

Bumper music fade in

**KB:** (she/her): Welcome to this 10-minute episode of the NFOA Bridge mini Bodcast. NFOA is the acronym for Not For Ourselves Alone, Washburn's motto. And the virtual bridge is located right here on Teaching Tuesdays connecting Washburn with the Topeka community and beyond through Community Engaged Learning, also known as CEL.

I'm Karen Barron, community engaged learning coordinator for the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning and host of this series. Today, our featured guest is the Director of the Honors Program and Professor of History, Kerry Wynn. Welcome, Kerry.

**KW:** Thanks, Karen. I'm glad to be here.

**KB:** We are glad you're here. Kerry, I know you have incorporated CEL into some of your classes, so my first question is, why is CEL important to your pedagogy? What do you see as the benefit to students and to the community?

**KW:** That's a really big question, I think, the, so I'm an historian by training and where I've used community-engaged learning, it's been in history classes, and I think in terms of pedagogy, there are many things that community-engaged learning can show students about how a community tells its history and what they as historians have to contribute, and I think in terms of the wider community, so our students at Washburn, whether they're originally from Topeka or not, once they're at Washburn, they're Topekans; they're part of the city, right, and faculty are part of the city, and I think community-engaged learning can center us in that community and as a municipal university, I think that instructors have a particular role or a special role that they can play in making sure that students understand that community and we do things that are relevant to the people around us.

**KB:** Right, and I, yeah, I like the idea of the community of place. And so even though the students may be from other areas besides Topeka, when they're here, they are in that community, so I appreciate that, that thought. Would you mind sharing and describing some examples of CEL in your courses past, or present, or future?

**KW:** Sure. So, one of the courses that I've done is Learning in the Community. And we, in its first iteration, we haven't had a second iteration because of Covid, but because of its first iteration, we, the students and I, helped Ward Meade Historic Park and Old Prairie Town to research Charles Sheldon and his background. So, Charles Sheldon was a minister in Topeka at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was the person who originally coined the phrase, What Would Jesus Do? It's a lot older than you might think, and it was part of the Social Gospel Movement. So, the social gospel called upon people who belonged to formal churches to kind of extend their religious ideas or their kind of moral underpinnings into the community and seek social change, and Old Prairie Town has Charles Sheldon's study, and so my students basically produced a report that would lead them toward some good resources for being able to interpret that history, and that was a partnership with Old Prairie Town and Shawnee County Parks and Rec. And so, that was a fun project I think for students to do. We also did in a later class an oral history

project, a large oral history project, with women who had been politically active in the 70s and 80s in Kansas, and so the students did interviews with women who had been involved in the feminist movement, or the court system, or formal politics. They interviewed people from former governor Kathleen Sibelius to faculty members who had been undergraduates at the time, to people who had belonged to the contraceptive rights movement, all sorts of different women who had been active in different kinds of political movements in the 70s and 80s, and they produced podcasts regarding those, and those were really fun.

**KB:** Oh good. Okay, well, could you just, is there a podcast link you can shout out there?

**KW:** Not an easy one, but if you have show notes, I can send you the link and you can go there.

**KB:** Okay, yeah, do that because I will, I will have a transcript, and I was not aware of that, that sounds like a really interesting project. I would love to listen to some of those, and I'm sure other listeners would too. I am familiar with the Old Prairie Town project that you and your students did and, yeah, it's exciting to hear, you know, of your other ideas. The idea of, of your class, Learning in the Community, just fits in really well with that.

**KW:** Yeah, yes. So, I think we called it. Did I? I may have said Learning in the Community because I've got LinC on the brain, but it was History in the Community.

**KB:** History in the Community. Okay, and maybe I heard it that way because I also have LinC on the brain. So, so, who knows? Okay, good.

**KW:** Well, we follow their model a lot, right? We follow their example because they've really taken community-engaged learning to the next level. I'm just starting out. But, yeah, so we did History in the Community for that particular class.

**KB:** Ok, right, and, yeah, I totally agree. It just keeps growing and, yeah, and our hats off to the, the late Rick Ellis who started all that at Washburn and Kris Hart is, is keeping it going, and, yeah it's thriving and just growing and I, I'm, I'm happy to be a little part of that. So, we're kind of running close on time, Kerry, but I wanted to ask you one other question. I also know that you're currently on a committee to promote CEL service, research, and teaching activities being included in the future for promotion and tenure. Can you talk to us about why you think this is important both to faculty and to the university as a whole?

**KW:** Well, that's a really good question. I think that the, from the perspective of faculty members, right, many faculty members are engaged in community-engaged learning across campus, and they invest significant time and effort in these projects, which have great scholarly outcomes at the end of them, right? So, they're not only a great way for students to engage with all of these different ideas and to really embrace the community, but they're also a real site of scholarship for faculty and a real site of engaged teaching and as a municipal university, we're invested in the community and the community is invested in us, and I think it's really exciting as a faculty member, you know I've been a faculty member at Washburn for 16 years now and I'm a Topekan, and I, you know, this is where my kids are growing up, and I think for many of us,

we're here and we're invested, and putting this in promotion & tenure standards, when we've invested all this intellectual energy, shows that the university is invested as well.

**KB:** Right. Yes, and I couldn't agree more. Well, thank you, Kerry for being here today sharing your experiences with and thoughts on Community Engaged Learning at Washburn. It's been a pleasure talking with you.

**KW:** Thank you very much.

**KB:** So, for more information on how you can get involved with Community Engaged Learning at Washburn, please see the CEL pillar on the Center for Teaching Excellence web page and contact me, Karen Baron coordinator of CEL for CTCL.

A special thanks to Tom Morgan for composing our bumper music and the Washburn jazz band for recording it, featuring Craig Treinen on sax. Thanks!

See you next week on the NFOA bridge!

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