



RIVERSIDE

School of Education
Community Engaged
Learning

Annual Report

2023–2024

About Our Program

The Community Engaged Learning (CEL) Program provides community engagement and professional development opportunities to the School of Education's (SOE) students. The SOE requires undergraduate Education, Society, and Human Development (ESHD) majors to complete a minimum of 40 hours of Community Engaged Learning before graduation. CEL allows students to put into practice their learned knowledge of education theory, research, policy, and practice in ways that contribute to the mission of an educational or community organization through well-informed service.

The goal of Community Engaged Learning is to enrich and extend the UCR coursework experience with applied, real-world learning addressing community-identified concerns while serving the population needs of students, faculty, and partners.

The UCR definition of Community Engaged Learning:

1) establishes and sustains mutually beneficial, respectful, and sustained collaboration that creates a sense of collective ownership and reciprocal value for the campus (including students, faculty, and staff) and community partners, 2) enriches the scholarship of the institution by accessing community cultural wealth and expertise, 3) addresses community-identified needs and enhances community well-being, and 4) deepens students' civic and academic learning, and promotes connections between these through opportunities for critical reflection and professional development.

Professional development and community engagement serve as the foundation of the program with the hope to provide these two foundational pieces to the populations we serve. Whereas, our pillars (e.g., past/current fieldwork experiences, CEL internships, research with faculty, and Service-Learning) provide opportunities for our populations to receive professional development and community engagement.

A message from the CEL Coordinator

As I reflect on this past year, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride for the transformative growth we have experienced in our CEL program. Together, we have continued to strengthen the bonds between our campus and the surrounding community, fostering partnerships that are not only mutually beneficial but deeply impactful.

One of the most exciting developments has been our expansion beyond the undergraduate program, making CEL a school-wide initiative. This shift has broadened our reach, allowing us to engage with students and faculty across the entire School of Education. It has brought new energy and perspectives, making our work more inclusive and innovative as we prepare future educators to build meaningful relationships with the communities they will serve.

This year also marked a pivotal transition as we moved under the leadership of the Strategic Initiatives team, now guided by Dr. Raquel Rall. Her visionary leadership has opened doors to new collaborations and opportunities, further enhancing the scope and potential of our work. With this shift, we have seen an increase in support, allowing us to dream bigger and achieve more than we ever imagined.

As we look toward the future, I am more hopeful than ever about what lies ahead. The expansion of our program, the new leadership under Dr. Rall, and our deepening community ties have set the stage for even greater impact in the coming year. Together, we will continue to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world application, ensuring that our students and community partners thrive.

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication. It is through our collective efforts that we can continue to make a difference—one that echoes far beyond the walls of our classrooms and into the lives of those we serve.

With gratitude,

Sarah E. Juarez



Our 2023–2024 Team



Raquel Rall, PhD

Associate Dean of
Strategic Initiatives



Sarah Juarez, MEd

Community Engaged
Learning Coordinator



Liz Veth Morales

Program Manager



Emily Perez Ortiz

Student Engagement
Specialist



Irene Yong

Student Engagement
Specialist



Ernesto Gutierrez

Student Engagement
Specialist

CEL Committee



Raquel Rall, PhD
Chair

Associate Dean of
Strategic Initiatives



Sarah Juarez, MEd
Co-Chair

Community Engaged
Learning Coordinator



Marsha Ing, PhD
Faculty Representative

Associate Professor, SOE



Eui Kyung Kim, PhD
Faculty Representative

Assistant Professor, SOE



Esmeralda Munoz
Partner Representative

Academic Counselor, Student
Athlete Academic Services



Jessica Saldivar
Partner Representative

Director, UCR College
Corps



Emily Perez Ortiz
Student Representative

CEL Student Engagement
Specialist

The Community Engaged Learning Committee plays a pivotal role in fostering meaningful partnerships between educational institutions and the communities they serve. The committee is responsible for overseeing various initiatives that connect students with real-world experiences, such as reviewing and selecting the winners of the inaugural School of Education middle school essay competition. This competition aimed to empower young voices and encourage critical thinking among middle schoolers, providing an opportunity for them to engage with important social and educational topics.

