements. In addition to the creation of detailed projects and KPIs, we established a timeline for each project and assigned project leads.

This strategic plan was created with the intention of evaluating it annually to ensure accountability. We decided a flexible approach that adapts for growth throughout the years would be more advantageous than a fixed five-year plan. As the strategic plan was created to be evaluated and re-assessed annually, the Center is reviewing the strategic plan in 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024. We are confident that this plan will allow for more productivity while avoiding burnout. We are able to be realistic about our capacity throughout the year while still achieving ambitious goals.

MISSION

Grounded in TCNJ’s mission to “empower its diverse students, staff, and faculty to sustain and enhance their communities,” as well as TCNJ’s commitment to the public purpose of higher education, TCNJ’s Center for Community Engagement develops lifelong learners who are prepared to lead lives that are critically informed through community and civic engagement.

We do this by delivering educational experiences, service opportunities, and critical reflection that connect TCNJ students and faculty with community members and organizations in reciprocal collaborations.

These collaborations enhance the ability of participants and organizations to understand and address the contexts and causes of social injustices and community-identified concerns.

FOCUS AREAS

Through careful consideration and revision, we have deduced four focus areas that as a Center we will concentrate on. We utilized these areas of focus to identify our objectives. With those objectives established, we were able to conceptualize specific projects and determine appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of each focus area.

Focus Areas include:

1. *Awareness and Understanding of Center:* Since it is vital to our collaborative efforts, we will focus on spreading awareness and understanding of the Center to the campus and larger communities. As the Center establishes its identity through a name change, we want to ensure clarity of the Center’s work and each Institutes’ roles.
2. *Intentional Stakeholder Engagement:* Our stakeholders are crucial to ensuring effective community engagement and the programs that the Center operates. Because of this important role, intentional stakeholder engagement is an area we are committed to giving proper attention.
3. *Innovative and Mission-Driven Opportunities:* The incorporation of social justice and a commitment to Trenton were both recurring themes in conversations throughout the years at the CCE. It is of utmost importance to the Center to not only further educate students on how to be responsible community members, but also to envision creative solutions and accept opportunities for growth.
4. *Internal Operations:* As the other focus areas are outward facing, we have designated an area of concentration for internal operations. These are the foundation for a sustainable program to support progressive ideas across the Center.

YEAR 1: OBJECTIVES, PROJECTS & KPIS

We track the success of the Center's strategic plan through key performance indicators (KPIs). Over the first year of the plan, we have completed KPIs both in specific focus areas, as well as in general.

Overall KPIs achieved in Year 1 of the strategic plan include:

1. One conference / presentation attended
2. Attended/organized two group meetings per semester with governance, administration, and deans
3. Co-sponsored minimum of one event per semester
4. Three CEL submissions/presentations to conferences

FOCUS AREA 1: AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF CENTER

KPIs achieved in Focus Area 1 include:

1. Each CCE staff member is on at least one campus committee, coalition, council, etc.
2. Each division is on at least one external community committee, coalition, council, etc.
3. Completion of newsletter for Fall, Spring and Summer
4. Increased followers on Bonner Instagram by 10%
5. Tweeted 20 times a month on CCE Twitter
6. Recognized minimum of two students, partners, and faculty per semester (newsletter, website, campus newspaper, social media, TCNJ Today page)
7. Shared/highlighted one faculty publication
8. Completed and shared a CCE report three times each year
9. Two CEL and two Bonner submissions to present at conferences
10. Plan developed for Carnegie Classification

Our first objective is to communicate CCE roles and goals to the campus and larger community.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Ensure CCE representation on committees, coalitions, councils, etc. across campus and larger communities.
2. Develop a communications system with strategies to disseminate, promote, and market CCE activities for TCNJ and external audiences with consistent, updated content.
3. Facilitate informational campus tours to communicate our goals with other offices and discuss collaboration opportunities.
4. Expand social media presence and complete website redesign with clear information on what we do, how to work with us, and our impact.

