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## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IS MORE THAN INTERNSHIPS

- Experiential learning involves students engaging in direct application of skills, theories and models.
- Students apply knowledge and skills gained from classroom learning to real-world settings, creative projects, or research.
- In turn students apply what they have gained from the applied experience to academic learning.
- An experiential learning activity can occur outside of the traditional classroom experience, or it can be part of a course.

***Experiential learning, sometimes called “applied learning,” encompasses the following topics, but it is not limited to them...***

**INTERNSHIP:** Experiential learning experiences for which a student may earn academic credit in an agreed-upon, short-term, supervised workplace activity. Internships integrate classroom knowledge and theory with practical application and skills developed in professional or community settings. The work can be full or part time, on or off campus, paid or unpaid. This definition does not include internships that are required components of a program leading to licensure or certification (e.g., teacher preparation or social work).

**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION:** An experiential learning experience that combines classroom learning and productive paid work experiences in a field related to a student's academic and career goals. Co-ops are formal partnerships between an educational institution, an employer, and one or more students, and typically provide meaningful work experiences for students. Co-ops occur off-campus and may be full time or part time.

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP:** Students in an entrepreneurship program develop broad-based entrepreneurial skills relevant to any organization, industry, or community -- including start-up, not-for-profit, and for-profit. Entrepreneurship involves consistently thinking and acting in ways designed to uncover new opportunities that are then explored to provide value.

**STUDENT TEACHING:** A student is assigned to a particular elementary or secondary school under the supervision of a classroom teacher and/or faculty mentor. Typically a specified number of hours of student teaching are required for teacher certification.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** A focus on educating students as global citizens. Classes or

programs include meaningful civic education and activities for social good. Classes and projects have components of reflection and engagement.

**CLINICAL PLACEMENT:** Students rotate through a variety of health care agencies with faculty supervision focusing on the health care field process. Emphasis is on mastering theoretical concepts, improving skill proficiency, and developing clinical reasoning abilities with a focus on evidence-based practice.

**PRACTICUM:** A period of practical experience in academic, professional or community settings (agencies/organizations) as part of an academic program or course. This approach is grounded in application and practice of theoretical/technical concepts/skills and cultural competency relevant to a course or profession.

**FIELD STUDY:** Collection of information outside of an experimental or lab setting. This type of data collection is most often conducted in natural settings or environments and can be designed in a variety of ways for various disciplines. Field study may be mentored, self-directed, or comprise a full course. The projects include inquiry, design, investigation, discovery and application.

**SERVICE-LEARNING:** A credit-bearing educational strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience and strengthen communities.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Volunteerism and service performed by students for community benefit. This service may be integrated with a particular program of study. This may include days of service, smaller group projects, fund-raising events, or individual volunteerism, typically acknowledged by the college or university.

**CREATIVE WORKS:** A capstone, senior project, performance, or other creative work that occurs as a culminating experience for a student in an accredited class or program.

**RESEARCH:** Mentored, self-directed work that enables students to make an original, intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline by exploring an issue of interest and communicating the results to others.

**TRAVEL/EXCHANGE (INTERNATIONAL OR DOMESTIC):** An instructional program delivered in an off-campus location. Often the program is delivered as a sequence of courses, the content of which is enhanced by the location, by distinctive historic or cultural features available in the location, or by a unique approach to the subject matter that is specific to the location. Exchanges are often conducted by individual students traveling to a location that has been pre-approved by their home institution, and where they determine their specific course of study in collaboration with home and host institution faculty.

*Source: This document draws upon material collected by the State University of New York (SUNY) Experiential learning Steering Committee. It has been modified and reviewed by members of the WCSU Experiential learning Working Group (ALWG), which meets twice a semester. The definitions are intended to facilitate the identification of experiential learning activities; they are not intended to describe all approved applied/experiential approaches.*