

Community Engagement Fellows Project Report

I'm grateful for the invaluable connections, support and feedback that I received as a participant in the CE Fellows program. First and foremost, the CE program provided a rich opportunity for me to connect with Western faculty and students eager to participate in creating a multimedia place-based history project. Designed by students interns, Bellingham's Working Waterfront (BWW) utilizes digitized maps, oral histories, historical photos, and spatial analysis to a) tell the story of the waterfront's historic buildings and shorelines, b) reveal important connections between the built environment and the larger ecological and demographic trends of the last 160 years, and c) provide a space for community input as the City and Port move forward with waterfront redevelopment.

My participation in the CE Fellows program has moved my project from the early incubation stage to the first phase of developing a map that tells the story of Bellingham's waterfront historic buildings and shorelines. The format of the CE Program and Travis's approach to collaboration facilitated my partnership with WWU Professors and an intern completing his senior project at Huxley College of the Environment. As of Spring Quarter 2016, student interns from WCC and WWU are gaining valuable job skills creating, editing and managing the GIS mapping software for this project. They are out in the community conducting research at libraries, special collections and government agencies (see GIS Internship description attached).

Meeting on a regular basis with CE faculty to discuss and peer review projects helped me push forward and stay engaged with local organizations. I am currently serving on the cultural committee for Bellingham SeaFeast 2016 <http://www.bellinghamseafeast.com/> The Festival's mission to honor, "our rich maritime heritage, thriving working waterfront,...and culinary bounty of our corner of the Pacific Northwest," will provide a perfect venue to showcase the BWW map. Individuals, organizations, and businesses will have the tools to visualize the transformation of Bellingham's waterfront since its "founding" and contribute to a discussion about how best to plan for the future.

Finally, the program connected me to CE Fellow Brad Howard, Journalism Professor at WWU, who shares similar interests in utilizing ArcGIS to show how GIS can be applied as a tool to issues and topics in the study of history. We are, in a very timely way, developing a WCC Special Topics Course, which we are scheduled to co-teach, Spring Quarter 2017. I will be updating my CE profile with links to the BWW map and the current version of our Mapping History course syllabus, soon, I hope!