Well-developed community partnerships are necessary for creating opportunities and positive change within our local communities. Rutgers Civic Engagement and Service Education Program (CESEP) rests on a commitment to meaningful, long-term service allegiance to the partners and communities with which we work. These relationships are intended to be intentional and reciprocal. This dedication to our partners promotes more significant change, resource development, and capacity building in our communities—as well as allows for personal and professional growth for each volunteer, community partner, and student participant.

In order to build capacity of professional training opportunities for community organizations through skill-based client-volunteer-service projects, the CESEP program under the leadership of Professor Maurice Elias will expand its service efforts with a new pilot project called, Advancing Community Development (ACD). In recent discussions about the need for sustainable service projects that have a long term impact on their organizations the CESEP Community Council members requested that we develop a mechanism so they have access to professional 'trainers' that will help them address specific community needs.

ACD is a pilot initiative that will identify skill-based client-volunteer service project teams composed of J&J employees and Rutgers students to serve community-identified needs in locally based organizations. Rutgers students would be required to enroll in a 3-credit internship seminar class. CESEP would monitor the students involved and coordinate all of the logistics. The three-credit internship seminar will be taught by Rutgers faculty with J&J volunteer employees as guests speakers along with community-based leaders. The seminar class will focus on community engagement, community-based research, and social responsibility.

CESEP would solicit proposals from community-based organizations for projects and would vet them with representatives from J&J. Successful proposals would be ones where J&J employee expertise would match the identified community need. CESEP would then recruit students to serve on the project teams paired with J&J employees. Skill-based volunteer project teams would assist organizations in a myriad of projects that allow them to improve upon the delivery of services to their constituencies or help solve a problem or issue. Projects may include among others, proposal writing, strategic planning, technology application, financial planning, human resources development, marketing, and board development, etc.