



To: Rebecca Sawyer, ACCU Vice President

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Topic: University of Dayton Civic Learning

## **Introduction:**

At the University of Dayton, community engagement, equity, justice action, dialogue, and civic inquiry are intrinsically connected to our Catholic and Marianist tradition of the University. These all occur in many ways across the institution. Below are a few examples of spaces and work that is occurring. If you would like more context or examples, please reach out, we would be happy to provide more information.

**Community Engagement** (*Collaborative projects with diverse partners, Community based research and projects, Community Engaged Learning, Equity and Justice Engagement and Action, Guided Reflection, and Civic Inquiry*):

Community engagement at the University of Dayton describes mutually beneficial collaborations between the University and our communities (local, regional/state, national, and global), practicing reciprocal, responsive, and respectful relationships. Working in community partnerships and through a communal understanding of issues and the sharing of resources, we engage in social justice action that works for the Common Good. There are many places on campus that are doing community engagement or civic engagement. This happens both inside and outside of the classroom. Courses that are doing deep community engagement have a “community engaged learning tag”.

Community engagement occurs all across the University, but it often is supported out of our Centers and Institutes that include: The Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, Hanley Sustainability Institute, Human Rights Center, ETHOS Center, The Center for Social Concern, and The Global and Intercultural Affairs Center. Representatives from these centers meet monthly to create synergy and continue to work together to deepen community engagement across the campus. Below are descriptions of a few of the centers and examples of the work they do.

## **Fitz Center:**

The Fitz Center was established in 2002 and is often referred to as the “front porch of the University”. The Fitz Center “addresses community identified challenges by cultivating reciprocal, collaborative and inclusive partnerships and learning environments to catalyze a more healthy, just and equitable future for the Dayton region” (<https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/fitz/about.php>). It works from an asset based framework with an emphasis on widely shared vision. The Fitz Center has deep examples of collaborative projects with diverse partners, community based research and projects, equity and justice engagement and action, and civic inquiry. Three examples include Health Equity, Educational Equity, and the Faculty Fellows Program:

**Health Equity and HEATT:** <https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/fitz/health-equity-fellows.php>

In August of 2021 Nancy McHugh came in as the new executive director of the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community. In her meeting with community partner organizations it

became very clear that there was a strong desire for collective work around health equity and a noted lack of health practitioners in our region who worked from a health equity lens. A group of roughly twenty-five community members and several University of Dayton faculty and staff, met regularly to discuss how to impact inequitable health outcomes in Dayton and Montgomery County. While there are many significant health inequities in our region and many drivers of these, the health inequity that the collective expressed the most concern about is the high rate in Black infant and maternal mortality in Montgomery County. The collective gave the Fitz Center a mandate to reach out further to other partner organizations and community members and to come back with a plan to impact Black infant and maternal mortality and to increase the number of health equity minded health professionals in Dayton. From this work emerged the Health Equity Activation Think Tank (HEATT), a collaborative out of the Fitz Center, but run by a volunteer, Sharon Hawkins who is funded by the Dayton Foundation. The group determined that their priorities are:

1. Exploring and creating awareness around race bias and equity practices in healthcare
2. Analyzing research and utilizing evidence-based solutions that have been effective in other regions and shaping them for impact in Dayton
3. Understanding, analyzing, and utilizing data, including at the neighborhood level
4. Changing the narrative and mental models around Black infant and maternal mortality
5. Moving forward legislation to impact Black infant and maternal mortality
6. Increasing the impact of doulas

With the other mandate from the initial collective being to develop a way to increase the number of health equity minded health professionals in our region, the Fitz Center developed a three year cohort program called the Health Equity Fellows. The student Health Equity Fellows will start their work in their sophomore year at UD and will work with the Fitz Center for three years through mini courses, connected curriculum, two years of paid internships, health literacy community engagement, capstone projects and research opportunities. The program aims to develop health equity minded students through co-curricular education, mentorship and professional development. Health Equity Fellows will have the opportunity to work with community health partners in Montgomery County and will receive a scholarship for their involvement. This program was highlighted in “Diverse Issues in Higher Education”:  
<https://www.diverseeducation.com/health/article/15304216/university-of-dayton-to-launch-health-equity-fellows-program-for-underrepresented-students>.

