



ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND
VICE-CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC
AFFAIRS**

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PROVOST

Undergraduate Education and Innovation

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PROVOST

International Affairs and Global Strategies

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE CHANCELLOR

Corporate and International Relations

SERVICE LEARNING TASK FORCE

FINAL REPORT

Spring 2015

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I. **Committee Charge:**

The task of the committee is to articulate the role of service learning in students' education and identify actions to improve the quality, number and value of service learning opportunities at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

II. **Committee Membership:**

Michael Andrejasich, Annie Abbot, Adam Heinz, Laurie Kramer, Bruce Litchfield, Benjamin Lough, Lisa Monda-Amaya, Enrique Rebolledo, Sarah Zehr

III. **Executive Summary**

The benefits that service learning experiences provide students are manifold and far reaching. Students demonstrate an enhanced motivation for learning that service learning courses generate and they place high value on learning in an authentic context. There is abundant research, surveys and literature that testify to the added value service learning provided in higher education by true, mentored service learning experiences. When strongly tied to curriculum, service learning prepares students to translate disciplinary knowledge, research, and theory to real environments and populations, thereby facilitating their ability to solve critical societal problems while they acquire a range of professional and life skills.

In the “ready for careers” surveys conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities employers and student participants agreed that it was important to acquire applied and field based learning experiences along with knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences. Students emphasized the importance of working in communities “for and with” people from different backgrounds and cultures. Further “employers strongly endorse educational practices that involve students in active, effortful work—practices including collaborative problem-solving, internships, senior projects, and community engagements.”¹⁹

In reviewing best practices the committee focused on those practices that elevate the institutional philosophy and mission of service learning, provide for faculty support and engagement, provide for student support and engagement and build and maintain relationships with community partners. Institutional approaches to supporting and promoting service learning, in both domestic and international contexts, are varied. At Illinois, the committee found that “best practices” exist at the unit and program level. For example Learning in Community (LINC) in the College of Engineering provides an excellent program that has all of the indicators of a best practice in student support and engagement (*page 7*). At departmental-disciplinary course level, excellent examples of service learning can be found across campus. Spanish, Music Education, Special Education, Social Work and Physics are but a few of the excellent community-based learning offerings that were identified by the Carnegie application survey. In working with community partners (*Page 8*), Action Research Illinois (ARI) had a long history as the East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP) of developing and maintaining strong and sustained relationships with community partners. While this campus' Strategic Plan “Visioning Future Excellence” emphasizes the six critical societal challenges and a role for service learning (Goal II. Initiative a.ii. Transformative Learning Experiences), we fall short in the practices that reflect excellence

in advancing the role of service learning in the intuitional mission (*page 5*) and supporting faculty (*page 6*).

While there are barriers to the development and implementation of service learning, they are surmountable as evidenced by the many institutions that have developed thriving programs. The first critical barrier is that service learning is not familiar to students, faculty, and administrators; it is generally not part of our educational experience. Second, initiation of service learning requires a substantial investment of time. Finally, the university is not organized to readily facilitate service learning. *However, in every case the barriers noted above also represent significant opportunities for students, faculty, administrators, and the wider community. The benefits of service learning far outweigh the perceived barriers.*

In order to most effectively and efficiently overcome these barriers, build on the opportunities and expand the benefits of service learning, **the committee is in strong agreement that a centralized office for the administration and support of service learning activities is essential to achieving a high quality 21st Century undergraduate experience at this University.**

IV. COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES AND PROCESS

The Committee divided into three working group to address the four components of the charge as outlined in the April 8, 2015 letter. Each working group conducted a literature search and reviewed the University of Illinois 2005 & 2009 CCTF and Strategic Plan recommendations as well as the 2008 & 2013 Carnegie applications. Finally a website review of the institutions on the US News & World Report list of institutions with “stellar examples of service learning” and a comparison of centrally-supported service learning centers on Big Ten campuses were conducted. The Committee discovered that all but Illinois and Rutgers provide some level of central support for service learning on their campuses. Rutgers has a central office for service learning abroad and supports community service through their office of Student Involvement, very similar to the Office of Volunteer Programs at Illinois. Committee members contacted and interviewed the directors of service learning centers at the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities, the University of Nebraska and The Ohio State University.

Defining Service Learning at Illinois

The Committee found that it is essential that the campus works from a common definition of service learning. During the review of the 20 campus service learning centers, the 2002 definition of Service Learning (Community-Based Learning) from the National Commission on Service Learning had been adopted by half of the institutions.

“Service-learning is a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities”

The University of Wisconsin and Butler University are clear to describe the activities that are NOT considered to be service learning (e.g. volunteer activities). Penn State locates service learning in community-based environments as distinct from experiences in corporate or business environments. The University of Minnesota makes a similar distinction. The Ohio State University emphasizes that service learning “provides structured time for student reflection and connection of the service experience to learning”.

