



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA  
COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLARS  
TRANSCRIPT DESIGNATION

## Community Engaged Scholar Transcript Designation (CESTD) Operational Guide

### *Introduction*

This document is intended to provide UNO students, advisors, faculty, and administrators with information regarding the design, structure, procedures, policies, requirements, and timelines related to the [Community Engagement Scholar Transcript Designation \(CESTD\)](#). It is not intended to be a binding agreement. Rather it is a set of foundational operating guidelines to improve the understanding of the CESTD and assist in planning appropriate coursework and service activity.

**January 31, 2023 Version 5**

Last Updated Spring of 2023

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# **Organizational Structure/Roles/Membership**

## **Administrative Home**

The UNO Office of Engagement (OE) serves as the administrative home of the CESTD. In this role, OAA maintains the CESTD website, provides strategic direction, offers marketing and communication support, serves as a communication conduit with UNO's colleges and their deans and academic advisors.

## **Lead Executive**

The Chief Engagement Officer serves as the lead executive for the CESTD. The role of this individual is primarily to affirm policy, identify and coordinate financial support, lead the advisory committee, and serve as the primary communicator with the deans and other executive campus leadership. The lead executive is the final step in the appeals process for CESTD students.

## **Funding support**

Funds from the NU Foundation support the Centennial Fellow for Community Engagement, who provides day-to-day operational oversight of the CESTD. Funds from the Office of Engagement support operational and marketing expenses. Time and effort provided by members of the executive committee is part of their regular duties and does not require additional funding support.

## **Executive Committee Members and Roles**

- Members Jeffrey Southall II, Student Service and Leadership Collaborative (The Collaborative)
- Julie Dierberger, Service Learning Academy (SLA)
- Toni Monette, Volunteer and Civic Engagement Programs Coordinator
- Sara Woods, Chief Engagement Officer
- Centennial Fellow for Community Engagement, CEC

## **Canvas (or Presence) Redesign/Upkeep**

The Executive Committee is responsible for the overall design, structure, content, and approval of the Canvas site.

## **Communications and Marketing of CESTD**

The Executive Committee works with the Centennial Fellow, with assistance from Robyn Loos, CEC Special Projects Associate, and one Graduate Assistant regarding the planning and execution of marketing and/or communications to recruit students, as well as raise awareness among campus stakeholders.

## **General Communication with Participants by CESTD Components**

The Executive Committee is responsible for reviewing student reflections and posting scores on Canvas. The committee member/unit for each component's reflection is as follows:

- Service learning – Julie Dierberger (SLA)
- Community-based learning – Jeffrey Southall II (The Collaborative)
- Volunteer/community service hours – Toni Monette (Volunteer and Civic Engagement Programs)
- Final reflections – Sara Woods and Centennial Fellow (CEC)

## **Emerging Policy Revision/Development**

The Executive Committee is responsible for establishing and revising policy in consultation with the Chief Engagement Officer. The committee seeks feedback from the CESTD Advisory Committee (described below) as well as from current and former CESTD participants to identify potential areas for improvement.

## **Appeals**

The Executive Committee serves as the official Appeals Committee for the CESTD in the event a student seeks an appeal of a decision related to applicable coursework, service, or a graded reflection.

### **Oversight of community fellow/staff member**

The Centennial Fellow is currently a graduate student employee of the CEC and reports to the Chief Engagement Officer (Sara Woods). In the event the CESTD requires a part-time staff member, the Executive Committee will work with the Chief Engagement Officer to determine the appropriate supervisor for this position.

### **CESTD Advisory Committee**

The CESTD Advisory Committee serves as a communication and marketing conduit and provides feedback regarding policies, marketing approaches, and other input for the Executive Committee regarding the CESTD initiative. Meetings take place twice a year (each semester).

The Advisory Committee is composed of representatives from each UNO college, all of whom have been recommended by their dean, representatives from Student Success, along with student representatives. It is led by the ASVAA.

