What is Service Learning?

There are many definitions of service learning in the literature, each one with common elements that define how service is conducted in conjunction with course content. Course content/concepts, service learning project, and student reflection. The Office of Community Engagement at California State University, Northridge adopted the below definition in 2012.

**Service Learning** is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Faculty choose a limited number of meaningful partnerships with the goal of providing students with different, but consistent off-campus learning experiences. Through service learning, students from kindergartners to college students use what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems. They not only learn the practical applications of their studies but they become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

**Key Elements of Service Learning:**

- Service learning links service to the community through academic study.
- Service learning requires structured reflection of community work, which is integrated into the course work.
- Service learning emphasizes working with organizations and individuals to address needs defined by the community.
- Service learning includes civic responsibility, collaboration with the community, directed reflection, and integrating critical thinking into a course.
- Service learning results in clarification of career objectives and acquisition of work-related skills.
- Service learning provides students with an excellent avenue to promote personal and professional growth.

**Service Learning is NOT:**

- Volunteerism – a volunteer is available to respond to any need that an organization may have (clerical, administrative, etc.), however, while a student involved in service learning is expected to make observations and work with the community in a manner that incorporates academic theories in order to achieve course-specific learning objectives.

- Internship – an internship’s primary purpose is to develop skills related to a specific technical field or profession.
The Benefits of Service Learning

**Student Benefits:**

*Service Learning helps to...*

- Makes learning relevant
- Personalizes your educational experience
- Provides experience in the local communities to enhance learning
- Increases understanding of the four facets of community: justice, compassion, diversity and social responsibility
- Provides an understanding of the economic, political, and cultural structures of society and the impact these structures have on individuals, as well as specific groups
- Allows the opportunity to learn from individuals who are different from and similar to you in age, class, gender, educational level, physical ability, sexual orientation, and life experiences
- Encourages active participation in the community
- Develops social responsibility and leadership skills
- Influences decisions regarding major career options

**Community Benefits:**

*Service Learning helps to...*

- Provide access to knowledge and skills of university students
- Provide access to academic expertise
- Promotion of organizational sustainability
- Gaining new perspectives on programs and services
- Building a responsive work-forced community

**Getting Started With a Community Based Organization (CBO)**

Your instructor has pre-selected one or more community partner(s) that have a strong history of collaborating with CSUN and have a partnership agreement on file with the office of Purchasing and Contracts. You can find a list of these community organizations in the Service Learning Database ([http://servicelearning.csun.edu/site-list](http://servicelearning.csun.edu/site-list)). **No substitutions can be made without the instructor’s consent and an approved partnership agreement with CSUN’s Office of Community Engagement.**
Step One:

Things to consider when selecting your Learning Site...

• What are your skills and interests?
• What is your most comfortable work setting (i.e. one-on-one, small groups, etc.)?
• What do you want to learn from my service learning experience (i.e. new skills, job experience, etc.)?
• What populations do you most want to serve (i.e. school-age children, elderly, etc.)?
• How much time do you reasonably have to give each week?
• Does the community organization have business hours that are compatible with my schedule?
• Do I have adequate and reliable transportation to the community organization’s site?

Step two:

Contact the Learning Site to Discuss Your Service Learning Assignment...

Phone or email the Learning Site Supervisor at the Community Organization you have selected and be prepared to share the following information with them:

• Tell them that you are a CSUN student
• Tell them that your instructor requires you to complete a service learning assignment.
• Tell them the amount of hours you need to spend completing the service learning component of your course.
• Tell them the name of the instructor and class for which you are completing the assignment
• Arrange a date for your learning site orientation, confirm the address of the learning site, and ask for directions
• Be on time for your meeting
Attend a Learning Site Orientation with the Community Based Organization (CBO)
This must be completed on or before your first day participating at the organization

Prepare by:

- Dressing professionally and arrive to your appointment on time.
- Making sure to take your course syllabus and any details you have about the service learning assignment. Sharing this with your learning site supervisor will insure all persons have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes defined by the course instructor.
- Knowing what days and times you are available to complete your service learning assignment.

Things You Can Expect to Be Covered at Site Orientation Include:

- The mission of the organization
- Minimum daily, weekly, or monthly time commitments they may require.
- Who will be your site supervisor
- How can you contact your site supervisor
- The procedures for checking in at the learning site
- Who will sign your daily timesheet
- If TB test or background checks are required
- What type(s) of work you will be doing while at the community organization to achieve the learning outcomes defined by the course instructor
- Any training the community organization requires prior to beginning your service learning assignment.
- How you will be evaluated
- The organization’s privacy rights

Risk Identification
To ensure your safety while learning off campus please make sure to...