The Ohio State University considers “service-learning to be a form of experiential education characterized by student participation in an organized service activity that:

- is connected to specific learning outcomes
- meets identified community needs
- provides structured time for student reflection and connection of the service experience to learning”

This definition appealed to the committee because it makes clear that it’s not simply a matter of having students work in a community, but their work must be carefully devised so that it addresses a real need in the community, while also providing a true learning experience, complete with the articulation of learning outcomes and student reflection. Faculty and /or professional supervision must be part of the experiential learning process to both ensure that students achieve the stated learning outcomes and that the needs and interests of community partners are well respected. Furthermore, students must be equipped with the ethical, legal, and professional knowledge and skills that will enable them to contribute to the community organization in a meaningful, ethical, and culturally competent ways. We propose that the University of Illinois adopt this definition of service learning.

Task #1: Summarize the main benefits of service learning to students, and connect those benefits to the characteristics of the most effective service learning courses and experiences

Benefits to Students

- Enhanced professional development ^{1,2}
- Increased sense of civic responsibility, and increased civic engagement ^{3,4}; enhanced commitment to service ²
- Greater sense of efficacy; stronger beliefs that one can make a difference in the world ³
- Greater knowledge and skills in the following areas: ^{3,5,6}
 - Conducting research
 - Communication
 - Critical thinking; defining solutions and solving problems
 - Analyzing community and organizational needs and assets
 - Planning and executing projects in practice
 - Identifying and mobilizing tangible resources
 - Enhanced teamwork and leadership capacity
 - Intercultural competence and language skills (international service learning)
- Greater understanding and respect for diversity and marginalized populations ^{2,4,6}. If an international experience, greater respect for cultural diversity ⁷

- Heightened understanding of social and environmental issues, and a greater interest in wider community needs ^{2,3}
- More positive attitudes toward school and education and higher academic performance ^{3,5,8}
- Higher internalized ethical and moral standards ^{8,9}
- Positive service learning experiences enhance the understanding of academic course materials.¹⁰

The following student comments, collected as part of Action Research Illinois (ARI) service-learning program evaluation, illustrate the effect service learning has had on their overall educational experience:

“Although different from my original expectations,... it has turned out to be one of the most meaningful experiences that I have had in my life ... [and] has also allowed me to find new outlets for community service that I am passionate about, which will forever impact how I think and act when living in any community.” ^{1(p18)}.

“This kind of class has restored some of my faith in academia, which has been too focused on serving itself and teaching things from textbooks only ... Getting practical experience within the community is something I needed in before my senior year.” ^{1(p18)}.

Practice characteristics of effective service learning courses and experiences

The following characteristics have all been associated with better student outcomes across a variety of outcome categories: ^{3,4,11}

- Strong linkages between service and academic curriculum
- Incorporation of student voices in the learning process.
- Greater community involvement in all phases of service learning
- Structured or guided reflection
- Individual placements encourage more intense student-community interaction, but require more resources. Group placements offer increased community service but may inhibit the development of relationships with community partners and reduce some outcomes. Groups placements also decrease opportunity for students to learn language and cultural competencies, if the placements are international.⁷

*Additional benefits of service learning to the faculty, community, and the institution are not covered but their description lies beyond the scope of this review ^{1,2,7}

Task #2: Identify best practices for the development and implementation of service learning courses and extramural service activities that provide value to students, faculty, the university and communities they aim to serve

Effective practices for the institutional philosophy and mission of service learning as derived from our review of the literature and conversations with peer institutions:¹²⁻¹⁸

- The institution has adopted a formal and accepted definition for high quality service-learning that is used consistently to operationalize many aspects of service learning on campus.

- Service learning is part of the official campus strategic plan, including both short-term and long-term institutionalization goals. It is considered part of the primary mission of the institution and is tied formally and purposefully to other important and high profile efforts on campus.
- Service learning courses are listed in bulletins, schedule of classes, and course descriptions.
- Administrators demonstrate that they value service learning by dedicating human and financial resources to support the integration of service learning opportunities across campus (technical assistance, monetary incentives, and recognition). “Hardline budget commitments” of institutional funding is required for effective institutionalization of service-learning (as opposed to sole reliance on external grant support). Several institutions with effective service learning programs have a separate support unit or center focused on service learning and/or community engagement.¹
- Service learning courses and engagement is celebrated at the campus level in publications, receptions/ceremonies, recognition programs, etc.
- Service learning is included in institutional assessments. Data is collected on the number of courses, number of faculty teaching service learning courses, number of students enrolled, and number of agency partnerships.
- The university sponsors regional or national conferences on service learning and/or arranges campus speakers and forums on service learning.

