SPC St. Petersburg College

CIVIC

ENGAGEMENT

Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement

Faculty Guide

Community Engagement & Service Learning

INTRODUCTION

St. Petersburg College is committed to transforming the community through its institutional commitment to three foundational goals; Academic Excellence, Economic Mobility and Community Engagement. To further this end, SPC's Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement (CCLCE) serves as the catalyst for coordinating and developing SPC opportunities for civic learning and community engagement experiences.

As we continue to strengthen pathways for meaningful partnering academic excellence and community engagement, we have compiled this faculty guide to share resources for civic engagement within academic scholarship. This often takes the form of service learning. We hope this college wide civic initiative will build pathways to civic literacy across all disciplines and help our students reach academic and personal success.

Service Learning & Student Success

"College students who participate in civic engagement learning activities not only earn higher grade point averages but also have higher retention rates and are more likely to complete their college degree. They also demonstrate improved academic content knowledge, critical thinking skills, written and verbal communication, and leadership skills."

Campus Compact. <u>A Promising Connection</u>. 2010

WHAT IS SERVICE LEARNING?

Service learning is a method by which people learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that:

- Meet community needs;
- Are coordinated in collaboration with college and community;
- Are integrated into each person's academic curriculum;
- Provide structured time for a person to think, talk, and write about what he/she did and saw during the actual service activity;
- Provide people with opportunities to use newly acquired academic skills and knowledge in real life situations in their own communities;
- Enhance what is taught in college by extending student learning beyond the classroom;
- Help to foster the development of a sense of caring for others.
  Adapted from The Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform, May 1993.

Service Learning

- Connects theory and practice
- Meets learning outcomes
- Provides service to a community organization
- Integrates disciplinary approaches
- Strengthens critical thinking skills
- Strengthens communication skills
- Promotes value of diversity
- Promotes active learning

Incorporating Service Learning in Your Course

1. Identify clear course objectives that can be enhanced through experience. Look over the Major Learning Outcomes and the measurable outcomes.
2. Identify a strategy or method, a type of experience that will help to reach that objective.
3. Identify and clarify a method of assessing the learning gained through the experience. The simplest and most common form of assessment is in the use of written reflections. The stronger the questions used in the reflection, the better the responses will be. Reflection can address the feelings of the student: ambiguity, discomfort, fit. It may address perceived learning and growth. Growth can be in the areas of interpersonal insight, ethical insight and growth and particularly the integration of theory and the real world.
4. Make clear to students the connection between the experience and the learning goals of the course. Clarify also how the experience will be assessed.

Some suggested guidelines:

1. Start small. Keep the project simple, with a minimal time commitment and grade impact as you begin.
2. Remember that the grade for service learning or engaged scholarship is given for the educational growth, and not for the hours or work committed. We grade on the "learning" part of service learning. The academic goal is the assessment.
3. If you are just beginning, consider making the service learning component optional, and alternative to a research assignment or a final exam. You may want to consider it as extra credit.
4. In the beginning, it may be best but for the motivation of the student and for liability concerns to allow the student to choose the service organization from a list of options. Requiring students to use one service organization introduces complexities. The civic engagement office has a list of organizations with which we have had good experience. The service organizations cover a wide variety of academic disciplines.
5. The service project should be nonpartisan and nonsectarian. Faith-based organizations are great as long as the service involves a social service provided to all regardless of belief. Serving a church food pantry is okay, but teaching Sunday school or painting the sanctuary is not. By the same token, promoting the registration of students to vote is good, but working for a particular congressman's reelection is not.
6. ***Be sure to have students sign the release of liability form and the expectations contract before beginning their service. It can be found on the web address below***

   http://www.spcollege.edu/Ethics_for_Students/

In the process of integrating service-learning into a traditional course, consider the following issues as specifically as possible:

- The learning objectives of the new service component in relation to the overall objectives of the course. (Keep in mind, students are evaluated on the learning attained, not the service performed. Although students should provide quality service, it is the quality of the learning that makes service-learning such a powerful teaching and learning tool);
- The kinds of placements and projects that facilitate your service-related objectives;
- The kind of service such placements/projects provide to the larger community;
- The best format for the service component (i.e., mandatory, elective, short-term, long-term);
- Adjustments you might want to make to the course's traditional workload (e.g., less reading or fewer problem sets; fewer tests or cases). Ask yourself what kinds of learning the service related work facilitates that currently are covered or addressed in another way;
- Strategies that are useful in helping students link their field-based and classroom-based work (e.g., journals; focus groups, face-to-face or electronic; presentations, case writing, etc.)
- Course-appropriate broader, non-technical reflection topics (e.g., professional responsibility, equal opportunity, diversity and stereotypes, peace and justice issues, democracy and citizenship);
- Appropriate assessment strategies (e.g., pre- and post-tests, journals, work logs, supervisor reports, project deliverables).

