

University of Mary Washington

Center for Community Engagement

ACTIVITIES REPORT 2022-2023

November 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Community Engagement supports Goal 1 of UMW's Strategic Vision, which is to promote the values of service and community and civic engagement at UMW. Our mission is to serve as a catalyst for community engagement between UMW and our greater communities, building bridges between students, faculty, staff, and community partners through effective relationships that bring about student learning and positive social change.

The 2022-23 school year was an active year for the COAR program and the Center for Community Engagement (CCE).



Coming out of the pandemic, more and more students are interested in service, community engagement, and volunteer work and are eager to join COAR, Alternative Service Breaks, and UMW Votes. Over the past academic year, UMW worked with over 100 community partners and UMW students logged over 43,000 hours of community-engaged work, with nearly 20,000 hours of direct service. UMW offered 21 community-engaged classes and sponsored 262 internships helping the community. This report covers the time period between June 1, 2022 through May 30, 2023.



This diagram shows the range of programs supported directly by the Center for Community Engagement in the 2022-23 school year.

SUPPORT COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING ON CAMPUS

Community-engaged learning is a pedagogical practice that combines academic content and work in a community outside of the classroom in such a way that promotes learning and the common good. Community-engaged learning is considered a high impact pedagogical strategy, and is being embraced in many universities, across disciplines, for that reason.

Community-engaged learning helps students understand real world applications of course material and gives students experience with problem solving, communicating across differences, and working through complexity and ambiguity.

The Center for Community Engagement supports community-engaged learning on the UMW campus in a variety of ways.

The CCE maintains a [volunteer webpage](#) that lists a range of volunteer activities. The Honors Service Learning and Psychology Service Learning programs direct their students to this webpage, along with the COAR website, so they can find volunteer sites for their work. CCE also works one-on-one with students in the Honors Service Learning and Psychology Service Learning classes and help them find placements and introduce them to community partners, if needed. The Center for Community Engagement, and COAR, regularly works with over 100 community partners including Big Brothers, Big Sisters; Tree Fredericksburg; Friends of the Rappahannock; Loisanne’s Hope House, and many others.

Staff from the CCE also give presentations for community-engaged classes and share information about community-engaged opportunities as they emerge.

2022-2023 was the first year of the [Impact Program](#) on campus, and 21 students graduated from the program. [A detailed report on the UMW Impact Program successes can be found on the CCE website.](#) The

Director of the Center for Community Engagement manages the Impact Program and taught the spring class for the program. Dr. Jeremy Larochelle helps manage the program and teaches the fall class.

The CCE supported the following community-engaged initiatives on campus last year:

- **[Virginia Conservation Fellowship:](#)** Working with Dr. Ranjit Singh and a team of faculty and staff, we interviewed 6 students in winter 2022 and 2 were chosen for paid internships at local environmental organizations.
- **[Bragg Hill Community Garden:](#)** Working with Dr. Eric Bonds and a VISTA volunteer, the CCE supported the work of the Bragg Hill Community Garden. The garden is continuously used by Dr.



Bonds for community-based pedagogy; he participated in the [Summer Social Sciences Institute](#), supports a student garden club, and had students in the [Summer Enrichment Program](#) work at the garden.

Working with [Campus Compact](#), the CCE also nominates a student for the [Newman Civic Fellowship](#) every year, and sponsors an [AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer](#) on campus each year that provides support for the Bragg Hill Community Garden and the [Gwen Hale Resource Center](#).

In October 2023, alumnae Meghan McLees was selected for the Outstanding Young Adult Volunteer Award for the 2023 Governor's Awards on Volunteerism and Community Services, after a nomination in summer 2023 by Sarah Dewees, Director of the Center for Community Engagement. Meghan was very active in community-engaged work through the Center for Community Engagement, including COAR and Alternative Service Breaks. She participated in an Awards Ceremony which was held at the Governor's Mansion on November 13, 2023.

In fall 2022, the Director of the Center for Community Engagement co-taught a community-engaged class linked to [a study abroad program in Nepal](#), and traveled to Nepal over winter break, 2022-2023. The class was co-taught with Dr. David Rettinger, took 12 students to Nepal, and covered concepts related to international development, the non-governmental sector, and social change in Nepal.



UMW faculty offered 21 community-engaged classes in the 2022-23 academic year, encouraging their students to engage in the broader community through community-engaged research, direct service, and joint projects. In addition, several faculty in historic preservation, psychology, geography, sociology and other departments offered community-engaged projects for their students to assist with activities that benefitted community partners.