Effective practices for faculty support and engagement: ^{12-14,16,17}

- A critical mass of faculty members can articulate what service learning is, and participate as instructors and/or supporters.
- An influential group of faculty and staff serves as leaders or advocates for advancing service learning throughout the campus.
- Faculty involved in service learning receive public recognition for their service. Service learning is prioritized in hiring decisions, and is fairly represented in the promotion and tenure process for faculty.
- Faculty have access to necessary training to prepare them to effectively develop, teach and implement service learning courses or modules, including development workshops, and faculty-peer mentoring opportunities.
- Funds are available to incentivize faculty expansion of service-learning, and to promote the development of general education and interdisciplinary service-learning courses.
- Faculty accomplishments with service learning are publicized; a teaching award for faculty who offer service learning courses is offered.
-

¹ Research with 179 academics from diverse universities found key factors associated with the institutionalization of service-learning required a centralized office devoted to service-learning and a reporting structure under a chief academic officer (provost, academic dean, or chancellor’s office -- as opposed to student affairs office or other alternatives). (Bringle and Hatcher 2000).

Effective practices for student support and engagement: ^{12,13}

- A critical mass of discipline-specific and interdisciplinary service learning opportunities are available to students across the campus.
- Campus-wide mechanisms exist to make students aware of service learning opportunities, and to encourage students to participate in these opportunities.
- Student accomplishments with service learning are publicized; student service-learning awards are offered.
- Students are included in service learning planning groups and advisory committees.
- Students have access to service learning scholarships and opportunities for service learning course assistantships and site coordination.
- A service-learning minor or certificate program is available to students.

Effective practices for community partners: ^{12,13,18}

- Representatives from vetted community agencies are welcomed and encouraged to serve as advocates for expanding service learning opportunities on the campus.
- Community partners are aware of and invited to provide input into developing campus goals related to service learning.
- Both campus and community partners are aware of each other's needs, agree on the general goals for service learning, and commit to addressing both parties' needs in a mutually beneficial way. Service learning is understood as an interdependent partnership between the institution and the community agencies.
- Community partners are well aware of the differences between service learning and volunteering, and understand their role as co-educators.
- Resources are available for site-based community coordinators
- The university has a policies and procedures manual about service learning educational programs that define respective roles and responsibilities and that can be shared with community partners.
- Community agency personnel are included in course design and implementation of service learning courses, and when appropriate have a mechanism to team-teach courses.
- Community agencies are publically recognized for their participation and partnerships.
- A system is in place to monitor the training and supervision of students at the agency.

Task #3. Identify barriers to the development and implementation of service learning courses or other experiences, and recommend ways to overcome or reduce those barriers. Please consider both factors internal to campus and the relationships between campus units and external organizations.

A significant barrier is that most students, faculty, and administrators have not experienced service learning as part of their own education and may lack an appreciation of its true potential for accelerating and enriching student learning. As a result, service learning needs to be defined, benefits need to be explained, and best practices need to be articulated campus wide.

- Students need to be convinced to take greater advantage of service learning courses, and they need to learn how to learn in this new environment. *However, part of our mission is to help students learn how to learn. Learning by doing is a life-long skill that will serve students well in their careers. Once educated about service learning, students quickly come to embrace and defend service learning as their most valuable educational experiences, not only academically, but also professionally.*
- Opportunities for service learning need to be expanded, especially for students in particular majors that have historically lacked sufficient offerings, or spaces within those offerings. *With new models of undergraduate education emerging on our campus, units may discover new ways to incorporate service learning into their foundational or capstone courses that propel student learning.*
- Faculty need to be encouraged to use service learning as an instructional tool. In addition to believing that they lack the skills necessary to teach a service learning course, faculty may decline opportunities to teach these courses because they are perceived as time consuming, and are concerned with risks associated with placing students in community-based organizations or learning experiences. *However, once tried many faculty enjoy the pedagogy and the ancillary benefits of connecting with outside communities. Public engagement can also be a highly valuable source of research topics and a context for innovation.*
- Administrators need to be convinced of the value of supporting service learning. *However, once mutually beneficial experiences accrue, there are a variety of important returns on investment.*
- Initiation of service learning can require significant investments of time from both the university and public participants. Most models involve developing a relationship with a community organization. Faculty and students get out of the classroom, and one or more representatives of the organization must be available to serve as a liaison to faculty and students. *However, part of the benefit from experiential learning comes from developing relationships with others who know things you have not yet learned and who work in situations that you have not yet experienced. Their perspective is highly valuable and otherwise difficult to simulate in a traditional classroom.*
- Leaving campus and interacting with external organizations can present legal issues, risks, and ethical dilemmas. *However, those dilemmas are opportunities for experiential and translational learning that are otherwise difficult to teach.*
- Teaching via service learning deviates from traditional means that are established in the promotion and tenure process. Early career faculty using service learning may be

questioned about whether they have acceptable traditional instructional skills. *However, (a) service learning could be primarily facilitated by senior faculty and (b) because service learning is a proven pedagogy, the P&T process should evolve to reflect an understanding of the time and attention that the instruction of these courses demand.*