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SERVICE LEARNING

In developing a service-learning course, build time into your schedule to prepare students for the experience. In addition, allow time for sharing and discussing problems, concerns, and experiences throughout the process.

Understand that your students are going to be at different places developmentally. They will vary in their levels of comfort with service-learning and in the meaning they take from the experience.

Preparing:
- Personal attitudes/stereotypes - Help your students discuss these issues in a non-threatening, non-judgmental way before they go "live."
- Nature and significance of the work - What kind of work are they expected to do. What kind of agency is appropriate for your course? Why are you asking them to do service-learning? What will it add to their learning? What are they expected to accomplish for the service- learning site? Answering these kinds of questions will go a long way toward deflecting resistance. Students need to understand that a service-learning project isn't just busy work.

- Basic do's and don'ts - Even though your students are volunteering, the service-learning site may have some definite policies regarding dress, body piercing, decorum, etc. Discuss these issues with your students because many of them have not been exposed to professional expectations before. Handouts explaining appropriate dress and decorum are available from the Center for Civic Engagement.
- Anxieties and questions - Some students are anxious about their service-learning placements; others have questions. Allowing class time to address issues and answer questions will enhance the learning value of the experience.

Creativity and flexibility are the keys to a solution that fits everyone's needs.

SERVICE LEARNING ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- **Reciprocity** - The service and learning must be worthwhile and valuable for both the student and the community. There must be reciprocity between the server and those served.
- **Reflection** - Intentional, systematic reflection of the experience must take place in order to accomplish rational harmony in service-learning experiences. Reflection within the context of volunteer experience encourages introspective examination of other aspects of the student's life.
- **Development** - Service-learning occurs in different stages: serving to enabling to empowering; observation to experience to leadership.
- **Meaningful Service** - Service tasks need to be worthwhile and challenging in order to strengthen critical thinking skills.
- **Diversity** - A priority is placed on involving a broad cross-section of students working in diverse settings and with diverse populations within the community.

MEASUREMENT

Measuring student's commitment to service and civic engagement is an essential element of evaluating where we can make the greatest impact on student success and community development.

Faculty are asked to utilize the Engage for Change survey tool to capture service hours. This survey can easily be posted within MyCourses and when a student inputs their ID number it will automatically prompt them to select whether it is s course, club or campus activity. Once the student makes the selection, an email will automatically be generated to that instructor. Faculty are also encouraged to link an assessment tool to service hours. Refection papers and other debriefing assignments allow a student to reflect and process how the service connected with the coursework.

There are four areas of student engagement this survey measures. ***Based on the definitions below, please determine which area your project falls within and communicate this to your students to ensure proper reporting.***

1. Service Learning
Service learning is an in-class teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

2. Volunteer Service
A decision made by students to give time to a non-profit, civic group or volunteer organization that provides community services. It can include efforts to directly address an issue or work with others in a community to solve a problem. Done independently of a class or a student club.
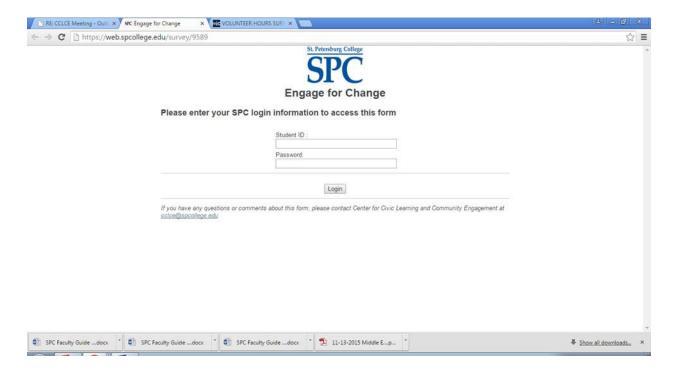
3. Civic Education
Active participation in the public life of communities in an intentional, informed, and constructive way to promote an improved quality of life in all communities, through non-political and political methods. It can include events such as attending county commission meetings, city commission meetings, school board meetings, and court proceedings.

4. Campus Student Engagement
Activity on and off campus that is consciously committed to reinvigorating the democratic spirit and community engagement in all aspects of campus life: students, faculty, staff and the institution itself. Activities foster students' unique responsibility for the development & role of knowledge in a democratic society to form the bases of social progress and human equality. It can include events such as student involvement in SGA and other club sponsored activities.

You can access the survey here:

https://web.spcollege.edu/survey/28979

There are a number of resources to assist faculty members who develop and teach service learning courses. These include the publications listed below, web-based resources, workshops, conferences, and of course, fellow faculty members, who are probably the best resources of all!

