

First-Year Experience Learning Community Agreement

The mission of the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning at Minot State University is to provide opportunities and support for students, faculty, and staff, through engaged teaching and learning, to enhance the higher education experience and increase student success.

In support of this mission, CETL does the following:

- Provides first-year experience learning communities that connect students to their peers and faculty members, engage students with the campus and larger community, enhance students' sense of belonging at MSU, communicate and facilitate student understanding of the academic expectations of the university, and enhance student competency in skills and capacities that are essential for success in higher education.
- Collaborates with faculty to provide professional development opportunities for the campus community regarding active learning and engagement.
- Facilitates the development of engagement opportunities – including active in-class learning, volunteer commitments, civic engagement opportunities, service learning projects, and internships – for all levels of students in all areas of study.
- Provides peer mentoring for first-year students, with an emphasis on supporting the transition into higher education.
- Provides tutoring services for students, in all levels and areas of study.
- Collaborates with Student Affairs staff to provide information and education regarding student support services offered at Minot State University.
- Assesses the quality and effectiveness of all learning communities through classroom observation, and analysis of student course evaluations, surveys, and focus groups.

As part of the First-Year Experience (FYE), the Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETL) will:

- Offer training sessions that support, prepare for, and facilitate faculty/staff members' participation in first-year learning communities.
- Offer common reading resources.
- Provide trained peer mentors for the FYE learning communities.
- Support and facilitate faculty/staff members' implementation of engagement activities in learning communities.
- Act as a resource for all first-year and engagement-related questions and activities.
- Offer engagement grant opportunities for interested faculty/staff.
- Arrange regular opportunities for faculty to learn about teaching methods that foster student engagement.

The responsibilities of the participating faculty or staff member, *before* the semester that the community is offered, are:

- To work collaboratively with the other faculty to form a learning community that connects courses from differing disciplines by a theme and meets the goals of the first-year experience.
- To work with CETL and your supervisor to handle scheduling issues and any overload issues.
- To submit a learning community description and syllabus prior to the start of the semester in which the course will be taught and according to the deadlines given by CETL.
- To work with the other faculty in your learning community to select and use a common reading for the learning community (if appropriate).
- To work with the other faculty in your learning community to make connections across all courses of the learning community, either through discussion, activities, assignments, etc.

- To work with the other faculty in your learning community (and the FYE Director, if necessary) to create and implement an engagement activity (volunteer, civic engagement, service learning, community problem solving) for your learning community. The activity should be relevant and related to the courses and topics in the learning community.

The responsibilities of the participating faculty or staff member, *during* the semester that the community is offered, are:

- To use active learning principles and strategies to promote and encourage engagement and collaboration in class, student-led initiatives, and individual and collective student civic engagement.
- To work collaboratively to facilitate student involvement in the intellectual and social environment of the university by providing intellectually stimulating and relevant academic experiences, by providing feedback to students, and by maintaining high and clear expectations.
- To connect students to academic and social support services as well as the range of social and professional development opportunities available to students at MSU.
- To meet regularly with your learning community colleagues, including the peer mentor, to discuss course goals, student issues, course planning, assignments, and other issues as they arise.
- To participate in at least one faculty development opportunity offered by CETL during that semester.
- To work with the library, the peer mentoring and tutoring coordinator, student affairs staff (residence life, counseling, disability services, career services, etc.), and other relevant people and resources to support your first-year students and to enhance the learning community's environment.
- To work cooperatively and productively with the peer mentor assigned to your learning community.
- To notify CETL staff of any significant problems or issues related to your learning community.
- To respond in a timely manner to the requests of CETL and its staff as related to your learning community and its courses.
- To make your FYE class available for observation by the FYE Director or designated observer.

The responsibilities of the participating faculty or staff member's supervisor are:

- To support the faculty/staff member during their participation in the first-year experience learning community.
- To work with CETL, your dean, and the Registrar's Office to handle scheduling issues and any overload issues related to the faculty/staff member's participation.
- To encourage first-year students to participate in first-year learning communities when possible.
- To notify CETL staff of any significant problems, issues, or changes related to your faculty/staff member's participation in a first-year learning community.
- To allow the participating faculty/staff member to participate in CETL faculty development opportunities, and to note these efforts on annual faculty evaluations.
- To share student evaluations of first-year learning community courses with the FYE Director.
- To recognize the faculty/staff member's participation in the first-year learning community when writing his or her annual evaluation (when applicable).

Faculty/Staff Member:

I agree to be an instructor in an MSU FYE learning community during the _____ semester. I agree with and will participate in the responsibilities as outlined above.

I will teach the following class(es) on the following days and times as part of an FYE:

Title of FYE learning community: _____

Class: _____ Days: _____ Times: _____

Credits: _____ The course will be taught as (choose one): In-Load _____ Overload _____

Class: _____ Days: _____ Times: _____

Credits: _____ The course will be taught as (choose one): In-Load _____ Overload _____

Faculty/Staff Member's Name (Printed)	Position
---------------------------------------	----------

Faculty/Staff Member's Signature	Date
----------------------------------	------

Department/Division	Phone	Email
---------------------	-------	-------

=====

Supervisor:

I will allow the above faculty/staff member to be an instructor in an MSU FYE learning community during _____ semester. I agree with and will participate in the responsibilities as outlined above.

Supervisor's Name (Printed)	Position
-----------------------------	----------

Supervisor's Signature	Date
------------------------	------

Department/Division/College	Phone	Email
-----------------------------	-------	-------

Please return the completed form to Julie Keller in the CETL Office, 101 Main.