

To: Amy Banes-Berceli, Associate Provost
From: Rebecca Cheezum, Senate Experiential Learning Committee Chair
Date: June 30, 2025
RE: Senate Experiential Learning Committee Annual Report

The 2024-2025 Academic Year was the first academic year after the committee was restructured to be the Experiential Learning Committee (ELC) with a subcommittee called the Service Learning Committee.

The ELC met virtually on the following dates this academic year:

Tuesday, September 24, 2024
Wednesday, October 16, 2024
Monday, January 27, 2025
Thursday, February 20, 2025
Monday, March 10, 2025
Thursday, April 3, 2025

Scope of work and committee activities: The first two meetings were convened by Associate Provost Kristin Landis-Piowar to identify who would be chair of the committee. I volunteered to chair the overall ELC. Over the next several months, the ELC developed a process for identifying Oakland University courses as experiential learning courses. Unfortunately, our work was challenged by insufficient information and poor communication with the other university entities working on similar topics. For example, we learned after a few meetings that the registrar already has an experiential course designation in use. Later, the day we were scheduled to align our process with the university definition, a member of the committee learned that the university was revising the definition, a process of which we were unaware. The committee recommends that the university consider ways to create structures to facilitate information sharing across different committees related to experiential learning.

Despite these challenges, the committee has developed a process for identifying courses as experiential learning courses.

The following courses will be automatically approved as experiential learning courses:

- a. Studio classes
- b. Laboratory classes
- c. Research/dissertation classes
- d. Internship, practicum, clinical
- e. Study abroad/Study away
- f. Student teaching
- g. Service Learning
- h. Field work

Department chairs will identify any other courses that are experiential learning courses.

Becca will work with the registrar's office and talk to chairs about this by early fall, 2025.

The remaining pages of this report are the meeting minutes from our meetings (once I became chair) and the annual report from the subcommittee. I will submit the Service Learning Subcommittee annual report as a separate document.

Experiential Learning Committee
Meeting Minutes
1/27/2025

In attendance:

Committee members: Becca Cheezum, Amy Gould, Ron Piscotty, Sarah Butash, Greg Bartley, Meaghan Barry, Linda Bzhetaj, Susanne Condrón, Molly McGuire, Jennifer Anderson, Ali Woerner, Deidre Hurse, Sheri Mackey, Caress Dean, Bridget Kies.

Guests: Kristin Landis-Piwowar, Wayne Thibodeau

Meeting objective: The central objective of this meeting will be to get better clarity on the university's definition of experiential learning and the purpose or need for this course designation.

The meeting was recorded.

Attendees introduced themselves.

Becca gave a brief introduction to our guests during the introduction period. Wayne Thibodeau added a bit more context to the efforts. He stated that the Experiential Learning Leadership Council has been going strong for two years. We are at part two where department chairs are working to implement "the Pledge." In the Student Affairs Division, we help manage those initiatives.

We went through some questions that Becca had sent to Wayne and Kristin a bit ahead of time.

1. What is the purpose of this designation (e.g., what problem are we trying to solve or how will this designation be used)

There is an opportunity. The launch of the Pledge is coming up on February 5th. Tying our knowledge to experience. How are we doing at this? We are looking for a baseline. The Experiential Learning Council is looking for courses that offer this in order to get that baseline. This is an elevated attempt to capture all the great things that are already happening here. If we are going to make a Pledge to students, we need a way to quantify it. If there is a designation on the course, the public can see that it is experiential. This committee can quantify it so we can tell the public.

2. Are we expected to review courses already designated as experiential by their course number because they are internships, practicum, or clinical courses?

There is no process worked out. It is for this committee to say that they want to rubber stamp courses with these designations if that is what the committee wants to do. If they want to review it, they can do that.

3. Is there a shared definition for experiential committee? No, it has just been an assumed process.
4. What is the university's definition of experiential learning? Here are some example of activities - would these count?
 - a. Study abroad? - probably. Are there any courses that fall outside of a course? We would only need to worry about experiences that are course-related.
 - b. Field trips? This would be up to this committee to determine, though it is likely. Kristin suggested using the service learning rubric as a launching point.
 - c. Community-based activities that are not service-oriented (e.g., my students have assignment options, such as attending a city council meeting or going to their local library to investigate the services they offer)
 - d. A dance performance or studio time for fine arts - this is a more clear experiential, fits pretty easily
 - e. Analyzing real data in a stats class
 - f. Does the experience have to address a community need? No, this does not need to be the case.

