



Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning
l'Alliance canadienne pour l'apprentissage par le service communautaire

Community Service-Learning (CSL) is an educational approach that integrates service in the community with intentional learning activities. Within effective CSL efforts, members of both educational institutions and community organizations work together toward outcomes that are mutually beneficial.

Known by a variety of terms (e.g., service-learning, community-based learning), CSL programs are most effective when they include key elements drawn from experiential education theory, especially developing critical thinking and intentionally facilitating reflection. Carefully designed and implemented CSL programs and courses assist students to make meaning from their community experiences, to connect experience outside of the classroom to more theoretical study, and to develop as individuals in relation to their values, their sense of social responsibility, and their leadership skills.

Community service-learning is relatively new to Canadian universities and colleges but has been extensively implemented in the United States over the past two decades, where it is most commonly referred to as service-learning. More recently, there has been growth in similar programs in many other countries, e.g., Australia and England. Although there have been examples of small initiatives over the past decades, it has really only been in the last few years that this pedagogical approach has gained more formal recognition and support on Canadian campuses.

A true pioneer on the national scene has been St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, funded in 1999 by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation to expand their service-learning program on campus. The generous invitation from St. FX in 2001 to Canadian institutions of higher learning who were practicing and/or interested in service-learning to gather for a three day symposium on service-learning in Canada was the catalyst to create a grassroots network of professional Canadian colleagues interested in this pedagogy. From that time to the present, the Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning (CACSL) has been steadily evolving.

Today the Alliance provides leadership and support for the development and enhancement of Community Service-Learning in Canada, connects with international networks, and promotes the benefits of this approach to universities, students, and community organizations.

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Canadian Alliance for Community Service – Learning

Vision

Students, educators and communities building partnerships to learn from each other while working together in innovative ways to strengthen individuals, communities and society.

Mission

CACSL is a national alliance established to support the active participation of students, educators and communities in community service-learning (CSL) by:

- providing resources and support to CSL practitioners in the post-secondary and non-profit sectors across Canada
- supporting local, regional, national and international networks of individuals and organizations involved in CSL practice and research
- investigating, celebrating, promoting and strengthening promising, community-centred CSL practices which contribute to positive social change
- advocating for CSL in Canadian post-secondary institutions as a complement to existing teaching, learning, and research and as a means of deepening and broadening inquiry through collaborative community engagement
- advocating for the integration of CSL into planning and practices within organizations in Canada's non-profit sector, as a complement to their own existing strategies to educate on social issues, implement programs and manage resources

Values

- CACSL believes community service-learning is a powerful form of experiential learning and community-university engagement.
- CACSL believes that informed engagement, through participation in activities focused upon community-identified issues, contributes to community and regional development and is an avenue to achieve social, environmental, and economic justice.
- CACSL encourages effective communication between, and active participation of, all CSL partners in decisions about the planning, development, and evaluation of individual CSL programs and of CACSL itself.
- CACSL understands that reflective research and inquiry into the processes and effectiveness of CSL are crucial to its becoming an integral part of academic and community learning.
- CACSL encourages the effective and creative application of CSL research to further enhance CSL practice
- CACSL recognizes and respects multiple ways of knowing (e.g. academic knowledge, community-based knowledge, indigenous knowledge) and believes they are complementary and mutually reinforcing.
- CACSL values the sharing of resources, knowledge, and information; clear, inclusive communication; creative collaboration; and meaningful partnerships with stakeholders from all sectors: educational institutions, community organizations, students, the private sector, and individuals.
- CACSL values open and inclusive communication and policies that are respectful of diversity and responsive to differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, and ability.

Canadian Alliance for Community Service – Learning Affiliated Programs in Canada

BRITISH COLUMBIA

- Douglas College - [Community Service Learning](#)
- Thompson Rivers University - [Student Development - Transitions to the Workplace](#)
- University of British Columbia - [The Learning Exchange](#)
- University College of the Fraser Valley - [Leadership Institute](#)
- Simon Fraser University - [Community-Based Learning](#)

ALBERTA

- [University of Alberta](#)
- University of Calgary:
 - [Faculty of Communication and Culture](#)
 - [Office of the Student Experience](#)

SASKATCHEWAN

- [University of Saskatchewan](#)
- St Thomas More College - University of Saskatchewan - [Les and Irene Dubé Community Service-Learning Program](#)

ONTARIO

- Brescia University College - University of Western Ontario:
 - [Co-Curricular Service Learning Experience](#)
 - [Community Development](#)
- [Carleton University](#)
- [Huron University College - University of Western Ontario](#)
- Lakehead University - [Food Security Research Network](#)
- McMaster University - [Office of Community Service-Learning and Civic Engagement](#)
- Nipissing University - [Biidaaban Community Service-Learning](#)
- Queens University - [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#)
- Ryerson University - [Service Learning](#)
- Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning - [Student Leadership and Engagement](#)
- [Trent Centre for Community Based Education](#)
- University of Guelph - [Centre for Community Service-Learning](#)
- University of Western Ontario - [Service Learning Program](#)
- University of Ottawa - [Experiential Learning Service \(ELS\)](#)
- University of Toronto - [Centre for Community Partnerships](#)
- Wilfrid Laurier University - [Centre for Community Service-Learning](#)
- York University - [Experiential Education Program](#)

QUÉBEC

- l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR) - [Projet d'intervention communautaire](#)
- l'Université de Sherbrooke - [Programme d'apprentissage expérientiel par l'intervention communautaire](#)
- l'Université Laval - [Laboratoire de recherche en sociologie](#)

NOVA SCOTIA

- [St. Francis Xavier University](#)

NEWFOUNDLAND

- [Memorial University](#)