



PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP COURSE (MGMT 208)

University of Canterbury

In collaboration with the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Christchurch City Council, and Selwyn and Waimakariri District Councils, we've designed a course that enables groups of students to work with community groups and leaders to develop projects that benefit these organisations and their communities.

The course's initial purpose was to enrich student learning but it is now about the mutual benefit of both students and community groups. Students are assessed based on how they meet community need, and the student/community relationship is placed at the centre of each project - there is a focus on the need for people and communities to connect and show that others care.

We get students to see leadership differently and help them understand the kind of leadership required to make a positive difference. We focus on experiential learning, because the best way to teach leadership is to expose students to it - and the collaborative, holistic approach of communities indeed demonstrates real leadership.

Our 2014 students worked on a wide range of projects with an even wider range of groups. Students advised on and wrote reports, plans and strategies for St Albans Residents' Association, arts networking group In The Loop, community garden trust Just Dirt, sustainability group Soil and Health Canterbury, Citizens Advice Bureau, Canterbury Family Violence Collaboration, youth organisation White Elephant Trust, Riccarton West Neighbourhood Safety Panel and more. They organised projects to transform land and spaces for Sumner Coast Care and Heathcote Village Project. They even looked at ways to increase and diversify the memberships of Bowls Canterbury, Christchurch Bridge Club and the Hornby Community Centre. Whether in-progress or complete, their work has made a significant difference to their greater Christchurch communities.

Our students have also benefited greatly, learning from the wisdom and experience of the community groups. As a result of their involvement, they have developed greater enthusiasm for volunteering and involvement in the community independent of course work, and have gained valuable and practical skills through positive experiences.

Our future goals include expanding the course from a single semester to a year, offering it to students across the University rather than from just Management, creating a University portal through which the community can access support and seeing the course incorporated into communities' long-term planning.

<http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/courseinfo/GetCourseDetails.aspx?course=MGMT208>