The importance of the committee lies in its ability to ensure that the community's diverse needs are met and that initiatives are inclusive. This is achieved by having a representative from each population the program serves. These representatives bring a wealth of perspectives, ensuring that decisions and initiatives are reflective of and beneficial to the entire community. This diversity is crucial to the committee's work as it helps address the unique challenges and opportunities each group faces, fostering more equitable and effective community engagement.

The committee's impact on the program is profound, as it not only enhances community involvement but also strengthens the educational experiences of students by offering them platforms to engage with their surroundings meaningfully. Moving forward, the committee aims to expand its initiatives, continue fostering diverse and inclusive participation, and create more opportunities for students and community members to collaborate on impactful projects that address local needs and promote educational growth.

FACULTY

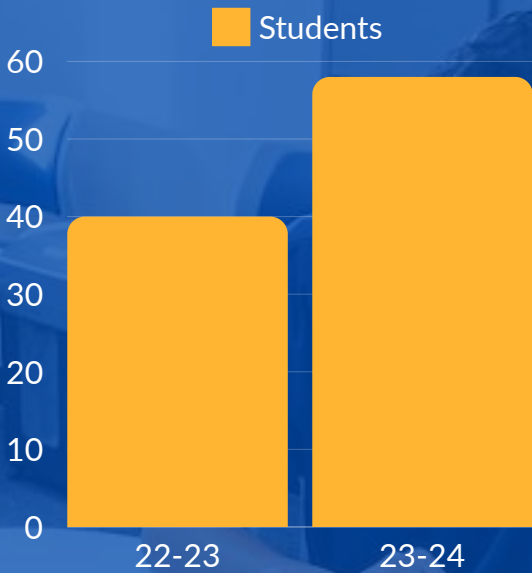
The Community Engaged Learning Program strives to serve the School of Education faculty. The ways we are able to serve faculty are through Service-Learning and connecting students to research opportunities. Below represents how many UCR students participated in research with faculty this past year.



Research with Faculty (EDUC 190)

58

students enrolled in an EDUC 190
between fall 2023 - spring 2024
compared to 40 students enrolling in the
2022-2023 academic year



Faculty who led an
EDUC 190 in the 23-24
academic year

Faculty



Eddie Comeaux	Austin Johnson
Robert Ream	Marsha Ing
Michael Solis	Worku Nida
Katherine Meltzoff	Lorena Gutierrez
Cathy Lussier	Rita Kohli
Soojin Park	Aya Shhub
Amos Lee	Kinnari Atit
Alice Lee	Jose Del Real Viramontes

Student Spotlight



Prashansa Agrawal

Graduated with a B.A. in Education, Society, and Human Development in Spring 2024

Prashansa enrolled in an EDUC 190 in Spring 2024 for a total of 3 units which equates to 90 hours in 10 weeks. She worked with Dr. Kinnari Atit who is a School of Education's Associate Professor. Her areas of research include the intersection of spatial thinking and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education.

We had the privilege on interviewing Prashansa after her experience and here is what she said:

What was the research about?

"I primarily worked on a project called the M-FIT Study. This work included learning to code data using google sheets/ excel, running participants, collecting data, and running data analysis."

What did you learn? About yourself? About education?

"I learned SO MUCH, from research practices in qualitative and quantitative research to obstacles in the STEM teaching and learning field."

How did working with the professor further your career plans?

"I did not expect that I would find my life's purpose, to become a researcher in higher education. Every day is a challenge yet incredibly rewarding."

Faculty of the Year



Marsha Ing

Marsha Ing, an Associate Professor at the School of Education, embodies a philosophy deeply rooted in building meaningful connections with her students and integrating community engagement into her educational approach. Her commitment to fostering rapport both inside and outside the classroom reflects a holistic strategy aimed at nurturing student interests and bridging academic learning with real-world impact.

Central to Dr. Ing's teaching methodology is a genuine interest in her students' passions and curiosities. Rather than imposing predefined topics or methods, she listens attentively to what intrigues her students and strives to ignite their enthusiasm. "I don't have an agenda," she emphasizes, "My approach is about discovering what excites you, what interests you, and how we can expand on those interests."

In practice, this approach involves linking students' interests to broader research themes and the academic world at large. Dr. Ing encourages students to explore how their interests can contribute to and resonate within the broader fields of higher education and mathematics education. By connecting their interests with existing research and the contributions of others, Dr. Ing empowers students to see the relevance and impact of their academic pursuits beyond the classroom.

