

Programmatic Excellence and Innovation in Learning White Paper:

California State University, East Bay

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This PEIL planning project involved conducting a survey, focus groups and key informant interviews with CSUEB faculty, staff and students in order to assess (1) current levels of involvement in community-engaged pedagogy, research and campus activities, (2) student, faculty and staff perspectives on how these practices contribute to student learning outcomes and (3) student, faculty and staff perspectives on barriers that inhibit and facilitators that support implementation of and benefit from these practices. Findings indicate wide variance in levels of student exposure to and staff and faculty implementation of all identified community engagement practices, despite strong endorsements of the value of these practices for supporting five of six of CSUEB's institutional learning outcomes. Findings suggest that barriers to the implementation of these practices at CSUEB include; limited staff and faculty knowledge of community engagement practices, varied perceptions of institutional

roles are traditional instruction and research, and has been conceptualized as the "third mission" of higher education (Bernardo, Butcher & Howard, 2012).

The methods and practices associated with community engagement encompass a wide variety of activities that include service, internships, practicum, and field placements associated with coursework, degrees and credentialing; community-engaged research that occurs in the context of coursework or independent scholarship; and co-curricular activities, events and programs that engage students, on and off-campus service projects. All community engagement activities are intended to put University campuses into dialogue and active cooperation with their surrounding geographical and sociopolitical communities in ways that provide clear benefits to those communities, to the achievement of the Universities' missions and, most centrally, to student learning and development.

The American Association of Colleges and Universities has identified service learning, community-based learning and internships as among the high impact practices most central to student preparation for work, citizenship and life (Kuh, 2008). The key features of these experiences are identified as (1) giving students the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills to real world settings and (2) providing a format for students to reflect on their service experiences in the classroom setting. Kuh (2008) notes that such experiences model the ideas that working with community partners and giving back to the community are both important outcomes associated with the college experience.

Relationship of Community Engagement to CSUEB Institutional Learning Outcomes

The CSUEB Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are focused on developing student skills and competencies related to; (1) creative, critical and analytical thinking and reasoning, (2) strong communication skills, (3) addressing diversity and multiculturalism, (4) collaboration

teamwork and leadership, (5) acting responsibly and sustainability locally, nationally and globally, and (6) expertise in a specialized discipline. Participation in community engaged learning experiences has the potential to bring to life the relevance of the University mission statement to students' learning and development, and to deepen students' understanding and application of these ILOs.

The data assessing the impact of community engagement practices on student learning and success highlights the ways in which community engagement experiences can be intertwined with other higher education practices so that each is synergistically enhanced. As such, many community engagement experiences align with multiple ILOs. Community engagement experiences such as service learning, community based research and community service projects require creative, critical and analytical thinking and reasoning of participants

Students' collaborative interactions with communities and community organizations in the context of community-engaged learning can serve to initiate student awareness of the need for social responsibility and thus promote their investment in acting sustainably at a local level. This experience can, in turn, help develop students' awareness of the need for social responsibility at the national and global levels, and provide a platform for considering how service can be scaled to different levels of impact. Finally, the integration of real-world experiences into course work, research and co-curricular activities is often seen as essential to the development of expertise in a specialized discipline. When upper division students are able to observe and demonstrate work their area of expertise, they are uniquely enabled to realize the value of their specialized disciplinary knowledge. These experiences build student confidence and provide a springboard to expand and apply new skills in local, national and global settings.

Scholarship on Community Engagement and Student Learning & Success

A growing literature supports the unique utility of community engaged pedagogy, research and co-curricular experiences for student learning. In an analysis of major national surveys of these practices, Campus Compact (2008) concludes that "community-based, participatory educational experiences can positively contribute to students' academic performance and persistence" (p. 2). Vogelgesang, Ikeda, Gilmartin, & Keup (2002) report that engaging in service through either service learning or volunteerism is positively correlated with student persistence, student satisfaction, and students' sense of personal success at college. Kuh, Kinzie, Cruce, Shoup & Gonyea (2007) report that community engagement during college students' first year of study yields particularly significant gains for historically underserved students, especially in student persistence.

identified grants as the single largest source of his or her educational funding, covering 39% of educational expenses.