CCE staff offered two community-engaged workshops for students during the Summer Enrichment Program in 2023, and at least one student from those workshops has decided to come to UMW (and join the Impact Program).

The Community Outreach and Resources (COAR) and UMW Votes programs also provide opportunities for community-engaged learning, and more details on these programs are provided below.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

UMW embraces our responsibility as a place-based institution and works to contribute to the health of our community – economically, socially, environmentally, educationally and politically. Through our work, we honor our commitments to our community and broader society and work to foster strong, reciprocal relationships. The Center for Community Engagement serves as the one of the primary contacts for community organizations seeking volunteers or looking to collaborate with UMW on a community-related project. CCE staff receive, assess, collate, and distribute information about volunteer opportunities with community partners, put information on the volunteer websites as needed, and publicize through other channels such as social media or sharing with faculty and staff. The CCE has a multi-faceted, ongoing relationship with Fredericksburg City Public Schools, including supporting the Start on Success program. Details of our partnership with [Fredericksburg City Public Schools](#) can be found on the CCE website. The Center for Community Engagement actively manages relationships with over 100 community partners each year. The CCE also worked with community partners on a range of projects last year, including hosting a conference for the [FailSafe/ERA organization](#) in April and coordinating a campus visit with the “Reach One” Fatherhood Initiative and Mentoring Program of the Tau Rho Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.



Many of the academic departments on campus also have long-term mutually-beneficial relationships with community partners that bring university resources to bear on historic preservation, tourism, environmental, social, and other issues in Fredericksburg.

STUDENT FACING PROGRAMS

The Center for Community Engagement supports several student-facing programs that provide experiential learning opportunities for students and help inspire members of our UMW community to pursue things greater than self. Through these opportunities and experiences, these programs help equip students to address society’s complex challenges and to be active citizens in our pluralistic liberal democracy. By following their interests and challenging



themselves in real-world environments, UMW students develop the knowledge, skills, and capacity to improve their lives, their communities, and the world around them.

I. Community Outreach and Resources (COAR)

COAR supported several community-focused projects during the 2022-23 school year. [COAR is a student-run service program](#) at UMW. COAR is a diverse group of students serving community needs through an active exchange of service and learning while continually striving to find solutions to problems that challenge the community. COAR helped coordinate several activities over the course of the school year:



1. **NEST Day of Service:** On August 19th, 2022, COAR helped support NEST (*New Experiences for Students Transitioning*) Day of Service where UMW students participate in a range of service projects serving the UMW community. We worked with the Office of New Student Programs to support volunteer opportunities for over 100 students. Activities included purchasing food items to make bag lunches for Micah Homeless Hospitality Center; purchasing items for hygiene kits to donate to school nurses in the Fredericksburg City Public School system; and purchasing paint and a picnic table for the Bragg Hill Community Garden. Among other service projects, NEST students made 200 bag lunches for Micah Homeless Hospitality Center; 20 hygiene kits with soap, shampoo, and deodorant (among other things!); and painted a picnic table for Bragg Hill Community Garden to protect it from the weather.



2. **Welcome Week:** UMW Orientation asked COAR to sponsor a service project during Welcome Week at the beginning of the semester. COAR helped students help make “no-sew” fleece blankets that are donated to children in need in Fredericksburg City Public Schools.
3. **Into the Streets:** On Saturday, September 24th, 2022, 73 UMW students met on campus to carry out volunteer activities. Students picked up trash on city streets, worked with Tree Fredericksburg to mulch trees in parks, visited the Habitat for Humanity ReStore, and did garden work at Downtown Greens, among other activities.
4. **Pay it Forward Day:** On Saturday, October 15, 2022, 74 students met on campus and carried out community service projects. Students picked up trash on city streets, worked with Tree Fredericksburg to mulch trees in parks, did garden work at Downtown Greens, and worked with UMW Buildings and Grounds to remove invasive species on campus, among other activities.

5. **Fall 2022 Gift Box Drive:** During fall 2022, COAR publicized the Gift Box Drive, purchased boxes, and facilitated gift box pick up and delivery. Students, faculty, and staff all picked up gift boxes and filled them with art supplies, books, winter gear, and toys. Approximately 400 gift boxes were collected by early December and distributed to youth in the Head Start Programs in Spotsylvania County Schools and Fredericksburg City Public Schools. Students delivered the gift boxes in person at FCPS.



