

Community Engagement and the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Affordances and Challenges of Service
Learning in Crisis**

Edited by

Tawnya Azar

George Mason University

Series in Education



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Part 1:
Responding to Communities in Crisis

Chapter 1

Introduction

While Community-engaged (CE) pedagogy or Service-Learning (SL) courses are not new concepts in higher education, they have received new attention in recent years. The rise of non-traditional methods of instruction and assessment, as well as the more recent impacts of artificial intelligence on education, have prompted more and more higher education institutions to turn to CE/SL style courses and programs. In the past decade, community-engaged instruction has experienced unprecedented attention in many areas of research as well as the significant allocation of internal and external resources while simultaneously facing new challenges such as changing demographics that make it more difficult for both students and faculty to take up and maintain this type of work.¹ When the COVID-19 pandemic entered this landscape in early 2020, it had a fundamental impact on all forms of community engagement—and especially in higher education community partnerships. Faced with in-person learning restrictions as well as in-person partnership opportunities, in addition to so many other pandemic-related personal and professional challenges, many faculty, staff, and community organizations were forced to suspend partnership agreements until a vaccine could be made widely available. In fact, the number of CE courses decreased dramatically in 2020 and 2021 because of the unique challenges they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.² At the same time, the need for community engagement had never been more pressing, prompting many faculty, students, staff, and community organizations to meet that need in novel and unprecedented ways. What emerged was a unique combination of compromise and opportunity that will affect CE research and instruction for decades to come.

This collection seeks to capture the unique moment that was the arrival and persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as explore the ramifications of this period on the wider field of CE in higher education. Within this volume are

¹ Amanda Darby and Gary Newman, “Exploring Faculty Members’ Motivation and Persistence in Academic Service-Learning Pedagogy,” *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 18, no. 2 (2014): 91–120. <https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/jheoe/article/view/1116/1115>.

² Merith Weisman, “Remote Community Engagement in the Time of COVID-19, a Surging Racial Justice Movement, Wildfires, and an Election Year,” *Higher Learning Research Communications* 11, (2021) <https://doi.org/10.18870/hlrc.v11i10.1225>.

chapters which explore the many pivots, adaptations, and new approaches that were taken in institutions across the globe at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as in the subsequent years when safety restrictions changed and vaccines became available. Represented in this collection of chapters are the voices of students, faculty, staff, and community partners all of whom explore the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their projects and their takeaways for future CE work—both in general and in times of crisis.

1.1 Community Engagement / Service-Learning Pedagogy

While many education activities have been labeled as CE or SL over the years, Furco's framework³ distinguishes between CE/SL and activities such as internships or volunteering. According to the National Service Learning Clearinghouse, Service Learning "is an approach to teaching and learning in which students use academic and civic knowledge and skills to address genuine community needs."⁴ According to Bringle and Hatcher,⁵ "service learning refers to a Course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organised service activity that meets identified community needs 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 civic responsibility" (112). While these definitions provide a useful starting point for understanding this work, they focus almost entirely on the academic institution (faculty, students, staff) and not on the community partners. A more nuanced definition that highlights the significance of reciprocity is provided by Torres and Sinton⁶

The methodology of service-learning dictates that a clear link exists between the service course in a service-learning experience, students learn not only about social issues, but also how to apply the new knowledge to action that addresses real problems in their own communities. Service-learning students are assigned challenging community tasks, which consider the community's assessment of its own needs, strengths, and resources to be leveraged. Students receive

³ Andrew Furco, "Service-Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential Education," in *Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning*, (Washington, DC: Corporation for National Service, 1996), 2-6.

⁴ "Why? - National Youth Leadership Council," *National Youth Leadership Council - Serve. Learn. Change the World.*, October 23, 2023, <https://nylc.org/why/>.

⁵ Robert G. Bringle and Julie A. Hatcher, "A Service-Learning Curriculum for Faculty," *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 2, no. 1 (1995): 112-122.