### **Centennial Fellow**

The Centennial Fellow is the primary point of contact for students, faculty, and staff regarding the CESTD. Specifically, the Centennial Fellow serves an advisor role for students as they complete the components of the designation. The Centennial Fellow is also responsible for maintaining the Canvas site, including updates or additions to content, monitoring student submissions and their status, and using Canvas to communicate with new and current student participants. Under the supervision of the Executive Committee, the Centennial Fellow communicates with the Office of the Registrar regarding listings of students for group emails and proving the names of students who have met program requirements for graduation. The Centennial Fellow will also order cords for commencement through the university bookstore. The Centennial Fellow will work closely with the Special Projects Associate to strategize CESTD-related outreach efforts with the audiences mentioned at the end of this document.

### **Part-time Staff**

In the event the number and/or needs of students signed up for the CESTD exceed the time and/or advising capacity of the Centennial Fellow and/or Executive Committee members, the Chief Engagement Officer will work with the Executive Committee to determine if additional staff member is needed.

## **Canvas**

### **Administration and Access**

The Executive Committee, as well as a small communications team, have administrative access to Canvas. The Centennial Fellow is the main point of contact and administrator for the Canvas site.

The Centennial Fellow monitors student progress and submissions as well as keeps track of new students. The Centennial Fellow generates a welcome email and provides new students with orientation and all necessary material.

The Centennial Fellow first receives notifications when students request to join the CESTD page. The Fellow subsequently receives notifications when the students submit material for the service learning and community-based learning components, when they submit their final volunteer service hours, and when they submit reflections. The Centennial Fellow is responsible for notifying the respective Executive Committee members when a decision needs to be rendered in a particular component area or when a reflection is ready to be reviewed. Each reflection may be completed at any time following completion of all its respective component's requirements. To graduate with this designation, students must complete all requirements within fifteen working days following Commencement. If a student wishes to be recognized in the commencement program and at the ceremony, they must meet MarComm Commencement deadlines which are generally April 1 for May graduation and November 15 for December, additional requirements may apply.

## Service Learning Component

### Requirements

Students in the CESTD must complete 6 hours of designated service learning courses. These courses must have a service-learning designation in the “course attributes” column of the online UNO course catalog. To learn more about service learning course attributes, watch a video on this [website](#). Students who believe a course is a service learning course but this is not indicated in the course attributes in the UNO Course Catalog should contact the SLA at [unosla@unomaha.edu](mailto:unosla@unomaha.edu). If there are questions about if a course counts for this component, please contact the SLA at 402.554.6019 or [unosla@unomaha.edu](mailto:unosla@unomaha.edu) located in room 216 of the CEC. Students must pass the course with a “C” or better to have them count.

### Description of Service Learning

Service learning is a method of teaching that combines classroom instruction with meaningful, community-identified service. This form of engaged teaching and learning emphasizes critical thinking by using reflection to connect course content with real-world experiences. Service learning instructors partner with community organizations as co-teachers and encourage a heightened sense of community, civic engagement, and personal responsibility for students while building capacity and contributing real community impact.

### Examples of Service Learning

Service learning courses connect classroom learning to community-identified service. These partnerships occur with nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies, P-12 schools, and/or businesses. For a list of previous service learning courses and project descriptions, please visit this [website](#).

### Transfer of Service Learning Coursework from Non-UNO Institution

Students would be allowed to transfer in one service learning course (equivalent of 3 credit hours) with proper documentation from their previous institution and approval from the SLA.

### Documentation requirements for service learning on Canvas:

The first step for students in meeting the service learning requirement for the CESTD is to utilize the Canvas CESTD website to upload an unofficial transcript from UNO containing grades from courses that meet this requirement. [Students can obtain unofficial transcripts from MavLINK at any time for uploading](#). If students are transferring a course from another institution, they should include the name and contact information of the school and instructor of the course and upload both an official transcript from the school and copy of the course syllabus. A representative from the SLA will verify the information and validate the course before the student receives permission to complete the reflection for this component. Final grades for current semester are due seven days following the final exams from faculty.