I see the potential value of using community engagement practices in my field/discipline.	46	48	15	1	3
I am interested in learning more about using community engagement practices at CSUEB.	30	44	31	5	3
I believe that students perceive community engagement practices as					

Service learning, internship or practicum linked to a class or degree	127	158
Service learning, internship or practicum NOT linked to a class or degree (but still linked to CSUEB)	49	230
Community-based research, action research or participatory research linked to a class or degree	93	186
Community-based research, action research or participatory research NOT linked to a class or degree (but still linked to CSUEB)	34	244
Off-campus community service project linked to a class or degree	58	217
Off-campus community service project NOT linked to a class or degree (but still linked to CSUEB)	42	228

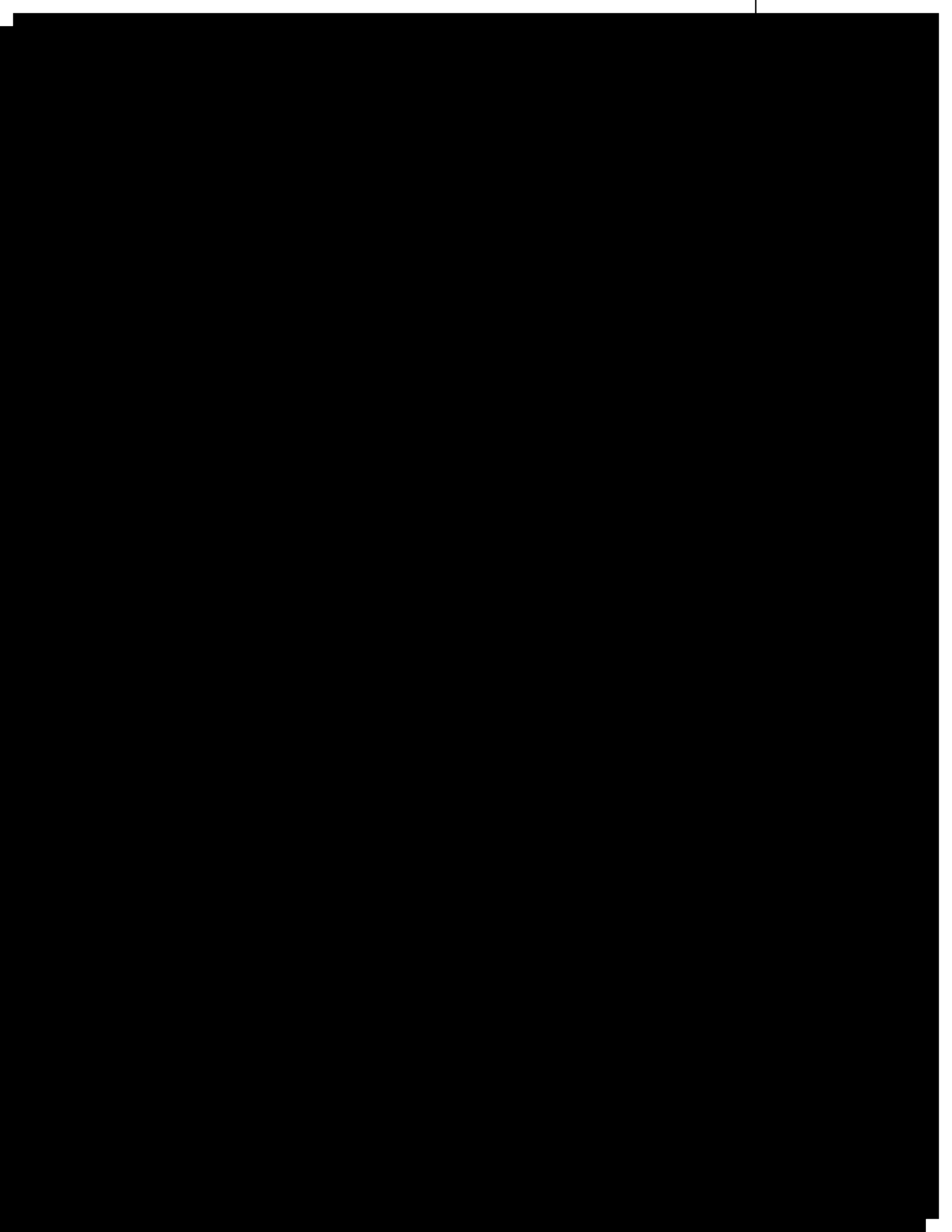
through teaching or coordinating course or degree programs that involve service learning, internships and practicum, as opposed to through freestanding on- or off-campus service projects or independent research. As shown in Table 8, 61% of staff and faculty participants reported teaching or coordinating courses involving service learning, internships and practicum. As part of their work at CSUEB, 54% of staff and faculty participants indicated that they have participated in off-campus service projects, and 50% of indicated that they have participated in on-campus service projects. Of note, only 42% indicated

