

SOME FAQs AND GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGING NONPROFIT COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN YOUR COURSES

Community engagement is one of the foundations of Serve-Learn-Sustain, and we encourage faculty and other instructors to consider engaging community, government, and industry partners in your courses. Especially when engaging community partners, due to power imbalances and long histories of community exploitation by large institutions (including universities), it is important to engage thoughtfully and respectfully. The Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain (SLS) is in the process of working with the other community-facing offices at Tech—Westside Communities Alliance (WCA), Office of Government and Community Relations, Office of Student Engagement, and the Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics and Computing (CEISMC)—and some of our community partners to develop an orientation program and materials for engaging with community partners. The program will focus on articulating, and providing training in, key partnership principles that we are currently developing and that are part of our Sustainable Communities [BIG IDEAS](#).

In the meantime, here are some answers to some FAQs about community partnerships. We hope you find them helpful. If you have additional FAQs you think we should add, or other thoughts, please share them!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

1. Asset-based Community Development
2. Civic Design
3. Collaborative Problem-Solving
4. Mutually Beneficial Partnerships
5. Doing Good in Your Neighborhood
6. Honoring Multiple Ways of Knowing
7. Long-term Relationships
8. Reciprocal Teaching & Learning
9. Shared Values
10. Valuing Community Impact

1) What are some different ways that community partners can engage in my course?

- a. Provide a little input to students on a project (e.g., one meeting or a few emails or phone calls)
- b. Give a guest lecture in your class as a Community Professional or Subject Matter Expert
- c. Host a community or site visit (not involving service)
- d. Host a community service activity
- e. Co-teach a unit of the course (help plan and then teach a few sessions, at Tech or in the community)
- f. Collaborate on a short-term course assignment (e.g., meet with students 2-3 times in person or by phone on a project assignment, perhaps come in to hear and critique a presentation; project may be a class assignment or a project brought to the class by the partner)
- g. Collaborate on a semester-long project (e.g., service-learning or capstone project)

2) How can I prepare myself and my students to work respectfully and productively with community partners?

SLS is in the process of working with the other community-facing offices at Tech and community partners to develop an orientation program and materials, including a Faculty Resource Guide, for engaging with community partners. These will cover the partnership principles listed above and will include helpful resources for tasks such as developing critical reflection activities and mutual expectations agreements (MOUs); guidance on what to do if the work starts to stray from the agreed upon scope and how to address challenges regarding intellectual property; and more. We will also develop a program and materials for community partners, to help them better understand how to work successfully with courses, faculty, staff, and students at Tech. Additionally, we have already begun the development of a database to help match partners and projects with courses and groups at Tech. In the meantime, if you would like help in this area, we are happy to work with you individually. Please contact SLS and we will find you the right person to talk to!

3) How/Should I compensate community partners for their time and work?

Faculty and students should always thank partners, by email, phone, and even by sending old fashioned thank you cards. This is an important piece of etiquette to teach students, and it helps them understand the importance of stewarding relationships. When possible, it is also often appropriate to offer financial compensation, using SLS and other sources of funding. It is particularly appropriate for small nonprofits or neighborhood associations with small budgets or no budgets and limited, or sometimes no, paid staff. Here are some guidelines to consider:

Type of Engagement (from list in #1 above)	Range to Consider
Provide a little input to students on a project	Thank you should suffice. SLS also has small tokens of appreciation that we can give you to give to your partner with a thank you note, and they often appreciate these little gifts. Contact SLS to request.
Host a service activity in the community	-For activities that they host anyway and that depend on volunteers (e.g., Trees Atlanta planting days): no payment necessary. -For activities designed especially for your students: \$150-200, depending on prep necessary and length
Give a guest lecture in your class as a Community Professional or Subject Matter Expert	\$100-200 depending on prep necessary and length
Host a community or site visit	\$100-200 depending on prep necessary and length
Co-teach a unit	\$300-400 depending on prep necessary, number of times, and whether they have follow-up work (commenting, critiquing, grading work, etc.)
Collaborate on a short-term course assignment	\$250-300 depending on prep necessary and number of times
Collaborate on a semester-long project	\$400-500 depending on time commitment*

**A Note on Capstones:*

Capstone Projects at Tech are often funded by the client. Some nonprofit partners, like the CDC and Georgia Conservancy, regularly pay for capstone projects. But most community organizations do not have sufficient funding to do this. While it may seem counterintuitive to suggest that Tech pay these organizations to allow us to do work for them, this suggestion builds on the key partnership principles of “Reciprocal Teaching & Learning.” It is well documented that student projects generally (not just at Tech), and particularly engineering projects, often fail when they do not sufficiently consider sociocultural knowledge and context—areas in which community partners have expertise. So, ultimately, for the benefit of our students and our partners, we view community partners not as clients, but rather as collaborators and, in fact, co-educators of our students and want to compensate them for their time and contributions.

Payments and Parking

SLS Admin. Prof. Sr. Jamie White-Jones can help you work with community partners to get them listed as vendors in Georgia Tech’s procurement system and submit a statement of services requesting payment. Contact her at jamie.jones@gatech.edu or 404-385-8135.

When making plans for partners to visit campus, always provide them with a good map and arrange to cover their parking. If you need guidance on this, contact Jamie.

4) Do you have other questions?

Feel free to contact SLS at any time and we will help you answer them, or find someone who can! Just call Jamie and she’ll figure out who to connect you with.

Questions? Need Help? That’s what we’re here for!
 Contact Jamie White-Jones in the Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain at
jamie.jones@gatech.edu or 404-385-8135