

WISCIENCE COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING FRAMEWORK

PROGRAM: PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWS (GRADUATE STUDENTS AND POST-DOCS)

OVERVIEW

The Public Service Fellows program is a unique STEM professional development program available to **graduate students and postdoctoral fellows**. In this year-long program, fellows build foundational knowledge and skills in public service and community engagement, then gain hands-on experience in a mentored practicum with a campus, community, or governmental organization. Fellows collaborate with a community partner or organization to work on a co-developed project of mutual interest. The Public Service Fellows program is designed to help graduate students and postdocs from any STEM discipline incorporate issues of public concern into their scientific work and career goals.

Fellows must apply to participate in the program and choose to specialize in one of the following pathways: community-engaged teaching, direct service, or science policy. These are interconnected areas, and fellows work together as a cohort over the course of the year to explore opportunities for STEM public engagement and the most effective ways to implement a community-based project. Annual cohorts consist of 9-12 fellows.

The program runs over a calendar year and is divided into 3 courses (described below). The overall Public Service Fellows curriculum draws heavily upon components of the community-based learning framework, though not all aspects are represented evenly throughout the year.



A direct service fellow partnered with the University Arboretum to investigate microbial life in the natural area, and combined observations and disciplinary expertise to make a “zine” to encourage Arboretum patrons to examine the area more deeply.

COURSE 1: PUBLIC SERVICE IN STEM

The first course in the Public Service Fellows program is Public Service in STEM (Integrated Science 640). This is a discussion-based seminar in which fellows work together as a cohort, forming a community of learners that will support understanding of engagement across each of the core pathways of public service. This seminar covers the fundamentals of public service and civic engagement in the STEM disciplines from a scholarly perspective, while developing a community around shared experiences. Fellows will get an overview of the core pathways of public service (direct service, community-engaged teaching, public policy, social entrepreneurship, activism, and philanthropy), learn the basics of community partnerships, and reflect on personal experiences with community engagement activities.

COURSE 2: RELATIONSHIPS AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT IN STEM PUBLIC SERVICE

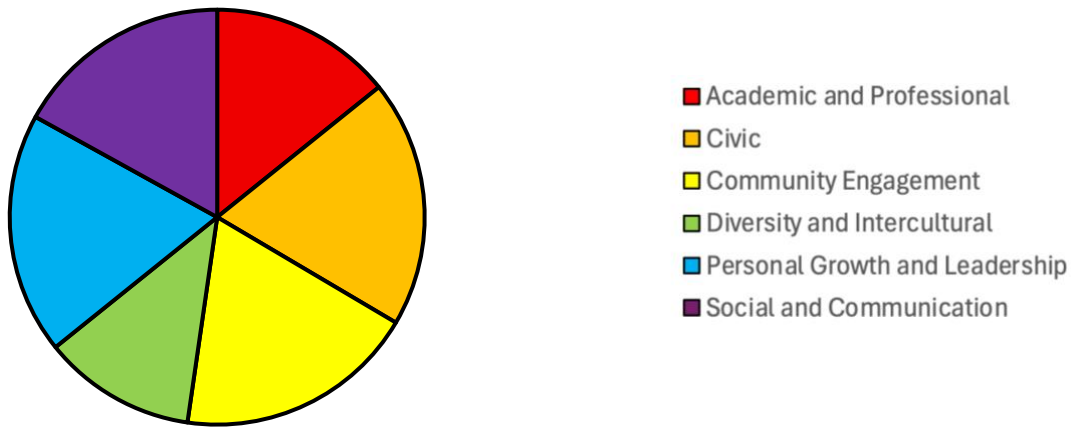
The second course in the Public Service Fellows program is Relationships and Materials Development in STEM Public Service (Integrated Science 740). This course provides opportunities for practical application of public service knowledge. The course is divided into two formats. First, a week-long, full-cohort workshop investigates personal aspects and relationship building skills to develop mutually beneficial partnerships, and fellows practice communication methods that may help to do so. The workshop also addresses norms and barriers within different communities and social justice issues that may be intertwined when partnering with community organizations to complete a project. After the full cohort workshop, fellows schedule three pathway-specific meetings. Each pathway group discusses the same topic through the lens of their pathway. These discussions focus on logistical strategies that may benefit from being tailored to specific audiences, and then they return to the idea of social justice in the context of their pathway. Each pathway group has a discussion that focuses on who controls power in a “Gardener’s Tale” allegory. (Jones, C.P., *Am J Public Health*. 2000; 90:1212–1215). This is used as a starting point for discussion when the full cohort regroup in the final term. Sharing the analysis of power and barriers through the same allegory but different pathway lenses is a powerful way to reconnect as a group.

COURSE 3: MENTORED PRACTICUM IN STEM PUBLIC SERVICE

The third course in the Public Service Fellows program is Mentored Practicum in STEM Public Service (Integrated Science 840). In this course, fellows divide their time between working on a co-developed project with an off-campus community partner and on-campus meetings for full cohort and pathway-focused meetings. A primary goal of this format is to allow fellows agency in pursuing their community practicum project while still maintaining the cohort support and career-focused professional development. The course provides opportunities to refine and implement skills necessary to work with a community partner to implement and evaluate a project that is mutually beneficial in process and product. Previous practicum partners have included instructors in undergraduate community engaged learning classes (often WISCIENCE’s Exploring Service in STEM and Service with Youth in STEM courses), leaders at libraries, a senior center, community-led volunteer groups, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the Wisconsin Legislative Council, among others.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWS PROGRAM AND FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

The Public Service Fellows curriculum is clearly and intentionally linked to the community-based learning framework. Much of the literature reviewed to develop the framework is included in the fellows' weekly pre-class preparation. The CBL framework is incorporated into different sections of the program in different ways. When program-wide components are mapped onto the CBL framework, each domain of the framework is represented:



Over time, the framework components are represented to different extents and woven into multiple contexts throughout the year. One way to discern where the framework domains are represented in the program over time is by analyzing representation of the framework divided by each course:

