



# Center for Community Engagement & Social Research

Monthly Faculty Newsletter



WINTER EDITION



# Central Community!

Dear Central Family,

As the Fall 2024 semester comes to a close, The Center for Community Engagement & Social Research (CCESR) would like to thank those who supported all the amazing initiatives and programs that have taken place. Our commitment to integrating teaching, research, and service through community engagement has flourished! We are grateful to everyone who has collaborated with us, including students, faculty, and community partners. Your dedication has played a pivotal role in addressing the most pressing needs of our community. We look forward to continued collaboration and making a positive impact for, and with, our community. Wishing you a happy holiday season and a peaceful New Year.

Sincerely,

The Center for Community Engagement & Social Research Team:

- **Beth Merenstein**, Executive Director
- **Christian Reyes**, Assistant Director and Community Partner Liaison
- **F. Kamilah Hastings**, Administrative Assistant
- **Diana Velasco**, Faculty Liaison
- **Angelia Rafter**, Student Liaison
- **Gabe Rosenberg**, O'Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy and Practical Politics

## RECLASSIFICATION APPLICATION



This year, The Center for Community Engagement and Social Research has been working on reapplying for the **Elective Classification for Community Engagement 2026** cycle. The Central community will be a valuable asset as we continue the reclassification process. We ask you to please share any important efforts that you or your departments have participated in. In the coming weeks we will be reaching out to different departments and centers on campus to assist with the application.

Together we will showcase the incredible work being done by our esteemed university.

*For more information or to schedule a time to talk about your efforts please contact our faculty liaison, Diana Velasco, at [d.velasco@ccsu.edu](mailto:d.velasco@ccsu.edu)*

## INTRODUCING...

# — CentralPulse —

BRINGING COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO DRIVE SOCIAL IMPACT  
THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PLATFORM

- Promote events for your course!
- Track your partnerships and experiential learning opportunities!
- Compatible with Blackboard, Anthology, and Handshake!

*Keep an eye out for more information surrounding the rollout of our new platform.*

## QUALTRICS

Qualtrics is a powerful survey software that we now have access to at CCSU. It is polished, professional, powerful, and user friendly. Everyone (faculty, students, staff, etc.) has access to and can use this tool to do research, collect feedback, gather information, poll classes, or anything else you'd like to do with a survey software.

Simply navigate to <https://ccsu.qualtrics.com/> and select "CCSU Single Sign-On" to get started. No need to make an account, it has already been made for you.

Below is a link to a recording of a workshop session on how to use Qualtrics (also featured on Blackboard Homepage).

[Qualtrics Workshop Link](#)



## Seeking Board Members!

Are you looking to get more involved with the community?

Look no further!

Some of CCESR's community partners are looking for Central members to join their Board of Directors. Time commitments and expectations vary from organization to organization so if you have an interest to serve, we can help find the right place!

Current Openings:



Friendship  
Service  
Center, Inc.  
love made visible

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**  
New Britain

**For more information reach out to Diana Velasco. Faculty Liaison.**

## EMPTY BOWLS

Thank you to those who purchased tickets and donated funds to support this past November's Empty Bowls event! Professor Sarah Stookey's course worked with CCESR to host the event at Smalley Elementary School. Students from Smalley and Central performed at the event while guests were able to dine and enjoy time with each other.

At the end of the event, over \$1,450 were raised. These proceeds will be given to Friendship Service Center, here in New Britain.



# ≡ Welcome ≡

CCESR is excited to introduce the new chair holder for the O'Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy & Practical Politics.

Gabe Rosenberg is an experienced Political, Communications, Legislative, and Election Law professional with a history of working at a senior staff level in electoral politics and government. Gabe graduated from the University of Massachusetts with BAs in Political Science and Social Thought and Political Economy, from Southern Connecticut State University with an MS in Political Science, and from the University of Connecticut School of Law with a JD. After years of experience in political communications and strategy with electoral campaigns, he spent five years as the Communications Director for the Connecticut Speaker of the House and the House Democratic Caucus, before joining the Office of the Secretary of the State as the Communications Director and eventually General Counsel and Chief of Staff.



**Please join us in giving a warm welcome to Gabe!**



# Celebrate New Britain Basketball Game

Friday, January 10th, 2025  
7 PM at Kaiser Hall

All residents of New Britain will be admitted free to the game, by showing a valid ID upon entrance to Kaiser Hall.

MLK Symposium & Day of Service  
- January 24th

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.  
SYMPOSIUM &  
DAY OF SERVICE**  
*Living the Legacy through Service*

**SAVE THE DATE**

**FRIDAY,  
JANUARY  
24, 2025**

**ALUMNI HALL**

Join us for breakfast, an interactive workshop and volunteer opportunities to benefit the greater community!

! Registration form and service activity details coming soon. !

OFFICE OF EQUITY & INCLUSION | CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL RESEARCH

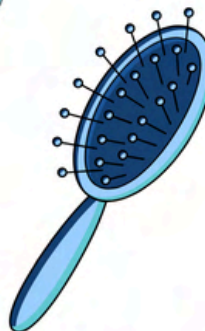


# DONATION DRIVE



## DROP LOCATION

Davidson Hall, Suite 115



All items will be used to supplement Community Partners in Action's Reentry Backpacks supporting those recently released from incarceration. Scan QR Code for more information on this initiative!

We will also be collecting on MLK Day of Service on 1/24/25 in Alumni Hall.



CENTER FOR  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
& SOCIAL RESEARCH

**Scan QR code for more info!**

# Community Engagement Around Campus

## SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

During the week of November 4th through 8th, the School of Engineering, Science, and Technology hosted **SEST Week**. This served as an opportunity for students to attend talks about different STEM related subjects. One panel discussed application development for IOT devices, social media, or business applications, with Cybersecurity approaches that are taken for small or large companies. Another panel hosted seven female alumni from different STEM majors who are also FirstGen students. During this panel, the alumni were able to share experiences about their time at Central and also motivate the future generations.

To end the week, students were given the opportunity to network and engage with leaders from the State of Connecticut and explore limitless possibilities with the following agencies:

- Administrative Services, Bureau of Information Technology Solutions (BITS)
- Administrative Services, Real Estate & Construction Services (RECS)
- Transportation
- Public Health
- Energy and Environmental Protection
- Emergency Services and Public Protection



## CAROL A. AMMON COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

An art exhibition featuring work from Art & Design students organized by Prof. Leanne Zalewski is on view at the **New Britain Public Library** for the month of November. Design students' works were selected from Prof. Nan Hu's DES 222 Graphic/Information Design



I and Prof. Peggy Bloomer's DES 122, from first-year students, and DES 225 Typography. Studio art students' works were drawn from Prof. Sonja Czekalski's ART 120 Design I and ART 430 Color Drawing classes, and Prof. Ted Efremoff, ART 141 Photography I. Art and art history students from Prof. Leanne Zalewski's ART 200 Global Art and ART 216 Modern Art courses contributed zines. Art education students, Sara Harrell and Kristen Condon also contributed works.



# Community Engagement Around Campus

## SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Central's **Xi Omicron Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi** collected donations for 4 different service activities during the month of November. They selected the following initiatives to receive the donations: For Boxes to Boots (for the military), Maria's Place, Hurricane Disaster Relief, and Naylor CCSU Leadership Academy. Check out their impact below!



- Boxes to Boots: 126 items
- Naylor: 82 books so far
- Maria's Place: 103 items
- Hurricane Relief: 109 items

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

On Friday, November 15 the School of Education welcomed students from **Cromwell, East Hartford, and Wethersfield** to the CCSU campus for our Equity, Education, and Thriving Conference. Approximately 100 high school students concurrently enrolled in the CCSU course EDF 215: Education in a Multicultural Society engaged in rigorous and meaningful conversation focused on making educational change. Students presented their research and reflections on career-based courses, educational equity and freedom, educational gaps, and school safety. Open discussion followed each presentation session. In the photo above, students propose strategies for addressing the achievement gap.



