



Service Learning

Learn. Serve. Engage.

Service Guides Academic Pursuits, Career Goals and Personal Connections for ElmU Students

Each year, hundreds of Elmhurst University students contribute thousands of hours serving their local, national, or global communities. Each semester, students welcome refugee families, mentor first-generation students, provide shelter for abandoned pets, advocate for human rights, promote the protection of our natural world and much, much more.

Civic Engagement is for Everyone

Meet the ElmU Civic Engagement Liaison



Natalia Gonzalez

Senior **Natalia Gonzalez** is ready to help you register to vote, create a voting plan, get paid as an election judge, and answer your civic engagement questions. As the Service Learning Civic Engagement Liaison, Natalia is passionate about being civically engaged and also about helping other ElmU students see the value of civic engagement. According to Natalia, "Civic Engagement is important because

it allows us to connect with our communities and with the people in them. With the upcoming election, we hope to get new voters registered and to share with our community more about the election process. I believe it is important for people to learn about their communities and different civil processes and understand how they can affect them."

This is an important year for civic engagement as we prepare to elect our next president. Be on the lookout around campus for opportunities to register to vote, create a voting plan, sign up to be an election judge, learn about the candidates, and learn about the importance of the democratic process brought to you

by Service Learning, Student Affairs, The Political Science Department and Criminal Justice faculty, El Centro and the Office of Equity and Inclusion, the Chaplains, the A.C. Buehler Library, as well as individual faculty members and student organizations.

Service and Civic Engagement go Hand in Hand

Bluejay **Dawson Wells** spent his summer interning with the Citizen Advocacy Center, a local non-profit organization that takes a holistic approach to building democracy through Community Lawyering. Dawson, a fourth-year communications major, put his academic skills to use in the real world by managing CAC's website, socials and much more. "Citizen Advocacy Center is a pro-democracy organization of community lawyers fighting to build democracy for the 21st century. At CAC, I learned about the importance of open and transparent local government and helped launch the organization's social media and local journalism project!" If you want to learn more about how your academic interests can connect to civic engagement and foster democracy, connect with the ElmU Service Learning team.



Dawson Wells

Look Inside for More
Info on How You Can
Get Involved with
Election 2024!

ElmU Votes: Important Civic Engagement Events This Semester

Register to Vote

- 8/29 on the Mall
- 9/4 at the Library
- 9/13 on the sidewalk east of Frick
- 9/17 in Founders Lounge
- 10/3 at El Centro
- 10/4 at the Library

Civic Engagement Lectures

- 9/19 Voting 101 with Dr. Mixon
- 9/30 Prinz Lecture featuring Greg Pratt from the Chicago Tribune in Founders Lounge
- 10/22 Voting 101 with Dr. Mixon

The Election: For Your Education and the Care of Your Soul – Hosted by ElmU Chaplains

Every Wednesday at 5:00pm in the Blume Boardroom starting in September

National Voter Education Week October 7th – 11th

Look for tables around campus for information on checking your registration status, registering online, mail in ballots, making a plan to vote, and reviewing your ballot

Civically Engaged Coursework

Election 2024: State of DisUnion
Want to continue the discussion on the election results, democratic practices, and civic engagement? Consider enrolling in Political Science 452.01: Special Topics: Election 2024 during J-Term 2025. This one credit course provides an in-depth and holistic analysis of the 2024 election and the challenges facing our democracy. From the local to the global impacts of the 2024 election, this course engages students in a discussion and examination of the causes and consequences of divided politics in the United States. J-term POL 452 will be conducted via an online, synchronous format.

Become an Election Judge!

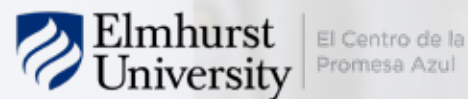
Volunteer to work the General Election on Tuesday, November 5th (there are no classes at ElmU on election day!) and earn a flat rate of \$250. Election judges oversee voting processes and assist voters as needed. Being an election judge allows you to engage with your community and learn more about the election process. Contact the Service Learning Program to learn more about becoming an election judge in your county.

Satisfy Your Experiential Learning Graduation Requirement While Promoting Civic Engagement

Connect with the Service Learning Program team to learn how you can connect with civic minded local non-profit organizations to satisfy your EL grad requirement via service. Check out Handshake and work with the WCPE and Service Learning on satisfying your EL grad requirement via internships with local campaigns and organizations focused on the democratic process.

