Concept Brief: External Partners 101 – 2026 Faculty Summer Institute Project

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Objective

Prepare students for workforce-aligned success by embedding meaningful external partner engagements into existing UVU courses. This FSI track supports faculty in designing and implementing partnership engagements with industry, nonprofit, community, or public-sector organizations that enhance student learning, skill development, and real-world experience.

Note: To align with FSI's emphasis on faculty-driven, project-based design, foundational tools, best practices when communicating, and examples will be provided as resources supporting faculty exploration and development. Faculty will independently create an external-partner project that integrates into a Fall 2026 course.

Project Description

Qualifying projects will embed a sustained, course-aligned interaction between students and an external partner. Partnerships may include client-based challenges, expert collaborations, community engagement events, a external workshop series, applied problem-solving experiences, or other similar project engagements aligned with course learning outcomes.

Note: This track will function as a **guided project-development lab**, rather than an instructional workshop. Faculty will determine the type, structure, and depth of the partnership that best enhances their students' learning. Project working time will provide examples, templates, and partner-search support, enabling faculty to customize their project based on disciplinary needs and workforce competencies they wish to highlight.

Deliverables May Include:
- A **revised syllabus** incorporating a sustained partnership engagement (recommended minimum of 10 hours of student partner interaction)
- A **Partnership Implementation Plan** aligned with CLOs, identifying student tasks, partner roles, timelines or feedback loops
- A draft **assignment, project, or module** within a course that operationalizes partner interaction
- Documentation of outreach to **3–4 potential partners** and rationale for final selection
- A **student-facing explanation** of the project and expected outcomes
- A **short faculty reflection** summarizing design decisions and next steps
- A **Fall 2026 launch roadmap** outlining what is ready now and what remains in progress

Competitive Projects Will:

- Include plans for **at least 10 hours** of meaningful student–partner engagement

- Strengthen discipline-specific knowledge and workplace-ready skills
- Incorporate one or more structured **feedback loops** with the partner
- Demonstrate early outreach or confirmed partner interest
- Clearly align activities and/or deliverables with course learning outcomes
- Provide opportunities for student **reflection, iteration, and professional communication**
- Show faculty autonomy and creativity in designing the partnership format

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Examples:

- **Business / Entrepreneurship:** A local startup hosts a problem-framing workshop with a class. Students analyze the issue and produce a short pitch proposal with solutions, competing against one another, receiving feedback from the founder at midpoint and final presentations for the best solution.
- **Engineering / Technology:** An industry partner provides a technical challenge and leads two workshop sessions. Students develop a prototype or process improvement concept and submit a technical report reviewed by the partner's engineering team.
- **Communication / Marketing:** A company presents a series of guest lectures on visual storytelling and digital strategy. Students complete short applied assignments—such as content drafts or messaging frameworks—and deliver a final piece for partner feedback.
- **Public & Community Health:** A community organization presents a health-access challenge through a kickoff event. Students conduct a systems-mapping activity, identify intervention points, and share recommendations for future events with the partner during a feedback session.
- **Humanities / Arts:** A museum facilitates a three-part workshop on narrative interpretation. Students develop a mini-exhibit concept or interpretive piece and present on it after refinement based on iterative feedback from museum professionals.
- **Behavioral Science / Social Work:** A nonprofit partner engages the class in a sustained consultation on improving client services. Students complete a needs-assessment report and participate in a reflective final discussion with the partner.
- **Education / Teacher Preparation:** A K–12 partner presents a curriculum challenge. Students design a mini-unit or instructional tool and submit a polished version for classroom use.

Next Steps

1. Confirm stipend funding from Wendy's office.
2. Approve concept to proceed with planning.
3. Identify a topic "expert" to serve as a **resource facilitator**, not an instructor, to ensure the project remains faculty-driven.
4. Draft the participant call and workshop outline for review by mid-January.