Our second objective is to articulate and share student, college, and community impact outcomes and indicators.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Develop a template, complete and distribute CCE reports each semester in a graphically-interesting way that includes student, college and community impact.
2. Encourage TCNJ faculty submission for community engagement work in peer-reviewed and professional outlets.
3. Expand social media presence and complete website redesign with clear information on what we do, how to work with us, and our impact.

Our third objective is to maintain and expand national recognition for TCNJ and the Center's efforts.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Present at conferences and panels.
2. Prepare for Carnegie Classification.

FOCUS AREA 2: INTENTIONAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

KPIs achieved in Focus Area 2 include:

1. Two new disciplinary standards have added a CEL component
2. Completion of Bonner faculty fellow role/job description including capstone, research, and curricular support
3. Hosted two panels and/or events with partners per semester: (a) for a Bonner-related project, and (b) for a CEL-related project

Our first objective is to coordinate and encourage collaborative campus-wide community engagement.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Create a map of past, present, and prospective campus wide community engagement projects and partners.
2. Facilitate informational campus tours to communicate our goals with other offices and discuss collaboration opportunities.

Our second objective is to increase faculty participation in CCE programming.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Increase the number of disciplinary standards that include community engaged learning projects.
2. Create instructional resources for CEL faculty to be included on the website.
3. Facilitate informational campus tours to communicate our goals with other offices and discuss collaboration opportunities.
4. Create Bonner Faculty Fellow/Advisor role.

Our third objective is to elevate community partner and stakeholder voice and utilize expertise.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Create partnership resources for CEL community organizations to be included on the website.
2. Create CCE (community partners and alumni) advisory board.
3. Create and communicate clear partnership guidelines, including application process and requirements.
4. Prioritize inclusion of campus and community partners as co-educators whenever applicable.

FOCUS AREA 3: INNOVATIVE AND MISSION-DRIVEN OPPORTUNITIES

KPIs achieved in Focus Area 3 include:

1. Collaborated with at least one other campus office per semester to support CCE-related programming for the campus community.
2. CCE staff assisted two community partners with projects

3. At least one community meeting hosted in Trenton related to Bonner Issue Areas of education, self sufficiency/adult education, and environmental/foods security
4. Bonner/CCE presence at a minimum of two Trenton community meetings per semester per coordinator
5. Established partnership at elementary, middle, and highschool
6. Completion of annual and cohort meetings and training that meet the identified Bonner Foundation learning outcomes
7. Completion of annual framework for Student Development Meetings with facilitation guides for each
8. Increased the number of opportunities for Bonner Scholars to facilitate Student Development Meetings
9. Met with Bonner Foundation representatives once per semester to ensure curriculum alignment with foundation priorities

Our first objective is to enhance collaborative efforts to integrate community engagement, equity, and social justice across campus.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Provide training and support for faculty & staff on mediating difficult conversations.
2. Increase civic engagement and voter education through TCNJ Votes.
3. Increase cross-campus collaborations for social justice education and co-sponsor events.
4. Create TCNJ-specific advocacy/activism training to understand the systems of power and change at TCNJ.
5. Prioritize inclusion of campus and community partners as co-educators whenever applicable.

Our second objective is to increase TCNJ/CCE presence in Trenton.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Increase support for community partner organizations to deepen relationships.
2. Create a virtual bulletin board of service.
3. Plan Bonner issue area community partner meetings in Trenton location on a semester basis.
4. Increase Bonner involvement across grade levels in Trenton schools to build an educational pipeline for students to access higher education post secondary.

Our third objective is to refine and strengthen CCE curricula.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Develop ACEL pathways.
2. Promote credit-bearing curricular components to Bonner Community Scholars experience.
3. Align curriculum to Bonner Foundation student development model.

FOCUS AREA 4: INTERNAL OPERATIONS

Key Performance Indicators achieved in Focus Area 4 include:

1. Developed standardized “list and timeline for data collection” based on specific program reporting deadlines.
2. Development and implementation of professional development plan template and ongoing supervision/reflection process
3. Integration of data- and outcomes-driven goal setting in personal development plan

4. 75% of projects completed in strategic plan
5. Full center check in twice a semester about expectations, roles, and goals

Our first objective is to foster a culture of assessment, accountability, and improvement.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Create a list and timeline for data collection needs and feedback for each program.

