



## Engaged Scholars Certificate Program

A QEP proposal by  
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## Introduction

Our world faces formidable challenges that demand the next generation of college graduates be engaged leaders with expansive understandings of public life, honed skills of critical thinking, and the abilities to collaborate with diverse groups to solve problems and create change. In Nashville and beyond, only the most informed and innovative citizens will help our communities find solutions to persistent social problems, such as poverty or racial inequities, as well as to newer challenges associated with rapid economic, technological, and environmental changes. Vanderbilt's students, both undergraduate and graduate, crave opportunities to delve deeply into the scholarship on public challenges and to feel empowered to be active citizens who are of service to their society. Through an emphasis on immersive learning, Vanderbilt has the opportunity to fulfill these needs and enhance its excellence in research-intensive education by offering more extensive experiential and publicly engaged forms of instruction and research that will have high impacts on both student and community development.

It is in this context that we propose the Engaged Scholars Certificate, a twelve-credit-hour program that provides students with immersive inquiry- and community-based learning experiences focused on one of four specific social problems of significance to the Vanderbilt and Nashville communities. This is the *only* program in the country that asks students to complete a series of interdisciplinary problem-focused courses and intensive inquiry-based projects in a rigorous, structured curriculum. It is envisioned as a complement to existing majors and minors, and as a fulfillment of all goals of immersion.

The Certificate provides students with a scaffold of learning experiences:

- Orientation. The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons introduces students to the opportunity to receive an Engaged Scholars Certificate in one of four social problem areas through Visions modules and optional problem-focused Commons Seminars.
- Citizenship and Community Course. As sophomores, those pursuing the certificate enroll in a gateway course orienting them to multidisciplinary research on the four problem areas, the ethics and methods of public scholarship, and, not least of all, historical and social dimensions of the Nashville community, including weeks of immersive learning experiences in Nashville with local experts and citizens. Students then select a problem focus for the remainder of their coursework.
- Engaged Scholar Courses (2). In their junior year, students enroll in two courses, both with a common problem-focus (e.g., health inequalities). One is one of four multidisciplinary courses focused on a particular problem area and requiring faculty-led, semester-long inquiry- and community-based group projects with Nashville partner organizations. The other is an elective chosen from an appropriate list of courses in that problem area from across the disciplines. At the end of their junior year, students propose a senior community-based research, design, or art project in that problem area planned in collaboration with faculty and a community partner.
- Engaged Scholar Capstone. As seniors, students enroll in one of four problem-focused Engaged Scholar Capstone courses in which they complete their research, design, or art projects, and participate in a year-end Engaged Scholar Symposium.
- Graduate Student Engagement. Besides being research and teaching assistants in the certificate program, graduate students also can enroll to complete Engaged Scholars Certificates themselves, but with a more customized and self-directed course and project design organized in cooperation with their department's faculty and community partners.

The Engaged Scholars Program enhances Vanderbilt's traditions of excellence while adding opportunities for students, faculty, and staff that are innovative for higher education.

- Enhancing Traditions
  - Contributes to all missions: teaching, research, and social service
  - Leverages the scholarly excellence of faculty research, teaching, and mentorship
  - Adds excellent citizenship, social service, and moral education opportunities
- Innovations
  - Combines research-, problem-, and community-based learning in a structured series of high-impact immersive learning experiences that are unique in US undergraduate education.
  - Supports strategic plans to build quality immersive learning experiences, to develop trans-institutional collaborations, and to expand practices of diversity, inclusion, and community building.
  - Advances public scholarship around problem-focused courses of study, enhancing faculty and student capacities to conduct generative discovery projects that meet research, learning, and community development goals.
  - Supports ethical academic-community partnerships built on collaborative, reciprocal, and sustainable relationships with community leaders.
  - Expands student and faculty opportunities and capacities to work with diverse populations in Nashville and beyond
  - Combines thorough and efficient methods of assessment that will be integrated throughout the program to ensure its impact and sustainability for all involved.

## Vision

The Engaged Scholars Certificate Program is a means for achieving the broader goals of 1) educating students to achieve excellence in expertise, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, research skills, and practices of citizenship and community building, and 2) supporting collaborative academic-community partnerships that have positive impacts on the Nashville area and beyond. In an effort to capture what this looks like in practice, the following represents a possible testimonial from a graduate of the certificate program in 2021. For other potential testimonials, please see Appendix I.