6. **MLK Day of Service:** COAR students assisted in planning, publicizing, and carrying out the MLK Day of Service this year, in partnership with the James Farmer Multicultural Center.



Held on Sat., January 21, 2023, 79 students participated in a variety of projects, including making personal hygiene kits (with shampoo, soap, and a toothbrush) for the local domestic violence shelter (Empowerhouse), fleece blankets and scarves, Jarrod Boxes, and soup-in-a-jar.

7. **Good Neighbor Day:** Held on Sat., March 19th, 2023, 73 students worked with our neighbors in the neighborhoods surrounding the campus. Students helped with yardwork, painting, and other activities. This activity builds positive relationships

between students and our UMW neighbors.

8. **Earth Day Clean Up:** On Sat., April 14th, 57 students participated in a variety of outdoor projects such as picking up trash on city streets, working with Tree Fredericksburg to mulch trees in parks, visiting Downtown Greens, and working with UMW Buildings and Grounds to remove invasive species.



9. **COAR Weekly Volunteer Programs:** The COAR program also supports the COAR Council, which is made up of the student leaders of weekly volunteer programs. Currently, COAR Council sends volunteers on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to the following nonprofit organizations: Downtown Greens, Loisanne’s Hope House, Stafford Junction, and Fredericksburg SPCA. Students also work with Bookmobile of Fredericksburg, Bigs in Schools (a program of Big Brothers, Big Sisters), and deliver food to local homeless shelters through a partnership with UMW Dining and the national Food Recovery program.

II. UMW Votes



UMW Votes is a non-partisan program dedicated to educating the community about all aspects of the voting process. The UMW Votes mission is to create civically-engaged students passionate about participating in our democracy. UMW Votes works with the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Students Learn Students Vote, Virginia21, and Campus Vote Project to increase voter registration, education, and mobilization in the greater Fredericksburg area and among UMW students. In 2023 UMW received the Voter Friendly Campus designation for 2023-2024, and UMW's ALL IN report can be found on the [website for ALL IN](#). The UMW Votes activities report for fall 2022 and spring 2023 can be found on the webpage for the [UMW Center for Community Engagement](#). UMW Votes was featured in the [Vote Friendly Campus report for fall 2022](#).

III. Alternative Service Breaks



The Center for Community Engagement offers Alternative Service Break (ASB) trips to students as a community engagement opportunity. ASB encourages community involvement and inspires personal growth through reflection. Students learn about the community where they work, issues related to homeownership, and help build and repair homes in partnership with local Habitat for Humanity chapters. Students are challenged to apply academic concepts to real-world experiences, and to think beyond themselves to gain a new perspective and grow their appreciation for the impact of service.

In fall 2022, CCE staff recruited student leaders for two Alternative Service Break programs that would run in spring 2023. During the spring semester, students held several fundraising events and participated in leadership development. During Spring Break 2023, 5 students traveled to North Carolina to work with [Habitat for Humanity](#) of Forsyth County in the Winton-Salem area. In May 2023, 12 students travelled to Maine to work with the [Midcoast Habitat for Humanity](#) in Rockport Maine.

IV. Work with Student Affairs

The CCE works directly with Student Affairs in many ways. In addition to helping with NEST Day of Service, partnering with the James Farmer Multicultural Center, and helping service clubs and organizations, CCE staff also provided community-engaged activity stations during new student orientation and worked all the admission and orientation events throughout the year. In addition, we provided presentations to FSEM Peer Mentors, NEST leaders, and RAs over the summer. CCE also actively supports the Red Cross Club and helps with their monthly blood drives on campus.

CONCLUSION

UMW is a member of Campus Compact, a national organization with a mission to advance the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility. Campus Compact urges universities to embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically. Campus Compact works to “build democracy through civic engagement” and support “...students as they develop leadership skills, strategies for engagement, public applications of academic knowledge, and increased civic participation.” The work of the UMW Center for Community Engagement continues to support this mission and uplift the goals of the 2022 UMW Strategic Vision, ensuring that UMW students have the knowledge, skills, and capacity to improve their lives, their communities, and the world around them.



The UMW Center for Community Engagement is located in Suite 320 in the Cedric Rucker University Center. Our mission is to serve as a catalyst for community engagement between UMW and our greater communities, building bridges between students, faculty, staff, and community partners through effective relationships that bring about student learning and positive social change.

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