Information regarding UNO service learning courses can be found here on this [website](#). Questions regarding service learning credits as it relates to the CESTD may be referred to Julie Dierberger via email at [jdierberger@unomaha.edu](mailto:jdierberger@unomaha.edu)

## Community-based Learning Component

### Description of Community-based Learning

Community-based learning (CBL) entails professional experiences that provide an opportunity to put academic knowledge in practice or learn more about a specific profession. During these experiences, it is expected that students gain intensive experience applying principles of civic and community engagement and/or disciplinary knowledge and skills in a community setting. Community is broadly defined and includes nonprofit, government, business, and K-12 partners.

Examples of CBL include, but are not limited to, The Collaborative, research, internships (paid/unpaid), practicums, and other coursework with a community component. Community-based learning courses differ from service learning courses in that they do not require reciprocal relationships with community partners to be successful. The goal for these experiences is focused on the student learning and experience for the project, not necessarily to fulfill a community-identified opportunity. Community-based learning courses are indicated in the “course attribute” section of the course catalog. Additionally, community-based learning course/section attribute can be assigned in the Catalog at the Curriculum level or any course section at the schedule level.

## Requirements

*Students must complete one (1) CBL experience equivalent to three (3) credit hours or 135 hours of effort.* If there is academic credit involved, the student must pass with a C. Non-credit CBL experiences that have not previously been identified will be approved by the Executive Committee.

- For the 2020-21 academic year, the executive committee will only accept UNO credit-bearing experiences and/or experiences associated with The Collaborative. Information about this can be found on their [website](#). The executive committee recognizes that CBL experiences can be broader than the above. The Executive Committee may consider broadening this designation to include other relevant non-credit CBL experiences in the future.
- At this point, no transfer of credit will be accepted for the CBL section of the designation.

## Examples of Community-based Learning

Examples of applicable CBL experiences include (but are not limited to): courses that are project-based and include in-community activities such as internships or practica that contribute to the student learning and/or community's well-being, student teaching, research papers that examine a community problem or potential solutions to a community opportunity, a full year of participation in the The Collaborative, or a for-credit study abroad experience. The CBL representative for the CESTD will review this information before the student receives permission to complete the reflection for this component.

## Documentation Requirements (initial/post CBL project) on Canvas

To meet the CBL requirement of the CESTD, students must upload verification documentation via Canvas that demonstrate that the course/experience meets the expectations and requirements of a CBL course. It is highly recommended for students to meet with the Centennial Fellow for Community Engagement before enrolling/engaging in a CBL experience to ensure that it is applicable to the Community-Based Learning Component of the Designation.

## Examples for Completion Documentation

- Transcript showing completion of course with C or better
- Copy of The Collaborative final portfolio

Questions regarding community-based learning should be directed to the CEC Centennial Fellow, Fatima Arroyo at [farroyo@unomaha.edu](mailto:farroyo@unomaha.edu)

# Volunteerism/Community Service Component

## Requirements

To meet this requirement, students must complete 135 hours of volunteer/community service hours that are not part of a class requirement. These hours must be completed in the community and not on campus (unless completed as part of an The Collaborative Day of Service or a student organization-sponsored service/philanthropic event). Students with questions about the eligibility of a volunteer/community service opportunity should contact Toni Monette at [tmonette@unomaha.edu](mailto:tmonette@unomaha.edu).

## Description

Volunteer or community service is defined as unpaid community involvement that occurs outside of the classroom and provides community or societal assistance, ultimately aiming towards community/societal improvement. In general, students receive no college credit for these activities although exemplary efforts may be recognized through scholarship, awards, recognition, and other rewards.

