



Guidelines to help students improve their engagement, highlight their service, and develop a professional presence on LinkedIn.

## Introduction

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As the We CU Summer 2020 Community Engaged Scholars Program is coming to a bittersweet end, we want students to carry on the valuable skills and knowledge that were gained from the program for future endeavors. Whether that be to expand your job prospects, seek more volunteer projects, or discover your own passions and niche, one thing is for certain —students' involvement in the program can be a stepping stone to more opportunities ahead. We recognize that LinkedIn is a platform that can lead students to such opportunities. Therefore, we want to provide you practical tips to incorporate the program and develop your professional presence on LinkedIn.

## Highlight your experience

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Reflect over the past 10 weeks to draw some ideas to add to your LinkedIn profile's *volunteer* section. Think about the projects you have worked on — what did you learn from these projects and what did you do for these projects? What population or causes did the project serve? How did you meet the needs of the community?

This can be easily completed by using your impact reflections from GivePulse! To access your reflections, log in to your GivePulse account and then, on the top of the page, click on **My Activity > Impacts** to view all your reflections.

Pull things from your reflections and experience that you think recruiters on LinkedIn would be

impressed to see and, most importantly, you would be proud to speak about when asked about your time with the program. Here are some tips on how to translate what you did onto the *volunteer* section of your profile:

### 1. Keep it short and simple with bullet points.

Often, recruiters will only glance and skim through LinkedIn profiles. Keep job and volunteer descriptions short and simple (but also impactful) and use bullet points to convey your experiences. Try to use no more than five to six bullet points per job/volunteer.

### 2. Start bullet points with action verbs.

The first word on the bullet point stands out the most; therefore, it is important to make your point with powerful action verbs. Here are some action verbs to use if you want to convey certain key attributes:

- Ability to lead and work with a team: *coordinated, mentored, oversaw, and organized, trained, and supervised.*
- Ability to be active: *created, developed, implemented, and spearheaded.*
- Ability to create valuable change or improve something: *boosted, consolidated, expanded, reduced, streamlined, strengthened, and maximized.*
- Ability to support people: *advised, advocated, educated, informed, and resolved.*

- Ability to research and analyze information: *analyzed, calculated, evaluated, forecasted, measured, surveyed, and tracked.*
- Ability to write and communicate: *composed, corresponded, documented, edited, and published.*
- Ability to achieve: *awarded, completed, demonstrated, and succeeded.*<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Quantify your experience with numbers.

Using statistics and numbers can make your experiences sound impactful and real. For example, saying “I volunteered for several local organizations through the program” does not convey active and impactful participation compared to saying “I committed over 40 hours volunteering for local organizations in Champaign county over a 10-week period.”

You can also quantify progress and achievements such as raising money for charity (“raised over \$500 for the American Red Cross’ Emergency Preparedness initiative”) or providing essential health resources (“sewed and donated over 50 masks for those in need of respiratory protection”).

You can also translate qualitative experiences indirectly into numbers. For example, say you want to show that you were able to engage and interact closely with the community. You can show engagement by providing measurements of engagement, such as “increasing social media traffic by 35% by creating and publishing informational graphics” and “surveying over 150 community members, achieving a 65% response rate in Champaign County.”

### 4. Grab attention with keywords.

Because bullet point descriptions should be kept short and simple, every word counts. Therefore, in addition to action verbs, use keywords throughout your description to catch the attention of recruiters. LinkedIn algorithms

will also recognize keywords and tailor your profile to connect you to similar jobs or people of interest.

For example, including keywords like ‘GivePulse’ or ‘Community-Based Service’ show that you are interested in volunteering and can use online platforms to seek volunteer work.

Including names of the organizations you worked with like the ‘YMCA’ or ‘Multicultural Center Inc.’ can connect you to future opportunities with these organizations or to similar organizations.

Including the population or causes you were a part of in the program like ‘women,’ ‘children,’ and ‘underserved communities’ can connect you to organizations that address issues related to these populations or causes.

### Showcase your skills

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The *Skills & Endorsements* section on your LinkedIn profile is a space to highlight your skillsets and areas of proficiency that are relevant to your future career goals. It is not only a way for job recruiters to get a quick glance of what skills you can offer but also allows for references to vouch for your skills through endorsements. Here are two guiding questions to think about when crafting the *Skills & Endorsements* section of your profile:

#### 1. What were some of the skills you used during the program?

Think about the new skills you learned or skills you already have but were able to improve either by working directly on a project with a local organization or attending a training listed on the We CU weekly newsletters. Identify which skills you were able to learn and use. List the skills you would like recruiters on LinkedIn to know that you are competent in and would like to use those same skills in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> “Moving Beyond Generic Resume Terms: Powerful Action Verbs for a Memorable Resume” <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/moving-beyond-generic-resume-terms-powerful-action-jessica-h/>

For example, did you create social media graphics or design a website for a project? You may want to put down *media planning, social media design, web design*, or the tool used like *Adobe Illustrator*.

Did you have to research information and write a newsletter for a project? You may want to put down *Research, data presentation, storytelling, newsletters, writing, or critical thinking*.

Did you have to use specific tools and technology for a project? You may want to list the tools and technology used such as *Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, VBA, and Squarespace*.

## **2. Who did you work closely with that saw you put your skills into practice?**

Think about who you worked closely with on projects that saw you put your skills to the test — it could be the local organization's project program coordinator or a fellow scholar on the same project as you. Reach out to them, connect with them on LinkedIn, and mutually endorse each other on the relevant skills you saw be demonstrated when you worked with each other on the project. Endorsements show recruiters on LinkedIn you have references to vouch for those skills and that you have indeed used those skills.

### **Feature your accomplishments**

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After participating in an informational session and training, achieving 40 hours of service over the 10-week program, and completing a pre- and post-experience survey, you will be recognized and given a certificate of completion for your achievements at the end of the program.

The completion of the program can be listed under the *Accomplishments/Honors & Awards* section on LinkedIn, which is different from listing the program on the *volunteer* section. The description on the *volunteer* section should emphasize the vocational aspects of the program, pointing towards the skills and tools

used to complete a project or task. The description on the *Accomplishments/Honors & Awards* section should indicate your ability to meet the requirements and fulfil the vision of the program. Through the program, you were able to learn from community partners' expertise and apply your own studies and knowledge to make a transformative impact on the local community. This sets your participation in the program apart from other volunteer opportunities as a recognized community-engaged learning experience.

We also encourage you to feature your certificate of completion on LinkedIn by posting an update on your page with the certificate attached. The certification is an indication that you have not only met all the requisites of the program but was able to demonstrate values of service learning and community engagement during these unprecedented times resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Expand your network**

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Our university is committed to building a strong and sustainable relationship with the community. We CU facilitates connection between the university and local community by coordinating opportunities for engagement and meeting the needs of the community. Your participation in the program plays a valuable role in maintaining and strengthening that relationship. In addition, we hope that your experience in the program leaves you with a powerful story to tell.

We invite you to join the We CU LinkedIn group and tell your story. The group is intended for current and past scholars to share their projects, connect with each other, stay up to date on We CU activities, and get informed about new opportunities in the future.

Tell your story by participating in the We CU LinkedIn group, showcasing the skills you enabled in your *Volunteer* section, posting your certificate of completion on your profile, and

featuring your accomplishments in the *Honors & Awards* section. Together, these actions build your visibility and networks while helping We CU gain recognition as a prestigious honor and program.

We welcome you to join the We CU group at <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12448460/>