



Faculty Service-Learning Handbook College of Southern Maryland



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Preface

Service-learning enhances the academic learning of college students. According to Eyler and Giles in *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* (1999), a majority of service-learning students report that they learn more and are motivated to work harder in service-learning classes than in regular classes. A majority report that a deeper understanding of subject matter, understanding the complexity of social issues, and being able to apply material they learn in class to real problems are among the important benefits of service-learning.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information and tools to help faculty incorporate service-learning within existing courses or create new service-learning courses. It also provides academic advisors, department chairs and others in the academic community with an introduction to service-learning so that they can support faculty efforts. This handbook explores conceptual questions about service-learning and offers practical suggestions for implementation. We look forward to exploring with you the many possibilities that service-learning can offer our students, the College, and the surrounding community.

Sincerely,

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The College of Southern Maryland Service-Learning Staff

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What is Service-Learning?



According to the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE):

Service-learning is a teaching method which combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Service-learning programs involve students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community.

Benefits of Service-Learning

Benefits of Service-Learning

At this point you may be wondering why you should offer service-learning. The benefits of service-learning extend from the student to the faculty member to the community agency.

Benefits to Faculty:

- Service-learning enriches and enlivens teaching.
- It changes your role from the expert on top to the expert on tap, and with that change you'll enjoy a new relationship with your students and a new understanding of how learning occurs.
- As you connect the community with the curriculum, you'll become more aware of current societal issues as they relate to your academic areas of interest.
- Faculty has the opportunity to identify new areas for research and publication, and thus increase opportunities for professional recognition and reward.

Benefits to Student:

- Service-learning enriches student learning of course material by moving them from the margin of the classroom experience to the center. It brings books to life and life to books.
- Students come to see the relevance and importance of academic work in their real life experience.
- It enhances students' self-esteem by allowing them to make a difference through their active and meaningful contribution to their communities.
- It broadens perspectives and enhances critical thinking skills. It improves interpersonal and human relations skills which are increasingly viewed as the most important skills in achieving success in professional and personal spheres.
- It provides guidance and experience for future career choice.

Benefits to the Community:

- Service-learning provides the community with substantial human resources to meet its educational, human, safety, and environmental needs. The talent, energy, and enthusiasm of our college students are applied to meet these ever increasing needs.
- Many students commit to a lifetime of volunteering after this experience, creating a democracy of participation.
- Service-learning creates a spirit of civic responsibility that replaces the current state of dependence on government programs and altruism by the experts. It results in a renewed sense of community and encourages participative democracy.
- Community agencies gain the opportunity to participate in an educational partnership.

What Service-Learning is not

There are many types of community involvement. However, it is important to note some vital distinctions between service-learning and these other forms of participation:

- **Volunteerism**, where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the primary intended beneficiary is clearly the service recipient.
- **Community Service**, where the primary focus is on the service being provided as well as the benefits the service activities have on the recipients.
- **Internships** that engage students in service activities primarily for the purpose of providing students with hands-on experiences that enhance their learning or understanding of issues relevant to a particular area of study.
- **Field Education** that provides students with co-curricular service opportunities that are related, but not fully integrated, with their formal academic studies.

Ten Principles of Good Practice

Howard (1993) identified ten principles of good practice concerning academic service-learning pedagogy. These focus on the academic course, the service experience, and new experiences for the faculty member. Please keep these practices in mind when incorporating service-learning.

The service-learning course should be rigorous and challenging.

1. Academic credit is for learning, not for service.
2. Do not compromise academic rigor.
3. Set learning goals for students.

The service experience should enhance student learning.

4. Establish criteria for the selection of service placements.
5. Provide educationally-sound mechanisms to harvest the service-learning.
6. Provide supports for students to learn how to harvest the service-learning.
7. Minimize the distinction between the student's service-learning role and the classroom learning role.

Teaching a service-learning course offers new opportunities for faculty.

