

SERVICE LEARNING IN YOUR COURSE

A Handbook for Prairie State College Faculty

2011-2012



 **Prairie State College**

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS Service Learning?

Service learning is the blending of community service with academic learning. This form of experiential education places students in a community-based context and faculty facilitate a critical reflection activity that links students' experiences to the academic course content. As a potentially powerful teaching approach, service learning also promotes social and civic responsibility among students.

What Service Learning is NOT

To fully understand what service learning is, it is important to know what it is not. Consider the following activities which are often confused with service learning. While these are worthwhile endeavors, they are different from service learning.

Service learning is not volunteerism

Because service learning is a part of a course, it is important that students, faculty and community-based organizations (CBO) realize that students are not "volunteers" who simply do those tasks which the CBO needs to have done. Instead, the activity should be related to course objectives. The service is then as much a key component of the course as are traditional instructional methods and activities.

Service learning is not a traditional internship

Service learning is often confused with practica and internships which students are required to complete as part of their pre-professional program preparation. In such activities, students are placed in a setting and expected to observe and assimilate skills. It does not necessarily address community needs or promote students' sense of social and civic responsibility. In contrast, service learning stresses reciprocity. Reflection, a key component of service learning, is generally absent from practica and internships¹.

Three Models for Service Learning at PSC

Service learning courses at PSC can basically be described in three categories. Faculty should explore the model which best fits the course in which service learning will be incorporated.

1. **Discipline-based Service Learning**
Students are expected to serve in the community throughout the semester and to reflect on their experiences on a regular basis using course content as a basis for analysis and understanding.
2. **Problem-based Service Learning (PBSL)**
Students (or teams of students) relate to the community much as “consultants” working for a “client.” Students work with community members to understand a particular community problem or need. This model presumes that the students will have some knowledge they can draw upon to make recommendations to the community or develop a solution to the problem.
3. **Undergraduate community-based action research**
Community-based action research is similar to an independent study option for the rare student who is highly experienced in community work. Community-based action research can also be effective with small classes or groups of students. In this model, students work closely with faculty members to learn research methodology while serving as advocates for communities.²

Guidelines of Good Practice for Service Learning

An effective and sustained program:

- Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.
- Provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience.
- Articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved.
- Allows for those with needs to define those needs.
- Clarifies responsibilities of each person and organization involved.
- Matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances.
- Expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment.
- Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.
- Insures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interest of all involved.
- Is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.³

The Impact of Service Learning

Research says...

- Students who participate in service learning report stronger faculty relationships and greater satisfaction with the College.
- Students who participate in service learning are more likely to graduate.
- Students and faculty report that service learning has a positive impact on students' ability to apply what they have learned in the "real world".
- Service learning has a positive effect on interpersonal development and the ability to work well with others, leadership and communication skills.
- Service learning has a positive effect on reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural and racial understanding.
- Faculty using service learning report satisfaction with the quality of student learning.
- Faculty using service learning report lack of resources as a barrier to providing service learning. (This is a concern that is addressed in Section III of this handbook.)
- Colleges and universities report institutional commitment to service learning curriculum.
- Communities report satisfaction with student participation.
- Service learning provides useful service in communities.
- Communities report enhanced university relations.⁴

PSC students say...

"Service learning removes people from their comfort zones and helps them think about others before themselves."

"I feel that students get much more out of their experiences...it makes them wiser, stronger, and better prepared for the world that lies before them."

"Not only did I learn about the field I'm majoring in, I also learned a lot about politics, how it relates to me and how I can influence change."

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I fit something else into a course with a full syllabus?

Service learning is not an addition to the current requirements. As with any new pedagogical approach, service learning may replace some of your traditional teaching techniques as you incorporate it into your course. Although there is an initial “set-up” time when first adopting this teaching tool, this is likely to pay-off in the form of increased student engagement and learning.

Is it reasonable to ask students to find space in their schedule for service learning?

If you find that students are struggling to meet the time requirements of a service learning project, consider the following options: 1) Make the service learning component of your course optional, offering a research paper or other assignment as an alternative; 2) Try to develop a varied list of community-based organizations in which students can complete their service learning projects. More flexibility enables them to fit the service learning into their schedules at their convenience.

Are students insured when they are at their service learning site?

As long as the service learning experience falls within the scope of the class, either as a required or optional element, they are covered by College liability insurance.

How are students transported to their placements?

