



# Center for Community Engagement & Social Research

Monthly Newsletter



OCTOBER 2023 EDITION



# CCSU Community!

Dear CCSU Family,

As the Fall 2023 semester is half way done , The Center for Community Engagement & Social Research (CCESR) looks back at two accomplishments in the month of October: Connecticut Supreme Court Hearings at CCSU and (Don't) JUST Vote: Addressing Public Issues Beyond Elections Panel Discussion. Both events involved students and faculty through strong relationships with both on and off-campus entities.

The Center for Community Engagement & Social Research (CCESR) brings together the important work of community engagement (CE) and applied research. Our primary goal is to integrate teaching, research, and service through community engagement. Additionally, we want all students to engage in multiple experiential learning opportunities and for our community to work with us to address their most pressing needs.

Sincerely,

The Center for Community Engagement & Social Research Team:

- Beth Merenstein, Executive Director
- Ed Vargas, O'Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy & Practical Politics
- Christian Reyes, Assistant Director
- F. Kamilah Hastings, Assistant
- James Robinson, University Assistant, Student Liaison
- Shealin R. Callahan, Community Engagement Student Ambassador
- Tony Moreno, Social Media and Marketing



# Community Engagement Around Campus & the Community

## CONNECTICUT SUPREME COURT HEARINGS AT CCSU

The Connecticut Supreme Court Hearings held at CCSU on October 19th were a resounding success. This unique opportunity allowed attendees to witness the legal process in action as two significant cases, "State of Connecticut v. Lawrence Lee Henderson" and "Vincent G. Benvenuto v. Kevin Brookman," were heard. The hearings provided valuable insights into the state's legal proceedings, enhancing participants' understanding of the justice system. The event's scheduling, with the first case at 10:00 a.m. and the second at 11:30 a.m., ensured a well-structured and informative experience. These hearings exemplified CCSU's commitment to offering students and the community exceptional educational opportunities and a deeper insight into the legal world.

Thank you to the Criminology and Criminal Justice department for helping bring this event to campus.



## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS: AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH

A workshop being presented by Beth Merenstein and Diana Cohen.

Come and (virtually) meet faculty and staff from the Center for Community Engagement and Social Research (CCESR) as we explore how to get started with community-engaged research projects. Faculty will share their experiences in the field and discuss topics such as working with Grants & Funded Research, accounting for community-engaged research in the promotion and tenure process, and the value of collaborating with community partners. By the end of the session, you will have a fresh perspective on how experiential learning can be transformative for both students and faculty!

Wednesday, November 8: 12:15 - 1:15 p.m. [Register online](#)  
A Teams meeting link will be forwarded to your email prior to the event.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: CITIZENSHIP AMBASSADORS

On Saturday, October 7, six students from CCSU's Honors Program accompanied by Dr. Aimee Pozorski spent their Saturday morning helping the Friends of the New Britain Public Library set up for the Fall Book Sale. Over the last few years, students from the Honors Program have helped us set up for our book sales. We continue to be impressed by their dedication, commitment and love of books and reading and hope we can keep the partnership growing. Students from CCSU's Honors Program in the New Britain Library's Community Room, where they spent their Saturday morning helping the Friends of the New Britain Public Library set up for the Fall Book Sale. (visit [www.nbpl.info](http://www.nbpl.info) for more information).



Seen in the photo, from left to right, are Ava Leblanc, Chris Stasiak, Prof. Aimee Pozorski, Matt Grammatico, Elise Jamharian, Nadia Bidonne, and Dale Neyra.



## FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITY: CAMPUS COMPACT

Join faculty from across institutions, disciplines, and varying levels of community engagement expertise to start to build a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how to work with community partners and engage students in meaningful, community-rooted experiences.

Participants in this interactive learning community will leave with a draft community-engaged course syllabus or course proposal, pedagogical resources, and a plan for course implementation.

Important information:

- There is no registration cost for participation.
- There are going to be six sessions between November 9, 2023 and May 9, 2024.
- This learning community is open only to active Campus Compact members and is a benefit of Campus Compact membership.

Click [HERE](#) to register and view more!



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING STIPEND (CEELS)

CCESR's Community Engagement Experiential Learning Stipend (CEELS) provides stipends for internships or research roles without standard wages, offering financial support for experiential learning opportunities that might otherwise be unpaid.