8. Re-think the faculty instructional role.

Liability and Risk

Conducting service-learning activities in the community can involve risk. Risk management provides tools to identify areas of potential difficulty. When planning a course involving service-learning, faculty members should consider liability and risk management issues. It is CSM's policy that all students participating in service-learning must complete the Liability and Release Form prior to performing their service. New forms must be filled out each semester, regardless if a student has done service-learning in the past. Forms are filed in the Center for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning for a period of three years. This form will be filled out as part of the Service-Learning Online Orientation. At the end of the orientation, the student will have the opportunity to submit it online or print out a copy (necessary if the student is under 18 years old). Identifying risk in advance reduces concerns about liability that may undermine a program or project.

Integrating service-learning into the course syllabus

Service-learning Course Development Worksheet

To be truly effective, service-learning must be well planned and integrated into the course syllabus with a clear sense of how to structure the service component and why this service activity is being utilized in this course. The syllabus should define the nature of the service, introduce a service model for the course, and address the relevance of the activity to the course.

Goals of Service-learning

Enhance classroom learning-
Meet community-identified needs-
Foster civic responsibility/civic engagement-

Which of your course learning objectives could be related to service?

What do you want your students to gain from the experience?

Preparation

How will you prepare your students for the service-learning project (“reflection”)? Include examples of preparation assignments such as conducting research, interviews, program selection, policy examination, and/or project selection and design.

Action

What types of service activities would be appropriate for your learning objectives? Describe the service activities through which students will learn and/or apply the course objectives, skills, and/or behaviors. Which local agencies or schools address the community needs your students might work on? How many hours of service will students complete?

Reflection

Curricular Integration

Will service-learning be required or optional for students? What are your deadlines for confirming their site placements, reflective assignments, hours of service, and post-service evaluation?

Assessment

Credit should be given for demonstrated learning, not simply for putting in hours. Learning can be assessed via a series of academic assignments that help connect the service experience with your teaching/learning objectives. How will you evaluate/assess/grade the service-learning component (e.g. class participation, grades for each reflection assignment, grades for papers or projects, etc.)?

Civic Responsibility

How will you purposefully foster civic responsibility among your students?

Recognition

How will you recognize your students for their service?

Checklist

- Student empowerment
- Reciprocity/collaboration/partnership
- Preparation (context, research, design)
- Action (service derived from preparation and design)
- Reflection (writing, discussing, evaluating)
- Demonstration (presenting, advocating, performing)
- Celebration/recognition

Other things to consider

Are your reflection assignments ongoing? Did you help your students develop learning and service objectives? Are you helping students develop critical thinking skills? Are you helping prepare students to be more effective citizens in a democratic society? Are your service-learning assignments academically rigorous? Are students gaining an in-depth understanding of their community or the issues that their service projects address?

Reflection: Helping Students Make the Connection

Participating in a service-learning activity does not guarantee a beneficial learning experience. Service-learning can expose participants to new concepts, procedures, events, people, experiences, and places; but without processing the experience no learning will occur. Reflection is one of the most important tools necessary to ensuring a successful service-learning experience. It is the means through which a student can make sense of what they are seeing and doing and how it relates to their learning objectives. When considering the service-learning component of your syllabus it is important to think about what type of reflection activities will best help students make the connections and get the most out of their service-learning experience.

Sample Reflection Activities include:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| >Journals | >Reflective essays | >Directed writing |
| >Group discussion | >Directed readings | >Experiential research paper |
| >Video essay | >Email discussion groups | >Art focused projects |
| >Reflective papers | >Responses to course readings | >Electronic discussions |
| >Writing portfolios | >Videos | >Individual or group projects |
| >In-class presentations | >Small or large group discussion | >Responses to outside readings |

Sample Reflection Activities

15 to 60 Second Activities

1. Posed question: Gather group; obtain silence; ask a question.
2. Capturing: Each participant makes a face, sound, or movement capturing how they felt about their service.
3. Snapshot: Create a silent snapshot of service project. One person starts with a pose or action related to project while others join the snapshot.

1 to 5 Minute Activities

1. One to Three words: Each student uses one to three words to describe experience.
2. One Minute Cards: Each student responds to a question in writing (can do this on index cards).
3. Poetry/Writing Slam: take turns; each day somebody writes a short poem or sentence about the project, and then shares with the group.
4. Guided Journaling: Answer questions posed throughout semester. Include timeline for completion.

