

**Community Engagement Fellows  
Project Report  
“Filmmaking for Social Change”  
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At the onset of the project, my goal was to further develop an idea that I had for a film course. The idea had been rattling around in my head for some time, as my background is planted firmly in the field of critical literacy, both in print and digital forms. I knew that I did not want to create a class on film appreciation, as that topic is already expertly covered by colleagues across campus. Instead, I wanted this project to focus on the art of *filmmaking*—akin to the composition process that students undergo when planning to write a paper. Planning, drafting, scripting, revising, editing—the entire process. I also knew, from teaching courses on instructional technology for teachers, that I wanted the films to highlight something meaningful to their creators (and ultimately, their viewers). Therefore, the match working with the Community Engagement Fellows was perfect. My students would make short films highlighting the work of the non-profit of their choice, and in turn, the non-profits would have free web content that could be posted on their social media sites.

During fall quarter, I learned more about the wide variety of socially conscious, non-profit organizations that operate in Bellingham. Some I was familiar with, but many I was not. This was where the benefit of participating in the CFF became immediately apparent. As I learned more about the organizations that fellow community members engaged with, the list of organizations to present to my filmmaking students grew. By the time winter quarter started, I had a robust list of organizations for my students to choose from.

As the year progressed, it became increasingly clear to me that the work I engage in through the Woodring College of Education cannot be separated from the work of non-profits in our community—all with the goal of making our communities stronger places for everyone to enjoy productive, meaningful lives. I had certainly known this prior to joining the CFF, but having the opportunity to make personal connections with community members (as well as with faculty from across campus) reinforced this idea. As a result of participating in my CFF cohort, I now know who I can turn to in Journalism, Communications, English and the wider community for advice, and for future collaborations.

As I sat in the Pickford Film Center watching my students’ films at our end-of-quarter screening event, I couldn’t help but think of that word: *collaboration*. The longer I’m at WWU (going on 17 years), the more I’m inclined to emerge from my isolated office in Miller Hall and collaborate with others. My dream would be for local non-profits to seek my students out for future filmmaking collaborations, either as part of future Filmmaking for Social Change classes, or hire them professionally. You can view my students’ films here:

<https://vimeo.com/channels/filmmakingsocialchange>