

Preparing Engaged Scholars

Emory University

Strategic Theme

Emory aims to be a destination university for both nurturing the growth and excellence of its faculty, students, and staff, and positively transforming local communities. The Preparing Engaged Scholars theme speaks to the responsibility of universities to prepare students for lifelong ethical leadership and active engagement in civic life.

The Preparing Engaged Scholars theme will expand the range and depth of community-benefiting learning, research, and service activities available to Emory students in all nine of Emory's schools. Students will be challenged to engage with the local community, to address societal issues, and to develop and apply the skills and attributes of critical thinkers and citizens in ways that promote the common good. As a result, Emory will produce socially conscious leaders with a portfolio of skills proven and values tested in community involvement.

Preparing Engaged Scholars creates a continuum of engaged learning that begins on the very first days of a student's Emory years with volunteer service, moves into coursework that connects classroom concepts with real world application, advances to internships with entities addressing pressing community issues, deepens with applied academic programs featuring rigorous study and intensive community engagement, and culminates with original research addressing community problems for honors or Master's theses or doctoral dissertations.

Creating this continuum of engagement requires significant investments in Emory's faculty to ensure they have the skills and resources to successfully incorporate community benefiting projects and activities into their course syllabi. Faculty also need support for non-traditional but intellectually rigorous research that either sheds new understanding on longstanding community problems or that actually responds to a specific community need.

Additional investments through Preparing Engaged Scholars also are building the administrative infrastructure necessary to sustain long-term, mutually beneficial community partnerships. Centralizing Emory's Office of University-Community Partnerships in the Office of the Provost will help ensure the engaged learning, scholarship, and service activities taking place in all of Emory's nine academic units are connected, coherent, and synergistic. A centralized center for Preparing Engaged Scholars also provides potential community partners with an easily identified, easily accessed point of connection, a place to begin the conversation about how Emory's vast intellectual resources can best be leveraged for greatest community benefit and for most valuable learning.

Preparing Engaged Scholars is led by the Office of University-Community Partnerships, the Office of the Provost, and Campus Life. The following summarizes the five areas of investment for Preparing Engaged Scholars.

Preparing Engaged Scholars: Five Strategic Areas of Investment

- 1) **Create the Infrastructure—Enhance the Office of University-Community Partnerships:**
Transform the Office of University-Community Partnerships into a university-wide administrative structure, located in the Office of the Provost, to bring greater coherence, visibility, and impact to Emory’s engaged scholarship, learning, and service activities.
- 2) **Invest in Emory Faculty—Establish a University-Wide Service Learning Initiative:**
Invest in training and support for Emory faculty across all units and ranks to ensure faculty possess both skill and comfort with engaged learning pedagogies and the practice of community-based/community-focused research. Provide the academic units with discretionary funds to support specific efforts to tie engaged learning and scholarship activities to the goals and priorities of the units.
- 3) **Promote Student Volunteerism and Strengthen Connections to Scholarship and Learning—Enhance Volunteer Emory:**
Enhance Emory’s gateway to engaged scholarship and learning by investing in the transformation of Volunteer Emory to allow students to craft a greater connection between service and scholarship and learning. Extend service opportunities to graduate students as well as to all undergraduate students.
- 4) **Ensure That All Students Can Participate in Community Engagement Programs and Activities:**
Increase the opportunity for students, especially those of limited financial means, to participate in engaged scholarship and learning programs by providing a variety of supports that offset the out-of-pocket costs of participating in an engaged learning program.
- 5) **Use Technology to Enhance Engagement – ePortfolio and Community Partnerships Database:**
Provide an easy-to-use electronic co-curricular portfolio, called ePortfolio, for students to document and connect their engaged learning activities. It becomes part of the student’s academic legacy and connects academic advising with career-planning. Also create an enhanced community partnerships online database to better document and track Emory’s engagement activities.

Preparing Engaged Scholars Strategic Theme Leaders:

Michael J. Rich, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director, Office of University-Community Partnerships

John L. Ford, Senior Vice President and Dean, Campus Life

Ozzie Harris, II, Senior Vice Provost for Community and Diversity

Sam Marie Engle, Senior Associate Director, Office of University-Community Partnerships