# Community Engagement Around Campus

## COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND REHABILITATION SCIENCES

the Department of Counselor Education and Family Therapy held their 6th annual Self-Care Retreat. This year's retreat was sponsored by the CJK Foundation, the Delta Kappa MFT Student Society and The Forum for Contemplative Practices. This year 12 students and 6 faculty attended the retreat focused on exploring self-care practices including



mindfulness, sound bowl therapy and yoga. Students engaged in conversations about the need for self-care as they pursue their graduate degrees in counseling and family therapy and as they enter the profession. There was a wide array of speakers this year including Victoria Ginter from the CCSU Wellness Department and Kim Pita who gave a demonstration of sound bowl therapy (pictured here). Each year the retreat includes a raffle and lunch on campus.

## ATHLETICS

The 2024 Turkey Trot hosted by RECentral & Athletics was a mile-long walk or run around campus, featuring free t-shirts for all participants! Those who signed up were encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item to donate to Maria's Pantry, the food bank on campus.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHT



Dr. **Tan Leng Goh** (physical education and human performance department) collaborated with **Northend Elementary School** in New Britain, CT to implement a “Fit and Healthy” program starting Fall 2024. The purpose of the “Fit and Healthy” program is to provide opportunities for the elementary school students to participate in physical activity, build their fitness levels and gain nutrition education. Students enrolled in Dr. Goh’s PE 305

course (Assessments in Physical Education, Dance Education and Health Education) assisted the physical education teacher, Mr. Michael Saccuzzo in the implementation of the program as part of service-learning within the coursework. The program consisted of a before-school physical activity program, physical education lessons, and recess activities. Additionally, nutrition education is integrated into the physical education lessons to promote healthy eating habits among the elementary school students. Activities (e.g., shuttle runs, pushups and curl ups) which target building the elementary school students’ cardiorespiratory fitness and muscular endurance are structured in the before-school program. During recess, the CCSU students engaged the elementary school students with various games and activities which allow them to be physically active. This partnership is beneficial for the elementary school students, as well as the CCSU students in gaining pedagogical knowledge and skills as future educators.

## COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT



**Community Partners in Action (CPA)** is among the leading advocates in Connecticut in the fight for restorative justice, supporting the transition from life in the system to life in the community. Their model for impact blends direct services, community action and restorative justice advocacy. Their programs offer essential services including transitional housing, reentry and resettlement support, workforce development and coaching, as well as partnerships with mental health and addiction services.

CCSU Criminology professors Stephen Cox and Sue Koski are currently evaluating CPA's Reentry Welcome Centers in Hartford and Waterbury. These centers provide guidance and resources to people who have recently been released from prison. Drs. Cox and Koski are studying their effectiveness and are working with CPA to improve their ability to help returning citizens be successful in the community.

Central is also partnering with CPA this winter for our Donation Drive, for which all items will be used to supplement CPA's Reentry Backpacks supporting those recently released from incarceration. You can drop donations off at Davidson Hall, Suite 115. We will also be collecting on MLK Day of Service on January 24th, 2025 in Alumni Hall, as supported by the Community Service Committee of the CCSU Alumni Association!

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MINOR

The Minor in Community Engagement is a program that draws from many academic areas, equipping students to work across differences to solve problems and create possibilities in your own community and beyond. Real-world experiences combine with engaged scholarship to develop the creativity, understanding, and civic agency students need to be active agents of change in today's world.

Students:

- Gain leadership skills and coordination experience.
- Make connections in the community.
- Develop skills and creativity to solve future problems.
- Improve their ability to analyze issues concerning social justice.
- Increase their appreciation of diversity.
- Enhance their understanding of community and civic challenges.



### Spring 2025 CEN courses:

- CEN 402 Community Engagement Internship Seminar (4 credits)
- CEN 300 Global Community Engagement: Exploring Costa Rica:
- Marketing & the Underground Economy (3 credits)

### Contact for more information:

Community Engagement Minor Coordinator: Dr. Julie Schnobrich-Davis  
[j.schnobrichdavis@ccsu.edu](mailto:j.schnobrichdavis@ccsu.edu)

## COMMUNITY ENGAGED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STIPEND

CCESR offers stipends to faculty and staff to participate in community engaged professional development. This stipend has a maximum of \$3,000 per awardee that can be used towards attending an academic conference, workshop, training, or webinar. Apply on our website or contact Diana Velasco for more information.

### Primary goals of the stipend:

- Promote community engaged practices/opportunities in the classroom and in research projects.
- Allow faculty and staff to expand their professional portfolio as it relates to community engagement.
- Open the opportunity to teach community engaged courses at the university.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING STIPEND (CEELS)

CCESR's Community Engagement Experiential Learning Stipend (CEELS) provides stipends for unpaid internships or research roles without standard wages. We offer financial support for experiential learning opportunities that might otherwise be unpaid.

### Student Internship Information

Eligible students would receive \$18/hour with a maximum of \$3,000 (this averages to 20hrs/week for an 8-week program). Applications open and close in the following months. More details of deadline will be given near the end of current semester:

- Spring: 12/02/24 – 01/03/25
- Summer: 03/31/25 – 05/02/25
- Fall: 07/07/25 – 08/08/25

Click [HERE](#) to apply!

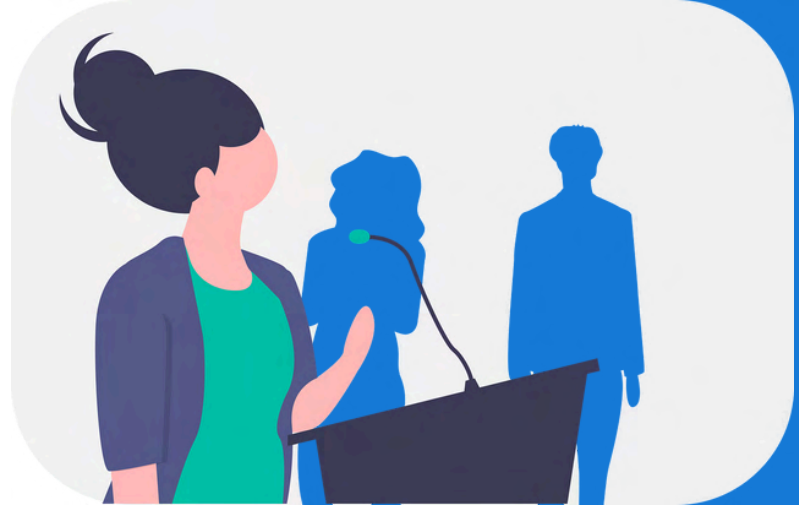


## CCESR IN THE CLASSROOM

It's not too late to have us guest speak for your class this upcoming semester! Whether you are teaching an FYE, intro course, or other - CCESR can come and speak to your class about...

Community Engagement  
Experiential Learning  
Volunteering  
Service Learning  
Internships  
and much more!

Reach out to Diana Velasco or Angelia Rafter to schedule a time.



## CONTACT OUR TEAM

For more information on working with CCESR, do not hesitate to contact us or visit our [website!](#)

- Executive Director, Beth Merenstein, [merensteinb@ccsu.edu](mailto:merensteinb@ccsu.edu)
- Assistant Director, Christian Reyes, [creyes@ccsu.edu](mailto:creyes@ccsu.edu)
- Administrative Assistant, F. Kamilah Hastings, [hastings@ccsu.edu](mailto:hastings@ccsu.edu)
- Faculty Liaison, Diana Velasco, [d.velasco@ccsu.edu](mailto:d.velasco@ccsu.edu)
- Student Liaison, Angelia Rafter, [a.rafter@ccsu.edu](mailto:a.rafter@ccsu.edu)
- O'Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy & Practical Politics, Gabe Rosenberg, [gr@ccsu.edu](mailto:gr@ccsu.edu)