## Examples of Volunteerism/Community Service

- Unpaid community service/philanthropic activities organized through UNO's Service and Leadership Collaborative, UNO student organizations, UNO Athletics, etc.
- Unpaid work in civic activities, community organizing, neighborhood associations, political campaigns, etc.
- Unpaid involvement with any nonprofit agency or other community organization including one time or on-going service

### **Transfer of Volunteer Hours from Non-UNO Institution**

Students seeking to transfer volunteer hours in this manner should plan on consulting with Toni Monette to ensure their documentation and credits are acceptable at least one semester prior to graduation. Transferred volunteer hours that have not been approved through The Collaborative through this manner will otherwise not be accepted in the 135 hours. Hours earned prior to high school graduation are not allowable and not eligible for transfer. With permission and proper documentation, students may transfer up to 35 hours of documented volunteer/community service earned before enrolling at UNO, for example, while enrolled at another institution of higher education.

### **Documentation requirements for Volunteer/Community Service on Canvas**

These hours should be tracked and verified through the Canvas document "Volunteer Hour Tracker" This document may be submitted once the student has recorded 135 credit hours on the appropriate Volunteerism Canvas Module. When this information is verified, the student will be able to complete the volunteer/community service reflection.

Questions regarding volunteer/community service should contact Toni Monette at [tmonette@unomaha.edu](mailto:tmonette@unomaha.edu).

## **Reflections**

Reflections are required at the completion of each three of the CETSD components, as well as at the completion of the modules for an overall final reflection. All three CETSD component reflections must be completed and given a passing score (15 or better out of 20 possible points) for the student to be able to complete the final reflection.

### **Definition of Reflections**

Students must complete written reflections that connect their community engagement experience to their learning and personal development. Reflections provide an opportunity to contemplate, synthesize, and articulate their CETSD experiences and the knowledge, skills, and abilities they derived from them. The reflections are designed to help students understand that by through engaged service, they are fulfilling an obligation that every member of a democracy share: to participate in one's community.

Students submit a written reflection piece upon completion of each of the primary categories: community-based learning, service learning, and volunteerism/community service that challenges them to think critically about how their community engagement experiences have enhanced their learning. The final reflection is an opportunity for students to connect their community engagement experience to their professional goals, their roles as citizens, and their personal growth.

### **Timing/Due Dates for Submitting Reflections**

Students will be given access to the reflection assignment for each component once 1) the student has submitted evidence that that all requirements for the respective component have been completed and 2) this evidence has been reviewed and approved. Students will receive permission to complete the final reflection after they have completed all three components and received a passing score for all three reflections. Apart from graduating students (see below) there is no specific requirement as to when students should submit the component reflections, although, this type of writing is generally easiest immediately following the experience, rather than later. The final reflection is intended to incorporate and synthesize the student's academic and community engagement experiences, as well as look toward the student's professional aspirations. It might best be timed to be written closer to the student's graduation date.

### **Service Learning Reflections**

For the service learning reflection, student must respond to the following prompts:

- Please briefly describe your service learning experiences.
- Reflecting on these activities, please describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities you gained through these experiences, providing specific examples.
- The contents should be limited on this reflection to 300-500 words. To pass this component, the student must earn the equivalent of a C (14 out of 20 points).

**Scoring:** Julie Dierberger, from the SLA, scores the service learning component reflection via Canvas using the scoring rubric.

### **Community-Based Learning (CBL) Reflections**

For the CBL reflection, students must respond to the following prompts:

- Please briefly describe your CBL experiences.
- Reflecting on these activities, please describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities you gained through these experiences, providing specific examples.

The contents should be limited on this reflection to 300-500 words. To pass this component, the student must earn the equivalent of a C (14 out of 20 points).

**Scoring:** Jeffrey Southall II, with The Collaborative, scores the CBL component reflection via Canvas using the scoring rubric.

### **Volunteer/Community Service Reflection**

For the Volunteer/Community Service reflection, student must respond to the following prompts:

- Please briefly describe your Volunteer/Community Service experiences. Reflecting on these activities, please describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities you gained through these experiences, providing specific examples.

The contents should be limited on this reflection to 300-500 words. To pass this component, the student must earn the equivalent of a C (14 out of 20 points).

**Scoring:** Toni Monette, with the Office of Engagement Volunteer and Civic Engagement Programs, scores the volunteer/community service component reflection via Canvas using the scoring rubric.

