



SERVICE LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

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CREATING FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE BY BRIDGING SERVICE-LEARNING WITH FACULTY-LED CENTERS

ABSTRACT:

Faculty-led centers are uniquely positioned to connect with service learning to address modern fundamental changes in how communities form, change, and represent themselves. Specifically, our discussion will center on how such practices can connect classroom theory to real-world contexts, helping participants navigate diversity and systemic complexities, while promoting civic responsibility. Four directors of two different UHD centers share lessons from different programs they have run, including the Election Public Deliberation and Historias del Centro. Technological practices, implications, and future considerations will be discussed.

THEMATIC FOCUS:

Shifting Foundations: Modern fundamental changes in how communities form, change, and represent themselves.

BIO:

Windy Lawrence, Ph.D., a Professor at the University of Houston – Downtown since 2002, is the founding director of the Center for Public Deliberation (CPD), established in 2008. She teaches communication courses like Facilitating Public Deliberation and serves as Vice President of the National Issues Forum Network. Her service learning initiatives provide “high impact” experiences, engaging 2,800 students over the last five years in civic agency development. In the last 10 years, she has organized 130 interactive forums, fostering deliberation and partnerships with 50 community organizations. Recognized with the 2020 UHD Community Service Faculty Award and the 2023 Distinguished Faculty Award in Teaching, Research, and Service, her work advances deliberative democracy.

Houston, TX | March 26-28, 2026