Our second objective is to support CCE staff through professional development and engagement opportunities.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Develop and implement onboarding and support continual training of CCE staff.
2. Create personal development plans for staff members.

Our third objective is to establish/clarify CCE office expectations, roles and goals.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Create a staff handbook as the central location of all office policies.
2. Fulfil commitment to the strategic plan.

YEAR 2: OBJECTIVES & PROJECTS

FOCUS AREA 1: AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF CENTER

Our first objective is to communicate CCE roles and goals to the campus and larger community.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Create a process to share and evaluate CCE representation on committees, coalitions, councils, etc. across campus and larger communities.
2. Plan a system to collaborate with the Communications office.
3. Systematize and streamline Bonner social media practices.
4. Facilitate informational campus tours to communicate our goals with other offices and discuss collaboration opportunities. (Ongoing Project)

Our second objective is to articulate and share student, college, and community impact outcomes and indicators.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Systematize and streamline Bonner social media practices.
2. Present to stakeholders group, campus, and community.

Our third objective is to maintain and expand national recognition for TCNJ and the Center's efforts.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Present at conferences and panels. (Ongoing Project)

FOCUS AREA 2: INTENTIONAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Our first objective is to coordinate and encourage collaborative campus-wide community engagement.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Create a map of past, present, and prospective campus wide community engagement projects and partners.

Our second objective is to increase faculty participation in CCE programming.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Post and hire faculty fellow in spring and summer 2022
2. Increase number of disciplinary standards that include community engaged learning projects. (Ongoing Project)

Our third objective is to elevate community partner and stakeholder voice and utilize expertise.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Create partnership resources for CEL community organizations to be included on website.
2. Create CCE (community partners and alumni) advisory board.

FOCUS AREA 3: INNOVATIVE AND MISSION-DRIVEN OPPORTUNITIES

Our first objective is to enhance collaborative efforts to integrate community engagement, equity, and social justice across campus.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Coordinate with Inclusive Excellence to implement and integrate training.
2. Increase cross-campus collaborations for social justice education and co-sponsor events.

Our second objective is to increase TCNJ/CCE presence in Trenton.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Create a virtual bulletin board of service.
2. Work with K-12 educational partnerships to further develop and strengthen pipeline to success for Trenton to TCNJ students.
3. Plan Bonner issue area community partner meetings in Trenton location on a semester basis. (Ongoing Project)

Our third objective is to refine and strengthen CCE curricula.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Promote credit-bearing curricular components to Bonner Community Scholars experience. (Ongoing Project)

FOCUS AREA 4: INTERNAL OPERATIONS

Our first objective is to foster a culture of assessment, accountability, and improvement.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Implement and adjust the system for data collection needs and feedback for each program.

Our second objective is to support CCE staff through professional development and engagement opportunities.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Develop, implement and support continual training of CCE staff.
2. Develop and pilot process for CCE staff onboarding.
3. Implement and adjust personal development plans for staff members.

Our third objective is to establish/clarify CCE office expectations, roles and goals.

To deliver this, projects comprise:

1. Fulfill commitment to the strategic plan. (Ongoing Project)

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING INSTITUTE

Brittany Aydelotte - *Director of Community Engagement*

Megan Teitelbaum - *CEL Manager (FYCEL)*

Raj Manimaran - *CEL Coordinator (ACEL)*

Amy Schratz - *CEL Coordinator (ACEL)*

Luke Thompson - *Connect Trenton Coordinator*

BONNER INSTITUTE

Althia Muse - *Director of Bonner Institute*

Katie Kahn - *Program Manager of TCNJ Bonner Community Scholars*

Destiny De La Rosa - *TCNJ Bonner Community Scholar Program Coordinator*

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CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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