



SERVICE LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

ASHLEY COCHRANE & RILIE LEDFORD | BEREA COLLEGE

LEARNING THROUGH LEADING: STRATEGIES FOR ELEVATING STUDENT LEADERSHIP INTO CURRICULAR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

ABSTRACT:

CELTS staff and student leaders will share how student leadership is incorporated into curricular community engagement programming at Berea College. We'll explore how student perspectives influence support for service-learning courses and the Community and Civic Engagement minor. We'll illustrate how a team-based approach to student leadership development supports this work and explore how this model can be adapted at other institutions. Participants will share examples and identify opportunities for student leadership at their own institutions.

THEMATIC FOCUS: LEARNING THE CHORDS | PLAYING AROUND | SURPRISING COLLABORATIONS

BIO(S):

ASHLEY COCHRANE

Ashley Cochrane has worked at the Center for Excellence in Learning through Service (CELTS) at Berea College, in Berea, Kentucky for 21 years. As service-learning coordinator, she helped to establish core components of the program; she's been the Director of CELTS for 13 years. CELTS is the hub for academic and co-curricular student community engagement, and a team-based student leadership development model is at the heart of its programming. Ashley earned her BA in Sociology and Religious Studies from the University of Virginia and her MS in Education (Counseling Psychology) from the University of Kentucky. Her previous professional experiences include work as a community organizer and mental health counselor in rural Appalachian communities.

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RILIE LEDFORD

With a passion for public service and community engagement, Rilie Ledford is a Bonner Scholar, a Volunteer Firefighter in Berea, KY, and the Student Director of Service-Learning in CELTS (Center for Excellence in Learning through Service) at Berea College. Dedicated to fostering civic responsibility, she is a member of Berea's Voter Empowerment and Political Awareness Coalition (VEPAC) and organized impactful events like the Empty Bowls fundraiser to support local food banks. Rilie is a senior Political Science major with minors in Law, Ethics, and Society, and Community and Civic Engagement and is expected to graduate in May 2025.