5 to 30 Minute Activities

1. Cartoon: Draw a cartoon that teaches something important regarding the service project.
2. Compose a letter to site supervisor offering suggestions for working with future students.
3. Read a piece of pertinent literature and have students respond and draw correlations to their service.
4. Letter to self: Prior to the project, have students write a letter to themselves about their personal and career goals regarding the project. Place in sealed envelope and return to students at end of semester for reflection.

30 Minute to 2 Hour Activities

1. Song, Poem, Collage, Sculpture, Written Story, Skit: Can use with groups or individually.
2. Have students write a press release, take pictures, contact media, or obtain media coverage of a project.
3. Create a Mind-Map of experience
4. Interview each other: Break into groups of two or three; report back to larger group.

Longer-Term Project or Team Experience Activity

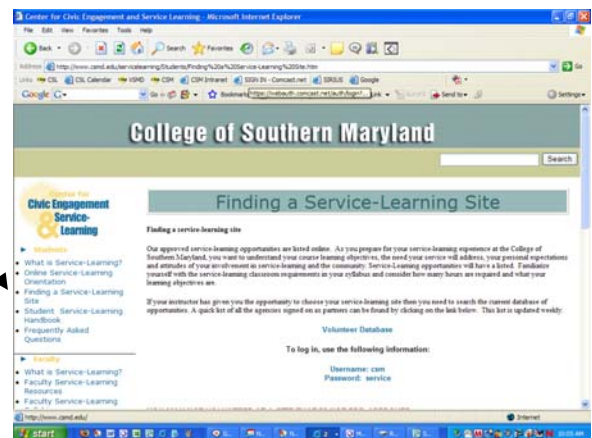
1. Create a video, newsletter, website, or article about the agency, specific project, or their experience.
2. Design a mural/display, portfolio, artwork, or video that chronicles experience

Faculty Service-Learning Checklist

College of Southern Maryland

At the beginning of the semester:

- Notify Sarah about incorporating service-learning into your course.
- Announce the service-learning component to your class and list the details in your syllabus.
- Explain the goal of service-learning and define how it is different from volunteerism or community service.
- Discuss the benefits of service-learning to the students, agency, and local community.
- Highlight or propose some sample service-learning opportunities for students.
- Direct students to complete Service-Learning Online Orientation and Liability and Release form at www.csmd.edu/servicelearning.
- Describe the steps for students to locate and secure a service-learning placement.
 - Service-learning opportunities are found by visiting www.csmd.edu/servicelearning and click on the link "Find a Service-Learning Site".
 - Student should contact the agency directly through the information provided on the website to set up the time and frequency of their service.
- Discuss the evaluation and reflection methods tied to the service-learning component, including an alternative assignment if relevant.
- Administer the Pre-CCAI survey (Faculty Fellows' classes only)
- Submit completed PPI form to Sarah Merranko (Faculty Fellows' classes only)
- Submit Faculty Fellows Stipend Agreement to Sarah Merranko (Faculty Fellows' classes only)



During the semester:

- Monitor students' progress in finding service-learning placements to ensure on time completion.
- Conduct periodic assignments or reflection activities to connect service back to the learning objectives.

At the end of the semester:

- Administer the post-CCAI survey (Faculty Fellow's classes only. If you would like, Sarah Merranko can come to explain and administer the post survey to your students).
- Have students complete the Curricular Service-Learning Survey. Return the completed forms to the Center for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning in LR 205.

***If you have any questions,
please call 301-934-2251 x7367
or come by the office located in the LR205.***

Frequently Asked Questions



1. Is this another feel-good excuse to water down academic standards?

This is an important and legitimate concern for all who are concerned with quality higher education, and it is the focus of much past and current research on service-learning. If applied properly, this pedagogy is actually more rigorous than the traditional teaching strategies. Students are not only required to master the standard text and lecture material, but they must also integrate their service experience into that context. This is a high level skill requiring effective reflection techniques designed to accomplish academic as well as effective outcomes. It is important to emphasize that incorporating service-learning does not change what we teach, but how we teach it. With this change comes a new set of challenges for both the student and the teacher.