*My name is Jessica Alvarez ('21), and I came to Vanderbilt four years ago as a first-generation college student from California who wanted to major in Medicine, Health, and Society. My parents, who struggled to make ends meet, suffered from various health problems when I was younger and had a hard time getting the care they needed. Consequently I have always wanted to give back to my community by helping low income families receive the health care they need. Despite having volunteered a lot during high school in community health centers, I felt I could not solve the underlying structural inequalities facing the families with whom I worked.*

*However, in my first year at Vanderbilt I found an opportunity to learn more about health inequalities and be a more empowered citizen via the Engaged Scholar Certificate Program, something that complemented my major nicely. As a sophomore, I enrolled in the Citizenship and Community course, which introduced me to histories and theories of several important and interrelated social problem areas - racial discrimination in the criminal justice system, public health inequities, educational inequalities, and debates around immigration - as they impact Nashville and from multiple disciplines. As a junior, I went on to take two courses in the problem-focus area of Health and Inequality taught by faculty from the Economics, Sociology, Human and Organizational Development, and Medicine, Health and Society, along with contributions from the School of Medicine and the Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center. These courses involved*

projects that allowed me and my fellow students to conduct community-based research with the Matthew Walker Center into the health risks of low-income youth in Nashville. We also received some guidance and training from the Meharry-Vanderbilt Community Engaged Research Core (CERC), which supports “innovative and translational community-engaged research...to impact the public’s health.”

I can’t tell you how much I learned from real-world situations and experts since I was able to test and refine the theories I encountered in classes to see how complex health care inequalities are. The opportunity to contribute to a better understanding of local health equality motivated me to do my best work. Through these courses, I learned that one significant factor shaping health care inequalities in Nashville is that those in poverty have limited transportation to clinics, hospitals, pharmacies, exercise facilities, and groceries with healthy food choices.

With help from faculty and graduate students from Vanderbilt and TSU, as well as Matthew Walker administrators and doctors, I developed a senior research project to use GIS mapping to identify areas of concentrated poverty, health and wellness services, and Nashville public transportation for the North Nashville community. This served as the basis for recommendations about how to better serve low-income residents of Nashville, with more bus routes, a private bus service, or other options that health providers could give to their clients. In my Senior Capstone course, I had the opportunity to hone and conduct the research with the support of my peers in a collaborative seminar. My inquiry- and community-based research was built upon a foundation of multi-disciplinary theories and methods, faculty and local expertise, and pressing community needs.

I am overjoyed that my research and recommendations helped the Metro Transit Authority to make their bus routes more effective, improving access to health and wellness opportunities for low-income Nashvillians. Also, together my peers and I made big contributions to Nashville by helping each other to develop our research and leadership skills working with local experts, and we even helped juniors in the program develop their projects with our partners too, paying our good fortune forward. My faculty and I received a letter from MTA and some of the patients of the Matthew Walker Center expressing their gratitude for our work, which was so nice and reaffirmed my desire to pursue this course of study. The certificate program opened my eyes to public scholarship and it gave me a sense of empowerment with the expertise, research skills, and social skills necessary for my life, and it gave me a head start towards a graduate degree in health care policy next Fall. Thank you, Vanderbilt University.

## The Engaged Scholars Certificate

The Engaged Scholars Certificate program will be an integrated program of study that spans all four years of a student’s residence at Vanderbilt and comprises 12-13 credit hours of study:

- **First-year:** Vanderbilt Visions modules and optional Commons Seminars to introduce students to the themes, issues, and partnerships available for immersion experiences (0-1 credit hours)
- **Sophomore year:** A Citizenship and Community core course to orient students to the Nashville community, social problem areas, and the ethics and practice of engagement (3 credit hours)
- **Junior year:** One multidisciplinary Engaged Scholar course that is inquiry- and problem-based and that involves extensive engagement with the community outside of the classroom. One elective in the problem-focus area, with community-based content. (6 credit hours)
- **Senior year:** Engaged Scholar Capstone course with scholarship project taken in the Fall semester (3 credit hours)

Every five years an Engaged Scholars Advisory Board consisting of faculty, student, and community leaders would select four social problem areas that are of central significance, both to current public scholarship across the disciplines, and to members of the Nashville community and the world. These

would become the focal content for each of the four components of the Engaged Certificate Program for that five-year period. This will allow participating faculty and students to conduct projects that build upon one another over the five years or more, ensuring more sustainable, reciprocal, and impactful relationships with community partners. Once four problem areas are chosen, faculty and community leaders in each area would develop an integrated scaffold of content for all of the components below.