Faculty of the Year – Marsha Ing

For Dr. Ing, integrating CEL into education courses is essential because it aligns with the core belief that education should strive to improve communities collaboratively. "Whether it's K-12 education or social work, CEL enhances lives and addresses real societal needs," she asserts. She advocates for a more authentic integration of CEL into academic curricula, emphasizing its transformative potential in fostering reciprocal partnerships and meaningful learning experiences.

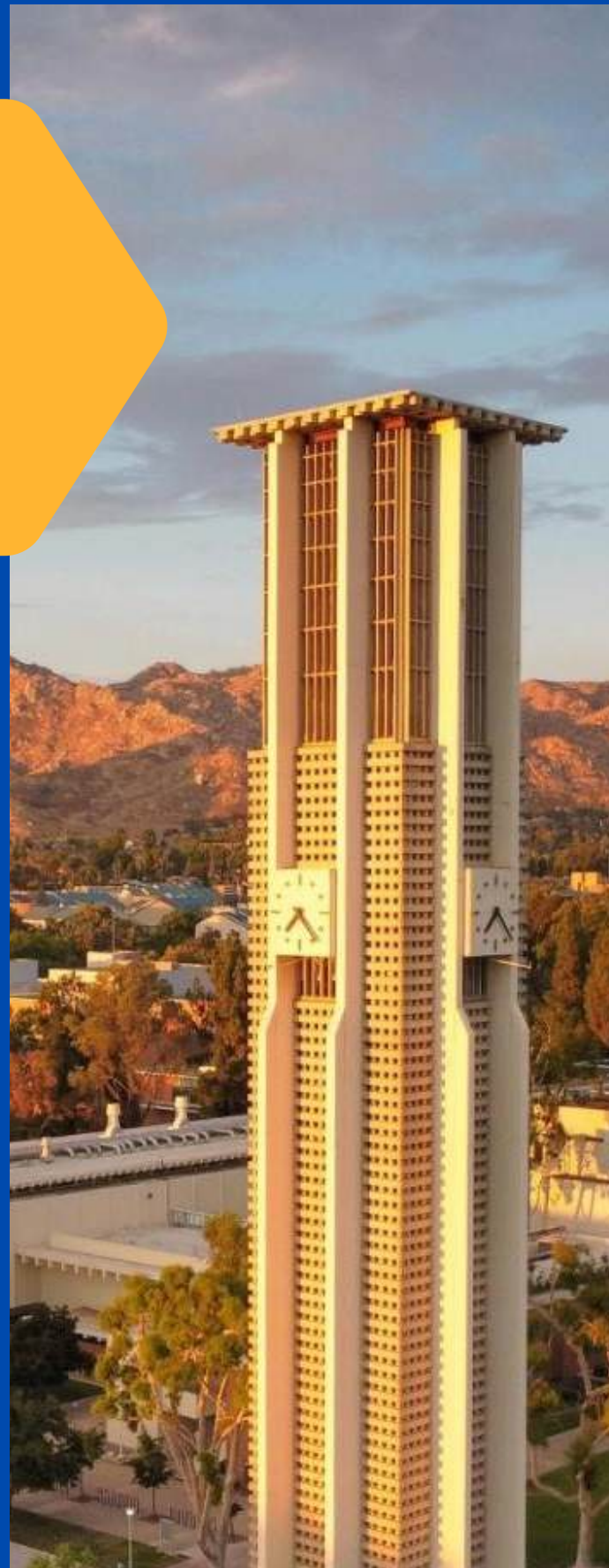
When asked about advice for faculty interested in adopting CEL into their courses, Dr. Ing encourages collaboration and a willingness to explore new approaches. She suggests reaching out to colleagues and leveraging resources within SOE to navigate the initial steps. Dr. Ing emphasizes that while integrating CEL may require additional effort, the benefits for students, community partners, and the institution are substantial. She advocates for a flexible and collaborative approach, emphasizing that there is no singular path to incorporating CEL. "It's about taking the first step with an eagerness to engage," she remarks, "and being open to evolving strategies that benefit everyone involved."

Marsha Ing's approach to education exemplifies a commitment to student-centered learning, community engagement, and the pursuit of impactful research. Her insights offer a compelling framework for educators seeking to foster meaningful connections and integrate community engagement into their teaching practices.