⁶ Juan Torres and Richard Sinton, eds., *Establishing and Sustaining an Office of Community Service*, (Providence, RI: Campus Compact, 2000).

academic credit for demonstrated knowledge in connecting their service experience with course content.

In a survey of definitions of university community engagement, Koekkoek et al.⁷ highlight some of the ongoing debates in the field about the purpose of CE/SL work in higher education, including spatial components (global/local), mutual benefits and reciprocity, the sharing of knowledge versus economic impacts, relevance, accountability, and societal expectations of higher education. The benefits to students are well documented in the literature⁸ and include increased self-esteem, engaged learning attitudes, civic knowledge, social skills, and academic achievement. One of the ongoing criticisms of CE/SL scholarship and practice is the potential for university-community partnerships to be exploitative in nature. Recent literature emphasizes the significance of reciprocity, where the community and community partner organizations' needs are prioritized over institutional goals (for institutions), learning outcomes (for faculty), and grades (students). There is robust literature on its significance in creating a transformational (as opposed to transactional) experience for students and community partners.⁹ One of the barriers to the implementation and sustainability of CE work in higher education is the cost-benefit ratio for community partners.¹⁰ There are also well-established barriers for faculty participation (mainly the time investment

⁷ Arjan Koekkoek, Maarten Van Ham, and Reinout Kleinhans, "Unraveling University-Community Engagement: A Literature Review," *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 25, no. 1 (2021): 3–24. <https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/jheoe/article/view/1586>.

⁸ Christine I. Celio, Joseph Durlak, and Allison Dymnicki, "A Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Service-Learning on Students," *The Journal of experiential education* 34, no. 2 (2011): 164–181 and Jenna L. Currie-Mueller and Robert S. Littlefield, "Embracing Service Learning Opportunities: Student Perceptions of Service Learning as an Aid to Effectively Learn Course Material," *The journal of scholarship of teaching and learning* 18, no. 1 (2018): 25–42.

⁹ Patti H. Clayton et al., "Differentiating and Assessing Relationships in Service-Learning and Civic Engagement: Exploitative, Transactional, or Transformational," *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning* 16, no. 2 (October 12, 2010): 5–21, <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ904630.pdf> and Sandra Enos and Karri Morton, "Developing a Theory and Practice of Campus-Community Partnerships," in *Building Partnerships for Service-Learning*, edited by Barbara Jacoby and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 20–41.

¹⁰ Danielle D. Blouin and Elizabeth M. Perry, "Whom Does Service Learning Really Serve? Community-Based Organizations' Perspectives on Service Learning," *Teaching Sociology* 37, no. 2 (2009): 120–135. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X0903700201>.

and lack of funds) and for student buy-in.¹¹ The importance of integrating reflection exercises in CE courses cannot be overstated to potentially overcome barriers to a quality experience for both students and community partners.¹² This is even more evident in the existing research on community engagement in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic explored below.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic forced many institutions and organizations into conducting their work online, there were models and terminology used to describe CE/SL in a digital context, including Service-eLearning (using technology to conduct civic engagement and course activities), E-Service Learning (where instruction and service are online), and Distributed Service Learning (service is conducted locally by students, but instruction is online).¹³ More recently, Compare and Albanesi¹⁴ explored the concept of Extreme Online Service Learning (XE-SL) wherein the service and instruction are both conducted exclusively online.

1.2 CE/SL Research in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 forced many faculty to pivot to an all-online instruction model, impacting community-engaged teaching and

¹¹ Darby and Newman, “Exploring,” 91–120.

