



News from the UW-Madison Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies

FALL 2020 | ISSUE 6

Connect with the CommNS!

Hope to see you at our **Annual Event** — fully virtual and free of charge this year — or at upcoming CommUnity Conversations, so we can explore ideas and strategies together.

Follow us on **Facebook** and **Twitter** and join our “Friends of the CommNS” **LinkedIn Group** to keep connected!



Getting the Work Done: How Tos in Community and Nonprofit Efforts

Hellos & Goodbyes

We would be remiss to not note some “farewells” and new additions for our CommNS team. We bid adieu to Jessica Fischer, who obtained her master’s degree in Human Ecology and [began a fellowship at Global Giving] and Grace Armstrong, who began medical school at UW-Madison. We also welcomed new arrivals to the families of two of our valued colleagues, Associate Director Amy Hilgendorf and PhD candidate Troy Williams.

Greetings, Friends of the CommNS:

First and foremost, we hope you are all staying as safe and well as possible in these times. Since our last newsletter, we’ve all shifted expectations and the way we live and work, and experienced acute reminders of the need to confront the **history and systems** which create our current reality. **Dual pandemics** of COVID19 and systemic racism are formidable adversaries, disproportionately disrupting and degrading the daily lives and possibilities for some more than others, and exacerbating inequities and oppression which have long been defining features of our society. Cracks and chasms in systems have been exposed and widened, yet our interdependence should be more obvious than ever. This context underscores the importance of dedicated change agents, strong and independent civil society organizations, robust civic participation, creative community-driven efforts to fill in where other systems have failed, and new approaches to philanthropy.

As a University-based center focused on “inquiry and action for social change” through community, nonprofit, and civil society efforts, we have had the special opportunity during these times to observe and connect with a **vast array of mission-based efforts** which push for positive change and institutional accountability, and creatively and nimbly meet unmet needs in our communities. These organizations and efforts do this work even as they themselves are fighting for their own survival. **We continue to be amazed, but not surprised, at the way our regional and global partners persist, pivot, innovate, and serve.** We are also inspired by the way our students carry on with their personal and professional development to be **change agents** for the next chapter of our history, and the way our **faculty and staff** colleagues support them and strive to keep our coursework and degree programs relevant and critical.

We hope this **update** with some of the work we’ve been doing since we went online last spring, and some of our **plans** for the rest of the fall semester, will encourage you to connect further with us. Our network of experts, colleagues, change agents, and friends are not only our greatest source of hope but the greatest asset in our work. We wish you all strength and some “wins” in this autumn season.



Center for Community
and Nonprofit Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Spring & Summer Updates

- Completed the 2020 spring semester online—Human Ecology MS and Community and Nonprofit Studies student graduated. See Human Ecology MS capstone projects [here!](#) It was a delight to see many students move on to positions in their fields.
- Hosted virtual **CommUnity Conversations and CommUniversity Sessions**
 - **Spring series** co-hosted with Division of Extension, University of Wisconsin-Madison, to bring together nonprofit and community organizations to share about their work and challenges in COVID-19
 - **Special sessions** co-hosted with EQT by Design on **Sustained Engagement for Racial Justice**
 - **Summer sessions** including “Nonprofit and Fund Development in Uncertain and Challenging Times”, “Where Mission Meets Advocacy: Telling Your Story in COVID-19”, and “YALI Mandela Fellows Community Projects in Africa”.
- Launched a new web platform, **CommNS Knowledge**, where you can find recordings of past events, content briefs, and blog posts related to our ongoing efforts!
- Participated in the collaborative **“The COVID19 Effect on Wisconsin’s Nonprofit Sector”** research project
- Published the first ever **Civic Health of Wisconsin Report**
- Continued Co-Create technical support work with a variety of nonprofit and public agencies, engaging a host of graduate and undergraduate students.
- Continued work with faculty, student advisors, and Student Academic Advising on the updates to our undergraduate degree program.



Plans for Fall

- Welcomed the first students in our **Capstone Certificate Program** in Community and Nonprofit Leadership and a new cohort of **SoHE MS** and **CSCR PhD** students. Began fall semester 2020 in hybrid and virtual format, offering several community-engaged classes hosted by the CommNS teaching team.
- **CommUnity Conversations on Sustained Engagement for Racial Justice**—please join us for this ongoing series co-hosted with EQT by Design and the Morgridge Center for Public Service. Community contributors from our network will provide guidance, resources, and perspective to support individuals’ and groups’ customized work plans for sustained engagement for racial justice.
- **CommNS Annual Event**—please join us for the free and online 2020 Annual Event! This year, we’ll focus on “Getting the Work Done: ‘How-Tos in Community and Nonprofit Efforts.”
- Participation at **ARNOVA Annual Conference** in November—the CommNS will share about its community-engaged projects, efforts, and approaches, and its coursework for preparing future change agents in the sector.
- Accepting applications for our **Capstone Certificate Program** in Community and Nonprofit Leadership through December!



Stay in touch with the CommNS
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