Partners

The CEL program is dedicated to fostering meaningful collaborations between academic institutions and community partners. By engaging in joint projects and initiatives, the CEL program helps address pressing community needs while providing students with real-world experience and insights. These partnerships are crucial as they enable community organizations to benefit from the skills, research, and resources of students and faculty, leading to tangible improvements in various areas such as education, social services, and public health. Moreover, the CEL program emphasizes the mutual benefits of these collaborations, as they enrich the learning experience for students and drive impactful change within the community. The strength of the CEL program lies in its ability to create and sustain these valuable partnerships, ensuring that both the academic and local communities thrive through shared goals and collective action.



Our Partners



Coochella Valley Free Clinic



Camp Highlander 2024



FIGHT FOR
AUTISM



My Learning StudioSM
Learning for Everyone



UC RIVERSIDE
ATHLETICS



#CaliforniansForAll
College Corps



Highlander Orientation



Partner of the Year



Esmeralda Munoz

UCR Student Athlete Academic Services

Each year, the CEL program celebrates the outstanding partnerships that have fostered academic enrichment, experiential learning, and community engagement. This year's Partner of the Year award goes to Student Athlete Services, whose innovative collaboration with CEL has proven to be a beacon of mutual benefit and growth.

One of the key impacts of the partnership has been on Student Athlete Services' ability to provide academic support through peer mentorship. According to Esmeralda Munoz, Academic Counselor, the collaboration has "been crucial in offering additional academic support to our Student-Athlete population through peer mentorship." The involvement of CEL interns has allowed them to observe firsthand how peer-to-peer interaction can strengthen their services.

The benefits of this collaboration go beyond just the support for student-athletes. CEL interns gain valuable hands-on experience in academic counseling, providing them with a direct look into potential career paths in higher education. This mutually beneficial exchange has led Student Athlete Services to establish a permanent peer mentorship program as part of their long-term departmental goals.

Partner of the Year

UCR Student Athlete Academic Services

One of the primary factors contributing to the success of this collaboration has been open and consistent communication. The organization highlights the excellent support provided by CEL staff, especially Sarah Juarez, who has been pivotal in maintaining a transparent and seamless partnership. "Knowing we can rely on them and communicate any concerns, and vice versa, has made it such a seamless process for our team!" says Esmeralda.

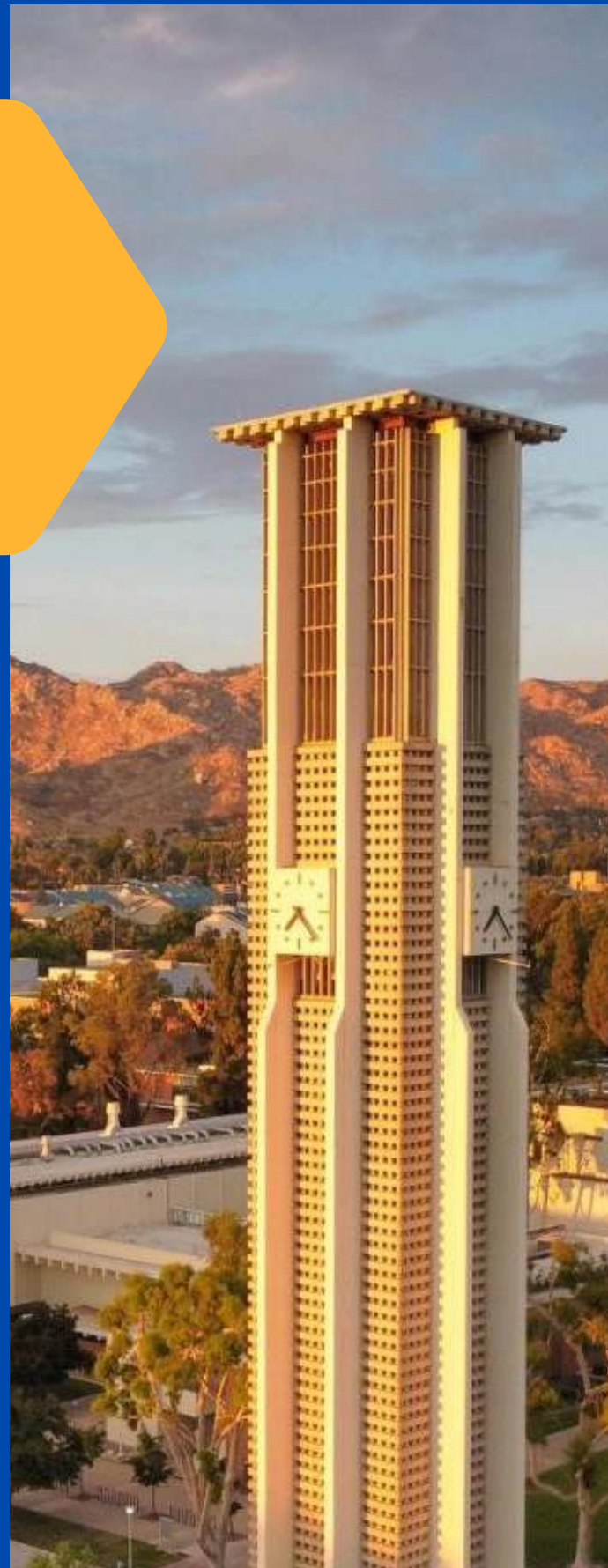
Moreover, the dedication of the students involved in the CEL program has greatly enriched the partnership. These students have shown both enthusiasm and a strong commitment to learning about athletic academic counseling, contributing significantly to the overall success of the collaboration.