While each step has unique learning goals and features outlined below, all share common design principles.

- High academic standards. All courses will meet high academic standards for reading, writing, research and design, creativity, reflection, and assessment. Faculty expertise, oversight, and leadership will be elemental to the program.
- Academic-community collaboration. All courses will be created by faculty and local experts in the four problem areas, modeling a co-creation of knowledge between campus and community, and ensuring reciprocal and impactful collaborations.
- Multi-disciplinary, trans-institutional collaborations. All courses except the junior elective will be designed by multidisciplinary groups of faculty who bring to bear different perspectives on the teaching and scholarship in the select problem areas. Co-teaching will be encouraged, although courses may be ensembles directed by a faculty of record.
- Intensive immersion. All courses will involve some experiential field-based engagement with Nashville sites of relevance to the four problem areas, but immersive experiences will become more focused and extensive throughout the certificate program .
- Student scholarship. All courses are organized to support the growth of student capacities for publishable and public research, design, or art projects. The certificate will treat students as producers of scholarly work for authentic community and academic audiences, enhancing learning and scholarly opportunities for students, as well as faculty and community partners.
- High-impact teaching. All courses will be supported in adopting best practices of experiential, critical, and citizenship education with a mix of lectures, writing-intensive inquiry- and problem-based assignments, case studies, debates, presentations, peer evaluation, community-based teaching methods, active learning, and other proven methods appropriate to the courses.
- Problem-focused cohorts. In the junior and senior years, all students in a problem-focus area will participate in the same courses and projects, which will create a cohort with common interests, field experiences, and partnerships, intensifying peer-based learning opportunities and common purpose among certificate participants.
- Integrative education. All courses will be designed to offer a coherent structured learning experience for students, and students will be encouraged to develop learning plans and projects that intentionally build their skills throughout the curriculum. More advanced peers in the program will be encouraged to offer guidance and mentorship through presentations, field work, common discussions, and symposia. This will support peer education as well as greater continuity and sustainability of community partnerships.
- Flexible organization. The courses of the program, while structured and graduated, will have degrees of flexibility to enable student and faculty participation in the program.
  - Certificate courses, when appropriate, may count towards any of the liberal arts requirements in Arts and Science's AXLE curriculum or the Liberal Arts Core in the Engineering, Blair, and Peabody curricula.
  - Certificate courses may fulfill major and minor requirements. For example, the sophomore course may satisfy major requirements for community-based curriculum

among Peabody departments, while junior courses may fulfill electives in various majors or minors when the content is appropriate.

- Conversely, department and program major or minor courses may fulfill the junior elective course for the Certificate.
- Certificate courses will be scheduled flexibly to not compete with junior study abroad, senior major and minor requirements, and other demands on student time.
- The Certificate program is flexible and scalable in the number and content of problem-focus areas, potentially changing with university or community needs.

### **First-year Orientation**

Vanderbilt Visions and optional Commons Seminars are opportune venues for introducing Vanderbilt students to engaged scholarship.

- Visions (0 credit hours). One of the goals of the Visions Seminar is to help students make informed and intentional decisions about their lives on campus. The syllabus for Vanderbilt Visions is designed to be flexible, with modules prepared to help faculty and student VUceptors lead discussions about a variety of subjects. A module on community service that is focused on the Nashville area and the opportunities afforded by the Engaged Scholars Certificate Program would easily fit into this orientation and could spark valuable student discussion and interest.
- Commons Seminars (optional 1-credit hour). Commons seminars have proven to be accommodating spaces for exploring interdisciplinary and publicly relevant issues, including guest speakers and off-campus experiences. Some subset of these seminars will be focused on social problem areas relevant to the four problem areas that are the subject of the junior experience. Students could enroll in one seminar to explore an issue and develop knowledge and curiosity that would help them begin the certificate program.

### **Sophomore Course: Citizenship and Community**

This will be a new course designed to accommodate 90-100 students per year and meet three primary content goals:

- Social problem scholarship. To introduce important current, rigorous, and interdisciplinary scholarship on the four social problem areas
- Engaged scholarship. To introduce students to the ethics and practices of engaged scholarship, so as to foster transformative partnerships that are collaborative, reciprocal, and educational for all.
- Nashville. To familiarize students with the history and current social analysis of Nashville as a case of national or global issues related to the four social problem areas.