### **Final Reflection**

For the final reflection, students must answer this question: "How have your service learning, volunteer/service, and community-based learning experiences through the CESTD contributed to your

- Professional aspirations
- Role as a citizen in a diverse and evolving society and
- Personal growth and development?"

#### **Requirements of Final Reflection**

The contents in the final reflection answers should provide specific examples and is limited to 600-800 words. To pass, the student must earn the equivalent of a C (14 out of 20 points).

**Scoring:** Sara Woods and the Community Fellow score the final reflection through Canvas using the scoring rubric.

#### **Resubmission After Failing Scores/Limits**

For any of the four reflections, students who receive an initial score of less than 14 (less than the equivalent of a C) may revise and resubmit their reflection or submit a new reflection. If the student does not receive a passing score, they have not passed this section and will not receive a CESTD. If they choose, they may seek an appeal through the appeals process described below.

## **General Policies**

### **GPA Requirement**

Overall GPA requirement for CETSD participants requires a 3.0 cumulative GPA.



### **Residency Requirements**

In addition to meeting residency requirements for the student's degree, to earn the CESTD, the student must meet the following minimum residency requirements for the CESTD.

- Students may only apply the equivalent of 3 (three) transfer credit hours of service learning from another accredited institution of higher learning. To be applicable for the CESTD, only Institution-accepted transfer credit that is posted to the student's academic record and available on the UNO official transcript is accepted. It must also be approved by the SLA.
- Students can transfer in **35** hours of volunteer/community service credit with documentation if they have transferred to UNO from another institution of higher education. These hours must be approved in advance by the CESTD Volunteer/Community Service representative.
- Under no circumstances may volunteer service hours earned before high school graduation be applied to the CESTD; however, service learning hours earned through a UNO dual enrollment service learning course would apply if credit hours are earned at UNO. If the dual enrollment service learning hours are earned at different institution of higher education, the transfer limitation applies.

### **Appeals Process**

A student may submit an appeal for any of the transcript components. Appeals must in writing, such as in an email. The appeal will first go to the individual or group assigned to that component (see scoring). If not resolved, it will then move to the entire executive committee for further review. Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell (AVCAA) is the final stop in the appeal process.

### **Process for Placing Designations in Student Transcripts**

The Executive Committee is responsible for notifying the UNO Office of the Registrar when a student has completed all requirements for the Community Engaged Scholar Transcript Designation. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for formally designating that a student has achieved "Engaged Community Scholar" status on their transcript. Once notated, this becomes a permanent designation on the student's transcript.

While students may complete the CESTD anytime during their enrollment at UNO, they cannot receive the designation before they complete their degree because of the cumulative 3.0 GPA at graduation requirement. Students must complete and submit all CESTD requirements, including reflections and required work products for CBL, within five working days following the student's formal graduation date to receive the official designation on their transcript. Once a student completes all components and reflections, the Executive Committee will conduct an audit to confirm that all service-based learning and CBL courses were completed with a "C" or better and that the student graduated with a cumulative 3.0 GPA or better.

Once the Executive Committee confirms that the student has completed all CESTD requirements, it will forward that student's name, along with the names of all other graduating students who have completed the requirements that semester, to the UNO Office of the Registrar requesting the designation of Community Engaged Scholar be placed permanently on the student's transcript.

### **Process for Recognition of Community Engaged Scholars at Commencement**

To be recognized as a Community Engaged Scholar at Commencement (notation in the Commencement program and given cords) the students must provide the Centennial Fellow with a written notification of their intention to graduate one week in advance of the Registrar's deadline to filing applications for degrees to be conferred in May/August/December (application for degree deadlines are March 12 for May, July 1 for August, and October 15 for December). Students will receive provisional recognition (in the Commencement program and with a CESTD cord) if they can demonstrate that they have made substantial progress toward completing the requirements for the designation. However, graduating students will still have to complete all CESTD requirements satisfactorily before receiving the formal designation on their transcript.

### **CESTD Digital Certificates**

The Registrar's Office will also provide official digital certificates to students who have earned the CESTD. These certificates may be used as additional proof of completion of the CESTD on various social platforms and E-portfolios.