- Pay attention to all safety issues.
- Identify emergency exits.
- Locate fire extinguishers
- Identify obvious damage to floors, walls, or ceilings that might create a risk
- Discuss if you will ever work unsupervised with CBO’s clients
- Take a tour of the site
- Find out where to park
Possible Additional Organization’s Requirements

**Background Checks (Not Required By All CBO’s)**

Background checks (which may include fingerprinting) are often required for service learning students who come into contact with protected classes of people, such as children, persons with disabilities, and persons living in assisted living facilities. The decision of a learning site to require a background check depends on the learning site’s interpretation of the laws or regulations that govern it. As such, the decision to request a background check from service learning students fall under the organizations responsibilities. The university plays no role in this decision.

Federal and state laws and regulations governing background checks are very strict regarding the privacy of the person being reviewed. Most laws allow only the entity requesting the background check to have access to the results. Consequently, because the university is not responsible for requesting the background check, **no faculty or staff member will ever be given the specific results of a student’s background check.** All learning sites are under strict guidelines to keep background check information private, and can have their licenses revoked if they violate this right of privacy. This means that if a student takes two separate service learning courses, each requiring a background check, they will need to submit to two background checks so that the results can be sent separately to both locations. This holds true even if both service learning courses are taken in the same semester.

Although it is the sole responsibility of the learning site to determine whether a background check is necessary, that does not mean that the learning site is always responsible for paying for the process. **If the learning site cannot cover the cost of the background check, then this responsibility falls to the student, no the university.**

**TB Tests (Not Required By All Learning Sites)**

Students participating in service learning are often required to obtain a current TB Test before they begin their service learning assignment. This test can be obtained from the Klotz Student Health Center at a cost of $5.00. Community Engagement will cover the cost of a limited number of TB Test provided by the Klotz Student Health Center. Please note that the Health Center will only be accepting vouchers from January 20th to February 20th.

Visit the office of Community Engagement (CIELO Suite SH-435) and ask for a TB Authorization Form, which requires the following information:

- Your name as it appears on your official CSUN records
- Your 9-digit CSUN Student ID number
• The course title, number, and CSUN professor for which you are completing a Service Learning Assignment
• Name of the Learning Site you have selected to complete your Service Learning Assignment
• Arrange an appointment at the Klotz Student Health Center for a test and follow-up reading (48-72 hours after the test is administered).
• Go online to schedule an appointment or call at (818) 677-3666
• Schedule your test for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday; as you will need to go back in 2-3 days to have it “read” by the nurse
• If you do not go back for a reading within 48-72 hour time frame, you will need to arrange another appointment and start the process from the beginning; and you will be responsible for paying the $5.00 fee
• You will receive documentation of your clearance upon completion of the test reading
• You should retain your TB test document for your records and provide a copy for the community agency for which you are serving
• **NO TESTS WILL BE PROVIDED ON THURSDAYS!**

**Risk Management & Student Forms**

**Student Learning Plan & Agreement (SLP&A)**

**The Student Learning Plan & Agreement (SLP&A) is DUE BY Monday, March 2, 2015**

• The *Student Learning Plan & Agreement* is a **mandatory** agreement that serves as a contract between the university and you the service learning student. It is an informed consent, demonstrating your awareness of the potential risks and behavior expectations at the learning site.

• Students who participate in a service learning assignment without submitting a Student Service Learning Plan & Agreement are **not** covered under the SAFECLIP campus insurance program and can be held liable for any damages incurred at the learning site.

• Students are required by campus Risk Management to **submit this agreement prior to reporting to the organization’s site**. This is an online form submitted through the Service Learning Database ([http://servicelearning.csun.edu](http://servicelearning.csun.edu)). Only students enrolled in a Service Learning course have access to log into the database. Once you log in with your CSUN credentials you will need to select the organization you have chosen from the “Site” tab. Once you have placed yourself at the site and entered an estimated number of service hours you will volunteer
you will be taken to the Service Learning Plan and Agreement. If you are not, please contact Nicole Linton, the service learning coordinator from the office of Community Engagement. Please do not fill out this form until you have discussed your learning objectives, goals, duties and approximate hours with your professor.