- The reputation of the university rests to some extent on the quality of work students accomplish in each service learning course. Therefore, the university is vulnerable and likely to be criticized for lack of excellence and low standards of student performance, as students stumble, make mistakes, and deliver low quality products. *However, when student realize the importance of their work, they are motivated to excel and thrive in a “real world” setting where others care about and rely on what they do and the quality of their work truly matters.*
- The university is not organized for service learning. We normally teach with lectures, discussions, labs, studios, and tests. "The organization is designed to perform as it currently operates." *However, at the foundation of the university is the mission to educate and provide public service. We can adapt and excel by structuring our activities to better implement service learning. This is an essential cornerstone of the land-grant mission.*

“The real object of university education is to furnish preparation for efficient social service.” – Edmund Janes James, President, University of Illinois, 1904-1920

V. Recommendations

1. Adopt the broad and widely accepted 2002 definition of Service Learning (Community-Based Learning) from the National Commission on Service Learning: **“Service-learning is a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”** We also recommend adopting the three criteria that Ohio State University uses as they detail the types of experiences that students should have in service learning courses (i.e., activities are designed to meet stated learning objectives, meeting a community-defined need, and include explicit opportunities for student reflection and growth).

This definition should furthermore include additional qualifiers or specific examples important to the Illinois experience. For example, based on our land-grant mission and our global focus, we may wish to emphasize both community-based and international service learning as desirable contexts for service learning. We may wish to distinguish service learning from volunteerism by emphasizing the connection to curriculum, the establishment of clear learning objectives and stated learning outcomes, faculty and/or professional supervision of off-campus work, and the integration of student reflection as a clear element

2. Establish criteria and a process for vetting Service Learning Courses that reflects faculty appraisals of the critical components of service learning at Illinois. The Ohio State and Minnesota Centers provide excellent examples of faculty-supported models. They provide tested criteria, forms and processes that can be adapted to reflect the issues important to our faculty and unique to the Illinois experience. They also offer excellent examples of how the approval of new service learning courses can interface with the Senate Educational Policy Committee to ensure appropriate reviews.
3. In consultation with the Registrar’s office, create a Banner designation for vetted service learning courses so that they can be visible to students at the time of course registration (similar to the “S” and “S+GE” at the Ohio State University).
4. Incentivize Service Learning for faculty and units. This could include an investment similar to the “Discovery Course” program and/or an expansion of course development grants. Review Communication No. 9 to ensure that opportunities are provided to faculty to describe the extensive time and effort they devote to creating and teaching service-learning courses so that this may be recognized.
5. Establish a central office with a tenured faculty Director position at the Associate Provost level that reports to the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education and Innovation. This “Office for Service Learning” should work closely with key functions in the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, Office of Public Engagement, the Office of Student Affairs, , the Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs and Global Strategies, the Study Abroad Office, Illinois Extension, and Research Park, where significant service

learning course development and instruction is occurring on campus (i.e., LINC, social science units, Spanish & Illinois, Community Learning Lab, etc.). This office will be responsible for: (1) promoting and supporting service learning/community-based learning and international service learning that includes formally recognizing faculty, students and administrators who practice effective service learning; (2) providing training and support for faculty who wish to develop and teach service learning courses as well as for students interested in community-based learning; (3) providing support and best practices for the development and maintenance of relationships with community and international partners, (4) maintaining a directory of service learning courses and (5) establishing a visible “one stop” website for service learning resources and course offerings.

6. We recommend a search for the director’s position begin as soon as possible. To best provide leadership for this new academic initiative, the Director should be a tenured faculty member. We recommend hiring an academic professional Associate Director who can assist with the Center’s programs and staffing. An administrative assistant will also be necessary to support the work of the Director and Associate Director and to staff a Faculty Advisory Committee, which will serve to connect the Office with the academic mission of the colleges and the campus as a whole. Additional personnel may be necessary as the portfolio of the center grows.

Funding for the Office should include funds to: (1) seed new service learning courses on a competitive basis; (2) enable community partners to conduct service learning projects that involve Illinois students; (3) conduct annual workshops for faculty to help them design and teach service learning courses; (4) provide modest travel for the director/associate director to attend conferences and visit other service learning centers at aspirational peer institutions; and (5) reward excellence in service learning instruction.

7. A successor committee to this task force should be appointed to continue the planning of an Office of Service Learning and to serve as an advisory group to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Innovation in the 2015-2016 academic year on service learning-related issues. The charge for the committee should emphasize the implementation of the above recommendations.

