Key Terms and Concepts in Service Learning

**Experiential Learning**: a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with students in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values (Source: Association for Experiential Education).

**Integrative learning** is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus. [Source: AAC&U Value Rubric for Integrative Learning]

**Community-Based Learning (CBL)**: a form of experiential learning that is situated outside the traditional classroom and occurs in off-campus community settings and may involve off-campus community groups and institutions. CBL may occur domestically or internationally and can integrate a range of teaching methods. Common curricular experiences that involve CBL may include clinical practice, field placements, practica, etc.

**Community-Engaged Learning**: like CBL, CEL refers to forms of experiential learning that are situated outside the traditional classroom and which occurs in off-campus community settings. Unlike CBL, learning through CEL is explicitly tied to learning both in and with community groups and organizations based on principles of partnership, mutuality and reciprocity.

CEL can be fostered through a range of instructional strategies include: problem-based learning, service-learning, internships and practica, clinical and field-based education, place-based learning, community-based research, action research, etc.

Teaching methods that support CEL and which align with High Impact Community Engagement Practices [HICEPs] share the following principles; they are:

- Designed to encourage learners to examine their connections and commitments to the community in which they live (local, national, global).
- Intentionally bring campus partners (faculty, staff, and students) and community partners together to address specific issues, problems or concerns.
- Created and designed through collaboration of campus partners and community partners.
- Value community partners as co-educators recognizing the value of their knowledge about their communities, issues and approaches for change.
- Encourage students to integrate academic and practical knowledge.
- Involve structured and guided reflection by students on the meaning and broader implications of the project/activity.
• Are designed to benefit students through learning and community partners through capacity building of the organization.
• Foster ‘democratic engagement,’ meaning that all contributors are valued in helping to address public issues, create knowledge through scholarship and action and be a part of the larger eco-system of individuals and organizations working for a healthy and just society.
• Are designed and carried out with explicit, clearly articulated Learning Outcomes that are assessed.

**Service-Learning (SL):** while sometimes used synonymously with community-engaged learning; SL is one of several community-engaged instructional methods that can be implemented with both youth and adult learners. It is recognized as one of 13 high impact teaching methods by the Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U].

There are numerous published definitions of service-learning in the literature, one regularly cited definition is the following:

SL is a course or competency-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in mutually identified service activities that benefit the community, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility (adapted from Bringle and Hatcher 1996, 222).

Other definitions do not limit the term “service learning” to curricular contexts, some emphasize the roles of faculty and community members in the process, and others make social justice or systems change an explicit objective .... There is, however, broad consensus that service learning involves the integration of academic material, relevant community-based service activities, and critical reflection in a reciprocal partnership that engages students, faculty/staff, and community members to achieve academic, civic, and personal learning objectives as well as to advance public purposes.” (Bringle & Clayton, 2012, p. 105)