- If you are a minor, a hard copy of this form can be picked up in the Office of Community Engagement. This physical copy must be filled out and signed by both the student and their parent.

- If, after reviewing potential risk, a student declines to volunteer at the designated service learning site an alternate option will be provided. The faculty member in charge will work with the student to ensure access to an equal learning opportunity that does not present the same potential level of risk.

- Separate agreements must be turned in for each learning site a student participates at.

**Student Timesheet**

**Student Timesheets** are DUE BY Monday, May 4, 2015

Student Timesheets should document all hours that a student serve at a learning site and the types of activity they participate in.

- This **Student Time Sheet** is accessible as a PDF document that students can print directly from our website or at this link [http://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/CE-Student-Time-Sheet.pdf](http://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/CE-Student-Time-Sheet.pdf).

- Students should have a site supervisor sign off on their hours and activities every time they report to the site.

- **Students are required to submit** a completed timesheet no later than Monday, May 4, 2015 to Community Engagement. To be considered complete all timesheets must have learning site supervisor’s initials daily, total hours calculated, and signatures from both you and your learning site supervisor.

- The best way to submit your time sheet is by uploading it through the Timesheet Submission Form [http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/community-engagement/timesheet-submission-form](http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/community-engagement/timesheet-submission-form).

- Individual timesheets must be turned in for each site a student volunteers at.

- This form serves as risk management function by keeping a record of when students were providing service at the site.
Pre-Service Learning Evaluation & Post-Service Learning Evaluation

The Pre-Service Learning Evaluations & Post-Service Learning Evaluations are designed to measure students' inclination & participation in service learning classes and the likeliness of students to participate as active members in their community. These evaluations also improve and enhance the service learning experience for CSUN students. Both evaluations are required at the discretion of your professor.

Pre-Surveys are DUE No Later Than Monday, March 2, 2015

Post-Surveys are DUE No Later Than Monday, May 4, 2015

- These evaluations are meant to measure experiences Before and After volunteering.
- Evaluations are to be submitted through SurveyMonkey. They can be accessed through the Community Engagement website http://www.csun.edu/communityengagement or by using the direct link below (Pre-Evals) https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PreSpring2015 (Post-Evals) http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PostSpring2015

Forms and Due Dates

Student Forms

- Pre-Service Learning Evaluation (at professor discretion) Due by: March 2, 2015 https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PreSpring2015


- Student Service Learning Plan & Agreement Due by: March 2, 2015 http://servicelearning.csun.edu

- Student Time Sheet Due by: May 4, 2015 http://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/CE-Student-Time-Sheet.pdf

Submit Time Sheet Here http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/community-engagement/timesheet-submission-form
Tips for a Successful Service Learning Experience

• The following tips are meant to help ensure students have the best experience possible. If after reading these tips you need any further assistance please contact the Service Learning Coordinator, Nicole Linton in the office of Community Engagement (818-677-6655, Nicole.Linton@csun.edu).

• Don’t delay. Get started early! Some community organizations only accept a few students at a time, so it is best not to procrastinate. An early start also allows plenty of time to complete the hours and class assignments related to your community engagement experience.

• Be flexible! One aspect of service learning is working with people, but there are many areas and opportunities for learning.

• Communicate effectively with the community organization’s staff. They are there to support you and to help you create a positive experience. Sharing the course syllabus with a site supervisor will help to guide your experience toward your learning objectives.

• Participate in classroom discussions regarding your service learning experiences; share your thoughts and experiences with others. This will help you deal with new situations that may arise and will provide insight as to how others might handle similar situations.

• Learn about the community and the people in it before making assumptions. You may come from a very different community than the one you will become part of through your service learning assignment.

• Make an effort to learn about existing strengths and needs of the community you are serving.

• Learn about the history of your chosen community organization. Understanding the agency’s purpose and goals will help you to better serve the organization.

• Be open to from other viewpoints. Observe and respect cultural differences; this includes differences in language, expectations, and values.

• Critically think about the purpose of your service learning assignment and actively work toward meeting the community organization’s needs while understanding the relevance within your own area of study.

• Pay attention to how you practice power. Learn and serve WITH the people at the community organization. We are reaching our hands out, not down.
• Accept, enjoy, celebrate, and build on small successes!