Educational Equity: <https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/fitz/community-partnerships/eep/index.php>

The Fitz Center for Leadership in Community's Educational Equity Programs provide University of Dayton students opportunities to collaborate with local schools, nonprofits and government agencies on student learning and development, connecting with families and engaging with the community as Education Impact Partners. The Educational Equity Program focuses on incorporating holistic approaches to tutoring, workshoping and volunteering, and is committed to fostering a deep understanding of how educational systems affect social outcomes. The program also aims to facilitate the professional formation, teaching and coaching of UD students on rules of community engagement, educational pedagogy, racial equity and cultural competency, while providing educational opportunities for K-12 students that will further their educational attainment.

Faculty Fellows: <https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/fitz/faculty-fellows-fitz.php>

The Fitz Center for Leadership in Community's Faculty Fellows Program is faculty research and action for the common good. The 2022-24 cohort includes nine faculty applying their expertise to projects intended to build partnerships and infrastructure to strengthen the community's assets. "The Fitz Center Faculty Fellows lean into University of Dayton's commitment as an anchor institution that is guided by its Marianist mission," said Nancy McHugh, Fitz Center executive director. "By mobilizing faculty who are invested in reciprocal and responsive collaborations with community partners, the Faculty Fellows program creates impactful outcomes for communities and for students and faculty." The projects were selected based on priorities identified by the Northwest Dayton Partnership, a collaborative effort aimed at improving equity and educational and career outcomes in northwest Dayton. (<https://udayton.edu/blogs/artssciences/2023-stories/23-07-13-fitzfellows.php>)

Examples of projects include:

- A community-based partnership to evaluate how improved wages for early childhood education staff affects their well-being and children's learning by assessing the school readiness skills of children involved in the program to assess growth.
- Building a community garden/green space on the Omega Community Development Corporation property located in the Dayton View Triangle neighborhood.
- Focusing on how solar projects the City of Dayton is initiating affect biodiversity and ecological processes. The senior capstone lab of Environmental Biology majors is collecting preliminary data, and the lab is tracking proposed solar sites over time to determine how the city's projects affect the environment in the hopes of collecting data that will be useful.
- Contributing to the preservation and validation (in scholarship and practice) of existing community knowledge and practices conducive to the formation of healthy habits in children, in order to promote the long-term prevention of chronic diseases. Students in the Spanish for the Health Professions class will work together with caregivers of Hispanic/Latinx children in a collaborative space that reflects the dialogic meeting of cultural practices and scientific approach, without privileging or discounting either.

### **Human Rights Center:**

The Human Rights Center was established in 2013. They "advance human rights by conducting research-driven, participatory advocacy; educating future practitioners; and fostering inclusive and reflective dialogue and learning that promotes innovation and deepens impact. Inspired by our Catholic Marianist roots, we work through sustainable partnerships with human rights practitioners and justice organizations in Ohio, the United States and around the world" (<https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/hrc/about/index.php>).

Human Rights has a long history at UD even before the HRC was created. In 1998, The University of Dayton created the first undergraduate human rights studies program in the nation. "With the Human Rights Studies (HRS) Major and Minor, students receive interdisciplinary instruction in contemporary understandings of justice and equality through legal, historical, philosophical, political, and religious perspectives. Human Rights Studies is a dynamic and evolving field and through our program students are equipped with the practical knowledge and skills needed to respond to the social, economic, technological and political threats to human dignity in the U.S. and abroad" (University of Dayton Academic Catalog). The HRC has examples of collaborative projects with diverse partners, community based research and projects, equity and justice

engagement and action. Three examples include Abolition, OH, Moral Courage Project, and PREVENTS-OH:

Abolition OH: [https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/hrc/abolition\\_ohio/index.php](https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/hrc/abolition_ohio/index.php)

Since 2011, a committed group of stakeholders has been meeting to respond to human trafficking in the Miami Valley. Social service agencies, law enforcement, advocates, civic organizations, and concerned community members come together to share information, develop resources, and take action. Coalition meetings are open to the public. We work in partnership with concerned community members and partner organizations in the Miami Valley and across the state and the country to prevent human trafficking, protect victims and survivors, and help prosecute the criminals responsible through awareness-raising, advocacy, education, and research.