Students are generally responsible for their own transportation to and from their service learning sites. Faculty should avoid driving students. Students with disabilities may receive some assistance with transportation. This is handled on a case-by-case basis. Requests for such assistance should be directed to Diane Janowiak, Director of Disability Services & Testing.

How will I monitor my students' performance and attendance?

The Service Learning Log found in Appendix C is an important tool for monitoring attendance. It is also important to maintain an open line of communication with representatives from the community-based organizations where your students have been assigned. This will allow you to make periodic checks not only on attendance, but performance as well. Communication with CBOs will be facilitated by Coordinator of Student Leadership Development and Service Learning.

How do I evaluate the students' performance?

The importance of reflection cannot be overstated. Class discussions, journals and reflection papers are excellent tools for assessing the impact that the service learning has on student learning outcomes. Such assignments typically require the student to synthesize course concepts and service experiences. These could be graded for analysis, critical thinking, and other typical criteria. Please resist the urge to give students points simply for completing a specified number of hours of service.

What are useful instruments for evaluating my course?

In addition to utilizing the Faculty Service Learning Evaluation Form in Appendix F, you may consider those evaluation tools available on a variety of websites. A list of such sites can be found in Section III of this handbook.⁵



SECTION II: IMPLEMENTING SERVICE LEARNING

Steps for Implementing Service Learning in Your Course

Step 1: Mid-term of the semester prior to offering service learning in your course.

Contact Dr. Consuelo V. Frederick Ballom, Director of Student Life and Multicultural Affairs, to discuss your course and how service learning will be included. Some topics for discussion at this point might include course construction, reflection activities and assessment tools.

Step 2: 3-4 weeks before the start of the semester in which you will offer service learning.

Identify those community-based organizations (CBO) that offer projects that are consistent with the learning objectives of your course and meet with representatives from these organizations. (See section III for a list of community-based organizations.) When meeting with the CBOs, it is helpful to have a list of questions, a copy of your syllabus and a list of service learning goals.*

Step 3: 3-4 weeks before the start of the semester in which you will offer service learning.

Consider these questions as you finalize your service learning plans:

- How are the course and service objectives related?
- What is the method of reflection?
- What are the service goals for the community?
- Are the academic goals and objectives explicit?
- How will student learning be assessed?
- How will you monitor service placements?

Step 4: 1-2 weeks before the start of the semester in which you will offer service learning.

Finalize service learning options and alternative assignments if offered.

- Assemble syllabus, service learning placement information for students, service learning agreements/logs, and evaluation forms for students. (See appendices.)
- Invite representatives from the CBOs you have selected to speak to your class early in the semester.* Share a copy of the finalized syllabus and service learning documents.
- Make plans for students' orientation and training to their service learning sites.*

Step 5: 1-4 weeks into the semester in which you are offering service learning.

Introduce students to the service learning assignment. Students should be allowed to review the syllabus, a description of the assignment and other service learning documents. Representatives from the selected CBOs should come to your class and tell students a bit about the organization and the nature of the work that students will do there.*

Step 6: 2 -5 weeks into the semester in which you are offering service learning

Approximately one week after the students have been introduced to the service learning assignment, they should submit completed service learning agreements.. Students should begin their service learning hours at this point. Remind students to keep their service learning log current.

Step 7: Throughout the semester in which you are offering service learning

Conduct and/or assign reflective activities throughout the semester. This gives students an opportunity to synthesize course concepts and service experience. Reflection activities might include:

- Journaling
- Discussion groups
- In-class presentations
- Reflection papers

Step 8: 2 -3 weeks prior to the end of the semester in which you are offering service learning

Begin the process of assessment by distributing evaluation forms. (See appendices.)

Evaluations should be completed by students, community-based organizations and the course instructor.

Step 9: 2 -3 weeks after the semester in which service learning was completed.

The course instructor should complete a final report. The format for this report is given in Appendix A. The final report should be submitted to Dr. Consuelo V. Frederick Ballom, Director of Student Life and Multicultural Affairs. Copies will be made available to the CBOs as well as the Civic Engagement Center.⁶

Expectations for Faculty, Students, and Community-Based Organizations

Faculty are expected to...