VI. References and Sources

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Website Reviews:

US News and World Report*

<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/serving-learning-programs>

Arizona State University*

<https://communityengagement.education.asu.edu/programs/university-service-learning>

Brown University*

<http://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/public-service/>

Butler University*

<http://legacy.butler.edu/ccs-students/service-learning/>

Duke University*

- <http://servicelearning.duke.edu/>
Georgetown University*
- <http://www.georgetown.edu/campus-life/service-and-social-justice/>
Indiana University
- <http://citl.indiana.edu/programs/serviceLearning/>
University of Iowa
- <http://careers.uiowa.edu/students/volunteer>
University of Maryland
- http://thestamp.umd.edu/leadership_community_service-learning
University of Michigan*
- <http://ginsberg.umich.edu/>
Michigan State University*
- <http://www.servicelearning.msu.edu/>
University of Minnesota***
- <http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu/>
University of Nebraska
- <http://engage.unl.edu/>
University of North Carolina
- <http://ccps.unc.edu/apples/>
Northwestern University
- <http://www.engage.northwestern.edu/fellowship/>
The Ohio State University**
- <http://service-learning.osu.edu/>
University of Pennsylvania*
- <http://compact.org/resource-posts/the-university-of-pennsylvania-searchable-database-of-service-and-service-learning-program/>
Pennsylvania State University
- <http://www.bk.psu.edu/Academics/Service-Learning-Community-Based-Research-Courses.htm>
Purdue University
- <http://www.purdue.edu/cie/learning/servicelearning/>
Stanford University*
- <https://haas.stanford.edu/>
Rutgers University
- <http://communityservice.rutgers.edu/>
University of Wisconsin
- <https://morgridge.wisc.edu/students-service-learning-courses>

*US News & World Report programs identifies as “stellar examples of service-learning”

**The President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction

***Inaugural Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification

University of Illinois @ Urbana-Champaign

<http://cte.illinois.edu/programs/service.html>

http://cte.illinois.edu/programs/teach_cert/citizen.html

<http://citl.illinois.edu/teaching-resources/teaching-strategies/service-learning>

<http://linc.illinois.edu/>

<http://www.eslarp.illinois.edu/>

<http://spanishandillinois.blogspot.com/>

<http://publish.illinois.edu/serviceabroad/>

<http://engagement.illinois.edu/Page.aspx?site=Engagement-at-Illinois>

<http://socialwork.illinois.edu/community-learning-lab-provides-service-learning-network/>

<http://union.illinois.edu/get-involved/office-of-volunteer-programs>

Interviews (see attachments, pages 16-22) :

- Laurel Hirt, Ph.D., Director, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Community Service-Learning Center (M.Andrejasich)
- Ola Ahlqvist, Ph.D., Director, The Ohio State University Office of Service-Learning (L.Kramer)
- Linda Moody, Director, University of Nebraska Center for Civic Engagement (S.Zehr)
- Donald Braid, Director, Butler University, Indianapolis, Center for Citizenship and Community (Lisa Monda-Amaya)

VII. Acknowledgements:

The Committee wishes to acknowledge the following members of the campus service learning community for the contribution of their time and expertise to the committee's work.

Valerie Werpetinski, Co-Director, Learning in Community

John Race, Program Director, Office of Volunteer Programs

Cheelan Bo-Lin, Senior Specialist, Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning

VIII. Attachments

1. Charge Letter

Office of the Provost and Vice-Chancellor
For Academic Affairs

Swanlund Administration Building
601 East John Street
Champaign, IL 61820

April 8, 2015

Service Learning Task Force

Thank you for serving on the campus Service Learning Task Force. The impetus to form this group has come from many directions, including a growing interest in and opportunities for international service learning, a strong sense of the importance of service learning as expressed recently in the Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education, and a meeting of service learning leaders on campus convened last spring by the Office of Public Engagement. Service learning can offer transformational experiences to our students, at the same time it demonstrates the university's commitment to local, national and global communities.

The task of your committee is to articulate the role of service learning in students' education, and identify actions to improve the quality, number, and value of service learning opportunities on our campus. To that end, we ask that your committee:

1. Summarize the main benefits of service learning to students, and connect those benefits to the characteristics of the most effective service learning courses and experiences.
2. Identify best practices for the development and implementation of service learning courses and extramural service activities that provide value to students, faculty, the university and communities they aim to serve.
3. Identify barriers to the development and implementation of service learning courses or other experiences, and recommend ways to overcome or reduce those barriers. Please consider both factors internal to campus and the relationships between campus units and external organizations.
4. Determine whether some campus-level structure(s) for service learning or coordination of service learning activities would be beneficial; if so, recommend a form that might take.

You may find it helpful to survey existing and recent service learning activities on campus, and describe the current state of service learning at Illinois. If you do this, please consider both course-based and non-course experiences as well as those experiences offered to students by University of Illinois Extension and other units with public service missions.

Your report can be concise, focusing on your main insights and your recommendations.

We ask that you do as much as you can toward your charge this semester, and provide a report by May 15, 2015. If your group should need additional time after that, we can discuss that in May. Thank you for contributing your time and energy to the work of this committee.