Reflecting on their experience, Student Athlete Services offers a key piece of advice for other organizations looking to develop similar partnerships with academic institutions: be proactive. "My advice to other community organizations is to actively pursue partnerships with academic institutions, especially if there are established programs like CEL."

The partnership between Student Athlete Services and the Community Engaged Learning program has proven to be a model of what can be achieved when two organizations with shared values come together. The impact on both the student-athletes receiving support and the interns gaining real-world experience is clear evidence of the success of this initiative.

Students

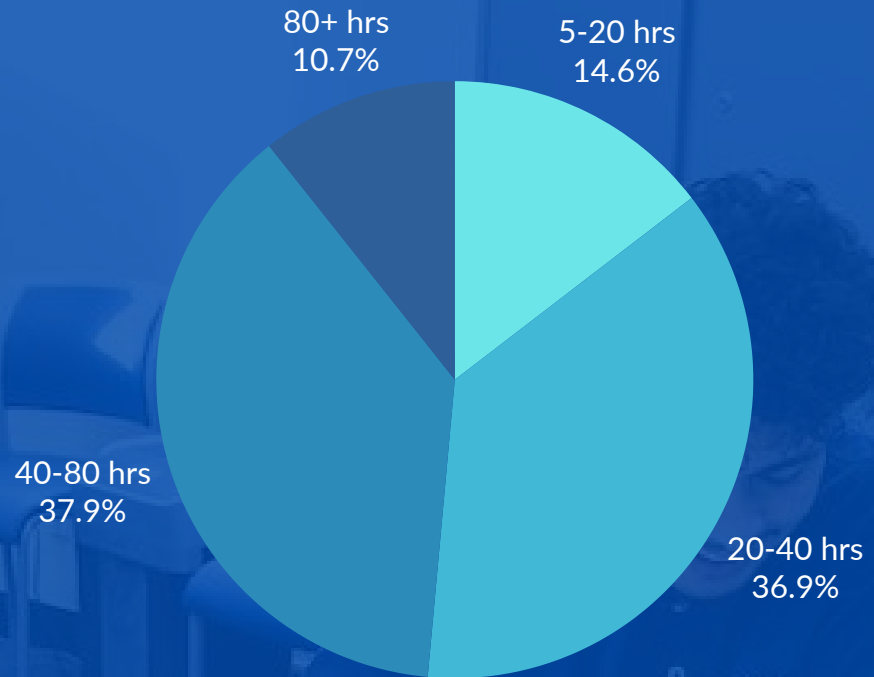
The CEL program plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' educational experiences by bridging academic theory with real-world practice. Through meaningful projects and partnerships with community organizations, CEL provides students with opportunities to apply their knowledge, develop practical skills, and gain valuable insights into social issues and community needs. This hands-on approach not only deepens their understanding of their academic disciplines but also fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills. Serving students through CEL is crucial as it prepares them for successful careers and engaged citizenship by connecting their learning with tangible outcomes and societal impact. By engaging with the community, students gain a broader perspective on the world, build professional networks, and contribute to positive change, thus fulfilling the program's mission to create a transformative and impactful learning experience.