two quarters per academic year, and 16% reported doing so occasionally. The remaining 30% of staff and faculty participants reported never doing so. As shown in Table 9 as well, similar breakdowns in frequency data related to the other community engagement practices surveyed translate into low rates of regular utilization of these practices by the staff and faculty surveyed.

Service learning, internships, field placements, or clinical hours					
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In addition, unlike other response patterns, students are more likely than staff and faculty to do so.

Thinking critically	240	48	100	13



Perceived Barriers to and Facilitators of Community Engagement at CSUEB

In order to assess what actions are needed to build capacity for community engagement at CSUEB, staff and faculty members were asked about their perceptions of potential barriers to the implementation of community engagement practices on campus, including negative outcomes that might associated with these practices, as well as perceived levels of attitudinal and concrete support for them within CSUEB as an institution. As seen in Table 16, 71% of staff and faculty endorsed the belief that using community engagement practices increases workload. In addition, 50% agreed that engaging in these practices potentially exposes staff, faculty and students to physical, legal, or other risks. These responses reveal staff and faculty concerns about the impact of using community engagement practices on their workloads, and about potential risks associated with implementing these practices, that will need to be addressed systemically in order to increase community engagement capacity on campus.

Using community engagement practices increases my workload.	30	50	30	1	2
Using community engagement practices exposes staff/faculty to physical, legal or other risks.	11	46	34	17	5
Using community engagement practices exposes students to physical, legal or other risks.	11	46	34	17	5

Comparison of data presented in Tables 17 and 18 provides information about another potential barrier to the implementation of community engagement practices as CSUEB. As shown in Table 17, marginal majorities of staff and faculty believe that community engagement practices are valued at CSUEB: 65% feel that community engagement practices are valued

within their Departments or Programs, 58% feel that these practices are valued within their Colleges/Divisions, and 61% agree that they are valued within CSUEB's institutional culture. However, Table 18 demonstrates that far fewer staff and faculty are certain that this attitudinal support is sufficiently backed by concrete resources and infrastructure.

Community engagement practices are valued within the culture of my Department/Program.	30	44	27	7	6
Community engagement practices are valued within the culture of my College/Division.					

In addition, participants observe that simultaneously and perhaps independently, an embedded culture of community engagement awareness and practice appears to be developing within the CSUEB faculty. This is perceived as being a function of younger, more recently trained faculty arriving at CSUEB with prior awareness of and training and experience in community engagement practices. It is also noted that other faculty may simultaneously be starting to recognize the value of community engagement practices for student learning and success, perhaps as the result of organically changing socio-political attitudes and student needs on campus.

However, it appears that this growing awareness of community engagement is still effectively confined to disciplines with an existing tradition of utilizing community engagement practices. The strong awareness of the drive to build community engagement on campus at CSUEB appears to be less well known to disciplines within which these practices are not customarily integrated within existing curricula and culture. This is a significant point because it identifies a specific opening through which the University can transition from a place that uses limited infrastructure and support to enact community engagement practices within specific disciplines and programs, to a place where community engagement is intrinsic to the culture of the institution. By shifting this culture institution-wide through strong infrastructural support from administration and explicit recognition of the importance of community engagement to CSUEB students and community, these practices can be more widely integrated into academics, co-curricular activities and athletics, and other key elements of student and faculty life.