¹² Sarah L. Ash and Peter H. Clayton, “Generating, Deepening, and Documenting Learning: The Power of Critical Reflection in Applied Learning,” *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education* 1, no. 1 (2009): 25–48; Hannah Hickson, “Critical Reflection: Reflecting on Learning to Be Reflective,” *Reflective Practice* 12, no. 6 (2011): 829–839; Timothy D. Mitchell, Faith D. Richard, Robert M. Battistoni, Cynthia Rost Banik, Rebecca Netz, and Cheryl Zakoske “Reflective Practice That Persists: Connections between Reflection in Service Learning Programs and in Current Life,” *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 21, no. 2 (2015): 49–63; Robert Tiessen, “Improving Student Reflection in Experiential Learning Reports in Postsecondary Institutions,” *Journal of Education and Learning* 7, no. 3 (2018): 1–10; Mandy Ashgar and Nick Rowe, “Reciprocity and Critical Reflection as the Key to Social Justice in Service Learning: A Case Study,” *Innovations in education and teaching international* 54, no. 2 (2017): 117–125; Sanders, Martha J. Sanders, Tracy Van Oss, and Signian McGeary, “Analyzing Reflections in Service Learning to Promote Personal Growth and Community Self-Efficacy,” *Journal of Experiential Education* 39, no. 1 (October 5, 2015): 73–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053825915608872>.

¹³ Marie G. Sandy and Zeno E. Franco, “Grounding Service-Learning in the Digital Age: Exploring a Virtual Sense of Geographic Place through Online Collaborative Mapping and Mixed Media,” *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 18, no. 4 (2014): 201–.

¹⁴ Christian Compare and Cinzia Albanesi, “Stand Together by Staying Apart: Extreme Online Service-Learning during the Pandemic,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 5 (2022): 2749–.

research in both predictable and unexpected ways. Community partners, faced with a similar struggle to serve their communities with restrictions on face-to-face interaction, were often too overwhelmed to work with higher education volunteers. Ethically, and, in some cases legally, universities could not ask students to risk their health with face-to-face community engagement. At the same time, the pandemic presented some CE faculty with new opportunities for community-engagement. Some responded swiftly to the immediate needs of the local, regional, or national community with which they worked, taking advantage of the affordances of digital technology or capitalizing on the issues that the pandemic itself created or exacerbated.

For example, Couillou et al.¹⁵ conducted a survey of community partners and higher education institutions to determine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on community learning that found more difficulties than opportunities. Higher education respondents note that many service-learning programs were canceled or reduced. While they noted one improvement over previous iterations of the CE courses, which was the expanded partner options thanks to the widespread adoption of digital technologies and virtual service options, much of their findings underscore the reasons why so many institutions and organizations suspended CE work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote options were found to be subpar for students and challenging for program requirements. Coordinating schedules, resource changes, and student difficulties working with populations demographically different than themselves and using technology that was unfamiliar to them (e.g. speaking on phones) proved to be additional stumbling blocks.

However, both Doody et al. and Smeltzer¹⁶ found little difference in the student experience between pre-pandemic and post-pandemic approaches to their CE work. Doody et al.¹⁷ determine that, although there were some differences in flexibility, communication, and collaboration between their pandemic CE courses and their regular CE courses, there was no difference for students in the critical skills they obtained or in their interest in the subject matter. They note that it was important when pivoting to account for student

¹⁵ Ryan J. Couillou, Beth L. McGee, April S. Carr, and Tabitha Lamberth, "Pandemic Partnerships: Community/University Experiences with Community-Based Learning in the COVID-19 Era," *The Journal of Experiential Education* 46, no. 3 (2023): 319–341.

¹⁶ Kevin Doody, Peter Schuetze, and Kimberly Fulcher, "Service Learning in the Time of COVID-19," *Experiential Learning & Teaching in Higher Education* 3, no. 1 (2020): 12–16, <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/elthe/vol3/iss1/8> and Sarah Smeltzer, Carlos Leon, and Vanessa Sperduti, "You Can't Throw Snowballs over Zoom: The Challenges of Service-Learning Reflection via Online Platforms," *RIDAS* 2020, 101–112.

¹⁷ Doody, Schuetze, and Fulcher, "Service Learning," 12–16.

trauma and stress in the redesign of their classes. Smeltzer¹⁸ found that some of their students felt disconnected from the community partners after pivoting, but some felt empowered helping partners through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. They emphasize the importance of finding ways to facilitate reflection in spite of having to be all virtual and suggest that setting up a peer-to-peer mentoring system of former CE students with current CE students was one way to encourage student-partner success.