### **Junior Courses: Engaged Scholars Course and Elective**

Junior participants in the certificate program would enroll in two problem-focused courses, of 20-30 students each. One would be a multidisciplinary introduction to the problem-area with significant community-based immersion. The other would be a problem-area elective, preferably with community-based projects. The student learning goals of these courses are:

- Engaged scholarship. To comprehend critical inquiry and community-engaged research<sup>1</sup>, especially the use of multiple methodologies and design principles in the context of reciprocal and collaborative partnerships with community organizations.
- Social problems. To understand in greater depth a specific social problem area, including the theories and methods used to study it across the disciplines.
- Nashville. To know how social problems impact Nashville, among other places in the world, and how to assist community leaders in their endeavors to address them.
- Preparation for senior projects. To prepare for senior research, design, or art projects.

### Senior Course: Engaged Scholar Capstone

By the end of their junior year, students as individuals or possibly in groups will propose and hone research, design, or art projects that they will conduct in their senior year. To support these projects and to help students develop advanced knowledge and skills, there will be four Engaged Scholar Capstone courses of 20-30 students each, one for each problem focus in the certificate program. All seniors in one problem area would enroll in the appropriate senior capstone. The learning goals would be several:

- Advanced theory and methods. To learn advanced theory and methods in the disciplines appropriate to the community-based research project.
- Skills of scholarship. To hone skills of scholarly, collaborative research and problem solving with faculty and community experts.
- Social and leadership skills. To develop social and leadership skills of collaboration, communication, of moral reasoning.
- Nashville. To understand more deeply the social issues facing the Nashville community and to contribute to the scholarship on them, as well as possible interventions.

### Graduate Engaged Scholar Certificate

Graduate and professional students will have the opportunity to enroll in the certificate program with the approval of their departments. Their certificate requirements will be the same four-course sequence as the undergraduates, but their assignments for each class will be more extensive and tailored to their specific learning plans. These learning plans will be devised in consultation with their primary advisors. As part of their coursework, they also will serve as mentors for undergraduates, coordinators for projects, and faculty-partner liaisons. Their participation in the program will add greater knowledge, skills, and maturity to the research, design, or creative projects. They also will afford greater opportunities for public scholarship that is original, rigorous, and makes significant contributions to existing research or art, and to the Nashville area. This will help to generate more publishable scholarship and opportunities for new streams of funding for themselves and their faculty mentors. If interest in the program grows among graduate students, faculty, and alumni, the graduate certificate component of the program may be reorganized to support graduate fellowships. In addition, graduate students will participate in the program as teaching and research assistants throughout the curriculum of the program, from the Citizenship and Community course to the Engaged Scholar Symposium.

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<sup>1</sup> e.g., Lasker and Weiss 2003.

## Rationale

As Vanderbilt University looks to a challenging future for both higher education and our world, it is crucial to create opportunities for students and faculty to develop innovative and effective approaches to scholarship, learning, and public service. As part of this endeavor, it is vital to innovate a sophisticated and thoughtful enhancement program in the area of public scholarship and community-based education, one that will assist students in developing critical skills of collaborative knowledge creation, problem solving, and ethical leadership. The Engaged Scholars Certificate offers just such a program, one that fits squarely within Vanderbilt's mission and traditions of academic excellence, while realizing a strategic vision of innovative trans-institutional and immersive education.

### Student, Faculty, and Community Growth

The scholarship on teaching and learning is clear that experiential, community-based, and research-oriented pedagogies have many benefits.

- **Students.** Students who engage in community-based learning benefit from improved academic performance, enhanced critical thinking and problem solving skills, improved social skills of collaboration and the negotiation of difference, general psychosocial well-being, and a heightened sense of civic literacy<sup>2</sup> and social agency, leading to commitments to civic responsibility<sup>3</sup> and often careers of public service.<sup>4</sup> As Christine Cress notes, “students who are actively engaged with classmates and community tend to remain on strong academic paths and fulfill educational pursuits.”<sup>5</sup> This is why the American Association of Colleges and Universities identifies community engagement as a high-impact pedagogy that can teach to the whole student.<sup>6</sup> There is similarly conclusive evidence that students engaging in authentic scholarly experiences under faculty direction report growth in research and communication skills,<sup>7</sup> in addition to more critical understandings of knowledge creation and dissemination.<sup>8</sup> The Engaged Scholars Certificate combines the best of experiential, community-, and research-based pedagogies to offer many growth opportunities for students.
- **Faculty.** Beyond the positive outcomes of for students, a combination of research- and community-based education promises many benefits for faculty. Allowing faculty to integrate more authentically their research and teaching interests would enhance their scholarly productivity and the quality of their teaching. Similarly, there is significant evidence that community-based teaching facilitates generative partnerships with students and faculty, leading to more productive research and artistic endeavors, as well as greater career satisfaction, public efficacy, and belonging in campus and community settings.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Gowan and Salazar-Porzio 2015