- Prepare service learning courses in accordance with the guidelines provided in this handbook.
- Offer service learning projects that are inclusive of students with disabilities.
- Familiarize oneself with the service learning site(s) and monitor student progress through discussions, journal assignments, progress reports, or other means of assessment.
- Maintain regular communication with CBOs. Ask about students' performance, learning, and the community partner experience.
- Provide opportunities for students to reflect on what they are learning and to synthesize course concepts and service experience.
- Submit a final report to Dr. Consuelo V. Frederick Ballom, Director of Student Life and Multicultural Affairs.
- Complete a faculty evaluation and administer student and CBO evaluations. (See Appendices.)

Students are expected to...

- Be prompt, respectful and positive at their service learning site.
- Complete the Service Learning Agreement by the date assigned by the instructor.
- Fulfill all agreed upon responsibilities at the service learning site.
- Abide by the rules and policies of PSC and the CBOs.
- Log hours as directed by the instructor.
- Participate in reflection activities.
- Speak with their supervisor or instructor if uncomfortable or unsure about what to do.
- Respect the confidentiality of the people served.
- Share final projects and products produced as a result of the service learning experience with the CBOs.
- Participate in the evaluation process.

CBOs are expected to...

- Meet with faculty member to inform him/her about the agency's programs, needs, and opportunities 3-4 weeks prior to the beginning of the semester in which service will be provided. If there is a good match between the organization's goals and the professor's goals, formalize the partnership, and establish communication protocols.
- Complete the Service Learning agreement in collaboration with the student (s).
- Become familiar with the syllabus, course schedule, expectations for service, etc.
- Participate in a class meeting to present an overview of your organization.
- Orient students to the agency and/or project mission and goals.
- Provide meaningful work to the students
- Provide appropriate training and supervision to the students.
- Ensure a safe work environment and reasonable hours for the students to perform their service.
- Provide a service environment that is inclusive of students with disabilities.
- Maintain communication with the instructor.
- Participate in the evaluation process.⁸

SECTION III: RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO PSC FACULTY

Service Learning Websites

While this list is not exhaustive, it does provide faculty with some sites which may be useful when incorporating service learning into courses.

American Association of Community Colleges

www.aacc.nche.edu

AAC&U Civic Engagement Project

www.aacu.org/issues/civicengagement/index.cfm

Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges

www.mc.maricopa.edu/academic/compact/

Campus Compact “Service Learning and Faculty” page

www.compact.org/faculty

Educators for Community Engagement

www.e4ce.org

Facilitating Reflection: A Manual for Leaders and Educators

www.uvm.edu/~dewey/reflection_manual/

National Service Learning Clearinghouse

www.servicelearning.org



APPENDIX B: SERVICE LEARNING LOG

Prairie State College

Class: _____

Semester/Year: _____

Date	Starting Time	Ending Time	Hours of Service	Work Performed	Location	Verified by
Total hours of service performed						

**APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION
SERVICE LEARNING EVALUATION**

In order to better serve you, we request your feedback. Service learning, by definition, places a premium on the community partner’s input into developing projects. Please complete the following questions as candidly as possible. Return the completed survey in the enclosed envelope within 2 weeks of receipt.

We appreciate your commitment to Prairie State College students and service learning. Your responses will help us improve the quality of our programs and partnerships. Please call us at 708-709-3503 if you have any questions or comments.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

Please circle your response, using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Students were well-prepared for their service experience.	1	2	3	4	5
Our agency was able to provide adequate supervision.	1	2	3	4	5
Students generally have adequate skills and abilities to fulfill assigned service tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
The work of the students benefitted our agency’s clients.	1	2	3	4	5
Students met our expectations.					
Students have been dependable, dedicated and professional in their service work.	1	2	3	4	5
We were aware of course content and understood the connections between coursework and service.	1	2	3	4	5
Course interests were balanced with my agency’s interests.					
We want to continue to have service learners as part of our agency.	1	2	3	4	5
We would like more contact with Prairie State College service learning faculty.	1	2	3	4	5
We would recommend a service learning partnership with Prairie State College to others.	1	2	3	4	5

Describe three examples of the service completed by Prairie State College students.

How did Prairie State College students positively and negatively affect your agency and the clients served by your agency?

Do students give back enough time to make the time you spend with them worthwhile? Explain.

What problems, if any, did you encounter with students?

What would you do differently next time?

Agency Name

Phone #

Your Name and Position

Email

APPENDIX D: SERVICE LEARNING COURSE STUDENT EVALUATION

Please take a few moments to fill out this evaluation regarding your service learning experience at Prairie State College. Your feedback will help faculty and community-based organizations improve service learning opportunities.