In some cases, the experience of pivoting during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in unexpected advantages. For instance, Shaw and Halley¹⁹ kept SL classes that had been pre-scheduled for the Fall semester of 2020 even though they knew the COVID-19 pandemic would still be an issue. They reasoned that there was more to be gained from adapting community engagement to pandemic circumstances than would be lost—especially since they worked with communities at risk for COVID-19 pandemic misinformation and isolation. Their findings suggest that the adaptations they made actually helped to center the community’s needs in the students’ efforts (as opposed to centering grades). Additionally, students had to think of the advantages afforded by the pandemic instead of only overcoming challenges. Similarly, Gresh et al.²⁰ describe how their public health nursing service-learning program pivoted to support the Baltimore Neighbors Network which had volunteers connect with older residents by phone to foster companionship and aid in navigating the pandemic. Through this experience, students identified “assets and gaps in infrastructure as health systems and community-based organizations quickly worked to develop and adapt services during the pandemic” (252). Integral to their success was quick action by the institution to facilitate the partnership and virtual training and support for student volunteers.

It is important to highlight the vastly different circumstances faced by instructors and community partners including infrastructure to support online pivoting and the unique situation of different local, regional, and national

¹⁸ Smeltzer, Leon, and Sperduti, “You Can’t Throw,” 101-112.

¹⁹ Sarah Shaw and Meghan A. Halley, “Service Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Model of Temporal, Spatial, and Cultural Adaptability,” *Journal of Interpretation* 29, no. 1 (2021): 3.

²⁰ Ashley Gresh, Sarah LaFave, Veena Thamilselvan, Anne Batchelder, Jenna Mermer, Keilah Jacques, Amy Greensfelder, et al., “Service Learning in Public Health Nursing Education: How COVID-19 Accelerated Community-Academic Partnership,” *Public Health Nursing* 38, no. 2 (2021): 248–257.

experiences of the virus. Kondancha et al.²¹ discuss having to make an SL pivot in the context of Indian higher education, where the internet penetration rate as of 2019 was 54%, making it very difficult to move SL online. In addition to this challenge, they also had students move back home which meant they were unable to interact with local partners or community members. Even shifting service project focus to those who had sufficient internet access was difficult as many with this access reported virtual fatigue and were unwilling to participate as much. In some cases, they lost contact entirely with community partners. In spite of all these difficulties, they reported gains in student autonomy, administration, and soft skills as well as new areas of growth including trial-and-error, creative problem-solving, and using new technologies. This finding is also supported by Lin and Shek,²² who argue that e-SL has the potential to lower barriers to service (e.g. geography) and expand communities who can benefit from SL programs (e.g. those with disabilities). In their evaluation they found students reported similar benefits of the virtual SL program to face-to-face students and were even more likely to recommend the course for future students. They suggest that offering the e-SL likely helped students with the psychological stress of the COVID-19 pandemic and that reflection was key to their success. Using a mixed methods approach, Compare and Albanesi²³ found that while XE-SL can have comparable benefits for students to F2F SL, on-site engagement with community partners or community members was what students felt they missed the most. They qualify this finding by pointing out that students might be more amenable to xe-SL in a non-pandemic context.

In terms of thinking about possible long-term ramifications of pandemic CE/SL work, several scholars broach the notion that not only is CE work especially suited for crisis-mode pedagogy, but that the adaptations made during the COVID-19 pandemic could change all CE work for the better. Veyvoda and Cleve²⁴ argue that COVID-19 pandemic helped to reframe Service

²¹ Prashanth Kodancha, Ketu S. Sajjani, Anushree Raut, and Shashank Baboo, "Service-Learning in Indian Higher Education: Experiences of Adaptation to the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Service-Learning in Higher Education* 11 (2020): 1–24.

²² Li Lin and Daniel T. L. Shek, "Serving Children and Adolescents in Need during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evaluation of Service-Learning Subjects with and without Face-to-Face Interaction," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 4 (2021): 2114-.