<sup>3</sup> Astin and Sax 1998

<sup>4</sup> Eyler and Giles 1999; Astin et al. 2000; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, and Gray 2001; Finley 2012

<sup>5</sup> Cress 2012

<sup>6</sup> Kuh 2008

<sup>7</sup> Seymour et al., 2004; Healey 2013; Alberts 2009

<sup>8</sup> Lopatto 2003, 2007; National Research Council 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Eyler, Giles, Stenson, and Gray 2001

- Community. Of course, community-based research and teaching promises improved outcomes for the communities. Universities are often engines of economic and cultural development for their communities, but when universities empower broad faculty and student engagement, they become even greater forces for growth and social betterment. This has the potential to realize service missions and to further improve relationships between universities and their communities. The Engaged Scholars Certificate, with its emphasis on rigorous, collaborative, and reciprocal scholarship, can support impactful and sustainable community benefits.

## Honoring Tradition

The Engaged Scholars Certificate Program represents the best of Vanderbilt University's traditions of excellence in three ways.

- Supporting the University Mission. It honors all three of the university's missions for Vanderbilt to be "a center for scholarly research, informed and creative teaching, and service to the community and society at large." The program also supports Vanderbilt in its efforts to uphold "the highest standards and be a leader in the quest for new knowledge through scholarship, dissemination of knowledge through teaching and outreach, creative experimentation of ideas and concepts," and through "open inquiry, equality, compassion, and excellence in all endeavors."
- Faculty Scholarship. Second, and more specifically, the Certificate leverages a core strength of its faculty: excellent scholarship. Vanderbilt faculty are among the most accomplished scholars in their chosen fields, making Vanderbilt a world leader in scholarship and education. The interdisciplinary and problem-based focus of the Certificate Program allows it to draw from the talents of scholars across all disciplines and schools, and its focus on co-creative scholarship with students and community partners ensures the most rigorous traditions of research, design, and art can be incorporated into its courses and projects, benefiting all involved.
- Public Scholarship and Community Service. Third, the program represents a renewal of the university's commitments to community service and public scholarship. Vanderbilt's history in these areas is significant, since it is the founding home of Alternative Spring Breaks, the Ingram Scholarship Program, foundational research on community-based teaching at Peabody, and many endeavors among its staff and faculty across all schools to serve the common good. Even President John F. Kennedy's famous 1963 exhortation for students to "use [their] talents for the benefit of the society which helped develop those talents..." was issued at Vanderbilt's 90th Convocation.<sup>10</sup> Our students and faculty honor this call by pursuing high-minded ideals to bring knowledge into the service of their society. Community engagement is a cornerstone of Vanderbilt University and the Engaged Scholars Certificate Program seeks to strengthen this foundation by empowering students and faculty to realize these ideals more fully. Many campus units and programs endeavor to realize these ideals, and the Certificate program would collaborate with them to ensure efficient and innovative growth.

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<sup>10</sup> Kennedy 1963.

## Innovation

The Engaged Scholars Certificate represents several innovations for Vanderbilt and higher education.