Quick Review of Cohorts

87

Students participated in the CEL cohorts and was placed at one or more internships in the Inland Empire.



90.3%

of students who participated in the cohorts believe the program was helpful in providing experience for a future career

“

I have learned that sometimes as students we need a little push to get things started. I absolutely loved my internship and those around me. I had the opportunity to meet other soe peers and work along side them during my interhship. I was able to affirm my passion for my future career and education as a whole. I loved getting to know my community and actively seeing how my parcipation matter and how it positively impacted students in the community.

Ana Cienega, Fall/Winter Cohort

How are students completing their hours?



308

students made an appointment with the CEL team during fall - summer. The quarter where most students made an appointment was fall 2023.

CEL Celebration

The CEL Celebration was a significant event that recognized the remarkable accomplishments achieved throughout the year. It was an opportunity to celebrate the collective efforts of students, faculty, and community partners who contributed to the success of the CEL program. The celebration honored the Partner of the Year, recognizing an organization that demonstrated outstanding collaboration and commitment to supporting both students and the community. The Faculty of the Year Award highlighted a faculty member who skillfully integrated community engagement into their teaching, mentoring students to make a meaningful impact.

In addition, several Student Awards were presented. The CEL Award was given to students nominated by their supervisors and the CEL coordinator for their exceptional dedication to community projects. The Leadership Award acknowledged students nominated by their peers and the Student Engagement Specialist for their exemplary leadership and initiative within CEL activities. Finally, the Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards recognized students based on the number of hours they contributed to community engagement, with the Gold Award representing the highest level of service.

The celebration was not only a time to reflect on the program's growth and the success of its initiatives, but also a chance to appreciate the partnerships and collaborations that made this year's achievements possible.

CEL Celebration



Middle School Essay Competition

The SOE launched its inaugural middle school essay competition as part of a larger initiative started by the SOE dean to engage younger students in conversations about education and community. The competition aimed to inspire middle school students to think critically about the role of education in improving lives and communities. The essay prompt featured powerful quotes from educators Marian Wright Edelman and Marty Castro, encouraging students to reflect on how they would use their education to make a positive impact on their communities, society, and the world.

Through this competition, the SOE sought to foster thoughtful classroom discussions on community, education, and the importance of service and empathy. Students were encouraged to provide personal examples, insights, and reflections on how they could leave a lasting, indelible mark through their education. The competition emphasized the value of learning through service, the power of empathy, and the responsibility we all have toward others.

Ultimately, three winners were chosen, and two honorable mentions were recognized: Genesis Abrams (7th grade) and Guillermo Alberto (6th grade). The first-place winner received a \$200 gift card, the second place received \$75 gift card, and the third place received \$50 gift card. All three winners and their families were invited to visit the campus and enjoy a celebratory lunch with the SOE dean. This initiative is an important step in creating a culture of education that emphasizes community engagement and personal responsibility from a young age.

Middle School Essay Competition



First Place

Ethan Lundberg

Vista Heights Middle School



Second Place

Lezah Azad

University Heights Middle School



Conclusion

As we close this chapter of an extraordinary year for CEL, we are energized by the momentum we've built and eager for what lies ahead. The coming year promises even more growth, collaboration, and impact as we continue to expand our reach and deepen our connections across campus and the community.

One of next year's most exciting developments is the inclusion of graduate students in our CEL programs. This will bring new perspectives and offer graduate students meaningful opportunities to engage with the community while advancing their academic and professional goals. We also look forward to building more partnerships across campus and the community. By collaborating with a broader range of departments and organizations, we will expand our impact and bring together more educators, students, and community leaders committed to community engaged learning. Additionally, we are expanding the CEL team. Along with our Student Engagement Specialist, we will add a Program Manager and Faculty Liaison. This growth will increase our capacity for service-learning, student involvement, and faculty-led research, allowing us to create even more impactful programs.

Our ultimate goal for the upcoming year is to solidify the connections between each population we serve—students, faculty, and community partners. By building stronger relationships between these groups, we aim to foster a collaborative ecosystem where learning, teaching, and service are seamlessly integrated. By the end of next year, we envision a fully connected network of students, educators, and community members working together to advance the common good.

Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to Community Engaged Learning. Together, we are creating a brighter future for both our students and the communities they serve. We look forward to continuing this journey with you in the year ahead.
