



Title	 Fundly Connect
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Platform	Cloud-based, internet-based
Minimum System Requirements	Current web browser, internet connection
Target Languages	English
Target Audience	University-based service learning administrations; Non-profit organizations
Price	Free for students and non-profit organizations; Variable rates for universities based on service needs
Reviewers	<i>Kelly H. Koutnik & John I. Lontas</i> University of South Florida

Fundly Connect is a cloud-based software which provides universities with a platform for maintaining and creating connections with non-profit organizations, simplifying the service-learning process for their students, and establishing a service-learning record-keeping system fit for the digital age. It initially began with the efforts of Merith Weisman, Director of Community Engagement and Strategic Initiatives at Sonoma State University. Merith wanted to automate and organize the process of establishing and monitoring service-learning opportunities at the university level, which for so many years consisted of logbooks and paper trails. The goal was to create a platform wherein digital connections could be made for service-learning opportunities and collaborations between universities and non-profit organizations. Over the course of a few years and through collaborations with University of California San Francisco (UCSF), San Francisco State University (SFSU), and University of San Francisco, a platform was created which would later serve the needs of universities in the immediate region. In 2015, beta testing was conducted for an updated version of the platform, now called *Fundly Connect*, with SFSU. Following this successful phase and integrating continued feedback and contributions from several universities in the area, the first rollout of the current program in select universities came in Fall 2017. The software is currently going live nationally and is available to serve the needs of university service-learning programs and non-profit organizations countrywide.

Presently, most universities require service-learning activities for their students and these can be difficult to track and organize at the rate and variety of which they are carried out. Often, students will be taking several courses and have different requirements for each course. Universities are required to report service-learning activities in a specific manner and are tasked

with maintaining records of these activities, which can be a complicated and monumental chore. Alternatively, non-profit organizations often have difficulty finding individuals who are willing and able to help, individuals who regularly serve as a lifeline to such organizations. *Fundly Connect* provides a solution to each of these concerns, in that the software eases the burden for university administrators, students, and non-profit organizations alike.

Toward this end, the software features a highly customizable and cohesive interface, allowing each university to adapt the software to fit their needs. For example, universities now have the ability to create their own custom page and URL for ease of access and cohesiveness with current programs and activities already established. In addition, university administrators have the option to set parameters for students regarding the logistics of hours required for individual courses, areas of interest offered, current community partnerships, and more. Faculty can obtain individual login credentials and manage class activity as they see fit. They also now have the option to transfer monitoring of their assigned students' activity to the university-appointed service-learning administrator

REGISTER AS DIRECTORY

Student Faculty/Staff Organization Team

WELCOME! FIND AN OPPORTUNITY OUR PARTNERS ABOUT US HELP CALENDAR

Active Opportunities : 67 Number of Students : 148 Hours Volunteered : 622

Search Opportunities

Keyword
Enter your address

SEARCH **ADVANCED SEARCH**

ULink

Welcome to SF State's official community engagement portal!

Community/Industry Partners: Why Partner with us?

- Whether you are a non-profit organization, government or public institution, large corporate organization or a small business, and whether you require a short term solution or have a long term project in mind, you can draw on the

No Record(s) Found

Conversely, students can create individual profiles housing all their service-learning activities. Each profile acts as a résumé of their experience, while also organizing the requirements for each course and concurrently offering search features to find activities of interest.

The Fundly Connect platform also benefits non-profit organizations. Specifically, non-profit organizations can gain regional visibility by creating an available opportunity through the software and, with a few simple clicks, sharing that information with multiple universities in their area. Organizations are also able to set tailored parameters concerning prerequisites or background screenings required, whether the opportunity is paid or unpaid, and creating searchable tags by topic or area of interest as needed.

It bears repeating that all of the features *Fundly Connect* offers are customizable to meet the needs of universities, large or small, and allow administrators to effectively manage and document their service-learning program activities. As previously mentioned, the software is cloud-based and is available to users with updated browsers and a robust internet connection. Moreover, *Fundly Connect* is also mobile responsive and can be used on tablets and other smart devices. Accessing the portal is simple, only requiring users to create a username and password and then obtain approval from their university administrator. While approval requirements can vary based on university needs, they are set in place to ensure both safety and compliance with regulations. Should concerns arise, an extensive FAQ section is available to users as well as collaborations with appointed university administrators who can walk students and organizations through the process of portal use and navigation. For ease of access, quarterly updates to the software are maintained based on user feedback and feature requests. The cost of university administrative licenses for this software varies, as it is based on organization-specific needs and

characteristics, including size and number of community partners. The software is offered free of charge to students and non-profit organizations.

In sum, *Fundly Connect* provides a reasonable entry point to universities looking for an automated and efficient system of tracking, managing, and documenting service-learning activities. Its intuitive interface offers the opportunity for customization to meet diverse customer needs, whether those of a student, a non-profit organization, or a university administrator. This software, now available to universities across the nation, is by all accounts an innovative and useful tool certain to strengthen service-learning opportunities. Most assuredly, service-learning opportunities are vital to the students and the organizations they serve. *Fundly Connect* bridges this gap with a digital footprint too important to ignore.

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