### **Provisional Status**

Conferral of the CESTD at Commencement should be considered Provisional until all final grades are received by the UNO Registrar's Office and the CESTD Executive Committee confirms the final eligibility of students to have the designation on their transcripts. Students will receive a Certificate of Completion letter from the Director of this program on behalf of the institution confirming their final status.

## **Student Engagement**

### **Eligibility Requirements**

- Any student may enroll in the CESTD through Canvas
- Students must earn a C or better in the two service learning classes as well as the community-based learning course (if applicable)
- Students must have a minimum overall cumulative GPA 3.0 at the time of graduation to earn the designation (confirmation through final audit)

### **Enrollment Process in CESTD**

#### **Canvas**

To enroll via Canvas, the student must first have access to the Canvas course link, which is available [via the website](https://unomaha.instructure.com/courses/18418). Once students click on the link, they may request to join the Canvas site. The Executive Committee and Centennial Fellow will then work on approving and welcoming new students. Canvas Course Link: <https://unomaha.instructure.com/courses/18418>

#### **Automatic enrollment of students with service-learning coursework:**

Automatic enrollment through a designated service learning course will take place in future semesters. Currently, students who are enrolled in one or more service learning courses receive an email inviting them to enroll in the CESTD.

## **Communications**

### **Recruitment/Communications**

- The Executive Committee will work with Student Enrollment, as well as Robyn Loos, CEC Special Projects Associate and one graduate assistant, regarding these efforts. The following includes a general list of communication strategies and audiences. Detailed information is available in the Office of Engagement SharePoint Site. Please contact Robyn Loos for more information at [rloos@unomaha.edu](mailto:rloos@unomaha.edu).

#### **\*Strategies**

- Fall and spring semester email through HubSpot to communicate with student, faculty, and specialty audiences at UNO regarding the transcript opportunity.
- Student driven email (January or February and September or October – must be from the current semester)
- Faculty driven email (January or February and September or October – must be from the current semester)
- Specialty audience list included in faculty list to ensure we reach specific people at UNO outside of the data from SLA
- Faculty Senate (go through Exec Committee)
- CESTD Information Handout
- Intentional sharing of materials (i.e., Universal Information handout) with audiences that have direct access to UNO students
- MavDaily and Bullseye Promotions (aligned with emails in January and September)
- [Ongoing website updates](#)
- [Updates to canvas content \(as needed\)](#)
- Communication with UNO students enrolled in CESTD to ensure projects involving community partners will be entered into CEPI
- The Executive Committee and Centennial Fellow will reach out to advisors and briefly present at the Academic Advisory Council (AAC) once a semester. The advisors will then have access to a CESTD guide specifically for their needs. Meetings have taken place with academic advisors to seek their assistance in identifying potential students who are appropriate candidates for the CESTD transcript designation.

- The Centennial Fellow will routinely publish Volunteer and Internship Opportunities to the respective page on Canvas per BPO submissions to the Lutton Wall.
- Coordinate social posts promoting recognition of students during commencement

\*Strategies may be in progress, ongoing, or completed and are subject to changes as needed.

#### **\*Audiences**

- Honors Students
- Academic Honorary Organizations
- TRIO/Project Achieve (learning community)
- Thompson Learning Community (learning community)
- Goodrich Scholars (learning community)
- Student Involvement
  - Greek Life (includes Presence)
  - Student Government
  - Current student president and vice president
- The Collaborative
- Advisors Group (AAC) / Advisors Leadership Group
- Internship Coordinators
- Faculty teaching Service Learning and Community Based Learning
- Students in Service Learning and Community Based Learning
- Exploratory Studies (specialty audience)
- Scott Scholars (specialty audience)
- Registrar (specialty audience)
- Deans, Chairs, and Directors (Deb Smith-Howell) (follows email sent to specialty audience with exec committee)
- Any currently enrolled UG student who has ever taken a SL or CBL course at UNO and achieved a 2.5 or higher in the course(s)