### [Student Internship Information](#)

Eligible students would receive \$18/hour with a maximum of \$3,000 (this averages to 20hrs/week for an 8-week program). Application open and close in the following months. More details of deadline will be given near the end of current semester:

- Fall application opens in July and closes in September
- Spring application opens in December and closes in February
- Summer application opens in March and closes in May

Click [HERE](#) to apply!



# Community Engagement Around Campus

## CAROL A. AMMON COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

On October 24, a remarkable milestone was achieved as we successfully hosted an ACAMS Conference (Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists). The event saw enthusiastic participation from our students in CRM 378/AC 490, our esteemed agency partners, and officers from the Detective Certificate programs. Impressively, the conference also drew the attendance of external agencies, including some from as far as San Diego, showcasing its wide-reaching impact.

This occasion served as a valuable learning experience, fostering connections, and providing extensive networking opportunities for all involved. The engagement and enthusiasm displayed were truly commendable.



## SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The School of Business at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) has introduced the Career Accelerator Program (CAP), a transformative initiative dedicated to enhancing the academic and professional journeys of its students. Aligned with CCSU's holistic education commitment, CAP equips School of Business students with the essential skills, resources, and opportunities necessary for success in the modern workforce. This innovative program immerses students in career exploration, work experience, and skill development. CAP sessions are tailored to boost career readiness by providing guidance on resume and cover letter writing, interview preparation, and networking techniques. Moreover, it offers mentorship and networking opportunities to expand students' networks and improve their career prospects.

The program's fall semester saw 65 students benefiting from CAP through partnerships with local businesses and interactions with 15 industry experts. Students have shown strong interest and commitment to the program, attending sessions between classes. To celebrate the launch's success, students who attended 3 to 5 sessions will receive certificates at a networking lunch with all presenters and Dean Lisa Frank on December 8, 2023. The program will continue into Spring 2024, reinforcing CCSU's commitment to preparing students for the competitive job market. Dr. Dana Wilkie, Associate Dean, emphasized the program's importance in equipping students with the tools they need to excel in their future careers. CAP is open to all School of Business students, embodying CCSU's dedication to comprehensive education beyond the classroom.





# Community Engagement Around Campus

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

The Department of Educational Leadership and Instructional Technology (ELIT) hosted an Ed.D. All-Cohort Gathering on Wednesday 9/27. The event brought together 60 students from five different cohorts, from those just starting out in the program to those just completing their dissertations. The students are all full-time employees in schools, colleges, and universities. The theme of the evening was “Designing a Doctoral Community for Collective Impact” and included opportunities for students to network and establish professional connections across cohorts. Students collaboratively designed and shared models for how CCSU faculty and educational leadership students might work together to create greater partnerships with educational organizations around the state. The evening also served as a launch for the Community Action & Leadership Laboratory (The CALL), a new initiative from ELIT faculty which will provide opportunities for Ed.D. students to collaborate with diverse stakeholders to address current challenges facing the educational community.



## SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, SCIENCE, & TECHNOLOGY

A remarkable achievement is in the making as Prof. Boateng Onwona-Agyeman, previously the Dean of Engineering Sciences at the University of Ghana and now the Provost, shows a steadfast commitment to fostering collaboration. His enduring interest in establishing an MOU and subsequent visit as Dean have set the stage for potential advancements. During a recent visit to Ghana, a new chapter in their program was unveiled, exemplified by the collaborative facility constructed by Toyota and the University of Ghana's Engineering program. Dr. Elsie Effah Kaufmann, the current Dean of the School of Engineering Sciences, who holds both a BS and a PhD in Bioengineering from Penn, further enriches the prospects for collaboration along side Charles Mate Kole, founding Director of the CCSU Center for Africana Studies and professor of Psychology, who retired from CCSU a few years ago, and is now at UG. All are a driving force in this endeavor. A fruitful partnership involving faculty and student exchange and even undergraduate recruitment from Ghana is on the horizon as they continue to build on the project.