²³ Compare, Christian, and Cinzia Albanesi. "Stand Together."

²⁴ Melissa A. Veyvoda and Tricia J. Van Cleave, "Re-imagining Community-Engaged Learning: Service-Learning in Communication Sciences and Disorders Courses During and After COVID-19," *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups* 5, no. 6 (2020): 1542–1551, CINAHL Complete, https://doi.org/10.1044/2020_PERSP-20-00146.

Learning as community-engaged instead of community-based. They suggest that e-Service Learning has the potential to solve some of the problems with traditional face-to-face Service Learning and distance learning in general. They suggest that regardless of the modality, students need to engage with humans different than themselves, and they found that reflection (to include COVID-19 impacts) was one of the reasons that their adapted SL program resulted in even more meaningful chances for engagement than their traditional face-to-face program. Burton and Winter²⁵ make a compelling case for the *adaptability* of service-learning pedagogy, arguing that community-engaged courses are resilient in times of uncertainty and stress. They argue that SL/CE courses should persist in spite of the crisis and online options should increase even after the COVID-19 pandemic ends. Leung et al.²⁶ argue that the changes to Service Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic will have significant ramifications for service-learning long after it ends.

1.3 Contributions of this collection

The goal of this edited collection is to capture the work of pivoting and innovating in community-engaged teaching. With a primary focus on community-engaged teaching in higher education, this collection explores how faculty, students, and community partners adapted their work during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to capturing the work of CE during the COVID-19 pandemic, this collection also seeks to answer several important questions including:

- What challenges did the COVID-19 pandemic pose to existing community-engaged teaching?
- How did faculty, partners, students, and/or staff pivot CE courses to work around the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What new opportunities for community-engaged teaching did the COVID-19 pandemic present?
- What support, if any, did institutions offer for community-engaged teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic?

²⁵ Casey Burton and Marcia A. Winter, "Benefits of Service-Learning for Students during the COVID-19 Crisis: Two Case Studies," *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, 2021.

²⁶ Hildie Leung, Daniel T. L. Shek, and Diya Dou, "Evaluation of Service-Learning in Project WeCan under COVID-19 in a Chinese Context," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 7 (2021): 3596.

- For what reasons did faculty, staff, students, and partners persist in CE work under the difficult circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How did students respond to the challenges and opportunities of working on community-engaged projects during the COVID-19 pandemic? How did this affect their learning outcomes?
- How did community partners adapt to the restrictions and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic? How did these adaptations affect the relationship between institutions, faculty, students, and community partners?

1.4 Chapter Outlines

This book has 21 distinct chapters, which are grouped into four thematic parts. It is important to note that many of the chapters in this collection examine all four of the identified organizational themes, so they are divided based on a particular emphasis or contribution to that theme. The first part, “Responding to Communities in Crisis,” focuses on pivots made to meet some of the most immediate needs that the COVID-19 pandemic created or exacerbated. The second part, “The Student Experience,” focuses on the impact of COVID-19 pivots in CE classes on students. The third part, “Community Partner Perspectives,” focuses on highlighting the impact of COVID-19 adaptations of CE programs on community partners and includes chapters written by the community partner authors. The fourth part, “Theoretical Approaches,” presents new ways of thinking and executing CE work based on changes emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic and their potential to impact the future of CE work in higher education in the long term.

In Part 1, Chapter 2 “How Do We Care for One Another in a Crisis? Using Mutual Aid Assignments to Build Community,” Carla Wilson and Jennifer Musial make a compelling case for teaching community-engagement through mutual aid projects (community-lead support networks designed to meet the needs of a community) instead of relying on governmental or corporate aid during a crisis. They emphasize that their student populations were among those most vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and so finding a way to approach CE work that centers a pedagogy of care was essential. Through their students’ mutual aid projects, they found a way to meet the immediate needs of the community during the COVID-19 pandemic and underscore the value of relationship-building and reciprocity in community partnerships. Their chapter describes these mutual aid projects and the benefits and challenges their students faced as they navigated these community networks through the changing landscape of the pandemic. In Chapter 3, “Art in a Democratic Society,” Brandon Bauer describes the

development of a civics-focused, arts-based, service-learning course to adapt to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic and address the 2020 United States Presidential Election. The author notes that the hybrid modality of the course, coupled with institutional financial support for the service-learning component, meant that students were able to not only meet some of the immediate needs of the community related to the U.S. Presidential Election, such as get-out-the-vote efforts and poll working but also connect with artists and organizations whose mission is to bring together the concepts of democracy and art.