Infrastructure and Resources

Focus group and interview participants' assessments of the infrastructural support and resources available for community engagement efforts on campus vary considerably. Most of

these assessments focus on the levels of support that are available to faculty already involved in community engagement at CSUEB. At one end of the spectrum is a sentiment that was repeated many times over: Without real prioritization and funding what is the point? On the other end of the spectrum, one individual indicated that the infrastructural issues have been, or are being, effectively dealt with and that expanded implementation comes down to staff and faculty either choosing to become involved in these practices or not. In the middle of this spectrum, there is optimistic recognition of the Provost's increased funding to service learning, but also acknowledgement that such funding is a drop in the bucket compared to what is needed.

The most clearly emergent theme in relation to infrastructure and resources is the need for further investment in them. One interviewee proposed creating a proper Office of Community Engagement at the administrative level of Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, to coordinate *all aspects* of community engagement, rather than only service learning. There is agreement that this fundamental change would constitute a significant step toward developing an intrinsic culture of community engagement at CSUEB. More widely, participants clearly expressed little optimism that a University-wide cultural shift toward community engagement will succeed without (1) significant funding for infrastructure and resources that aid in the logistics, facilitation and management of community engagement efforts, and (2) release time for faculty to develop and implement these practices.

Structural, Practical and Logistical Issues

Participants raise a wide range of structural, practical and logistical issues related to the implementation of community engagement practices on campus. Some participants described a lack of dissemination of key information about what community engagement resources are available to faculty now. Others noted a lack of information sharing among various faculty,

departments and programs about their community engagement involvements. Other participants raised issues related to

it is deeply embedded in the University's cultural fabric.

Both the staff/faculty focus group and the key informant interviews conducted with CSUEB co-curricular program staff, faculty and administrators represent a broad range of experiences with and knowledge of community engagement as practiced at CSUEB. As such, they yielded a number of specific recommendations for enhancing community engagement capacity at CSUEB.

Implications of Findings for Learning and Student Success

It seems clear that CSUEB is uniquely positioned to systematically implement and benefit from community-engaged pedagogies, research and co-curricular activities. As a campus that serves high proportions of ethnic minority students, first generation college students, non-traditionally aged students and international students, our student body is one for whom community engagement can be especially valuable for learning and skill development (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2012; Kuh et al, 2007). Being situated within (and mandated to serve) the diverse and vibrant geographical, racial/ethnic, economic and political communities of the East Bay, our campus is surrounded by a dizzying array of complex social problems, as well as nationally innovative efforts to address those problems. The dynamic communities of the East Bay provide enviable opportunities for engagement that can address identified community needs, connect students with communities and issues of meaning to them, and better prepare graduates to apply the knowledge and skills they develop at CSUEB outside of the classroom.

However, in order for our campus to manifest the benefits of these practices for students, several goals must be accomplished. First, before such practices can be effectively implemented,

the concepts associated with various forms of community engagement must be clearly understood by a significant proportion of faculty, co-curricular staff and administrators, based on a common set of definitions and expectations. Next, in order for our students to have opportunities to participate in and benefit from well-conceived and well-executed community engagement endeavors, faculty, co-curricular staff and administrators must view those endeavors as valuable (and even essential) to institutionally defined educational goals. Finally, in order to develop and integrate community engagement practices across campus, significant institutional infrastructure and resources must be dedicated to enacting the changes needed to achieve these collective visions. As such, CSUEB has much work to do among the institutions, individuals, and communities in question in order to maximize the potential impact of community engagement practices on student learning on our campus.

