

# An Overview of Service-Learning

May 1, 2003

# Presentation Agenda

- What is Service-Learning?
  - History
  - Distinguishing elements
  - Examples
- Overview of Syllabi
- Models in Higher Ed

# History

- **1980's:** National service efforts were launched at the grassroots level, including the Campus Outreach Opportunity League and Campus Compact, which help mobilize service and service-learning programs in higher education.
- **1990- 1994: The National & Community Service Act:** Congress passed the National and Community Service Act of 1990. The legislation authorizes grants to schools to support service-learning and demonstration grants for national service programs to youth corps, nonprofits, and colleges and universities.

# What is Service-Learning?

It is a teaching method whereby students learn and develop through active participation in organized service experiences that:

- Are integrated into the academic curriculum
- Meet the needs of a community
- Provide structured time for reflection
- Help foster civic responsibility

Adapted from the National and Community Service Trust Act, 1993

# Program Characteristics

- **Academic Experience**
  - Links the learning in the classroom to the activity in the community...and vice versa
  - Reinforces what is learned in the classroom
  - Designed with clear academic goals

*Characteristics excerpted from Eyler, Janet and Giles, "Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?" San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.*

- Community Project
  - Connects the student to the community in activities that are mutually beneficial
  - Projects take place at the community level
  - Ideally, students and community leaders participate in planning the project

- Reflection Requirement
  - Built-in opportunities to reflect on the experience
  - Creates a deeper understanding and better application of subject matter
  - Increases appreciation of problem and encourages solution analysis

- Civic Role and Appreciation
  - Experiences have a higher purpose that emphasizes the reward and value in service
  - Increases civic engagement of the University
  - Gives the student a better understanding of their individual role in society

# Service-Learning is...

- Cleaning up a river bank is *just service*.
- Looking at water samples under a microscope is *just learning*.
- Biology majors meeting state standards by taking samples from local streams, analyzing the samples and then presenting the information to a pollution control agency is **service-learning**.

# Service-Learning is NOT...

- Community Service
- Volunteering

*These are “Service”*

- Experiential Learning
- Hands-On Learning
- Internships

*These are “Learning”*

# Service Learning Syllabi

- Alma College
- University of Utah
- Notre Dame University

Retrieved from Campus Compact ([www.compact.org/syllabi](http://www.compact.org/syllabi))

# Alma College

- Discipline: Environmental Studies, Public Policy, Health
- Course: “Comparative Public Health and Environmental Policy”
- The course reviews Mexican and US history and government, followed by study of selected health and environmental problems along the US/Mexico border. Students travel to the border to observe conditions and design a project related to environmental-health issues.

# University of Utah

- Discipline: Music
- Course: “The Pianist and the Community: Career Development and Volunteerism”
- The course emphasizes that community service is a vital aspect of any musical career. Students teach piano to at-risk students and participate in recitals.

# Notre Dame University

- Discipline: Chemistry
- Course: “Chemistry in Service of the Community”
- Students join with community partners in helping to identify neighborhood homes that have unsafe levels of lead contamination.

# Six Models for Service-Learning

- “Pure” Service-Learning
  - Intellectual core in the idea of service, not necessarily in a particular discipline
  - Example: Berea College
  - As a first-year seminar, students are introduced to the interdisciplinary study of community, focusing on a variety of topics, fostering leadership skills, and introducing them to possible non-profit sector careers and field experience in their majors.

*Six Models excerpted from Heffernan “Fundamentals of Service-Learning Course Construction,” RI Campus Compact, 2001.*

- **Discipline-Based Service-Learning**
  - Spending a semester in the community with ongoing reflection of their experience
  - Previous Example: University of Utah
  - Music course teaches that community service is a vital aspect of any musical career. Activities are based on the music discipline.

- **Problem-Based Service-Learning**
  - Students serve as “consultants” to the community working on a particular problem or need
  - Develop solutions to the problem
  - Assumes a particular knowledge base
  - Previous Example: Notre Dame University
  - Chemistry students join with community partners in helping to identify neighborhood homes that have unsafe levels of lead contamination.

