



*Community Based Education/ Service
Learning
Faculty Handbook*

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Community-Based Education at Tusculum College

At Tusculum, Community-Based Education including service-learning is an integral part of the Civic Arts curriculum and a requirement for all non-education majors. Many courses include service-learning components and as part of the Commons Core Curriculum, all students have the opportunity for practical experience outside the classroom and a chance to serve the community. We describe these experiential learning projects as the Civic Arts in action.

The current sequences of courses including a community component are as follows:

ORIEN 105 – Tusculum Experience. This course is for incoming freshmen and includes Nettie McCormick Service Day.

CMNS 251 – Theory and Practice of Citizenship. This class is to be taken during the sophomore year. Students are required to perform 10 hours of community service in this class.

Service-Learning practicum to be completed in the Junior year. This requirement can be met through one of the following options: a CCA – approved internship, an approved departmental service-learning course, or SVLN 354 – East TN Based service-learning.

Students interested in additional service-learning courses may take the following, after the above pre-requisites have been met.

SVLN 356 – Immersion. Travel to a distant location. Previous immersion courses have traveled to Belize; Washington DC; Caretta, WV; and New Orleans, LA.

SVLN 351 – Summer Practicum. Students create their own service-learning experience in their hometowns.

The Center for Civic Advancement

Mission Statement

The Center for Civic Advancement seeks to engage the heart, mind, and soul of Tusculum through cultivating awareness of self and of others. We aspire to do this through the establishment of meaningful relationships with our local, national, and global communities.

The college has established the Center for Civic Advancement (CCA) with full time staff to help support the Tusculum Community in the following areas:

- Global and Missions Studies
- Service-learning courses
- Service-learning course components
- Community Service
- Internships with non-profit agencies
- Forums and discussions
- Research opportunities
- The Bonner Leader Program
- The Center for Economic Development and Entrepreneurship
- Community partnerships
- The Institute for Community Empowerment

In addition to these areas, the Center for Civic Advancement develops the annual sequence of courses based on community need and student learning objectives aimed at engaging students in academic practice while nurturing civic understandings. The Center is located on the second floor of Rankin Hall with offices and a gathering space for students to work together on projects.

Additional resources and an updated list of community partners can be found on our website: www.tusculum.edu/cca .

Please feel free to contact any member of the CCA staff for assistance or coordination of community-based education needs.

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Community-Based Education and Service-Learning through Faculty Course Integration

Service-Learning is an experiential teaching pedagogy that can be an effective vehicle for the development and acquisition of foundational knowledge that consists of specific competencies, skills and attitudes. In their book, *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?*, Eyler and Giles (1999) state that when the service experience is well integrated with theory and practice through effective application and reflection, many of the intellectual goals of higher education, including learning and application of material, critical thinking and problem solving, and perspective transformation, can occur. Students acquire valuable skills in areas such as leadership, collective decision-making, communication, working in groups, public problem solving and self-knowledge. Further, the Virtue Competencies, which are the concepts of Civility, Self-Knowledge, and Ethics of Social Responsibility, lie at the heart of Tusculum's student outcomes for service-learning experiences.

What are the effects of CBE/ service-learning?

"Engaged learning" raises expectations of students, enables them to consider how their learning affects and is affected by its application, and enhances the educational process by increasing their involvement in learning.

– The American Association of Colleges and Universities ("Bringing Theory to Practice," 2012)

Service-learning has a positive effect on multiple areas:

- **Personal outcomes**
 - Student personal development such as sense of personal efficacy, personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development.
 - Interpersonal development and the ability to work well with others, leadership and communication skills.
- **Social outcomes**
 - Reduces stereotypes and facilitates cultural and racial understanding.
 - Increased sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills.
 - Commitment to service both in college and beyond.
- **Learning Outcomes**
 - Increases students' academic learning.
 - Improves students' ability to apply what they have learned in "the real world."
 - Students demonstrate complexity of understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development.
- **Relationship with the Institution**
 - Stronger faculty relationships.
 - Improved satisfaction with the college
 - More likely to graduate.

Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2007

Definitions

There are many great definitions of service-learning within the field. Several commonly used definitions are presented here to provide a basis for discovering the common ground among them and to promote discussion about their meaning.

- Service-Learning means a method under which students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service that: is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience. - *American Association for Higher Education*
- Service-Learning is a credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996).
- Service-Learning is an experiential teaching method which engages young people in meaningful service to their communities as a means of enriching their academic learning; promoting personal growth and helping them develop the skills needed for productive citizenship. - *Tusculum College CCA*

Types of Service

- **Direct Service** – Activities which address immediate needs, one to one, but not always the conditions from which these needs emerge. Examples: tutoring, mentoring, visiting the elderly, serving food at a soup kitchen.
- **Indirect Service** – The channeling of resources to solve problems. Students become part of a larger community effort. Examples: community based research (CBR), community building, socially responsible daily behavior, community economic development, drives, collections, fundraisers, clean-ups, construction.
- **Civic Action and Advocacy** – Active participation in democratic citizenship. Examples: Informing the public about problems to be addressed and working toward a solution: lobbying, speaking, educating, writing, formal and informal political activities, public policy work, vigils, rallies, marches, picketing.