Working definition on ELI website. The one-sentence line is: "commitment to provide undergraduate students with opportunities for meaningful hands on learning. That commitment seeks to enhance academic knowledge with experiential learning, internships, or even community engagement opportunities."

Amy Gould did some additional research and provided the example of the College of Engineering at University of Michigan. They reported that 98% of their graduating engineers participated in at least one experiential learning. They included curricular, co-curricular opportunities. This included student organizations. They stated that there was ample opportunity for experiential learning. Focused on learning resources, such as helping students to reflect on and communicate the value of their experiences in relation to their career. They developed competencies. It was a broad definition. Whatever experience you had, you need to talk about it. The student would self-select if they had participated in an experiential learning. They have a way to capture their learning at the end.

Wayne Thibodeau commented that they capture some of this in the first destination survey for alumni.

Becca confirmed are we are focused on courses, as submitted by faculty. Do we need to be aware of a parallel process for students?

Kristin stated that would be outside of our responsibilities, but this committee is designed to give an opportunity

5. Is there particular data that the university needs to collect, such as for the OU Pledge or for the Carnegie classification?

No, we don't need to worry about the Carnegie Classification process.

6. There was some discussion about whether we would be experiential learning or need to change to experience-based learning. Experience-based learning was better received by people in some UCM focus groups.

7. How do we work in tandem with the ELI council? There are members who are on both committees, so we can have some cross-conversations.

We will need to figure out what to do with courses where there is 1 experience, but the course is not largely experiential.

After the guests answered questions, the committee debriefed.

- Make the labor as reasonable as possible for us.
- What is the incentive for faculty to fill out these forms for
- Could department survey notify the committee of what they
- Start with people who know the classes that are being offered in their departments/ programs.
- Are we considering a second attribute for experiential learning.
- How are we going to identify courses automatically (e.g., internships, practicum, etc.)
- Lance, the student rep, asked about faculty who aren't as integrated, such as lecturers, who may not be as integrated. He would probably never think about getting it designated as experiential learning.
- How do we incorporate independent studies?

Winter, 2025 meetings

Thursday, February 20th, 11:00

Monday, March 10th, 1:00

Thursday, April 3rd, 11:00

Experiential Learning Committee

Meeting Minutes

2/20/2025

11:00 am

Zoom:

<https://oakland-edu.zoom.us/j/92947756090?pwd=SBjyRUosLV7jsTw1yJpdujaNmSlaEy.1>

In attendance: Jennifer Anderson, Sarah Butash, Becca Cheezum, Susanne Condrón, Caress Dean, Caitlin Demsky, Huirong Fu, Amy Gould, Bridget Kies, Sheri Mackey, Ron Piscotty

Meeting objectives:

Develop a workplan for the committee's work

Identify places where we can "rubber stamp" approval

1. Approval of minutes from last meeting - the meeting minutes were not approved because we did not have quorum.
2. Update from Service Learning subcommittee
 - a. One course has been approved
 - b. One course is under review
 - c. The subcommittee has done outreach regarding the course designation
 - i. Provost weekly emails
 - ii. Community engagement newsletter
 - iii. CETL newsletter
3. Discuss process for this committee - the committee discussed at our previous meeting a three-step process for approval:
 - a. Step 1: Automatic approvals - based upon specific course designations in banner
 - b. Step 2: Department chair approvals
 - c. Step 3: Committee review, based upon an agreed-upon designation.
4. Experiential learning designation - There is already an experiential learning course designation in banner
 - a. How does this happen? - with the creation of the course
 - b. There are course number designations that shadow the course type
 - c. Sarah Butash will generate a list of all courses with the experiential learning attribute before the next meeting.
5. Potential categories for automatic designation, either by registrar's office based upon course attributes built in or by department chair based upon their review and knowledge of course. (We will need to approve these formally at the next meeting because we did not have quorum.)
 - a. Studio classes also have an attribute - this can be automatically designated experiential learning (approve at next meeting if we have quorum)
 - b. Include laboratory classes as experiential learning - this can be automatically designated experiential learning (approve at next meeting if we have quorum)
 - c. Research/dissertation classes - this can be automatically designated experiential learning (approve at next meeting if we have quorum)