In Chapter 4, “Online Community Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Was It Still a Mutually-Beneficial Experience?” Sarah Beth Dempsey and William T. L. Besson detail the challenges of conducting CE courses, which were mandated by their institution as a graduation requirement while facing COVID-19 pandemic safety restrictions, which banned students from working on-site with community partners. They wondered how all the adjustments they had to make to continue their CE requirement impacted the goal of a mutually-beneficial experience for students, faculty, and community partners, so they conducted a survey of these groups and present their findings in this collection. Their findings have significant implications for the future of remote learning CE style courses and for institutions facing similar constraints in a future crisis. In Chapter 5, “Bridging the Digital Divide: Community-Engaged Writing and Advocacy,” Tawnya Azar presents a case study of how her CE course—which focused on addressing the digital divide in different communities—changed over the different phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. Azar emphasizes the tension she and her students initially faced over being unable to meet the need for digital access and literacy, which was amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic because of the restrictions against working on site with those most vulnerable to the effects of the digital divide. Azar argues that shifting to a project-based model of CE and remaining flexible to the needs of her students and community partners had unexpected benefits that will shape her approach to CE work in the long-term. She concludes with an overview of potential implications for the future of CE in higher education in general and with suggestions for faculty interested in facilitating a CE course for the first time. The final chapter in Part 1, Chapter 6, “An Integration of STEM and Service-Learning from the Ashes of a Pandemic,” focuses on the affordances of pairing STEM problem-solving methodologies with service-learning pedagogy to address some of the immediate and long-term needs that arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gloria Poveda and Nicholas Valley discuss the effect of the pandemic on service-learning and physical science programs at their institution and the challenges and solutions they discovered through the adaptations they made, offering insights into how their integrated approach

contributed to resilience in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it might also function in future times of crisis.

In Part 2, Chapter 7, “Embracing the Challenges to Community-Engaged Teaching Brought on by the Pandemic: Examination of Student Community-Engaged Research Through Two Case Studies,” Bemmy Granados and Doug Barrera explain how the success of their COVID-19 pandemic pivots was in large part due to the fact that their courses involved a significant focus on undergraduate research component. They note the value of conducting research with and for community partners and argue that a project-based approach to community-engagement is well-suited to remote learning and thus a viable option for future situations in which CE courses are conducted online. Chapter 8, “Pre-Service Teachers’ Learning Outcomes Resulting from an Online Co-Teaching Experience of Local Mothers and College Professors During Early COVID-19,” explores the impact of COVID-19 on a program designed to provide field experiences for pre-service teachers in which they co-teach with community members off campus with the intention that these experiences would both raise the PSTs’ awareness of social justice issues facing these communities and to see families as co-leaders of their children’s education. Lauren E. Burrow and Heather K. Olson Beal analyzed the PSTs’ reflections to address specific questions related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the program. The resulting evidence suggests that in spite of the inability of PSTs to work off campus with community members in-person, the main learning outcomes of the program were realized. In Chapter 9, “Community-Engaged Research in a Virtual Environment: Challenges and Lessons Learned from Pivoting Graduate Student International Research Projects,” Nichola Driver, Tiffany Jacob, and Becca Bona discuss the implementation of an International Public Service Project for their graduate students in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter presents findings from the analysis of seven in-depth interviews with graduate students who had to adapt their projects during the summers of 2020 and 2021. The authors emphasize that the inclusion of student-led, community-engaged research projects in their program was integral to the success of this pivot. In Chapter 10, “Navigating (Remote) College Going Pathways Alongside Black and Latinx Youth,” Kelsey Ruiz, Dr. Olga M. Correa, and Anastasia Morton highlight the disproportionate effect that the COVID-19 pandemic had on communities of color and specifically address the impact of the pandemic on Black and Latinx students seeking to obtain post-secondary education. Their chapter explores how they advanced their mission of promoting college access through two university-sponsored programs and the adjustments they made during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the subsequent shift to hybrid instruction in the second year. They utilize a college access, retention, and

success framework to present pedagogical practices and student viewpoints on their experiences during this period.