Community-Based Research (CBR)

What is Community-Based Research?

Community residents, with the assistance of academic researchers, gather information they need to address local problems. The community drives the entire process of setting the goals for community change, identifying questions that need to be researched, collecting the information, and deciding how to take action with the results.

Community-based research can be a powerful tool for communities because it puts community folks in charge of local planning and research - a process that traditionally has been left to experts in academia and government. *Knowledge is power!*

What is the difference between Community-Based Research and Traditional Research?

Community-based research values the local community perspective at every phase of the research process, instead of treating community members as merely sources of data for researchers.

Basic Principles for Designing a Community-Based Learning Course

Community Engagement and Preparation

- *Questions to consider:* Does the service component meet a public good as identified by the community? Has collaboration with community, students, and faculty occurred? How will the partnership with the community be handled? What are the structures in place to guide how the work will be accomplished, what roles will be filled, and how the product will be utilized?
- *Implementation:* Clear expectations and communication of goals and processes will alleviate possible conflicts or disappointments. Students will need to be prepared for the experience by learning about the service site, acquiring the skills they will need for the service as well as exploring the social contexts related to the service. Make sure there is enough substance in the service to keep students meaningfully engaged.

Connection to Academics

- *Question to consider:* Is there a clear link between the service project and the course content?
- *Implementation:* It is critical that the service component of the course is outlined in the syllabus and that the rationale for its inclusion is explained. Academic rigor should always be maintained and academic credit is for learning, not for service. Instructors need

to think about the explicit connections between course goals and the community's expectations and clearly articulate service and learning goals.

Reflection

- *Question to consider:* Is there a mechanism that encourages students to link their service experience to course content and to reflect upon why the service is important?
- *Implementation:* Reflection is an active, on-going, and thorough dissection of the service activity. It is the means by which students come to understand the meaning and impact of their efforts. They link what they have learned about themselves and the academic disciplines to what they have done in service to others. Without reflection, students simply go through the motions of service and remain cognitively unaffected by the experience, left with their personal ignorance and biases reinforced or unexamined.
- *Some possible questions for reflection are:* What am I doing and why? What am I learning? What stereotypes do I have about this population? What has been most challenging about the experience personally, intellectually, emotionally? What have I learned about myself? What are the social issues being addressed? What are some possible solutions to these issues?
- *Additional Insight:* Reflection methods should be diverse and multifaceted. Examples include: writing journals, essays, research papers or articles for the local newspaper, discussions in class or with the community, oral presentations, educational presentations, artistic expressions, i.e., role plays, music, painting or drawing, etc.

Reciprocity/Parity

- *Question to consider:* Is reciprocity and parity evident in the service component?
- *Implementation:* This suggests that every organization, entity, and individual, including the instructor involved with the service-learning project, functions as both a teacher and learner on equal terms. Participants are perceived as colleagues, not as servers and clients.

Presentation to Community/Celebration

- *Question to consider:* Is there an opportunity for the results of the service work and experience to be presented to the community and/or public?
- *Implementation:* The sharing of results, achievements and knowledge, across organizations and among individuals is the final step in the service-learning process. This involves the recognition and evaluation of the partnerships between the College and community agencies where community change is discussed and celebrated. For example: Are oral histories that student's collect returned to the community in some public form? Is the data students collected on the saturation of toxins in the local river made public?

Guidelines for Student Reflection

1. Activities should encourage creativity.
2. Reflection sessions should be student-driven.
3. Activities should address community impact and social change.
4. Reflection should also develop and explore personal growth and responses of each individual student.
5. Activities should be structured enough to achieve learning objectives, yet flexible enough to a lot for changing individual and project needs.
6. Reflection methods should be diverse and multifaceted.

Speaking: Whole class discussion
Small group discussion/activity with report
Oral reports to group
Discussions with community members or experts on the issue
Public speaking on project - teachers, church, agency board, etc.
Teach material to younger students
Testimony before policy makers

Writing: Essay, expert paper, research paper, final paper
Journal or log - kept daily, weekly or after each service experience
Case study, history
Special project report
Narrative for a video, film or slide show
Guide for future volunteers/participants
Self evaluation or evaluation of program, service agency
Newspaper, magazine and other published articles
Portfolio

Multimedia: Photo, slide, video or power point presentation
Painting, drawings, collages, 3 dimensional creations, etc.
Dance, music, role-play, theater

Activities: Gather information needed to serve or understand a project
Surveys or Community Based Research
Simulate or role-play actual or possible situations
Prepare conference or workshop presentations
Plan a training session for other students, program leaders
Recognition and celebration
Plan new or next-step future projects
Recruit peers to serve
Allocate program budget

Guidelines based on those outlined in Carl Fertman's *Service Learning for all Students* and the reflection standards in *The Training toolbox*, a training manual of Maryland Student Service Alliance.

