



**UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA**

**2023/2024  
COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING  
ABRIDGED EVALUATION REPORT**

## Forward from the Director

The 2023/2024 academic year was another successful impactful year for CSL.

We offered our full range of surveys to students, community partners, and our academic instructors. Participation rates 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 constituencies.

My academic training was in Student Equity in Higher Education, and my heart is in making university life, and experiential learning within that, more accessible for all. So I am thrilled with the findings of our brilliant evaluation coordinator, Katy Kincaid, that 'Indigenous students and first-generation students are overrepresented in CSL compared to the overall U of A student body. 9.5% of CSL students identify as Indigenous (compared to 4.9% of the overall student body) and 39.3% of CSL students are first-generation (compared to 34.4% of the overall student body).' There are a number of reasons for that, 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.

A special thank you to Katie Kincaid, CSL's Evaluation Coordinator, as she departs and begins teaching in the Department of Psychology as she completes her PhD. We will miss her.

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.

Dr. David Peacock

## **Methodology**

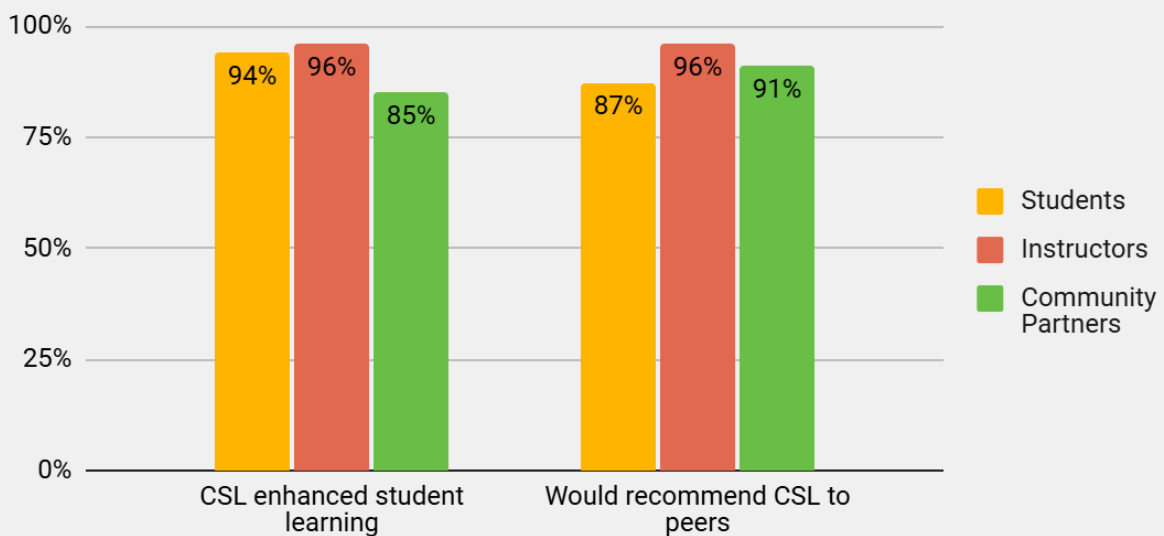
The University of Alberta CSL program distributed surveys at the end of the term to CSL placement-based students, classroom-based students, instructors, and community partners. The surveys were completed online through Google Forms. Students and instructors filled out their evaluations during class time 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
<p><b>1,212</b> placement-based students</p> <p><b>971</b> responded to the evaluation survey</p> <p><b>74%</b> women, <b>24%</b> men, <b>3%</b> two-spirit, non-binary, or other gender</p> <p><b>83%</b> are under 25 years old</p> <p><b>39%</b> are first generation University students<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>7%</b> are international students</p> <p><b>81%</b> in a CSL course for the first time</p> <p><b>14%</b> are working towards a CSL certificate</p>	<p><b>61</b> different instructors</p> <p><b>26</b> responded to the evaluation survey</p> <p><b>29%</b> taught a CSL course for the first time</p> <p><b>23%</b> had 1-5 years of experience teaching university courses</p> <p><b>50%</b> were contract academic staff</p>	<p><b>200</b> community partners</p> <p><b>74</b> responded to the evaluation survey</p> <p><b>36%</b> mentored a CSL student for the first time</p>

**FIGURE 2. OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH CSL**



<sup>1</sup> 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

**94%** indicated that CSL is an effective teaching/learning strategy<sup>2</sup>

**87%** would recommend CSL to peers

**83%** 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 a ton of learning and knowledge about disability...through this course. It really challenged a lot of beliefs I did not even know I held before engaging in this experience.”

“I gained new perspectives and a new approach to interacting with people who live with impairments. No two people are the same so I enjoy the diversity in interaction and getting to experience and see new things every time.”