Moral Courage Project: <https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/hrc/moral-courage/index.php#:~:text=This%20project%20aims%20to%20tell,communities%20during%20moments%20of%20crisis.>

This project aims to tell the stories of “upstanders” (those who refuse to be bystanders) to identify and celebrate individuals who take risks to make important contributions to their communities during moments of crisis. In all communities, there are individuals who stand up on behalf of others in danger regardless of the risk. These people embody moral courage yet are often left out of history. This project trains students to take testimony and engage in human rights storytelling. These skills coupled with the opportunity to conduct fieldwork provide students with valuable and transformative experiences. Working with partners enables support to organizations on the front lines. The Moral Courage project develops multi-platform, multi-media products that utilize audio recordings, photography, music, and writing to bring stories to life.

PREVENTS-OH: <https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/hrc/extremism/extremism-prevention.php>

The Preventing Radicalization to Extremist Violence through Education, Network-Building and Training in Southwest Ohio (PREVENTS-OH) project aims to develop a proactive, informed and resilient network of organizations, coalitions and civic entities aware and capable of collaborating to prevent domestic violent extremism in Southwest Ohio. Community Awareness Briefings raise awareness of the risks of radicalization and the paths to prevention. Dialogues enhance civic engagement and build trust by conducting dialogues on sensitive topics in our community.

More information can be found here: <https://dayton247now.com/news/local/ud-human-rights-center-receives-352109-to-combat-domestic-violence-extremism.>

### **ETHOS Center:**

Engineers in Technical Humanitarian Opportunities for Service Learning (known as the ETHOS center) was founded in 2001 and its foundation is its “reciprocal partnerships between community-based organizations and UD’s School of Engineering. Through collaborative work on shared goals and aspirations of these partnerships, our mission becomes a reality”

(<https://udayton.edu/engineering/connect/ethos/about-us/index.php>). ETHOS has examples of collaborative projects with diverse partners, community-based research and projects.

ETHOS Immersions and Breakouts:

<https://udayton.edu/engineering/connect/ethos/student-experiences/index.php>

In summer 2022 all three of our immersion programs were back up and running! 65 plus graduate and undergraduate engineering students participated in the ETHOS International,

Dayton and Domestic Immersion programs throughout 2022. Students lived and worked across the world, from South America to Africa and India, across the country, from the Pacific Northwest to Vermont to low country South Carolina, to right here in Dayton, Ohio.

ETHOS R&D: <https://udayton.edu/engineering/connect/ethos/ethos-rd/index.php>

Ethos R&D embeds cohorts of undergraduate and graduate students into long-term faculty mentored Ethos-centric research and design projects. Each project focuses on engineering for the common good and enabling collaborative solutions to societal challenges through the development of

- just and sustainable technologies and systems,
- novel and appropriate design practices, and/or
- engineering pedagogy related to human rights, social justice, and/or global engineering.

### **Equity and Justice Engagement and Action:**

“The University of Dayton’s commitment to Inclusive Excellence is rooted in the Catholic and Marianist conviction that every person has innate dignity because all people are made in the image and likeness of God. Social or cultural discrimination is incompatible with God’s design. Efforts to create access and lead everyone to excellence through equity and inclusion emanate from the University of Dayton’s call to solidarity and the common good”  
(<https://udayton.edu/diversity/index.php>).

**The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI)** “provides leadership and support for the university’s strategic efforts to advance its work on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Ultimately, our goal is to create and sustain a campus educational community and workplace environment that celebrates and enjoys the gift of diversity, achieves equitable outcomes for individuals and communities regardless of their identities, and to model inclusion throughout the institution”  
(<https://udayton.edu/diversity/about/index.php>).