- Multidisciplinary problem- and community-based inquiry. *The Engaged Scholars Certificate Program is the only program in the country that asks students to complete a series of interdisciplinary problem-focused courses and intensive inquiry-based projects in a structured curriculum.* To be sure, across the US there are countless programs that offer students opportunities for co-curricular community service (including Vanderbilt itself), many that have a large roster of community service courses for credit (e.g., Stanford, Tufts), and a few campuses have community service learning requirements and even curricula focused on leadership or service (e.g., Rice, Elon). The most comparable program is Brown University's similarly titled "Engaged Scholars Program," which is run by the Swearer Center and five participating departments.<sup>11</sup> However, the combination of interdisciplinarity, inquiry-based education, and a problem-focused community engagement makes the program unique. More importantly, this combination makes the program effective. For students, faculty, and community partners to learn the most about the complexities of social problems and their communities they must engage not only in mere volunteerism and reflection, but also in intensive, immersive scholarly inquiry with insights from many fields. Community-based research enables all parties to investigate (inter)disciplinary theories and methods, and thus unearth more carefully the epistemological processes by which social issues are understood and resolved.<sup>12</sup> Inquiry-based approaches to community education also open opportunities for students and faculty to go beyond mere volunteerism and conduct projects in which they learn extensively with their partners, modeling ethical models of cooperative and reciprocal knowledge creation and generating more rigorous interventions in common problems.
- Supports Innovations of the Strategic Plan. The Engaged Scholars Certificate supports the strategic plan in several important ways. It will educate the whole student via a form of immersive learning that combines both student research and community engagement, representing a more thorough approach to the benefits of immersive learning. It also will be designed around interdisciplinary and problem-based approaches, therefore providing significant opportunities to facilitate cross-college and trans-institutional collaborations in teaching and research. It additionally will support strategic initiatives around diversity and inclusion since community engagement enhances opportunities for students (and faculty) to work with diverse populations and to develop intercultural competencies and skills of collaborative learning. This will help students to grow intellectually, socially, and ethically in ways that will make campus and community life more dynamic and informed.
- Leverages a Dynamic Nashville. The Certificate Program innovates new and impactful ways of interacting with a dynamic local community. Nashville is a vibrant and growing area with unique history and a variety of opportunities and challenges from which we all may learn. It is also home to many creative leaders and organizations that are both equipped and ready to partner with the University to build opportunity and solve pressing problems. As we know, knowledge and expertise is not limited to the confines of the academy, and if Vanderbilt is to

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<sup>11</sup> Students take courses on community engagement organized by a department and then participate in co-curricular events and a capstone course designed to help students reflect upon their volunteer community service requirements.

<sup>12</sup> Strand 2000.

offer its students and faculty the broadest context for inquiry and learning, it is imperative that it extends its campus beyond its walls to include local expertise and knowledge. The collaborations that are possible between the Nashville area, or other communities, and Vanderbilt represent opportunities for both campus and community to learn from one another, to generate new research efforts, and to solve pressing problems. The Engaged Scholars Certificate Program can help the University to become a more active and impactful citizen in the community, and in so doing enjoin a national conversation about the potentials of engaged scholarship for renewing our public life and higher education.

## Program Needs

The Engaged Scholars Program largely will build upon existing faculty and staff resources, and therefore will be very cost-effective, especially relative to its impacts on the campus and community. However, it will require some administrative coordination and commitment to ensure the program functions smoothly for all involved, including community partners. Please see Appendix II for some general outline of the program's annual budget.

- Student Support. Students will need advising and appropriate coordination of courses and projects to ensure the certificate is available, practical, and educational. This may be done through CASPAR, Visions, and faculty advising in each of the four problem-focus areas. Students also will need logistical support for the travel involved in site visits, as well as IRB procedures and other project coordination needs.
- Faculty Support and Coordination. Faculty with the appropriate expertise will be asked to develop and teach courses in a coordinated fashion around specific problem areas and community-based projects. The number of faculty necessary to teach in the program may vary depending on the number of faculty co-teaching each course. Of the 13 required courses offered once each year when the program is fully functional (1 sophomore course, 2 junior courses in 4 problem areas, and 1 senior course in 4 areas), 9 would be new and 4 would be electives that already exist in the curriculum. This means a minimum of 9 faculty Instructors of Record would be necessary to teach the program, with likely more participating as co-teachers or guest lecturers. Participating faculty will have to have the latitude to teach these courses granted by their departments and schools, and they will need to receive the appropriate teaching and service credits for team teaching, curriculum development, and community project building. Faculty also will require some administrative support dedicated to creating, monitoring, developing, and assessing partnerships and projects to ensure they are intellectually rigorous, ethical, and productive for all.
- Faculty Development. Faculty will need significant instructional development resources from the Center for Teaching in building the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively incorporate inquiry- and community-based teaching methods into their courses and in the advising of students. Faculty teams in the four problem areas will also benefit from curricular development consultations and group facilitation to integrate the design of the junior and senior level certificate courses and projects. Faculty will also need help understanding community interests and developing partnerships, drawing from the expertise in schools, departments, and units with significant community engagement experience in the School of Arts and Science, Peabody College, the School of Divinity, the School of Engineering, the

Ingram Scholarship Program, the Institute for Medicine and public Health, the Meharry-Vanderbilt Community Engaged Research Core, the Office of Active Citizenship and Service, and the Office of Community, Neighborhood and Government Relations.