Sequence for Reflection Questions

- **Expectation /Anticipation:** What do I think may happen? What stereotypes do I have about this population? What pitfalls, if any, do I anticipate?
- **Description:** What are your observations - people, sights, smells, physical setting, etc. What do you see, hear, and feel?
- **Comparison:** Compare this agency with others you have seen - similarities and differences.
- **Analysis:** What parts of the experience have been most challenging to you personally, intellectually, emotionally?
- **Synthesis:** What have you personally learned from your placement site? What are the social issues being addressed?
- **Evaluation:** What changes would you recommend in how your service operates? What are some possible solutions to the issues that have been raised?

Guidelines on Liability and Safety Issues for Class Service-Learning Projects

The cardinal rule is: *Communicate*. Before a service-learning project is begun, there must be clear communication between all parties: the agency, the faculty member, students, and the CCA. More than anything else, this will reduce, if not eliminate, risk.

Most cases of liability involving students arise from negligence or from failure of the campus to execute its duty appropriately to protect the student(s). Liability can occur when placing a student in an unsafe situation or failing to warn a student of potential dangers. Examples of liability include: travel hazards; failure to properly screen or train participants; and abuse of others can cause liability. Liability can also result from injury that the student causes to someone else in the performance of the job. For example, if a child, under the supervision of a volunteer working in a day care center, was injured because the student allowed the child to run into the street, the college and/or the sponsoring service organization would be liable.

The first step to assure that your students are properly informed about service experiences is to present the goals, learning outcomes and requirements of the service elements **in the course syllabus**. Faculty members should provide time for discussion and encourage questions during the course. Explain to the students what they should expect and be sure they know the correct procedures to follow in the event of an emergency, accident, unexpected changes and/or problems.

Faculty, students, community agencies and the CCA all have key roles in creating safe service experiences. The following examples list the most important elements of each role.

- **Faculty:** connect students and communities through academic courses, allowing time for questions to be raised and discussion so that students are comfortable with the experience and know what to expect. They facilitate communication of expectations and responsibilities in regard to issues such as behavior, appropriate clothing, use of tools and machinery and environmental considerations.

Faculty may invite community partners into the classroom to teach students about the mission and activities of the agency. Community agencies should be considered as equal partners and instructors in the project. They can also provide valuable insights throughout the entire process. There are several benefits to this, including the fact that a close working partnership between the agency and the faculty member may lead to conversations about safety issues that would never be explored if there were no comfort level between the two.

- **Students:** should adhere to all policies of the site, including safety procedures. They are to follow an agreed-upon schedule or notify the supervisor if unable to work when expected. They will respect all confidentiality and reporting policies of the site. They will not work alone with a child or other client and will not transport anyone unless cleared by

the site supervisor. They will notify the supervisor and the CCA or instructor of any changes.

Students should follow commonsense guidelines for behavior while completing service. They should: respect the privacy of all clients (recipients of volunteer service), avoid inappropriate language and dress, never give out their phone numbers or addresses, not loan money to clients, never offer their home as shelter to a client, ask for help if in doubt, and be flexible in their thinking.

- **Community partners:** provide organizational orientation and training for the position, providing a clear understanding of what is expected of the student(s). The site supervisor will guide and evaluate the student(s). S/he will certify the service hours given by the student(s) and may be asked to provide a brief evaluation at the conclusion of the service. They will notify the student and the CCA or the instructor of any changes.
- **Center for Civic Advancement:** cultivates relationships with a wide variety of community agencies with the goal of reciprocal benefits for each. The CCA also seeks to provide appropriate resources for faculty and students while maintaining safety and other standards. As service administrators, the CCA negotiates safety standards and a formal agreement with the non-profits and government agencies we most commonly work with. In most cases, a signed *Community Service Assumption of Risk Statement* from the community partner will be on file with the CCA. In the event it is not, one must be signed before the students begin service. Please contact the Center for Civic Advancement for more information. A copy of the *Statement* is attached for your information.

Community Based Learning Course Development Worksheet

Course Title, Name and Catalogue Description:
Community Partner(s):
Type of Service and Intended Service Project:
Connection to Course Content:
Assignments that Support and Connect Course Academic and Service Components:
Community Identified Needs that the Project Meets:
Student Learning Outcomes for Project:
Reflection Mechanism and Method of Presentation

Community Based Learning Instructor/Organization Agreement

Instructor: _____

Organization: _____

Description of Service-Learning project to be completed by the student(s):

Responsibilities:

Tusculum College:

Community Partner:

Timeline of Work:

Evaluation Method:

Final Presentation Date: _____

Signatures

Instructor: _____

Date: _____

Organization Representative: _____

Date: _____

Additional Resources

American Association of Colleges and Universities. <http://www.aacu.org/>

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National Campus Compact. <http://www.compact.org/initiatives/trucen/trucen-toolkit/>.

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