Sincerely,

Pradeep Khanna
Associate Chancellor
for Corporate and International
Relations

Reitumetse Mabokela
Vice Provost
for International Affairs
and Global Strategies

Charles Tucker
Vice Provost
for Undergraduate Education
and Innovation

2. Interview Notes

**University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
Community Service-Learning Center
Laurel Hirt, Ph.D., Director**

The University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus Community Service-Learning Center was established in 1989 and has served as a central support function for campus service learning courses, off-campus study and domestic HECUA internships. The center has a full-time director who has held that position for 18 years and a staff of 5 FTE with clerical support. The Center annually employs 10-15 student workers. The center support 50-70+ courses annually with an enrollment of several thousand students. 70-100 faculty use the Center's resources every year. The work of the Center was a significant factor in the University receiving an invitation from the Carnegie Foundation to be one of the six inaugural institutions to receive the "Engaged Institution" classification.

Questions for Director Hirt:

- What level of University Administration does the center's director report to?
 - When the Center was established the director reported to the Office of the Provost. In its fifth year it was moved to the Office of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts where the majority of courses being served at that time were offered. Throughout its history the Center functioned as a central campus resources for all colleges. Today almost every College on the campus offers some service learning opportunity for UM students. The Center recently returned to the Office of Public Engagement in the Office of the Provost along with the Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center, Center for Urban & Regional Affairs and the University Metropolitan Consortium. The move back to central campus administration reflects the levels of engagement activity across the campus and the activism on colleges outside Liberal Arts including Design, Engineering and Education. It was a better fit and acknowledged the central mission.
- How is their budget structured and how are they funded (general revenue, grants, student fees, etc.)?
 - The Center is a function of the Office of Public Engagement and reports to the Provost. The budget is funded by general revenue.
- How community partners are vetted? How (and by who) are those relationships maintained?
 - The Center has over 300 partners. 125 community partners have worked with the University ten years or longer, 25-30 organizations have worked with the University since the first years when the Center was established. The Center is responsible for the stewardship of the relationships with the community partners. It monitors for compliance with policies and regulations (ie. EEOP) and some formal contracts. The center serves as contact for the partner's supervisor and maintains a partner website. It does not support one-time volunteer events, this is a function of student affairs.

- The Fall 2015 University of Minnesota course schedule lists 75 “Community Engagement Courses”. How is this designation determined? Is there a faculty review at the University level? College level? Unit level?
 - There is a formerly adopted process but it has not been implemented. There is no formal review at this time (outside of regular course and curricular review process).
 - Courses are self-identified by faculty who agree to comply with criteria “X,Y,& Z”
 - The Center conducts a review, not a faculty committee. It will evaluate the syllabus, and works with the faculty to ensure the course complies with the service learning criteria.
 - Courses receive a community-based learning attribute that is searchable and listed but not clearly visible. “Students do manage to find them”.
 - Some courses are added to the list through a student driven petition process.
 - One barrier to maintaining the attribute is the changes in faculty. Depending on who is teaching the course the content is not always consistent.
- What is the scope of the training for students interested in Service Learning? What services and support are provided to faculty through the development workshops? Is there sustaining support for faculty?
 - The Center oversees a “Community Engagement Scholar” credential that is Transcribed. One full-time staff member is dedicated to the advising for 300-400 students.
 - The center provides workshops, individualized support to faculty for curricular development, Logistical support, assists in aligning new courses with the “grand challenges and “start-up” funding through mini-grants. The Center works with graduate students to prepare future faculty for engaged scholarship.
- Are students and faculty happy with the campus support for community/service learning?
 - The number of engaged departments grows and faculty are “on board”.
 - P&T guidelines recognize the value. Some colleges have been more supportive than others. “The ethos is led by the College of Design”.
 - Some colleges have a service learning graduation requirement.
- What is her (his) vision for SL on campus?
 - Engagement is very embedded in the new campus strategic Plan
 - The colleges participate in a Public Engagement Council at a high level administration. Most colleges have an Associate Dean responsible for public engagement programs and activities.

**The Ohio State University
Office of Service-Learning
Ola Ahlqvist, Ph.D., Director**

The OSU Office of Service-Learning is a small office, comprised of a half-time faculty Director (Dr. Ahlqvist), a full time Associate Director, and administrative assistant. They rely on partnerships with various offices at OSU to have a greater impact, such as International Programs, and Student Affairs.

Questions:

- What level of University Administration does he report to?

Now reports to the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education.

In the past, the office had reported to the Office of Outreach and Public Engagement, which was under the Vice Provost, but this was not ideal as this office was too broad in its scope and not sufficiently tied to curricular issues.

Ideally, the Director would like the office of Service-Learning to fall under a larger umbrella tied to experiential learning that would be treated as a category of general education.

- How is their budget structured and how are they funded (general revenue, grants, student fees, etc.)?

Modest budget. Campus covers salaries, travel funds (\$8-9K), special events (\$1K), and supplies.

Receives \$20K a year from the Provost's office plus \$20K a year from the Office of Outreach and Public Engagement. These funds are used to seed new courses and fund service learning experiences.

Additional funds come via partnerships on specific projects with other units, including Study Abroad, Extension, and Outreach and Public Engagement.

- How are community partners vetted)? How (and by who) are those relationships maintained?