Books

160 Ways to Help the World: Community Service Projects for Young People, Linda Leeb Duper

Be a Global Force of One!, John Boal

Better Together: Restoring the American Community, Robert Putnam

Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, Robert Putnam

Building a Movement: A Resource Book for Students in Community Service, Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL)

Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service, Vol. 1, 2 & 3, Jane Kendall and Associates, National Society for Internships & Experiential Education/Campus Compact

Community Service as Values Education, Cecilia Delve, Suzanne Mintz, Greig Stewart ed.

Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility, Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, Jason Stephens

Engaging the Whole of Service-Learning, Diversity, and Learning Communities, Joseph Galura, Penny Pasque, David Schoem, Jeffry Howard

Fundamentals of Service Learning Course Construction, Kerrissa Heffernan

Journey to Service-Learning: Experiences from Independent Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities, Robert Sigmon and Colleagues, Council for Independent Colleges

A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service Learning, Student Voices and Reflections, Janet Eyler, Dwight Giles, Jr., & Angela Schmiede, funded by CNS

Praxis I: A Faculty Casebook on Community Service Learning, Jeffery Howard, ed.

Praxis II: Service-Learning Resources for University Students, Staff and Faculty, Joseph Galura, Rachel Meiland, Randy Ross, Mary Jo Callan & Rick Smith, ed.

Praxis III: Voices in Dialogue, Joseph Galura, Jeffery Howard, Dave Waterhouse, & Randy Ross, ed.

Service Counts: Revitalizing Literacy Efforts in America Higher Education, Michael Kobrin and Rachel Nadelman, Charles Drago, ed., Campus Compact

Service-Learning Code of Ethics, Andrea Chapdelaine, Ana Ruiz, Judith Warchal, Carole Wells

Service Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on Its Origins, Practice, and Future, Timothy Stanton, Dwight Giles, Jr., & Nadinne Cruz

Service-Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices, Barbara Jacoby and Associates

Service-Learning in the Disciplines, 18-book series, Edward Zlotkowski, ed., Each volume has discipline-specific syllabi, along with excellent general information.

Service-Learning Reader: Reflections and Perspectives on Service (textbook), Gail Albert, ed., National Society for Experiential Education.
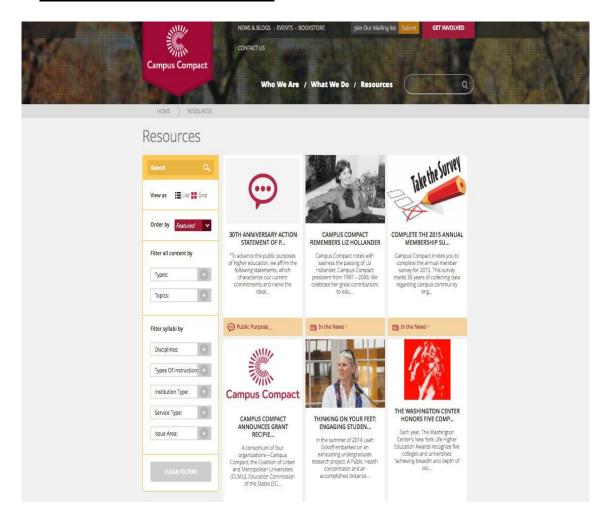
A Social Change Model of Leadership Development, Version III, Higher Education Research Institute

What Do You Stand For? A Kid's Guide to Building Character, Barbara Lewis

Where's the Learning In Service-Learning?, Janet Eyler & Dwight Giles, Jr.

SAMPLE SYLLABI

If you are looking for sample syllabi and project ideas, please visit Campus Compact's website. They provide a search engine based on your course & discipline. You can find those resources at: http://compact.org/resource-posts/

Online Resources

SPC is currently working on developing community engagement components for each of the ten academic communities. Stay tuned

Although the Center for Digital Civic Engagement is no longer a live site, their resources are still posted for use. You can find more information at: http://mncampuscompact.org/cdce/

You may also find more helpful ideas here:
- ✓ https://www.magnapubs.com/online/mentor/how-can-i-create-an-online-service-learning-project-13726-1.html
- ✓ https://www.washington.edu/trends/engaging-online-students-with-their-communities/
- ✓

For more information, please contact:

Tara Newsom, J.D. L.L.M
Professor, Social & Behavioral Sciences
Director, Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement
Newsom.tara@spcollege.edu
727-512-9550

CIVIC CAMPUS LEADS

Meg Delgato, Ph.D.
Professor, College of Education
St. Petersburg College/Gibbs Campus
delgato.meg@spcollege.edu
727-341-4422

Joy Moore, PhD
Academic Chair, Mathematics
St. Petersburg College/Clearwater Campus
moore.joy@spcollege.edu
 (727) 791-2542

Douglas Rivero, PhD
Academic Chair, Social & Behavioral Sciences
St. Petersburg College/Seminole & eCampus
rivero.douglas@spcollege.edu
727-394-6948

Eric Tucker, Ph.D.
Professor, Ethics
St. Petersburg College/Tarpon Springs Campus
tucker.eric@spcollege.edu
727-341-4698