Excellence and Innovation in Community Engagement

The development and implementation of well-conceived and well-executed community engagement programs is based on many factors, including the adoption of soundly theoretically-driven teaching and learning practices, the cultivation of new relationships both within and outside of the University and collaborative work among faculty, staff and students. As a starting point, it seems unrealistic to assume that already burdened staff and faculty will be able to develop such relationships, fundamentally alter existing curricula,

supportive functions such as disseminating programmatic information both on and off campus, providing staff and faculty education, support and training around a variety of community engagement practices, and maintaining a current and complete web presence. It would also encompass logistical support

Thus, the development of a truly University-wide culture of community engagement might begin with workshops led by knowledgeable staff and faculty-led (with stipends) for others who are interested in and at least marginally able to develop community engagement courses, research plans and service projects appropriate to their disciplines. However, unlike colleagues in disciplines where community engagement is culturally embedded, faculty in disciplines with little or no community engagement investment will be faced with the non-trivial challenge of building effective community engagement efforts that address the needs of the University, students and communities, from the ground up.

As such, the Office of Community Engagement would need to have programs and personnel focused on these non-traditional community engagement disciplines with the goal of providing fundamental education about various types community engagement as well as existing pedagogical and research tools and methods. This would have the effect of developing a common culture with a well-defined base

critical to accomplishing these goals stems from this analysis:

Refrain from re-inventing the wheel: Utilize the many outstanding existing University community engagement programs and research initiatives from which theoretically-driven, research-based

Recognize, differentiate and credit accordingly community engagement efforts that contribute to the public good, versus traditional internships and fieldwork that often focus on benefitting the student and employer through the accumulation of clinical hours.

Provide non-departmentally based University funding for student internships

Provide non-departmentally based University funding for student grants, fellowships and awards related to community engaged learning, research and service.

Provide a Community Engagement web-button on the CSUEB Homepage that showcases University community engagement activities past, present and future.

Produce and disseminate yearly University-wide reports that summarize past, present and future community engagement programs, events and opportunities. Many staff and faculty who are involved with community engagement on campus have little to no knowledge of what others on campus are doing in relation to community engagement.

It is the hope of the research team that the analysis and recommendations presented here will provide a data-based foundation for the development and prioritization of strategies for increasing CSUEB's capacity for community engagement. It is also our hope that they will serve as critical baseline measurements against which

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Dr. E. Maxwell Davis is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Development and Women's Studies at CSU East Bay, where she teaches courses in social science research and women's health, but she began her career as a medical social worker providing direct services to people living with HIV/AIDS in community health settings. In between, she worked in research at the University of Southern California, Drew CARES and AIDS Project Los Angeles. Her interests include behavioral aspects of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment for marginalized consumer populations, the intersection of HIV/AIDS and substance abuse, and health care disparities shaped by gender, sexuality, race, culture and socioeconomic status. In her scholarship, she seeks to use community-based and participatory action research methods, interdisciplinary scholarship, and qualitative and mixed methods to integrate critical theory and applied social science.

one of a small team coordinating the Freshman Day of Service, which in 2013 involved 1250 students and 30 diverse community partners in over 60 events over eight weeks. Ms. Restaino's MA thesis in Socio-Cultural Anthropology, "Achual Sustainable Arts Project," relied on her connections throughout Central, South America, Europe and Nepal and revealed the value and challenges between micro-enterprise and a subsistence community.

Dr. Luther M. Strayer is an Associate Professor of Geology in the Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences at CSU East Bay, where he teaches lower-level General Education courses focusing on introductory earth sciences and natural disasters, and both undergraduate and graduate geology major's classes. He is structural geologist (faults, folds, mountain belts, etc.) specializing in two very different areas: field geology and numerical models of compressional mountain belts. Dr. Strayer is currently working collaboratively with scientists in Taiwan on quantitatively testing theoretical models of accretionary wedge formation, and most recently conceived, proposed, and now is coordinating the *East Bay Seismic Experiment*, an open-sourced, cooperative effort between CSUEB and the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) to utilize the seismic source resulting from the implosion of Warren Hall (Summer 2013), which will ideally provide significant new data on the geometry and behavior of the Hayward fault and the seismic response of the area immediate around within the CSUEB campus community. Dr. Strayer has published articles in the *Journal of Structural Geology*, *Tectonics* and *Water Resources Research*, and 2 chapters in *Thrust Tectonics and Hydrocarbon Systems* (McClay ed. 2004), and an invited speaker at the *Thrust Tectonics '99* conference at the Royal Holloway University.