In Part 3, “Community Partner Perspectives,” Chapter 11, “Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future: Service-Learning in Higher Education,” Ryan J. Couillou and Beth L. McGee situate a qualitative study of community partner and higher education representative perspectives of the COVID-19 pandemic within past and emerging research on the challenges and benefits of remote CE work more broadly. They point out which factors contribute to the success of remote service-learning in a general sense and highlight special considerations for COVID-19 service-learning more specifically. They review the feedback from higher education representatives and community partners and make suggestions for improving service-learning including prioritizing reciprocal outcomes, more remote and hybrid service-learning options, and designing SL courses with major disruptions in mind. Chapter 12, “Organizing Apart: How College Students Engaged their Peers in the 2020 Election,” is co-authored by Chuck Black and Kassie Phebillo both of whom work as community partners at the Campus Vote Project. Through their organization, they partner with institutions of higher learning across the country to focus on non-partisan voter registration and education. Their chapter explores how they helped institutions and students across the country make the leap to largely virtual efforts to maintain their mission. They also identify several takeaways from this experience that have important implications for ongoing efforts to increase voter registration and the number of younger poll workers as well as approaches to engaging with community partners during a crisis and in the longer term. This chapter is an important contribution to this collection as it represents a community partner perspective. Susan Haarman, Donald Ziegler, Sasha Adkins, Maggie Ozan-Raffery, and Tamar Frolichstein-Appel, the authors of Chapter 13, “Going Global Rather than Local During and After the Pandemic: Shifting from Placement-Based to Project-Based Service-Learning,” offer a case study of a global health service-learning course that made the transition from a placement-based service-learning course to a project-based service-learning course due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that this necessary shift to working with one community partner on a specific project resulted in stronger connections between the service component of the course and the other course content. Such was the success of this pivot that this approach has continued to be the preferred approach even after the safety restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic loosened. This chapter includes the perspective of the faculty and staff who facilitated the service-learning course as well as a representative of the community partner they worked with.

In Chapter 14, “Connecting Amidst the Chaos: Shifting Community Engagement and Tourism Brand Implementation to a Virtual Environment,”

Rita Colistra offers a case study of a grant-funded community-branding project in an upper-level advertising and public relations capstone course. Through this case study, the author details the successful adaptations the class and community partner made during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to achieve the course outcomes, support the community, and ensure a mutually beneficial outcome for the community partner. Colistra provides suggestions for project management tools and approaches that aided in this effort as well as recommendations for conducting virtual service-learning and community-engaged projects. Emily Troshynski and Carolyn Willis of Chapter 15, “Coming Home During a Pandemic: Lessons on Community Engagement for Reentry Success,” contribute their case study of a community-based reentry program for formerly incarcerated individuals that had to make significant adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors use data from four focus group sessions which included seven staff members and interviews with twenty-four post-incarcerated clients to address how the reentry program made these adjustments, the impact of these changes on the community partner relationships, and the experiences of justice-involved clients during this period of global crisis. Their findings are not only significant to this collection’s efforts to capture community-engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to reentry models more broadly and especially involving periods of crisis. Shawn Donnelly of Chapter 16, “A Community Partner’s perspective - Response to COVID-19, Service-Learning, and Community Connection,” is herself a representative of The Society of St. Vincent de Paul and provides a unique community partner perspective on the COVID-19 pandemic. Donnelly details how her organization which relied on thousands of in-person volunteers to serve the community in a variety of capacities had to make the necessary shift to volunteering from home due to the need to keep volunteers and vulnerable community members safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. She highlights the important role that area university students and faculty played in supporting this new model of community engagement, noting the advantages it afforded her organization and the challenges that they needed to navigate. Chapter 16 makes a valuable contribution to this collection as it explores the dynamic of community-engaged higher education from the perspective of a community partner.

