

WESLEYAN ENGAGED PROJECTS | CSPL/CGST480

Sponsor Expectations

Engaged Projects (EPs) are academic endeavors in which a student studies a topic of their choice and completes a final project intended for a non-academic audience. Full details are at <http://engagedprojects.site.wesleyan.edu/>.

EP students must enlist a volunteer Sponsor who will give advice and feedback throughout the semester. Sponsors can be Wesleyan alumni, community partners, or employees; family members or friends; professionals with related expertise; etc. Seeking, enlisting, and interacting with an appropriate Sponsor is a component of the EP learning experience.

We imagine that the best Sponsor matches will be those where there is reciprocal benefit; perhaps the Sponsor can use the student's research or project in their own work, they are interested in mentoring a young person, or they are retired and looking for meaningful ways to spend their time.

Minimum Required Sponsor Commitments (5-10 hours)

Kickoff meeting

Students will be prompted to schedule a meeting with their Sponsor to get to know them better, build rapport, walk through the schedule for the semester with them, and ask if they have any questions or advice at this stage. Students will be required to turn in their notes from this meeting.

Essay review

Students will start the semester by researching their topic and writing a 5-page “explainer” essay, which they will send to their Sponsors. Sponsors are asked to share overall reactions and suggest additional research, learning, connections, or conversations that will help their student move forward productively.

Project draft review

EP students will complete a draft of their final project, which they will send to Sponsors. Sponsors are asked to give feedback, suggest additional contacts/partners, and provide any other advice that will help their student move forward productively.

End-of-semester wrap-up

EP Sponsors will be invited to give feedback about their experience and share advice for future EP students and Sponsors.

Optional Sponsor Activities

Sponsor/student pairs may wish to schedule additional meetings throughout the semester.

After Sponsors give feedback on project drafts, EP students will make updates and send those “final” versions to their Sponsors. While Sponsor feedback is not required at that stage, it is welcome and appreciated.

After students officially launch/implement their projects, they will write a 2-page post-mortem documenting project outcomes, lessons learned, etc. They will send those write-ups to Sponsors. While Sponsor feedback is not required at that stage, it is welcome and appreciated.

A Note to Sponsors

Dear Engaged Projects Sponsors,

As director of Wesleyan's Patricelli Center for Social Entrepreneurship and an instructor in the Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life, I am excited to offer the Engaged Projects course. EPs respond to this critical moment in history by empowering students to connect their academic pursuits to what is happening in the world around them. They deepen student learning and introduce students to their own agency and positionality in society.

As an EP Sponsor, you will play a critical role in a student's learning process. I am grateful for whatever lived experience, scholarly background, and/or professional expertise you bring to the table. But even more, I am grateful for your willingness to connect with your student, to help them learn the art of relationship-building, and to advise them as they produce and launch their engaged project.

Although Sponsors will work directly with their students, you are always welcome to contact me with questions, concerns, or feedback about the Engaged Projects initiative overall. My door is always open -- virtually or in person :)

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