

ASSESSING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND “CLOSING THE LOOP”  
Community Engagement Fellows Project Reflection  
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My accomplishments and growth as a Community Engagement Fellow can be best communicated in reflecting on three different areas: project reflection, individual growth, and future plans.

Project Reflection

The objectives of my project were:

- to explore assessment of community engagement
- develop ideas for improving assessment of community engagement in my classes
- use assessment as a way to “close the loop” and improve my community engagement assignments

Interacting with other community engagement fellows was very helpful in exploring these objectives. While some participants seem disinterested in the topic (one person focused on her calendar and phone), there were many comments that helped me see this from multiple perspectives.

Hearing other ways that people have assessed their community engagement was also helpful. In particular, some people have made significant changes to their approach based on assessment data.

Individual Growth

One of my favorite parts of the community engagement fellow’s interaction was the way everyone was involved in the discussions. For example, when we talked about one colleague’s project relating to non-education related community organizations for education students, there were many ideas about places for students to interact. Participants built on other ideas. Ultimately, this resulted in wonderful conclusions for all participants.

One of my goals for the community engagement experience was to gain a new perspective on my work in general. In particular, I wanted to be re-energized and motivated to the ideas for community engagement that are so central to my teaching philosophy and my passion for my work in general. I wanted to learn more about what others thought about community engagement and how it energized them in their work. Discussing such a diversity of approaches and perspectives in our sessions was very useful in part because there were academics, adjunct instructors, community partners, and CSL staff present. All contributed something different based on their experiences. Ultimately, it accomplished my goal for my individual growth in supporting my passion and commitment for community engagement, not only in the topic of assessment, but also in every aspect of my teaching, research and service to WWU.

## Future Plans

My future plans relating to community engagement include:

- In two weeks I am co-presenting at a conference a session titled: *Assessing the impact of community engagement*.
- Integrating community engagement into a new class (for me) titled “Managing Cultural Diversity”
- I continue to re-think how to assess community engagement in my courses, including making a change this year asking community partners to specifically comment on the contribution of my students.