



2024/2025 COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING ABRIDGED EVALUATION REPORT

Forward from the Director

The 2024/2025 academic year was another impactful year for CSL's students, community partners and instructors.

Participation rates from all constituents in CSL remain relatively high for these kinds of surveys, and certainly can be said to be representative, in general terms, of how CSL is being experienced by these groups

This past fall term, CSL was pleased to be able to offer CEWIL funded student equity awards for deserving students. Volunteering in the community, of course, is connected to time and money, or the student's reservoir of both. CSL is one of the most accessible forms of experiential learning on campus. Oscar Baron-Ruiz, CSL's evaluation coordinator and the author of this report, notes that 44% of CSL students are 'first generation', meaning that their participation in university is a first for their family. This is significantly higher than the value for the wider university (33%). There are a number of reasons for this, including the faculties from which our students are drawn. Students from equity deserving students see quite quickly that CSL can be a way for them to pursue higher education in a way where their knowledge and abilities can be in service of their communities. CSL both attracts and develops students who realize that the purpose of higher education is not only to gain a better income as an individual. It is to make our world more just and fair for all.

Many thanks to Oscar, PhD student in Engineering and CSL Evaluation Coordinator, for this report. The results from our surveys suggest CSL remains an important and valuable academic experience for many at UAlberta, while as always showing us areas where we can continue to improve. Any positive results here represent the collective labour of instructors, students, community partners, and CSL staff.

Dr. David Peacock
CSL Director

Methodology

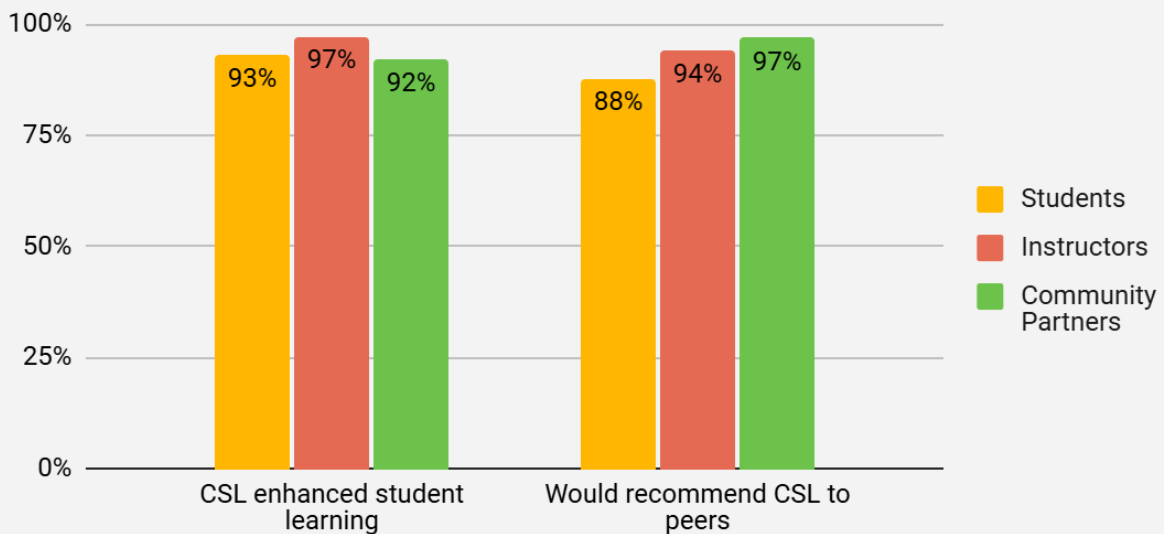
The University of Alberta CSL program distributed surveys at the end of the term to CSL placement-based students, classroom-based students, instructors, and community partners. The surveys were completed online through Google Forms. Students and instructors filled out their evaluations during class time at the end of term, and community partners were emailed a link to complete the survey on their own time at the end of term.

The CSL Evaluation Coordinator used the programming language R to analyze the quantitative data. The analysis included calculating descriptive statistics, summarizing response distributions, and comparing frequencies from previous years.

Statistics at a Glance

CSL Students	Instructors	Community Partners
1,577 placement-based students 1,083 responded to the evaluation survey 69% women, 27% men, 4% two-spirit, non-binary, or other gender 87% are under 25 years old 44% are first generation University students ¹ 8% are international students 82% in a CSL course for the first time 20% are working towards a CSL certificate	43 different instructors 35 responded to the evaluation survey 49% taught a CSL course for the first time 27% had 1-5 years of experience teaching university courses 59% were contract academic staff	124 community partners 63 responded to the evaluation survey 33% mentored a CSL student for the first time

FIGURE 2. OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH CSL



¹ These are students with the highest level of parental education less than a baccalaureate degree. The educational achievement levels of a student's parent(s) or caregiver is sometimes used as a proxy measure of socio-economic status.

Student Experiences with CSL

Satisfaction with CSL as a pedagogical process

93% indicated that CSL is an effective teaching/learning strategy²

88% would recommend CSL to peers

86% indicated that CSL helped them understand some of the complexities of social issues

Student quotes on understanding of social change and social issues

"I gained experience in a classroom and being able to have the perspective of being an educator figure rather than a student. It gave me a sense of encouragement in going forward with my Bachelor's of Education"

"I developed stronger interpersonal skills by engaging with residents through meaningful conversations and activities, learning how to communicate effectively with individuals facing cognitive and physical challenges. This experience also deepened my empathy and understanding of the unique needs of older adults, particularly those living with dementia."

"I gained a lot of knowledge and experience on website building and social issues around Edmonton, and even the world."

"I gained a deeper understanding of Indigenous issues in Canada, as well as a fresh perspective on these important matters. I also learned about the various barriers and challenges that exist in society that primarily affect minorities, and ways I as a minority myself, can help and contribute to advocacy and support for our communities."