- Community Partner Support. Community partners will require some incentives to participate as collaborators in research and teaching projects, and some support to ensure their expertise and work are used most effectively. This will involve significant liaison work between the university and their organizations including some development and coordination of projects with faculty, project and course assessments, and management of their participation in courses and the Engaged Scholar Advisory Board.

The Certificate's needs are quite modest relative to the transformative impacts the program is likely to have on student learning, campus life, faculty research, and community development.

## Assessment

A valid, reliable, and efficient assessment process is possible for the Engaged Scholars Certificate Program, one that will ensure it is an exemplary and transformational program. Assessment is an indispensable process for critical reflection on, and improvement of, any rigorous academic program. The first step in any assessment is to define the goals of the program, and the Engaged Scholars Certificate Program starts with the goal of producing students who have achieved high levels of knowledge, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, research skills, and greater expertise in citizenship and community building. Given the program's emphasis on reciprocity and collaboration with partners, the other major goal is to promote positive community partnerships and development. The second step in assessment would be to define a systematic, flexible, but efficient method of assessing student growth and community partnership. Fortunately, an array of methods exist to measure student learning (e.g., the Critical Thinking Assessment Test<sup>13</sup>), citizenship development (e.g., the Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire<sup>14</sup>) and the quality of community partnerships (e.g., the Transformational Relationship Evaluation Scale<sup>15</sup>) that could be used to assess gains for certificate students. Alongside student course evaluations, student research portfolios, and faculty and community partner reflections, Vanderbilt will have sufficient information with which to assess the outcomes of the certificate program for students, and also faculty and partners. With the help of significant expertise in the assessment of teaching, learning, and community among Vanderbilt faculty and the Center for Teaching, an optimal balance may be found between rigorous and efficient methods that will excellence and sustainability.

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<sup>13</sup> Stein, Barry, and Haynes. 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Moely et al. 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Clayton, et al. 2010.

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## Appendix I - Possible Testimonials

### **Sarah Dederian ('22)**

*My name is Sarah Dederian ('22) and I am a senior at Vanderbilt majoring in Economics and minoring in Spanish and Latin American Studies. While I am not of Hispanic descent, I have always been interested in Latin American studies and hope to pursue a career in immigration law.*

*My first year at Vanderbilt I took a Commons Seminar on the Latino Immigration Experience. In this course, we learned about the logistics of the American immigration process and met with many Latin Americans in the Nashville community who were new American citizens or going through the citizen application process. After completing the Commons Seminar, I became fascinated with the immigration process and decided to apply for the Engaged Scholar Certificate Program to develop this interest and have an opportunity to serve and engage with the Nashville community. My sophomore year I enrolled in the Citizenship and Community course, which provided me with a holistic approach to the history of immigration, immigration policy, racial discrimination, public health inequalities and educational inequalities.*

*As a junior, I enrolled in two courses on Immigration and Social Inequality, one of which was team taught by faculty from the Departments of Spanish and Portuguese, Sociology, and the Program in Latin American Studies, along with staff from the Office of Active Citizenship and Service (OACS) and Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS). As part of the course, my peers and I were matched with a Latino student in the Nashville community who did not speak English. Each week, we would visit the student's house and tutor our respective student in Spanish. Not only did this give me an opportunity to practice my Spanish in an immersive setting outside the classroom, but I learned about Latin America's rich history and culture, particularly that of Mexico. I celebrated Benito Juarez's birthday, ate caldo de pollo until I felt sick, danced to Jarabe Tapatío, and developed an appreciation for Mexican music. I also learned about what is like to be a Mexican American living in the United States; I heard stories about Yobana's father being deported, watched her cry over names she was called at school and experienced her frustration with the public school system.*

*Greatly impacted by my interactions with Yobana, I am in the process of creating a video documentary about the immigration stories of twelve Mexican American children living in the Nashville area for my senior project. With support from faculty and graduate students in Latin American Studies and Film Studies, and developed with the full participation of the children's families and the Nashville International Center for Empowerment my documentary research was well-informed and it will premiere this April at Belcourt Cinema.*

*I am so grateful for my experience in the Engaged Scholar Certificate Program and feel fortunate to have discovered my passion for immigration and Latin American studies. Based on my experiences in the program, I hope to pursue a career in immigration law.*