2. Will I be able to apply this strategy successfully?

Trying anything new is a risk, and it challenges our competencies. Most practitioners report a steep learning curve with confidence developing fairly rapidly once the strategy is allowed to work. Reading materials in this handbook, attending a few workshops and seminars, conversing with other service-learning faculty, and consulting with the Service-Learning Coordinator, will help you become more comfortable with using service-learning as an integral part of your course.

3. How can I fit something new into an already cramped curriculum?

Service-learning is not an add-on to your current course requirements. It does not change or add to what we teach; it only changes how we teach it. A part of the traditional classroom content activity is replaced with action and meaningful involvement of students in experiential learning.

4. What is the average number of hours recommended for service-learning?

The national average number of service-learning hours for a course is 20. At CSM, faculty use a range of 6-40 hours in their classes, depending on their learning objectives and how integrated the service-learning is into their curriculum.

5. Most of our students are working in addition to their school attendance. How can we expect them to fit Service-learning into their already busy schedule?

Surprisingly, many students are willing and able to do service-learning. Because of the variety and volume of our placement sites, there are opportunities and needs for students 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As faculty and staff, we must remain flexible in our hour requirements, recognizing the demands placed on our students.

6. What if something happens to my students or their actions result in damages to someone else?

All service-learning students should be fully informed about their placement and knowingly consent to undertaking any risks associated with their placement by reading and completing turning in a completed Liability and Release form. In most cases, the organization which provides the service-learning experience will be responsible for the acts of the students working with them and will assume responsibility for the student.

7. What is the difference between CSM Service-Learning and Volunteer Southern Maryland?

Volunteer Southern Maryland (VSMD) is community resource housed at the College of Southern Maryland that promotes volunteerism and sponsors various service events, drives, and activities for the greater community. VSMD's services are targeted at all potential volunteers in the tri-county area, as well as all non-profit agencies that are in need of volunteers. CSM's service-learning program uses the VSMD website database for their service-learning sites, but is separate from Volunteer Southern Maryland.

8. Can a student perform service-learning at an agency not currently listed on the database?
No. An agency must first sign up on the database and post their service-learning opportunities. An agency can sign up at any time to become a service-learning partner. To do so, the agency contact can reference the community partner sign up guide at the www.csmd.edu/servicelearning website on the left hand side.

9. Does a student have to perform service-learning at a non-profit agency? Can they volunteer at a local business?
Service-Learning is a teaching methodology that includes service with a non-profit agency in the community. There are other opportunities such as co-ops, internships, and work experience with businesses that can be arranged through the Career Services office on campus, but are not part of service-learning.

10. If a student is having trouble with the Service-Learning Online Orientation, who should he/she contact?
Please contact the Center for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning in LR 205 at 301-934-2251 x7367 for additional help.

11. If a student is under the age of 18, can they sign their own Liability and Release form?
Any student under the age of 18 must have their parent or guardian sign the form on their behalf. At the end of the Service-Learning Online Orientation, the student should print out the liability and release form to have their parent sign it. The hard copy should submit the hard copy to the Center for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning office in LR 205 prior to their service-learning.



Recommended Service-Learning Websites

- Academic Exchange Quarterly
rapidintellect.com/AEQweb/index.htm
- American Association of Community Colleges Service-Learning
www.aacc.nche.edu/servicelearning
- The Big Dummy's Guide to Service-Learning
www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/ideas.html
- Campus Community Partnerships for Health
www.futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph.html
- Campus Compact
www.compact.org
- Campus Compact Reader
www.compact.org/reader
- Community Works Journal
www.vermontcommunityworks.org/cwpublications/journal/cwjournal.html
- Idealist on Campus
www.idealists.org/ioc/
- Journal of Higher Education Outreach & Engagement:
www.uga.edu/~jps
- Learn and Serve
www.learnandserve.org
- Learn, Serve, & Surf
www.edb.utexas.edu/servicelearning/index.html
- Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning:
www.umich.edu/~mjcs/
- Minnesota Campus Compact
www.mncampuscompact.org
- National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
www.servicelearning.org
- National Society for Experiential Education:
www.nsee.org
- New England Resource Center for Higher Education:
www.nerche.org

The Center for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning also hosts a collection of books, articles, and resources on service-learning and reflection. Please stop by our office to browse or borrow parts of our collection.