

Manifesto of Engaged Scholar-Activists To All Regis College Students, Faculty and Administrators

The Regis College Center for Service Learning invites you to reconsider, with us, how we as students, faculty, and administrators engage in community, particularly as it relates to curricula in each of the disciplines and across the disciplines. Here are a few of the tenets we embrace:

- ❖ We advocate learner-centered education, placing focus on learning and the learner. We believe we are all lifelong learners and that as students, faculty and administrators we can learn immensely from the experience and knowledge of one another. We embrace opportunities that promote learning from each other in mutually respectful and provocative ways.
- ❖ **We believe students are powerful.** We recognize the knowledge, skills, and experience of students, and ask them to take full responsibility for their learning, actively participating in every aspect of their education. We recognize the importance of student accountability and encourage the use of learning contracts and on-going peer and self-evaluations to promote the responsibility of learners to themselves and others. At the same time, we also recognize the power that students hold both individually and collectively as stakeholders in the institutions of Regis University and Service Learning and believe in maintaining a balance between student empowerment and the systems of organization and accountability that make it possible.
- ❖ **We encourage the use of various forms of experiential education, both in and out of the classroom, seeking interactive ways to engage students, faculty, and administrators.** We work together with students and faculty to meet rigorous academic objectives, while challenging students to explore diverse perspectives, create meaningful relationships, develop a critical consciousness, and serve as positive agents of social change for local and global justice. We advocate teaching that keeps the curriculum contemporary, engages students practically and interpersonally, and responds to expressed community assets and needs.
- ❖ **We promote opportunities for genuine engagement with the larger Regis, Denver, and international communities.** We value community knowledge, skills, and experience. We aim to create learning opportunities for Regis populations that mutually benefit and fully respect the community.
- ❖ We hold that course content must integrate service and consistent opportunities for prelection and reflection to be considered community-based learning. **We are committed to doing more to help students understand the context of community-based engagement and facilitating deeper reflection with students on how their service connects to issues of justice.** Properly implemented, community-based learning allows for introspection, self-awareness, and personal responsibility, impacting learners' beliefs, attitudes, and ultimately, behavior. Community-based learning directly impels students to critically explore and perhaps challenge elements of the dominant culture they might otherwise take for granted, while also driving them to perceive their own complex location within systems of power and privilege.
- ❖ In the Jesuit tradition, we invite learners to engage in experiential opportunities while critically examining the structures in our society that perpetuate racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, poverty, ethnocentrism, and war and violence.

- ❖ We are committed to constant examination of issues of power, privilege, and difference in our own office and work, and we affirm the importance of the Jesuit values *Cura Personalis*, *Magis*, *Human Beings For and With Others*, and *Contemplatives in Action*. We believe that our work reflects these values at every level, from conception, execution, and integration, to reflection and assessment, and we are determined to affirm these values in all of our classroom engagements. We expect the same of academic departments, administration, and Regis University as a whole.
- ❖ We are committed to respect and to work in neighborhoods found in the following zip codes: **80221, 80211, 80216, and 80205**. We have prioritized these neighborhoods based on our commitment to local community and our social justice focus. While we will continue to work with other neighborhoods, priority will be given to community groups and organizations found in these primary neighborhoods. To learn more about these locations please check out the Piton Foundation, found at <http://www.piton.org>
- ❖ Furthermore, we are committed to the continued upkeep and expansion of the projects closest to our identity as an institution: En/Route, the Spanish English Exchange Program, and Refugee Youth Tutoring. These programs are some of the most important that we take on, and represent our commitment to building healthy relationships between Regis campus and the communities it finds itself tied to
- ❖ We encourage the use of intercultural teamwork in classes, providing students with opportunities to practice the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors they are theoretically gaining in the classroom and that they need to demonstrate upon graduation from Regis.
- ❖ We believe that at the core of Regis College curriculum there should be a paradigm for how students engage in community over their four-year college career:
 - **In their first year, students ought to have opportunities to complete community-based learning exercises (observations, interviews, surveys, participation in community events, interacting with community spaces, etc.) and direct service.**
 - **In their sophomore year, students ought to perform indirect service, provide organizational consultancy, or complete community-based research.**
 - **In their junior year, students should be charged with practicing advocacy and consciousness-raising activities.**
 - **In their senior year, students ought to practice organizing and have an opportunity to create and implement their own projects in conjunction with affected communities.**

Given these beliefs, we are proposing a new way of being:

In the upcoming school-year, The Center for Service Learning will be continuing a program grounded in the best practices of contemporary service learning research. This program will be based on the “Student as Colleague” model suggested by Campus Compact that is currently functioning in different forms at various other colleges and universities around the country.

We are inviting interested students, faculty, and administrators to become a part of a team that will continue to help craft the Engaged Scholar-Activist Program. Additionally, we are continuously looking for students interested in serving as Engaged Scholar-Activists. After receiving training (in community development, service learning pedagogy, facilitating reflection, understanding different learning styles,

and creating effective intercultural teams), these students will be tasked to work intentionally with interested departments/faculty and Service Learning Coordinators to design, implement, and evaluate curricular community engagement opportunities for departments/classes. Students will be treated and accepted as colleagues in this work. Engaged Scholar-Activists will also collaborate with community agencies, neighborhood associations, and affected populations, as well as directly with Regis students and student groups to facilitate opportunities for curricular and para-curricular community-based learning. We aim to recruit a diversity of students from a variety of academic disciplines to serve in these leadership positions. This can be a Workstudy position (should the student be eligible), averaging between 8 and 15 hours per week.