In Part 4, “Theoretical Approaches,” Chapter 17, “The Power of Community-University Partnerships During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Virtual Critical Service Learning for Social Justice in Asian American Studies,” Jennifer A. Yee, Sophía Soberón, Lucy Ngo, and Minji Kim provide an auto-ethnographic case study of how they managed the COVID-19 pandemic while reimagining their approach to community-engaged pedagogy. The redesign of their course not only helped to create a successful fully-online service-learning experience, it also helped them to imagine a new approach to community-engagement that

prioritizes individual and collective well-being. Their approach to community-engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic and to the research in this chapter prioritizes the concept of care in ways that will significantly impact the future of community-engaged teaching and research. In Chapter 18, “From ‘Community-Based’ Learning to ‘Community-Interdependent’ Practice: How Critical Pedagogy and Emergent Strategy Guided us Through Fracture and into Change,” Zapoura Newton-Calvert explores how the COVID-19 pandemic enabled her to redefine community-based learning (CBL) as a pedagogical framework to prioritize the lived experiences of faculty and students engaged with CBL. Through this framework, the author proposes a shift from CBL to “community interdependent” practice, the flexibility of which is not only suited to times of crisis but also to a more connective community-engaged experience. In Chapter 19, “Applying Ethical Engagement Frameworks to Adapt a Community-Engaged Learning Program to a Remote/Virtual Experience,” Kelly Bohrer, Molly Sayre, and Megan Shepherd discuss how they adapted their sociotechnical immersion program for engineering students to maintain their commitment to community-engaged learning (CEL) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this immersion program, students complete a required course that integrates sociotechnical design and a social justice framework, and they develop sociotechnical projects with community organizations whose missions serve marginalized communities. The center which facilitates this program utilizes three justice-oriented frameworks including Asset-Based Community, Equity-Center Design, and Fair Trade Learning, offering robust CEL style courses potential roadmaps to conducting social justice approaches to experiential learning both in times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic and in general. Jill Lassiter in Chapter 20, “Faculty Reflection on Community-Engaged Learning: Lessons from the Pandemic,” contributes to this collection by offering a five-step intentional reflection framework for faculty that can enable faculty to adapt their CE work to disruptive periods like the COVID-19 pandemic and ever-changing landscape of higher education and student demographics. The author argues that adopting a more consistent reflection practice will help faculty harness the flexible and innovative thinking they embraced to make the necessary changes to their courses during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Chapter 21, “Leading With Empathy – Reflections on Navigating COVID-19, Community Partnerships, and Student Needs in Community-Engaged Teaching,” Mary Mathis Burnett and Bailey Borman urge community-engaged instructors to consider the impact that empathy can have on students, community partners, and faculty themselves. To meet the Solutions-Based Learning graduation requirement for the large number of online students at their institution, Author 1 developed a community-engaged course based on the theory of Social Empathy. For both authors, this theory not only informed

their design of the course to help students understand experiences different from their own but also helped the authors identify the challenges working with students and their community partner during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their chapter functions as a reflection on these experiences and offers notable insights into the role of empathy in community-engaged teaching. Chapter 22, “Higher Education Community Engagement Pivots Supported Through a Virtual Community of Practice” describes how the creation of a virtual Community of Practice (CoP) enabled Audrey Falk, Barrett Brenton, and Martina Jordaan to continue their community-engaged instruction in spite of the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. These authors hail from a variety of colleges and universities around the world, and their chapter details the ways in which their virtual CoP helped them to process the challenges and opportunities that arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening their community engagement programs. They offer a series of recommendations for the development of CoPs and suggest that they have the potential to foster innovative pathways for the future of community-engaged instruction.

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