- d. Internship, practicum, clinical - this can be automatically designated experiential learning (approve at next meeting if we have quorum)
 - e. Study Abroad - this can be automatically designated experiential learning (approve at next meeting if we have quorum)
 - f. Service learning - this can be automatically designated experiential learning (approve at next meeting if we have quorum)
6. The question came up: what is the benefit to faculty to have their course receive a designation of service learning or experiential learning? The committee can come back to this question at a future meeting.
7. At future meetings discuss:
- i. a working definition of “experiential learning” [Oakland University’s working definition: *Experiential learning is the application of classroom learning to real-world experiences, including, but not limited to, service-learning, student organization leadership and campus involvement, faculty-led research and projects, study-abroad, field experience, cooperative education, and internships.*]
 - ii. List and consider more gray area courses, such as field trips, one-time experiences, independent studies, courses taught by lecturers with less broader involvement with university
 - iii. How do the items in ii fit with our definition?
 - iv. Consider process for approval
 - 1. Department chairs/program directors
 - 2. Faculty submissions
 - v. Develop relevant rubrics
 - vi. Finalize processes for approval
8. Winter, 2025 meetings
Monday, March 10th, 1:00
Thursday, April 3rd, 11:00

**Experiential Learning Committee
Meeting Minutes**

3/10/2025

11:00 am

In attendance: Jennifer Anderson, Meaghan Barry, Sarah Butash, Linda Bzhetaj, Greg Bartley, Becca Cheezum, Caress Dean, Huirong Fu, Deidre Hurse, Bridget Kies, Lance Markowitz, Molly McGuire, Ali Woerner,

2. January committee meeting minutes were approved
3. February committee meeting minutes were approved
4. The Service Learning Experiential Learning Subcommittee has approved two courses and is currently reviewing a third course.
 - a. It would be helpful to discuss motivations for faculty to get their service learning courses designated courses.
5. Becca had planned to have our committee work on developing a definition of experiential learning, as it relates to courses, to use that as a framework for approving courses. She learned earlier today (through Amy) that a committee, in which Wayne Thibodeau is involved, is meeting later today to change its definition of experiential learning. The university definition is more broad than just courses (which is our task). With this, the committee decided to focus on an automatic designation process.
6. Committee agreed to approve the following types of courses automatically. These would not go through any approval process by the committee, but will automatically be approved at the department level by the department chair.
 - a. Studio classes
 - b. Laboratory classes
 - c. Research/dissertation classes
 - d. Internship, practicum, clinical
 - e. Study abroad/Study away
 - f. Student teaching
 - g. Service Learning
 - h. Field work
7. We can also discuss motivation for faculty/departments to have courses designated as experiential learning courses.
8. Discussed Give Pulse - an online platform for capturing community engagement. We can record data for future reports. Jennifer reported that its use is being mandated. It is being rolled out by the community engagement office. Becca expressed that it is not known that it is being used, and after having sat through an orientation on Give Pulse she is not certain how it will be useful for classes and has concerns about putting information about community partners with whom she has built relationships over years.
9. We will need to figure out the process for the automatic designation. The committee could get a list of courses to audit, at least at the beginning.
10. Next meeting will be April 3rd. Dave Dulio will be coming to discuss a community engagement award for students.

Experiential Learning Committee

Meeting Minutes

4/3/2025

11:00 am

Zoom:

<https://oakland-edu.zoom.us/j/93506745693?pwd=NXGT3Ulqd5LfcjMnqUAonAgFqyhApW.1&jst=2>

1. Dave Dulio will discuss community engagement award for undergraduate students - There will be a community engagement award for students in the future. Dave Dulio was looking to get our committee's input on the criteria for the award. He would like to involve both our committee and the Community Engagement Committee, but also do so efficiently. Jennifer will send the nomination form and the criteria to the ELS, so the committee can see what that looks like. Dave said it is possible that there could be a graduate award, as well.
2. The [March meeting minutes](#) were approved.
3. Discuss building motivations or incentives for course designation (SL and Experiential Learning) How do we incentivize faculty to complete
 - a. It may need to be part of faculty tenure and promotion. This would be at the department chairs, so reaching out to department chairs.
 - b. Incorporate into merit for tenure track and special instructors
 - c. An award - like an excellent service learning course (like assessment committee has)
 - d. Promote it from the university - that service learning, experiential learning are valuable to the university.
 - e. Espace or coffee hours or something to build community among faculty that are doing this work. This could include faculty advisors for clubs.
4. Becca will work with chairs, registrar, etc. to determine a process for automatic approval and will update the committee
 - a. Next steps - joining up with community engagement committee regarding award; look at different ideas, what is low-hanging fruit.
 - b. What are goals that we want to work on next year?
 - c. We have completed the tasks that were developed for us.
 - i. We created a process. In previous years, we had developed the process for service learning and we have approved courses.
5. Thanks for a good year!

