As a metropolitan, public, Research University with a land-grant mission, The University of Missouri – St. Louis is committed to teaching, research and community engagement. Though UMSL is a relatively young university, organized in 1963, it has made a concerted effort to establish itself, as Chancellor Tom George has emphasized, as “the University of Missouri IN and FOR St. Louis.” This is evidenced in the university’s recently updated Strategic Plan in which community engagement is prominently featured. Furthermore, UMSL has received the Community Engagement Classification from The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The Foundation created this classification to indicate a significant affirmation of the importance of community engagement in the agenda of higher education. UMSL continues to advance an institutional commitment to community engagement. The Des Lee Collaborative Vision is one of the key community engagement activities of the university.

The DLCV’s primary focus is to enrich the overall quality of life throughout the St. Louis area and beyond through a connection to institutions of higher learning. DLCV professors provide the vision and leadership to enhance, support, and strengthen the region for the benefit of all its citizens. Special emphasis is placed on increasing opportunities for under-served populations. DLCV professors are the embodiment of community engagement through the work that they do in partnership with community organizations and in connecting their area of expertise with the broader public. Traditional responsibilities of teaching and scholarship are balanced by this significant expectation. The engagement activities are different for each of the DLCV faculty members as they relate to their community partnerships and their individual interests and research.

While there is not one specific way that a professor should be engaged in the community, here are some examples of how some are integrating this with their scholarship:

- Offering Conferences, lectures, workshops, festivals and presentations that include or are geared toward non-academic audiences
- Implementing Service-learning activities in courses
- Developing and conducting Community-engaged research addressing community challenges and issues
- Creating and engaging in Pre-collegiate and youth development programs
- Leading Study abroad and travel study programs
- Directing Interdisciplinary Research, Teaching, and Community-Service Centers
- Providing Consultation and design of evaluation protocols for partner programs and projects
• Convening and connecting individuals and agencies, bridging information and resources to the broader community while strengthening the scholarly community
  o Bringing together people from various social-service, religious, educational, governmental, health care, etc. agencies operating in target area for networking and collaboration
  o Hosting town hall meetings for public input and engagement
  o Linking faculty, researchers and students at local colleges and community partnerships
  o Connecting students or recent graduates with community agency programs
• Being Media experts and spokespeople in their fields of study, speaking about their work to broad audiences in a variety of formats (online, newspaper, magazine, journal, radio, white paper, etc.)
• Providing K-12 teacher education and support
  o Mentoring educational administrators and educators
  o Developing and delivering Professional development (PD) programs and one-time workshops for teachers in local schools
  o Providing website development and support where teachers can obtain and contribute lesson plans and video vignettes and connect with other teachers worldwide
• Exhibition curating and consulting
• Serving on boards and committees in public and/or community organizations and activities

The preceding examples are not in any order of value, but merely a sampling of ways that Des Lee Collaborative Vision professors incorporate community engagement in their profession. For Des Lee, his “Collaborative Vision” began as a way for university students, staff and faculty to go beyond the traditional classroom activities to make a difference in the community. The results include shared resources and best practices, new and exciting research, professional development opportunities, and enriching experiences that open worlds of possibilities to thousands of citizens in our region and beyond.