

Community Engagement Fellows Project Report

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I am pleased to have participated in the Community Engagement Fellowship Program this year. I feel that it was a worthwhile experience, although I am not as happy with my own development and progress as I had hoped to be. I think that my type of project was not necessarily a natural fit for the CEF program, however I gained some important knowledge, resources and contacts, as well as sharing some of my skills with other CE fellows and community members.

My project proposal was to develop a richer network of local business professionals and organizational leaders in order to create internship opportunities for my students as well as potential “real world” class projects. I believe that one reason why the fit of the project to the CEF mission was not perfect is that I am not only interested in nonprofit organizations but also local businesses as well. However, Travis Tennessen was very helpful in connecting me to local events and organizations, probably more helpful than the cohort meetings were for me personally. I did enjoy getting to meet several other community members and I was also happy to represent the College of Business and Economics in this sort of venue, as I feel the voice is unrepresented and possibly assumed to not be interested in these sorts of issues.

For my deliverable, I have created a database with contacts from the community and have started to develop a relationship with Whatcom Community Foundation through preliminary conversations with Pamela Jons and Rachel Myers. I am also very interested in participating in the Leadership Whatcom program, this year the schedule made it impossible to apply. I have discussed it with my department chair and tentatively plan to apply for the 2017 year. Future improvements and goals I have for myself is to continue to add to this resource to make it into something that the whole department can use.

I believe that I have a lot of work to do still to develop this project further. I appreciate the advice from Travis and the accountability that the CEF program provided to keep me motivated to make progress on this dimension of my job, rather than letting it slip to the bottom of the pile. I would definitely recommend participation in the program to folks who might have a better fit with their personal projects and the mission of the CEF program. I hope to remain engaged with the program as it continues and expands, as I think that it is a valuable asset to our community here at Western.