Program structure and communication

Involvement with community organization fit well with interests in the course	83%
I had enough information about the requirements of CSL	81%
There was adequate communication between my instructor and me	84%
There was adequate communication between my community partner and me	78%
My project team and I received an appropriate amount of guidance from my community partner organization	77%

Connections between course learning and placement learning

This experience provided the opportunity to use my academic knowledge in the community	86%
Course work and class instruction enhanced my ability to understand my community experience	83%
My community project experience provided a useful context to think through course material	83%

²Percentages in this section represent the share of respondents who indicated that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with a statement about CSL.

This experience in the community provided the opportunity to better contribute to class discussions and assessments	78%
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Student quotes on learning from their CSL placement

"I enjoyed my CSL placement so much that I will be continuing with my volunteering after this course is finished! I think the most important thing my CSL did for me was solidify that I am meant to be an educator and work to shape youth. CSL allowed me to see what an elementary classroom is like in real time, and gain insight from a teacher and the methods, websites, and learning strategies she uses within her classroom. This CSL placement has allowed me to create relationships with each of the students in the class. I've seen them grow from the start of the year and get comfortable with me helping them when I can and I value that so much. This has helped me gain further insight into my philosophy of education and what I would like to bring to my own classroom when I become an educator."

"I believe this program and course provided me with an invaluable opportunity to learn about evaluation strategies and health promotion. Working regularly with vulnerable populations and those facing housing crises, I've often felt that, despite having strong policies, programs, and resources in place, we're still falling short. I've always believed that the root cause lies in the lack of proper evaluation, a failure to pause and assess whether we're actually achieving the goals we set out with in the first place. This course and the opportunity it offered have equipped me with the tools to address this gap, and I'm confident I will apply these insights in my future work to drive more effective and impactful outcomes."

"I believe what I gained to be much greater than what I offered. I gained a deeper understanding and level of sympathy for the youth I got to spend time with. I have gotten a bit better at seeing the world from their perspective, though I still have a long way to go."

Instructor Experiences with CSL

Satisfaction with CSL as a pedagogical process

97% indicated that CSL enhanced student learning

94% would recommend CSL to peers

86% indicated that CSL helped students understand some of the complexities of social issues

Connections between course learning and placement learning

Course work and class instruction seemed to enhance CSL students' ability to understand their community experience	83%
During the course, I provided CSL students with opportunities to reflect on and learn from their community project experience	83%
CSL enhanced the learning environment	94%

Instructors' most commonly used strategies for integrating CSL into courses

Check-ins with students	63%
Inviting partners to class (e.g. to see student presentations)	49%
Student assessment	66%
Check-ins with partners	43%
In-class presentations/workshops by community partners	60%
Translation of CSL partners' material	3%

Community Partner Experiences with CSL

Satisfaction with CSL as a pedagogical process

92% indicated that CSL enhanced student learning

97% would recommend CSL to peers

95% indicated that CSL helped students understand some of the complexities of social issues

Community partner quotes on understanding of social change and social issues

"Students gained knowledge of many issues that seniors in our communities are facing, including food access, financial & food insecurity, mobility challenges, and isolation."

"We heard from students in our debriefing session that this project helped them gain skills in talking to people and networking, and gave them a better understanding and appreciation of all the resources and organizations that are working together to support Edmontonians. A win-win!"

"They learned about the different experiences and challenges newcomer students may face at schools. They also learned about the unique needs and assets each one of those students has and how to provide help in supportive and non-judgmental way."

Program structure and communication

There was adequate communication between community partners and students	89%
If needed, CSL staff provided assistance and support in integrating CSL into my work	70%
I knew enough about the aims of CSL	76%

Community partner benefits of participating in CSL

CSL helped me develop relationships with students, instructors, and the university	90%
CSL helped me develop mentoring skills	75%
CSL helped our organization accomplish some of our project needs	94%

Community partner quotes on benefits of participating in CSL

"[CSL Students] offered student perspective and ideas we haven't considered on the motivators and barriers for student engagement for sustainability-related events."

"Since 2020, organizations such as ours have suffered a shortage of volunteers in these roles, and the CSL students helped to perform the vital service of providing food to seniors in our community."

"The questions [CSL students] asked reminded me to take a step back and look at the bigger picture of what we are trying to achieve as an organization and how we are going to get there."

"[CSL students] Interacted with seniors - brought "sunshine" to their day by having the time to listen and care"

Conclusions

Key findings of the 2024-2025 CSL Evaluation at the University of Alberta include the following:

1. There is a general consensus that community-service learning is an effective teaching and learning strategy. 93% of students, 97% of instructors, and 92% of community partners reported that CSL enhanced learning.
2. Compared to other stakeholder groups, community partners are most likely to report they would recommend CSL to their peers (97%). In comparison, 87% of students and 94% of instructors report that they would recommend CSL to their peers.
3. Satisfaction with CSL staff support remains high among instructors, though there was a decrease among community partners. CSL instructors and community partners who sought assistance reported receiving the support they needed at rates of 96% and 70%, respectively, compared to 100% and 92% in the previous year.
4. Compared with the previous year, a larger proportion of community partners (94%, up from 88%) reported that CSL students helped the organization accomplish some of their project needs.
5. Indigenous students and first-generation students are overrepresented in CSL compared to the overall U of A student body. 6.9% of CSL students identify as Indigenous (compared to 5.8% of the overall student body) and 43.9% of CSL students are first-generation (compared to 33.0% of the overall student body).

To view the comprehensive 2024-2025 CSL Evaluation Report, please contact our Evaluation Coordinator at cslinfo@ualberta.ca. To learn more about the CSL program at the University of Alberta, please visit our website at uab.ca/CSL