**Center for Social Concern:** The Center for Social Concern, as part of the University of Dayton Campus Ministry, was founded in 1994 and has as its mission to “seek to unite faith and action for justice. This mission is carried out by numerous opportunities for reflective service, service-learning, and education and advocacy for justice. Catholic social teaching is the foundation and guide of this mission, and is integrated into all of the Center's programs”  
(<https://udayton.edu/ministry/csc/about.php>). The Center for Social Concern has examples of equity and justice engagement and reflection. The focus on action for justice occurs through various student programming and opportunities. Deep and intentional reflection is a core component of all Center for Social Concern activities whether it is a day of service or a summer rooted in intentional community. Examples of programs include Breakouts and Immersions, SERVICE Saturdays, Social justice plunges (a day immersed in a social justice topic at a local level), Service and Social Action student organizations, activism opportunities, social justice prayers, and more.

**In Student Development,** the Brook Center, provides a variety of peer mentorship, workshops and training, and an on-campus food pantry. The Multi-ethnic Education and Engagement Center offers student support and programs for students, faculty, and staff. The Women's center offers support, Experiential learning opportunities, and activism. <https://udayton.edu/studev/index.php>

### **Civic Inquiry and Intergroup Dialogue:**

**Dialogue Zone:** <https://udayton.edu/libraries/dialoguezone/index.php>

The Dialogue Zone is a curricular and co-curricular initiative that builds capacity among students, staff, and faculty to learn and practice facilitated dialogue in order to address difficult issues that arise as we interact together in community. By creating space for multiple perspectives, cultivating listening skills, and promoting critical understanding, we foster a culture of dialogue. The Dialogue Zone reimagines conflict and challenging conversations as opportunities for learning and reflection that contribute to the common good.

**Dayton Civic Scholars:** <https://udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/fitz/student-servant-leadership/dcs/index.php>

The Dayton Civic Scholars program is run out of the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community (see above) and it is an example of civic inquiry and helping students identify their vocations in and out of their careers to participate in Public life. Dayton Civic Scholars are students who have taken a three-year commitment to engaging in the greater Dayton community. The interdisciplinary group of students follow an intentional pathway from the classroom to community leadership and public service. The Dayton Civic Scholars program accepts students from all majors and backgrounds. Their commitment includes attending a weekly mini-course, taking the three credit hour Leadership in Building Communities course and engaging with the community at least 30 hours per semester. The intent is to enable up to 45 University of Dayton students to have high community impact in the community by preparing each 15-student cohort for meaningful civic leadership roles as students. Students meet local leaders and engage in internships with local community organizations and government offices. Scholars also receive an annual scholarship.

**DC Flyers:** [https://udayton.edu/honors/program/dc\\_flyers.php](https://udayton.edu/honors/program/dc_flyers.php).

DC Flyers explore careers in Washington, D.C., through summer internships and experiential learning opportunities. Participants will represent the University of Dayton in our nation's capital, benefiting from the mentorship of co-workers, faculty, peers and the local UD alumni network

**Statehouse Civic Scholars:**

[https://udayton.edu/artssciences/academics/politicalscience/statehouse\\_scholars/index.php](https://udayton.edu/artssciences/academics/politicalscience/statehouse_scholars/index.php).

This is an eight-week, summer residential internship opportunity in Columbus, OH. The twelve students who are selected as Statehouse Civic Scholars intern in highly desirable offices in state government, including the Ohio Statehouse, executive agencies, judiciary, interest groups, and lobbying firms. Last year's Scholars worked for the Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Speaker of the House, Office of Budget and Management, and other key legislative offices

**Dayton2DC:** <https://udayton.edu/artssciences/academics/politicalscience/dayton2dc/index.php>.

Dayton2DC is an annual opportunity for University of Dayton students to engage with professionals and gain practical advice about starting and navigating a career in D.C. The trip centers around an intense three days where students meet with university alumni who are working on Capitol Hill, in executive agencies, for lobbying firms, think tanks and nonprofits, as well as, in international development, human rights and strategic communication. Dayton2DC is a remarkable networking opportunity for you to engage with professionals to discover more about potential career fields while gaining practical advice about starting and navigating a career in D.C.