## **Devin Mancini ('23)**

*Hello! My name is Devin Mancini ('23) and I am a junior in the College of Arts and Science double majoring in Chemistry and Earth & Environmental Science. While my parents were born and raised in southern Italy, my father's engineering firm signed a contract with the Puerto Rican government to conduct an extended water quality enhancement project in the city of Caguas. This is where I spent the majority of my teenage years and is where I gained a passion for sustainability and environmental health. Puerto Rico is a beautiful island with a unique, thriving culture and many natural areas being protected and conserved, but unfortunately it is extremely expensive for the government to produce enough energy for its residents and provide it at a reasonable cost to consumers. This has led to many economic issues, and now many are proposing a shift to using more clean energy on the island.*

*Coming to Vanderbilt, I was not very familiar with the role that American universities play in society, but I was thoroughly impressed by the school's new Engaged Scholar Certificate Program. During my first fall semester my student VUceptor, a senior in the School of Engineering, was working in Nashville through her capstone project with the Urban Green Lab. She always talked about the meaningful projects that the nonprofit was doing all around Nashville, offering workshops in fields such as urban agriculture and hydroponics, in addition to changing the behavioral practices of participants to reduce their carbon footprints. Getting to see her not only participate in the Engaged Scholar Certificate Program, but genuinely invested in Nashville and making a difference, inspired me to get involved in the program and make it a significant component of my undergraduate experience.*

*I went on to take the sophomore-year core course to prepare me to be involved in a similar project. As an aspiring researcher, I wanted my work in Nashville to be heavily science based, but I also wanted the work I was doing to be beneficial to the health of Nashville's citizens and environment. So, with faculty from Civil Engineering contacted both the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and the Urban Green Lab to explore options in sustainable development. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that Tennessee recently launched an Energy Efficiency Loan Program (EELP), which provides low-interest funds to industries in the state to facilitate the implementation of renewable energy devices. During my junior year I have been working extensively with this program to test the efficiency of different renewable energy devices, preparing myself for a senior capstone project in which I will write a comprehensive analysis of different renewable technology options for Tennessee industries.*

*My hope is to relay the information to the Urban Green Lab and give them the research and resources they need to expand their work with private industry in the local community. Because of the Engaged Scholar Certificate Program, I have immersed myself in this incredible opportunity to pursue my research interests, while also making a difference in the city that I now call home.*

## Appendix II - Budget

An annual budget for this program is difficult to outline with much precision given that it may rely on administrative infrastructure for strategic planning initiatives around immersion and cross-college teaching that are in process. However, at a minimum the Engaged Scholars Certificate would need the following resources, some of which will be phased in gradually as the program rolls out from 2017 to 2021.

### Annual Needs

- Program Direction or Coordination. Duties would include supporting course development and coordination within and across the problem areas, faculty-community partnership development, chairing and facilitating the advisory board, ongoing research project oversight and coordination, assessment, publicity, liaison work with campus units supporting the Certificate (e.g., the Commons, the Center for Teaching), and potential teaching.
- Graduate Student Teaching and Research Assistants. 11 Total.
  - 10 TAs/RAs. We expect that departments that provide the Instructors of Record would provide most TAs and RAs, but additional TA/RA resources may be necessary to cover all courses. The full program would request 10 TA/RA lines per academic year: 1 for the sophomore course, held once each year (2 total); 1 for each of the required junior team taught courses, held once each year (4 total) (all junior elective courses will have TAs, as needed, supplied by their own departments and programs); 1 for each of the four senior capstone course (4 total).
  - 1 RA. We expect that 1 RA would assist the Program Director or Coordinator in implementing student surveys, collection of other data necessary for analysis, and preparing annual assessment documents.
- Community Partners. We request an honorarium of \$1000/year for each of the 4 community partners, or \$4000 total. This honors their time and participation in multiple courses and projects.
- Transportation. To transport students off campus to work with community partners, we request three twelve-passenger vans. Faculty or graduate students will drive vans. Typical costs for renting a twelve-passenger van are \$100/day plus fuel.
- Faculty Development. Every five years we envision an Engaged Scholar Learning Community to develop courses, relationships and projects with community partners, and skills in public scholarship and community-based teaching. It would be a yearlong series of 10-12 meetings of all participating faculty, graduate TAs/RAs, and community partners held in the year before the new curriculum is implemented. The costs would involve no more than the \$5000 necessary for meals.