All service learning courses that involve community partners (which are virtually all of them) stem from faculty proposals that are vetted. Faculty build relationships with community partners and are responsible for maintaining these relationships over time. The Office of Service-Learning does not create partnerships for faculty as these relationships need to be organic. However, the Office may help faculty to develop and sustain these relationships by teaching faculty about best practices, etc.

- The Fall 2015 course schedule lists over 100 "Service Learning Courses". How is this designation determined? Is there a faculty review at the University level? College level? Unit level?

The Office of Service-Learning has a very clear vetting procedure for determining which courses may use a service learning attribute. Vetting criteria should be available on the web; if not Ola can provide this. Basically, they look for 3 characteristics that correspond to the definition of service learning that they use:

“Service-Learning is a form of experiential education characterized by student participation in an organized service activity that:

- is connected to specific learning outcomes
- meets identified community needs
- provides structured time for student reflection and connection of the service experience to learning”

So the vetting process focuses on: (1) information about the community partner and how that partner has been involved in identifying a core need that students will focus on; (2) how students will be engaged to reflect on the process of learning; and (3) what the core academic unit is expecting students to learn.

The vetting process is now done online by an internal review committee (Dr. Ahlqvist and 2-3 tenured faculty members). It is a formal review process that occurs as new courses are put forth to satisfy the requirements of a service learning designation. All approved courses are designated as either “S”—a service learning course; or “S + GE”—a service learning course that also intends to report student learning outcomes, which is an essential requirement for all general education courses on their campus.

- What is the scope of the training for students interested in Service Learning? What services and support are provided to faculty through the development workshops? Is there sustaining support for faculty?

To receive seed funds to develop a service learning course, faculty are required to participate in a Course Design Institute—a short term, but in-depth, program offered by their CITL to support strong pedagogy in the design of service learning (and other) courses. They promote the use of a common pedagogy when it comes to the design of service learning courses. Support faculty as they develop syllabi, develop student learning outcomes, Graduate TAs are also trained to support service learning. No sustaining support for faculty other than seeding new courses.

- Are students and faculty happy with the campus support for community/service learning?

Yes. In particular, the Course Design Institutes have been very well received by faculty. Ola feels they have been very successful.

- What is her (his) vision for SL on campus?

Expand focus to connect with other forms of experiential learning. They see the connection to study abroad and student affairs as critical to their work.

Service learning, and international service learning, will be a centerpiece of the new second year-experience program (STEP) that OSU is implementing in 2017.

Other Notes:

Growing interest in international service-learning. They use a definition of global service learning advanced by Hartman, Kiely, Friedrichs & Boettcher: “a community-driven service experience that employs structured, critical reflective practice to better understand self, culture, positionality, social and environmental issues, and social responsibility in global context.”

Definitely see service learning as distinct from volunteerism due to its explicit connection to curriculum.

My reactions:

Important to have a tenured faculty as director as a unit like this to ensure connection to curriculum and general education mission

Need at least an associate director and administrative assistant, but this will still create only a bare-bones office

Report to Provost’s office to ensure connection to curriculum and potentially, general education

Develop an advisory board for the Director that includes representatives from study abroad, student affairs, and faculty from units that offer service learning courses

Provide sufficient funds for seeding new courses

Hire a staff person to help faculty develop pedagogically sound service-learning curriculum and best practices for facilitating these courses and supervising students. Although it would be great to ask CITL to do this, I do not believe that they currently have anyone on staff who has these skills.

Develop a formal vetting process by which service learning courses receive approval, along with an attribute for Banner. Process must stress the connection of service learning to curriculum and articulate clear expected student learning outcomes.

**University of Nebraska
Center for Civic Engagement
Linda Moody, Director**

Center for Civic Engagement – 5 years “new” – based in Student Affairs (not Academic Affairs)

- Service learning has always come from Student Affairs
- Started in Student Involvement Office – student community learning
- Service learning certificate – Dr. Franco
- Strong senior leadership support
- Great support from Director of Undergrad Education, Nancy Mitchell
- Main focus to start certificate for civic engagement; Nancy and Linda Major worked with all 8 college deans to get certificate approved
- University of Nebraska chancellor retiring in 1 year so going through leadership changes; VC Academic Affairs has stepped down; other changes – Student Affairs connection to Academic Affairs is Linda Mitchell
 - Good rapport and good relationship with Associate VCs in Academic Affairs
 - At one time, not a good relationship between Student/Academic Affairs – looking forward to building relationship with new VC Academic Affairs
 - Events that show similar things happening in several places in the University
 - Prior to budget cuts in early 2000s, had a Teaching & Learning Center where an individual worked with Academic Affairs
 - Have to prove themselves to Academic Affairs
- Strategic plan for Student Affairs – hints strongly at notion of holistic learning, holistic experience
- UNL – University of Nebraska Lincoln – find it in teaching, research, and service – find in land grant mission
 - View service as given, part of mission
 - Serve communities through teaching/research
 - Chancellor Perlman (sp?) has called for holistic teaching for undergrads
- Try to reduce faculty time as much as possible – work with career services to document experiential learning taking place
 - Memorandum of understanding with partner
 - Service learning directory for faculty
 - Take care of logistics
 - Service learning TAs – again, reduce faculty workload
 - How they can remove barriers – eliminating administrative time and building community partnerships