Connect with El Centro During the Election Season and Beyond

Visit El Centro for voting resources in Spanish and to learn more about civic minded interest groups like Voto Latino, LGBTQ+ Victory Fund, APIAVote, Black Voters Matter and others that focus on engaging historically underrepresented groups. El Centro staff can also work with students and their families who have questions about registration requirements for first time voters. El Centro is located on the ground floor of Niebuhr Hall. elcentro@elmhurst.edu



Want to get involved? Ask questions? Learn more about why your votes counts? Find resources in Spanish? Learn more about your rights as a voter? Better understand the issues and where the candidates stand?

Connect with Student Affairs, El Centro, Service Learning, the Library, or visit <https://library.elmhurst.edu/ElmUVotes>



Digital Media Brings Service with The BASE to ElmU Students



What do you get when middle schoolers, non-profit organizations, college students and instructors contribute a whole lot of volunteer hours? The next generation of musicians, writers, directors, and creative thinkers! Throughout the 2023-24 school year, ElmU digital media and music instructors and students, headed by [KJ Benedyk](#), collaborated with The BASE, a Chicago non-profit

organization that provides a range of community programming including academic/STEM tutoring, violence prevention, life skills and healthy lifestyle guidance. Elm U students worked with students from Leif Ericson Academy in West Garfield Park to guide the middle schoolers in creating original songs and music videos as part of The BASE's video production program. The yearlong collaboration culminated in an evening at The Music Box Theatre in Chicago, where the students' projects premiered on the big screen. ElmU 2024 grad [Sarah Glees](#) said, "Helping produce each of these videos has been truly rewarding and allowed me to gain lot of important skills I plan to use post-graduation. I learned so much about music video production and how to balance producing seven videos at once. I loved getting to connect not only with the directors but also the middle school students from Leif Ericson who are all so talented and grew so much both in confidence and as creatives. I'm so proud of each music video and everything they've accomplished."

This service project provided an opportunity for ElmU students to connect what they're learning in the classroom with post-grad career options. The project also provided a space to work on soft skills that all college grads will need in the workforce – prioritizing collaboration, time management, written and verbal communication skills, and so much more. If you'd like to learn more about how Service Learning can help cultivate soft skills, or how to connect with the Digital Media program to work on similar projects, contact the Service Learning Program.



Gianna Cabrera, Fath Jones and Ellie Bonefas

Roots and Wings – Aadam Ahmed

When it was time to prepare for graduation, **Aadam Ahmed** realized that he still needed to fulfill his experiential learning graduation requirement. That's when he contacted the Service Learning Program. Aadam decided to enroll in EXP-250-05: Service Learning so that he could volunteer with Roots and Wings in nearby Bensenville. Roots and Wings is a non-profit organization that creates programs that promote wellness, mentorship and educational resources for new immigrants and their families in need. Roots and Wings already has established after school programs for kids to create art, learn music, and even garden, but Aadam wanted to connect his classwork to his service experience. That's when Aadam decided that he would create an afterschool coding club. Aadam created a month's worth of lessons where he taught students aged 10-15 how to create a webpage using HTML and CSS. Aadam said, "It was a great experience where I could teach valuable skills, work on a real project, and make valuable connections."



Aadam Ahmed and students from Roots and Wings

If you have a skill set, interest, or hobby that you'd like to share with the families at Roots and Wings, or if you'd like to learn more about satisfying the experiential learning graduation requirement via service, contact the Service Learning Program.

Newman Fellow – Emerson Azcoitia



President Troy VanAken and Emerson Azcoitia

Emerson Azcoitia, a fourth-year education student, is among the 142 students from around the United States and Mexico who make up the 2024-25 class of Newman Civic Fellows. The yearlong program recognizes students committed to creating positive changes in their communities and around the world. As a Newman Civic Fellow, Emerson will have access to learning and networking opportunities emphasizing personal, professional, and civic growth. The goal of the Fellowship is to provide Fellows with the skills and connections to create large-scale positive change. Through their work with the World Student Christian Federation, Emerson is working to "reimagine what it would look like to build community by connecting cross-culturally to people just like us on the 'other side.'" As a future elementary school teacher, Emerson's core values and advocacy are centered around the education system with a focus on supporting and cultivating new leaders. Through their work with the fellowship, Emerson will be better equipped to build bridges between disparate communities and help tomorrow's leaders learn to organize change in their own communities.

We Want to Hear from You!

Tell us about how you are serving and learning in your community. Or find out how to get involved with one of the wonderful organizations highlighted in this issue. Our goal is to help you combine your interests and passions with community needs and opportunities. We can also help you fulfill your Integrated Curriculum Experiential Learning graduation requirement through service.

To learn more about how Elmhurst University members are serving their communities, learning about themselves and building their futures, visit elmhurst.edu/service-learning

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