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I believe that student engagement in the classroom benefits from connecting what is covered in the classroom to the real world. In many of my classes to date, I have been incorporating recent news articles on relevant topics to illustrate these connections. Bringing relevant, local outside speakers to these classes will further help students connect classroom content to real-world activities and outcomes. Speakers from Whatcom County would also likely illustrate more local applications of energy and environmental economics that might be more relevant to the future professional experience of the average student, as opposed to national-level policy implications.

The outcome of my time with the Community Engagement Fellows program this year was a more focused plan bringing these proposed outside speakers into my upper division energy and environmental economics classes at WWU in the future, including identifying some potential speakers and discussing ways to maximize their educational value. While I did not bring in any outside speakers to my classes this year, I did forward some ideas to a colleague teaching an energy business class that brings in numerous speakers from local energy businesses.