# • Capstone Courses

- Designed for a particular discipline
- Draws upon knowledge from throughout coursework
- Transition from world of theory to world of practice
  
- Example: Portland State University
- Senior students participate in an applied research project where they work with the Community Justice Dept. to evaluate the alcohol and drug counseling services.

- # Service Internships

- Intensive experience in a community setting
- Regular and ongoing reflective opportunities
- Focus on reciprocity – benefit to both student and community

- Example: University of Pennsylvania

- *The Public Service Internship Program* is a 12-week summer program that immerses 20 undergraduates in real-world problem solving in the West Philadelphia-Penn community.

- Undergraduate Community-Based Action Research
  - Popular, independent study option
  - Students work with faculty to learn research methodology while serving as community advocates
- Example: Allegheny College
  - Creek Connections is a partnership between Allegheny College and regional K-12 schools where AC staff and students provide the framework and assistance for school-based investigative research in local watersheds.

# Model Programs

- **University of Pennsylvania**

- Ranked in top 3 schools for service-learning programs by U.S. News and World Report (2003)

[www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/brief/acadprogs/acadprogs05\\_brief.php](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/brief/acadprogs/acadprogs05_brief.php)  
(retrieved 4/29/03)

- **University of Maryland**

- Ranked 24<sup>th</sup> in U.S. News and World Report for service-learning (2003)

[www.inform.umd.edu/nowandthen/news/usnewsrankings902.html](http://www.inform.umd.edu/nowandthen/news/usnewsrankings902.html) (retrieved: 4/29/03)

- **Rutgers University**

- In 1993, President Clinton publicized the service-learning program as a model for colleges and universities across the country.

# University of Pennsylvania



Center for  
Community  
Partnerships

- Founded in 1992, the Center for Community Partnerships is Penn's primary vehicle for bringing together knowledge needed to solve the problems so that the University, the city, and society benefit.
- Activities
  - Academically-based community service
    - Provide technical assistance to faculty
  - Direct traditional community service
  - Community Development



- Member of Campus Compact
- 1200 students participated in one or more of 140 courses; 40-45 courses offered in any one academic year.
- Some SL courses exist outside of the Center
- Support
  - Staff: 30 full/part-time staff include University or grant-funded positions and AmeriCorps\* VISTA members.
  - Funding: University support, grant support, and endowment funds.
  - Governed: Director reports to the Office of the Vice President for Government, Community and Public Affairs and to the Provost.

# University of Maryland



- Founded in 1992, the Community Service Office is housed within the office of Commuter Affairs and Community Service.
- Activities
  - Curriculum-based service-learning
    - Provide technical assistance to faculty in course development
  - Co-curricular community service activities



- Member of Campus Compact
- 1500 students every year enroll in approximately 50 SL courses taught by about 30 faculty members.
- About 200 total SL courses offered.
- Some colleges require some level of experiential learning, of which SL is a choice
- Support
  - Staff: Four full/part-time staff working with SL
  - Funding: University support, mini-grants for specific courses
  - Governed: Director reports to the Vice President of Student Affairs Office.

# Rutgers University



- Citizenship and Service Education (CASE) was formed in 1988 to improve and consolidate the relationship between the University and the broader New Brunswick community.
- Activities
  - Academic-based service learning
    - Provide technical assistance to faculty in course development
  - Co-curricular community service programming



- Primary resource: In 2000, CASE put a community database resource on the web known as the "Redbook Online".
  - Faculty use Redbook Online as a search engine to identify suitable placement sites
  - Community based agencies use it to advertise their organizations to the student community at Rutgers
- All SL courses go through CASE.
- 500-800 students enroll in almost 50 service-learning courses each year.
- Some departments have SL requirements including the honors program.



- Member of Campus Compact
- Support
  - Staff: Two full-time, one part-time, two grad students
  - Funding: University funds, occasional grant support
  - Governed: Director reports to the Office of the Vice President of Undergraduate Studies

# Visit the Programs

- **University of Pennsylvania**
  - [www.upenn.edu/ccp](http://www.upenn.edu/ccp)
- **University of Maryland**
  - [www.inform.umd.edu/CSP/serviceLearning.html](http://www.inform.umd.edu/CSP/serviceLearning.html)
- **Rutgers University**
  - [www.case.rutgers.edu](http://www.case.rutgers.edu)