This evaluation is confidential and will have no bearing on your grade for the semester.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

Please circle your response, using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Sufficient class time was spent preparing me for my work in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
Sufficient training and supervision was provided by the agency.	1	2	3	4	5
Transportation was a problem in helping to complete my service work.	1	2	3	4	5
The service work I performed helped me to learn the course content.	1	2	3	4	5
The reflection activities in the course enhanced my learning.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe my service learning work made a positive contribution to the community.	1	2	3	4	5
I would take another service learning course.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel more connected to the PSC community as a result of this class.	1	2	3	4	5
This service learning course has made me more likely to engage in the communities in which I live in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5
This experience has positively influenced my attitude towards people who are different than me.	1	2	3	4	5
Social problems are more complex than I used to think.	1	2	3	4	5

Identify the population (e.g. children, the elderly, migrants) with which you worked.

Identify the greatest impacts on you (lessons learned, skills gained, etc.).

Identify the greatest challenges you experienced as part of your service learning placement.

In what way do you think your service addressed a community issue?

How have your attitudes and beliefs about community service changed as a result of this class?

What was the most valuable thing you learned from your partnership with the community?

**APPENDIX E: FACULTY EVALUATION OF
SERVICE LEARNING COURSE**

Please take a few moments to fill out this evaluation regarding your service learning experience at Prairie State College. Your feedback will help improve support of faculty service learning initiatives.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

Name

Course

Semester

Community-Based Organization(s): please list organization and contact name

Please explain how you intended for the service activities to relate to your course objectives.

What kinds of reflection activities and/or assignments did you include?

In what ways did you include the community partner in the course (e.g., guest lectures, final project presentation, etc.) How was the community partner's contributions recognized?

In what way(s) was social justice and/or civic engagement promoted?

Please circle your response, using the following scale identified below. Where possible, include any comments.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree
N/A = Not Applicable

I believe my students' subject matter comprehension was increased by the service learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I believe classroom discussions were enhanced by the service learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The additional responsibilities (for professor) that the service learning required were manageable.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
I received the support I requested from the Civic Engagement Center & Project Reach staff.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The community partner(s) and I maintained contact and were responsive to each other's needs.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

What went well about this course?

What would you like to have occurred differently? (Include those things for which you, Project Reach Staff, and/or your community partner(s) have responsibility.)

Will you teach this course with a service learning component again? Why?

What other resources or services would you like from the Civic Engagement Center?

APPENDIX F: TALLY SHEET

Instructor: _____

Course: _____

Semester: _____

	<u>Student Name</u>	<u>Service Site</u>	<u>Hours Served</u>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

TOTAL HOURS SERVED BY THIS CLASS

End Notes

1. Adapted from the University of Utah's Lowell Bennion Community Service Center's *Service Learning in the Curriculum: a Faculty Guide* found at www.sa.utah.edu/bennion/pdfs/ServLearnCur.pdf
2. Adapted from Heffernan Kerissa. *Fundamentals of Service Learning Course Construction*. RI: Campus Compact, 2001, p. 2-7.
3. Jane Kendall & Associates, *Combining Service and Learning*. Raleigh, NC: National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (Now National Society for Experiential Education), 1990.
4. Adapted from Eyler, Janet, Dwight Giles, Christine M. Stanson and Charlene J. Gray. *At a Glance: What We Know about the Effects of Service Learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions and Communities, 1993-2000: Third Edition*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University. 2001. www.compact.org/resource/aag/pdf.
5. Adapted from Gettysburg College Center for Public Service. *Planning and Implementing a Service Learning Course: a Guide for Faculty Members at Gettysburg College*. Second Edition. Gettysburg: Gettysburg College. 2005. www.gettysburg.edu/college_life/cps
6. Adapted from Gettysburg College Center for Public Service. *Planning and Implementing a Service Learning Course: a Guide for Faculty Members at Gettysburg College*. Second Edition. Gettysburg: Gettysburg College. 2005. www.gettysburg.edu/college_life/cps
7. UCP Access AmeriCorps. *Creating an Inclusive Environment: A Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National and Community Service Programs* First Edition. Corporation for National and Community Service. 2004.
8. Adapted from Gettysburg College Center for Public Service. *Planning and Implementing a Service Learning Course: a Guide for Faculty Members at Gettysburg College*. Second Edition. Gettysburg: Gettysburg College. 2005. www.gettysburg.edu/college_life/cps