**Department of Political Science:**

<https://udayton.edu/artssciences/academics/politicalscience/index.php>

Students are taught by an outstanding array of scholar-teachers in areas of inquiry that include American politics, public law, public administration, international relations, comparative politics, public policy, environmental politics, urban politics and political theory. We offer a B.A. in Political Science and a Master of Public Administration (MPA). MPA students also enjoy instruction from experienced practitioners in the field of public administration. Our students go on

to many of the most prestigious law schools and graduate programs in the country, and enjoy important careers in both the public and private sectors. A few foundational courses include: Introduction to Political Science, The American Political System, American Political Thought.

The Nonprofit & Community Leadership graduate certificate program prepares students to be agents of social change for the common good and transformational community leaders by providing them essential administrative and leadership skills

(<https://udayton.edu/artssciences/academics/politicalscience/academic/non-profit-and-community-leadership.php>).

**Law School:** <https://udayton.edu/law/about/index.php>

The University of Dayton Law School has the choice of an Online Hybrid J.D. or a Traditional J.D. along with opportunities to participate in special programs such as the Program in Law and Technology, the Pro Bono Commitment to Community Program, externships, clinics, *Law Review*, moot court and mock trial. In addition to our J.D. program, they offer graduate degrees in American and Transnational Law, including a Master of Laws (LL.M.) and a Master in the Study of Law (M.S.L.). We also offer a joint J.D./M.B.A. degree, a joint J.D./M.S. in Educational Administration degree, and a joint J.D./M.P.A. Master of Public Administration degree.

Law School American Constitution Society for Law & Policy: The mission of the American Constitution Society is to harness values of compassion and respect for each individual, and to re-incorporate them into American law and politics, in order to build a stronger and more decent national community. We seek to restore the fundamental principles of respect for human dignity, protection of individual rights and liberties, genuine equality and access to justice to their rightful — and traditionally central — place in American law. We want to strengthen the intellectual underpinnings of — and the public case for — a vision of the law in which these values are paramount. Our goal is a rekindling of the hope that by reason and decency, we can create an America that is better for us all

([https://udayton.edu/law/students/student\\_orgs/american\\_constitution\\_society.php](https://udayton.edu/law/students/student_orgs/american_constitution_society.php)).

### **Reflection:**

In addition to the Dialogue Zone, the Center for Social Concern, Human Rights Center, ETHOS, and the Fitz Center, The Office of Experiential Learning has resources and support for faculty and staff who do Experiential Learning. One of the “6 steps of Experiential Learning” is to embed reflection activities before, during, and after the experience (<https://udayton.edu/el/faculty-staff-resources/6%20Step%20Guide%20for%20EL%20Practitioners%20at%20UD.pdf>).

The Office of Experiential Learning also conducts many opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences at UD through a variety of opportunities called “Learning Labs”. Students have the chance to do guided reflection with peers and create visual roadmap reflections or do a self-guided reflection. These are great opportunities for students <https://udayton.edu/el/lab/index.php>. Here is more information about the Labs from a University of Dayton Blog “PATH Point-Eligible EL Lab” by Jamie Morris:

Since 2017, the Office of Experiential Learning (OEL) has hosted “EL Lab” workshops in which UD students from diverse backgrounds and majors gather to dialogue about their various EL experiences (internships, co-ops, community-engaged learning, education abroad, etc). They reflect on what they’ve learned through EL and create “learning journey roadmaps” to visually depict their unique learning pathways. Over 350 students participated in the first virtual EL Lab module and created their own learning journey roadmaps., which was more than the OEL could have imagined... After getting such great responses from students, the OEL team was able to answer some of their questions

regarding EL. The OEL partnered with Career Services and Education Abroad (CIP) to help answer some of the most commonly asked questions and how they are trying to help students participate in EL (<https://udayton.edu/blogs/experientiallearning/2020/11/virtual-path-lab.php>).

**Conclusion:**

As mentioned before, themes of civic inquiry and democratic engagement are embedded all through the University of Dayton and are connected to the mission and vision of the University. If you would like more context or examples, please reach out, we would be happy to provide more information. Please reach out to Samantha Kennedy, [skennedy2@udayton.edu](mailto:skennedy2@udayton.edu).