# Community Engagement Around Campus & the Community

## ATHLETICS

The Central Connecticut State football team hosted members of the Beautiful Lives Project for a football clinic following practice on Thursday, October 12th. Around 50 participants came to Arute Field and ran through kicking, tackling and offensive drills with members of the team. The highlight of the event was touchdown celebration practice. This is the second time that BLP has joined the Blue Devils football team at practice, making their first visit last fall.

“Today’s event with the Beautiful Lives Project really hits home about how special it is to be a college football player,” said head coach Adam Lechtenberg. “It is really two-fold for us. We are able to provide an hour of fun and excitement for members of our community, while also helping our guys see what is truly important in life. It was the perfect day for them to visit us and I am glad that we can be part of something meaningful like the Beautiful Lives Project.”



## COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: CONNECTICUT’S OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE



This semester, Connecticut’s Office of the Secretary of State has been instrumental in supporting CCESR’s efforts in boosting civic engagement among our students! On September 19, Secretary of State Stephanie Thomas kicked off National Voter Registration Day with a press conference and voter registration drive at CCSU. Secretary Thomas was joined by CCSU Provost Dr. Kimberly Kostelis, CCSU Associate Vice President for Community Engagement and Experiential Learning Dr. Beth Merenstein, CCSU O’Neill Endowed Chair for the Center for Community Engagement and Social Research Edwin Vargas, CCSU Student Government Association President Haneen Alkabasi and John Lewis Institute scholar Niya Blizzard-Ireland, who spoke about the importance of voting and civic participation. Secretary Thomas also participated in a panel discussion on October 26th, (Don’t) Just Vote: Addressing Public Issues Beyond Elections, and was joined by Election Assistant Commissioner Thomas Hicks, Equality CT Advisory Board Member Bilal Tajildeen, and Connecticut State Representative Jillian Gilchrest. This panel, moderated by SGA President Haneen Alkabasi and O’Neill Chairholder Edwin Vargas, discussed the importance of participation in elections, but also involvement in one’s own community to address public issues directly and on the ground.







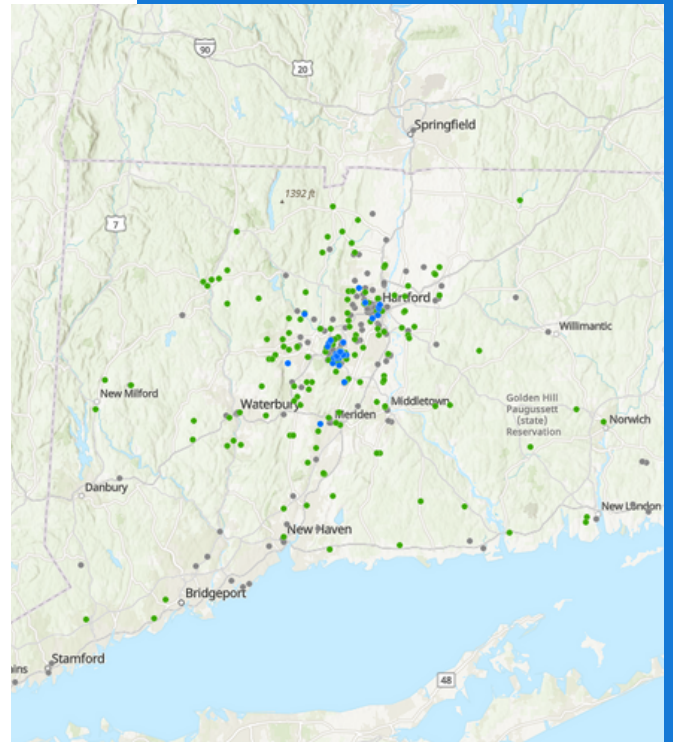
## CCESR'S INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MAP

CCESR has created an interactive map as a way to visualize the impact CCSU has had on the community and provide ideas for future projects.

On the map, you can view community partners CCSU has worked with, where students have completed internships/field placements, and the locations/descriptions of past community engagement or public service events.

If you have been involved in a CE event/project, fill out this [Microsoft Form](#) to have it added to the map and Collaboratory!

Click [HERE](#) to view the map!



## CONTACT OUR TEAM

If you would like to promote a community engagement or research project in our newsletter, contact Christian Reyes (see below). For other information on how CCESR can assist you, see our contact info below or visit our [website!](#)

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