Certificate

- 12 credit hours
- 6 civic values (ACLU value rubrics)

- Director of Undergrad Education (Nancy) helped to get certificate approved – part of University curriculum

Faculty committee

- People knowledgeable about service learning, believed in holistic educational approach, interested in student outcomes
- Not necessarily “movers and shakers” but definitely supportive
- Taking class, civic action plan, etc.
- Faculty from each college helped them to think through vision; helped with talking to faculty, spreading the word
- Advisory committee sort of fell apart after certificate was approved – still get their input from time to time, but less formalized than it once was
- Still working with Nancy (Director of Undergrad Education)
 - Working on SL designation (for service learning) so students can find them
 - Faculty can choose SL as designation
 - Courses have to be re-certified every 5 years
- Faculty committee very enthusiastic in beginning when charged
 - Selected those promoted and tenured
 - Chose people with good rapport in college/with dean
 - People known in discipline for their contributions
 - In some instances, they brought people/courses to the committee, some asked tough questions playing devil’s advocate but helped to think through challenges and barriers and gave them some good best practices to pursue (i.e. if you want this discipline, this is how we need to frame it)
 - At first, all “yaysayers”; now going for infrastructure, institutionalization, sustainability, and needed minds who had gone through a couple of cycles
- Overall, has worked well and now they have progressed to some other conversations
 - Discussions with sponsored programs and will do workshops with faculty on research appointments about notion of service learning, how grant dollars can move society/students forward
 - Great discussion with community partners – pretty broad in what they do, and go through cycles of faculty development, community partner development, administrator development; now they should have all 3 pieces working together on some initiatives

Important to tie it into the academic mission

- UN does not have Carnegie classification – that should help us
- Patty Clayton workshops on reflection (IUPIU?) – Brought her to campus to do some workshops on reflection – for faculty – helps with tough sell (takes too much time, etc.)
 - What are the outcomes
 - How do we document the learning/reflective thinking piece
 - Should we focus so much on exams?

Butler University, Indianapolis
Center for Citizenship and Community (CCC)
Donald Braid, Director

According to their website Butler University's "Center for Citizenship and Community (CCC) is a **non-profit, non-partisan** confluence of university and community. The CCC coordinates service-learning **course development** and **management** intercollege **programming** to foster civic mindedness, and Butler's Indianapolis Community Requirement (ICR)" The Center Director is Donald Braid, an Illinois Alum ('78). CCC has the philosophy "that **education can help shape society** for the better, and that an **informed** and **active** citizenry has the knowledge to **manage for themselves** the political, social, and economic factors affecting their neighborhoods and lives".

The Center was initially funded by an endowment, but more recently funding shifted to partial endowment and partial funding by the Office of the Provost. The previous president was a strong advocate for the program and moved the Center to the Provost's Office.

The following history was taken from the website: "In 1996, Margaret Brabant, then Butler's chair of the political science department, founded the Center for Citizenship and Community. She envisioned an organization that would span departments, colleges, offices, and community, with the aim of encouraging civic mindedness and civic engagement. Toward this end, the CCC has partnered with local organizations and Butler students have provided leadership for and learned from programs that range from dance instruction to recording oral histories, to mentoring and tutoring, to work with Iraqi refugee families".

Discussion with the Director:

The Center facilitates different types of programs on campus, three of which are described below:

1. Indianapolis Community Requirement (ICR)

Requirement Structure: Students must take one course in any part of the University that involves active engagement with the Indianapolis community. Additional guidelines can be found at: <http://legacy.butler.edu/ccf-faculty/icr-guidelines/>

The Center for Citizenship and Community facilitates by:

- **consulting** at every stage of the development of an ICR/SL course
 - offers \$500 to faculty for ICR course development – faculty propose courses
- helping to **identify** partner sites wherein to stage the service-learning
- **assisting** with post-course assessment strategies
- **supporting** projects through Service-Learning Course Fund Grants or assistance in securing external grants to support service learning and community outreach efforts

2. ICR Faculty Fellows Program

- Review proposals for ICR courses
- Meet with faculty to design courses and projects
- Receive \$2000 stipend

- Regular meetings of faculty fellows to discuss campus/program needs
3. Advocates for Community Engagement (ACES) Program
- The ACES are students hired to coordinate placement of students in the ICR sites. Approximately 10-15 students are hired who act as liaisons between the faculty who teach ICR courses and the community placement site. These students are paid \$10/hour and work approximately 10 hours/week. They provide guidance and oversee the work of Butler University students completing their ICR.