“I gained a new perspective on learning. I gained experience and adjusted my previous beliefs around inclusion.”

“I have learned about the inner workings of some social/community work, as well as experience in collaboration with these types of organizations.”

### Program structure and communication

Involvement with community organization fit well with interests in the course	84%
I had enough information about the requirements of CSL	82%
There was adequate communication between my instructor and me	87%
There was adequate communication between my community partner and me	79%
My project team and I received an appropriate amount of guidance from my community partner organization	75%

### 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	84%
My community project experience provided a useful context to think through course material	83%
This experience in the community provided the opportunity to better contribute to class discussions and assessments	81%

<sup>2</sup>Percentages in this section represent the share of respondents who indicated that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with a statement about CSL.

## Student quotes on learning from their CSL placement

"This was one of my favourite university courses in my university experience thus far. I gained a significant amount of knowledge about community service and how to better approach it due to some of the pitfalls in the current system...The course concepts that we tackled gave me great insight into how to properly tackle some of the issues that we have in volunteer work to date. I believe the content...will stick with me for the rest of my life. It was very impactful."

"I learned a lot about how to apply my class knowledge to real world settings. Learning the complexities of working with kids and how theory may apply or may need to be adapted, depending on the situation."

"[I gained] communication, organization, time management, and resource management skills."

## Instructor Experiences with CSL

### Satisfaction with CSL as a pedagogical process

96% indicated that CSL enhanced student learning

96% would recommend CSL to peers

92% 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	92%
During the course, I provided CSL students with opportunities to reflect on and learn from their community project experience	96%
CSL enhanced the learning environment	96%

### Instructors' most commonly used strategies for integrating CSL into courses

Check-ins with students	80%
Inviting partners to class (e.g. to see student presentations)	68%
Student assessment	64%
Check-ins with partners	64%
In-class presentations/workshops by community partners	64%

## Community Partner Experiences with CSL

### Satisfaction with CSL as a pedagogical process

85% indicated that CSL enhanced student learning

91% would recommend CSL to peers

92% indicated that CSL helped students understand some of the complexities of social issues

### Community partner quotes on understanding of social change and social issues

"I think they gained insight into the challenges Indigenous students face."

"The students learned more about the complexities of how social housing works in Alberta from both a legislative point of view and from a social point of view in terms of who accesses social housing and why. I also think the project contributed to students' understanding of the logistics of running housing and how the complications involved including very mundane things (e.g., door access) add up to lots of administrative work."

"I think they took a class with emotionally difficult subject matter, and that this bit of work making something for incarcerated women meant that they were doing something for a person – it helped students carry the difficult things they were learning with a sense of sending someone some care."

### Program structure and communication

There was adequate communication between community partners and students	85%
If needed, CSL staff provided assistance and support in integrating CSL into my work	86%
I knew enough about the aims of CSL	75%

### Community partner benefits of participating in CSL

CSL helped me develop relationships with students, instructors, and the university	85%
CSL helped me develop mentoring skills	71%
CSL helped our organization accomplish some of our project needs	97%

## Community partner quotes on benefits of participating in CSL

“The CSL students were able to provide extensive research and materials to advance our projects using current information available in coursework. This alleviated pressure on our own staff to do the same with little time.”

“CSL students brought a positive, and enthusiastic energy to the various programs they assisted with, and improved the quality of life to their 1:1 engagements. It is always a win-win for the students and [the organization].”

“As someone that knows next to nothing about software development, it was incredibly helpful to have [CSL students] to make our vision come to life. Each group member was patient, professional, and skilled. They asked inquisitive questions that complimented the concept of the app that I didn’t even consider!”

“[CSL students] brought in fresh, creative ideas that we are excited to implement.”

## Conclusions

Key findings of the 2023-2024 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. 94% of students, 96% of instructors, and 85% of community partners reported that CSL enhanced learning.
2. Compared to other stakeholder groups, instructors are most likely to report they would recommend CSL to their peers (96%). In comparison, 87% of students and 91% of community partners report that they would recommend CSL to their peers.
3. CSL instructors and community partners are very satisfied with CSL staff support. Of those who sought CSL staff support, 100% of instructors and 92% of community partners reported that CSL staff provided the support and assistance they were looking for.
4. Most community partners (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. 9.5% of CSL students identify as Indigenous (compared to 4.9% of the overall student body) and 39.3% of CSL students are first-generation (compared to 34.4% of the overall student body)..

To view the comprehensive 2023-2024 CSL Evaluation Report, please contact our Evaluation Coordinator at [cslinfo@ualberta.ca](mailto:cslinfo@ualberta.ca). To learn more about the CSL program at the University of Alberta, please visit our website at [uab.ca/CSL](http://uab.ca/CSL)