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Getting to the Core of Undergraduate Community-Engaged Research: A Case for Implementing Core Competencies in UCEnR

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Getting to the Core of Undergraduate Community-Engaged Research: A Case for Implementing Core Competencies in UCEnR

Abstract
This conference proceeding was presented at the International Association on Service Learning and Community Engagement Conference held September 2016.

Keywords
community-engaged research, community, community engagement, CEnR, VCU

Disciplines
Higher Education

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We are a premier urban, public research university focused on academic success.

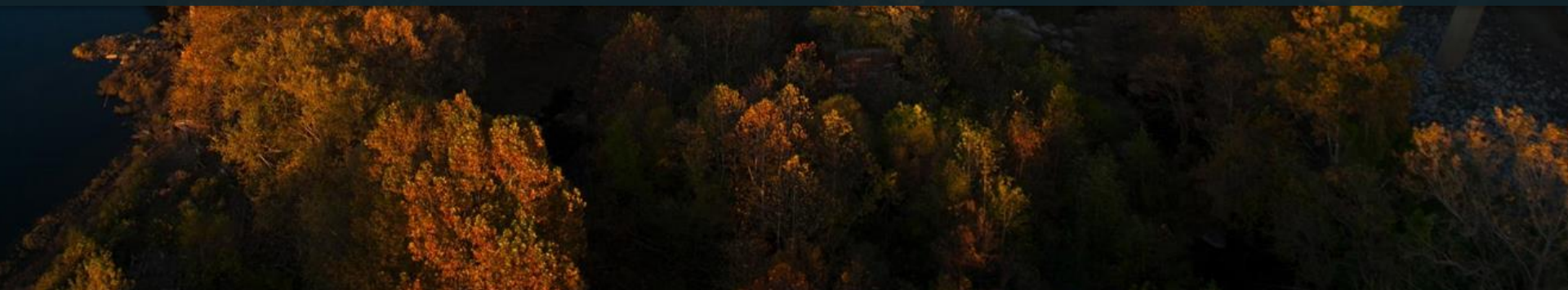
Established in
1838

Located in
Richmond, Virginia

31,242
students

About Richmond

» Virginia’s capital city
» Home to six Fortune 500 companies
» Growing innovation ecosystem
» Thriving arts community



Community-Engaged Research is at the heart of VCU.

Picture from http://drewfonts.tumblr.co

VCU's Quest for Distinction

Theme III: **Become a national model for community engagement and regional impact**

- Expand community-engaged scholarship and service-learning.
- Create university-community partnerships with a focus on the key targeted areas of:
  - K-12 Education
  - Access to Health
  - Economic Development
  - Sustainability
- Provide strategic leadership in addressing sustainability challenges through curricular and service innovations and green facilities and operations.

Community-Engaged Research is “a collaborative process between the researcher and community partner that creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community”

(VCU, 2013)

Q. Why Undergraduate Community-Engaged Research?

A. Gain exposure to the practical value of CEnR

A. Increased awareness of community issues

A. Increased student competence

A. Better preparation

Core Competencies

"Set of skills and abilities that are the source of the more visible and identifiable strengths" (Morrill, 2010)

[As of Spring 2016, no formal core competence list for UCEnR had been established.]

Q. What skills should UCEnR students have?

What are UCEnR students expected t**o do**?
What are UCEnR students expected **to learn**?

Learning outcomes

Best Practices

Q. What skills should UCEnR students have?

A. Research Skills

A. Community Engagement Skills

Literature Search: Boolean Method

core competence
practice behavior
best practice
general skills

AND

undergraduate
community-engaged
research
undergraduate
community-based
research

UCEnR Core Competencies List: A Synthesis

Total number of Sources, Categorized by Subject (Percent, Excluding Theoretical guidance)					
Basic Skills of UCEnR	**Basic Skills of CES**	**Basic Research Skills**	**Basic Undergraduate Research Skills**	**Institutional Expectations for UCEnR**	**Theoretical Guidance**
10 (31%)	2 (6%)	5 (16%)	11 (34%)	4 (13%)	10

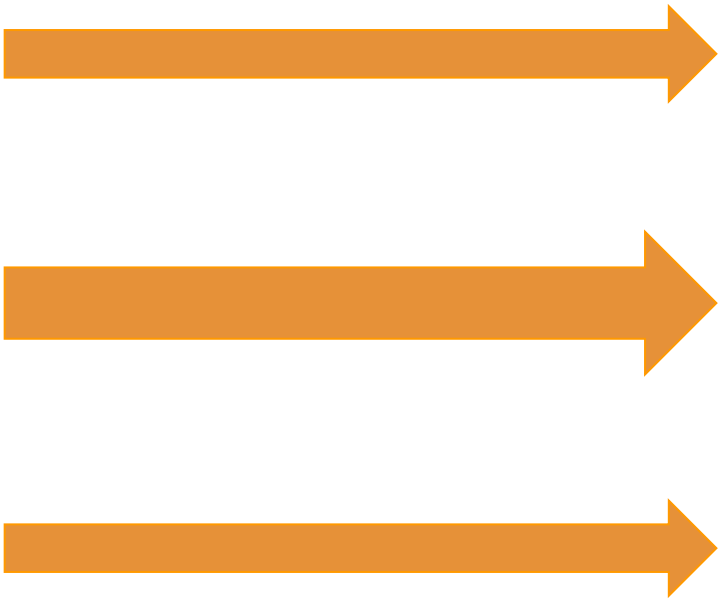
Database hunt: 32 Sources

Approximately 145 items in final list, 7 pages long

UCEnR Core Competencies List: A Synthesis

Subject Source		Example
Learning outcomes	UCEnR	*Understands the merits behind CEnR and community service*
Best practices	UCEnR	*Tolerates obstacles faced in the research process*
Basic skills	Undergraduate research	*Communicates results with an awareness of the associated ethical and social issues*
Simplified competencies	Community-engaged scholarship	*Ability to negotiate across community-academic groups and contexts*
Institutional expectations	Undergraduate research	*Understands the importance of public and private partnerships between the university and the community*

Next Steps



- Pending review by community-engaged scholars
- CC tested
- Incorporate Belmont Report revisions of CEnR ethics
- Long term data

Questions!
Comments!
Thank you!

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Research
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