



Bonner Center for Civic Engagement

Faculty Fellowship: Newcomers Faculty Learning Community

[Community-based learning \(CBL\)](#) is a pedagogical strategy that connects students with on- and off-campus communities, immersing them in the class content in a way that promotes belonging and deep learning. We know that imagining and implementing CBL strategies takes time and support. In the Newcomers Faculty Learning Community (FLC), faculty fellows will learn together about opportunities to study and engage with the Richmond region and will also explore important parts of CBL pedagogy such as critical reflection and building community relationships.

The Newcomers FLC is for UR instructors who are either new to CBL or new to the University of Richmond. "New to CBL" includes instructors who have been at UR for any amount of time but have no prior experience teaching community-based learning courses. "New to the University of Richmond" includes instructors of any classification who have been at the University for fewer than five years with or without prior CBL experience.

What is a faculty learning community? An FLC is an interdisciplinary group of faculty that commit to work together for one year, facilitated by a CCE staff member. The opening spring workshop (May of year prior to CBL course) offers information on the topic and also develops a common language for course design, reflection, assessment, and community partnership. As faculty work together in the FLC during the next year, they share their experiences and challenges with CBL, develop questions together, support one another in brainstorming solutions and, in spring, construct a modest project together that synthesizes their learning and potentially benefits future community engaged practitioners. One example of a project was the creation of an end-of-semester survey to be used specifically for CBL classes. Fellows commit to attending all the meetings, and the meetings are carefully scheduled to accommodate everyone's schedules. Faculty surveys confirm the value of FLCs:

"I found the community of fellows most valuable. Having the chance to learn from one another and to see how faculty across different disciplines approach community engagement. The exchange of perspectives, strategies, and experiences not only broadened my understanding but also gave me practical ideas I could adapt to my own teaching and partnerships."

Faculty fellows in the Newcomers FLC commit to:

- teach a [CBL class of any mode](#) in AY 2026–27;
- participate in workshops in May 2026 (3 active workshops, 3 hours each);
- participate in a half-day syllabus assignment review in August 2026;
- attend three, one-hour faculty learning community (FLC) meetings in the Fall 2026 and three, one-hour FLC meetings in Spring 2027; and
- participate in assessment activities.

The Bonner Center for Civic Engagement acknowledges the extra time and commitment it takes to offer a CBL course, especially for the first time. To support you in this work, the CCE commits to:

- create an interesting and nurturing space for fellows to connect and collaborate;
- increase the amount of financial support available to you through our [course support grant program](#);
- purchase books and materials to enhance learning in the FLC; and
- support your attendance at a community engagement conference or other appropriate learning opportunity between May 2026 and September 2029.

[Apply to the Newcomers Faculty Learning Community](#) by Friday, April 10.

Please contact Terry Dolson (tdolson@richmond.edu) for more information.