



Houston Action Research Team

The Houston Action Research Team (HART) is a semester-long program composed of small, interdisciplinary teams of Rice undergraduate students working with a community partner to address a social issue. HART is an Act level program within the CCL scaffolded approach of Learn-Act-Create Change. The program is based in community engaged learning and civic professionalism, which allows for academic preparation and integration and professional, personal, and civic development. Through a social justice lens, community partners propose a project that the student team will work on collaboratively with the community partner, an assigned faculty advisor, a graduate student advisor, and CCL staff for a project that is grounded in engaged scholarship and ethical engagement. As part of the co-educational model of the CCL, students will have the opportunity to learn and engage with a community partner directly throughout the project development, research, and presentation.

Civic Research is at the core of the program and is one of five civic practices highlighted within the Center for Civic Leadership. Civic research is participating in inquiry-based processes that incorporate methodology and theory for a rigorous study to understand and influence social issues. Civic research falls within the realm of engaged scholarship wherein both students and community partners are knowledge producers and co-creators. Rather than the traditional approach of scholarship that stems from the university outwards, engaged scholarship allows all stakeholders to have a mutually beneficial approach to working with one another.

Civic Professionalism is a framework that helps students understand their professional identity in relation to the public responsibility they have and the social good of their work. Regardless of the sector of work, civic professionalism allows students to build transferable skills while understanding the ethical implications of their work in society. Throughout the HART program, students will have an opportunity to develop a civic professional understanding and skills.

Program Framework

Through an intentionally developed program, students can learn and grow with one another through their projects, the program, and with the support of the graduate student advisor, CCL staff, faculty advisor, and community partner. The program is broken up into weekly meetings, project meetings, and program-wide meetings. These all allow students to develop into civic professionals and ethical researchers within the community.

- **All Hands Meetings** are weekly meetings with the students, graduate advisor, CCL staff, faculty advisor, and community partner. During these meetings, the research plan and development will take priority while providing a space for engaging in critical reflection and feedback to ensure the success of the project. These meetings are held sometime during M-F 9-5
- **Team Meetings** are weekly meetings led by the graduate student advisor to further develop the project, provide mentorship and overall team development and guidance. Workshopping and brainstorming during the team meetings will allow for stronger and more directed All Hands Meetings. These meetings are held sometime during M-F 9-5
- **Cohort Meetings** are meetings throughout the semester to help situate the context of the work each team is doing with respect to civic practices, engaged scholarship, and civic professionalism. With a larger focus on supporting student development as civic professionals, these meetings will begin as CCL staff and graduate student run but will translate to open spaces of collaboration between the teams in the latter half of the semester. These meetings are typically held sometime between M-F 9-6:30pm

Projects are based in a social justice lens of supporting a community partner in work that is timely, relevant, and of importance to their organization. Each semester, HART offers 2-4 projects that students may apply to based on fit and interest. The community partner perspective is what makes these projects unique from other opportunities on or off campus, as there is an intentional approach to engagement where the community partner plays a large role in supporting the student team in their work throughout the project timeline.

For the Spring 2024 semester, there are two projects:

Institutional Advocacy for the SA Labor Commission

Improving the Equity and Resilience of Houston’s Road Infrastructure to Flooding with Better Engineering and Policy |

Commented [1]: add titles here

Timeline

- December 2023- applications released
- Sunday, January 7th at 11:59 pm- application due
- January 15th and 16th - interviews, on Zoom
- Week of January 22nd - program begins
- January
 - introduction to program, beginning of meetings, and community building; research brainstorming and development; building of literature review and research questions; understanding the writing process; and sharing research agenda with community partner
- February:
 - work on research agenda, timeline, and communication; research implementation and data analysis begins; writing of report begins; draft shared and progress updates
- March:
 - continuation and finalizing of research, writing, and presentation
 - final reports and presentation to community partner and key stakeholders
- April: CCL Showcase

Application Requirements

HART Application
Updated Resume
Unofficial Transcript

Financial Support

As part of the program, undergraduate students will commit to approximately 10 hours of work each week for a total of 150 hours throughout the experience. Students will receive compensation of \$10/hr. If a student is work-study eligible, the HART program can be used for that eligibility. It is important that students fill out all the necessary material as soon as they are accepted into the program to ensure the proper delivery of payments. More information will be shared after acceptance into the program.

HART Application Prompts

1. In reviewing the HART project description and in considering the opportunity to work with both a faculty and community organization(s), what interests you about this civic research project, its stakeholders, and potential community impact? (3750 character limit)
2. There are several areas within any given HART project where your skills will be built upon or developed. In thinking about what strengths you will be bringing, choose three of the following that you feel most confident about (note: no need to rank them)
 - My understanding of civic practices including but not limited to: advocacy and activism, civic research, service, policy and governance
 - My confidence in working successfully with other Rice students toward a common goal through a group project
 - My ability to develop a formal written report (e.g., academic papers and/or technical reports)
 - My understanding of data analysis and interpretation (e.g., statistic knowledge, statistical software)
 - My ability to visualize data that is understandable to a general audience (e.g. graphs, charts, information graphics)
 - My confidence in interacting with the stakeholders involved with the project (e.g., conducting interviews, communicating with multiple stakeholders, establishing professional relationships)
3. Explain your three strengths and reflect upon areas of growth you'd like to develop with this opportunity (1000 character limit).
4. Given your reflections from above, synthesize your overall goals for the project as well as the program (they can be academic, professional, personal and/or civic goals) (1500 character limit).