The Do Not’s of Service Learning

• DON’T report to your learning site under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
• DON’T give or loan a client money or other personal belongings.
• DON’T make promises or commitments to a client that you cannot keep.
• DON’T give a client or community organization representative a ride in a personal vehicle.
• DON’T use your personal vehicle to provide services for your organization.
• DON’T tolerate verbal exchange of a sexual nature or engage in behavior that might be perceived as sexual with a client or community organization representative.
• DON’T tolerate verbal exchange or engage in behavior that might be perceived as discriminating against an individual on the basis of her/his age, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability or ethnicity.
• DON’T engage in any type of business with clients during the term of your service learning assignment.
• DON’T enter into personal relationships with a client or community organization representative during the term of your service learning assignment.
• DO KNOW that you can request an alternative learning site if you are not comfortable with your current learning site.

Safety is a Priority

• Keep your automobile a non-attraction. Do not leave items visible in the car’s interior. Place valuable articles in the trunk prior to arrival at the learning site.
• If you take the bus, be sure to know the route and cost of bus fare.
• In case of a breakdown or a mix up with transportation, carry enough money for an alternate ride home.
• Develop a community safety net of resources in your learning site area.
• Get to know your learning site supervisor at the learning site.
• Familiarize yourself with people, places and things in the area that can be of assistance in times of emergency (i.e. know the location of phones, 24-hour stores, police station, etc.).
• Give the phone number of the agency where you’ll be serving to a roommate, friend, or relative before leaving for your learning site.
• Use common sense and conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times.
• Every learning site has its own rules, policies, procedures, protocol and expectations for which you are responsible. Familiarize yourself with the
workings of the learning site. This will contribute to both your success and your safety.

Creating Closure at the Learning Site

How can you, as a service learning student, best prepare yourself and individuals you have been working with for your departure? Through Community Engagement, students experience the frustrations and difficulties as well as the successes and hopes of working with different populations on a short-term (semester-long) basis. Closure signifies the ending of an experience, and will involve a period of time meant to effectively prepare participants for the conclusion of a community engagement partnership.

- **Give an Advanced Notice of Two to Three Weeks Before your Service Ends**
  In anticipation of final visits to the learning site, you should inform the learning site supervisor and those with whom you have worked, the number of weeks left of your commitment. This way, the learning site supervisor will be alerted to the loss of assistance and the persons being served will have the opportunity to emotionally prepare for and express "Goodbyes."

- **Plan a “Ceremony” for your Final Session**
  Plan a gathering with drinks and snacks. This may be a time for acknowledgment, sharing accomplishments, providing certificates and awards, taking and sharing photographs or creating a bulletin board, photo album, or another memento to reflect on the experience.

- **Write Letters**
  Write a letter to the learning site and/or the person you served sharing how the experience changed you, what you learned, and the lasting impact the service has had on you. If you would like to continue communication after the semester, invite the individual(s) you worked with to write back.

- **Give Small Gifts as Remembrances**
  Make a dvd of music both parties like, take a Polaroid camera to the last service learning visit and take pictures of each other to exchange, give a book (one that you have read together or one that you think the person might enjoy). Please don’t spend large amounts of money on gifts.

- **Behaviors to Avoid When Saying "Goodbye"**
  Emotions may surface for you and the people you have been working with. It is likely that the people with whom you have worked have experienced losses and it is never an enjoyable part of a partnership. However, leaving a partnership without saying goodbye will leave both you and the other person feeling unsettled and abandoned. Be aware that you may become "romanticized" and may be inspired to make promises to perpetuate that feeling of good will. However, you...
must BE HONEST about ending the experience. Your time commitment is finished and it is appropriate for you to say goodbye. Do not make promises that cannot be kept.

**CSU Sexual Harassment Policies**

The California State University Chancellor's Executive Order No. 345 requires each campus of The California State University to maintain a working and learning environment free from sexual harassment for its students, employees, and those who apply for student or employee status. The following federal and state statutes prohibit sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination:

**Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended)** – Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972; Government Code Section 12940; and the California Education Code, Section 200 et seq.

**Responsibility** – All members of the university community are responsible for ensuring that their conduct does not sexually harass any other member of the university community. This same responsibility extends to employees of third parties doing business with the University and to campus visitors. University administrators and supervisors have the further responsibility of preventing and eliminating sexual harassment within the areas they oversee. If administrators or supervisors know sexual harassment is occurring, receive a complaint of sexual harassment, or obtain information indicating possible sexual harassment, they must take immediate steps to ensure the matter is addressed, even if the issue or alleged problem is not within their assigned area of responsibility.

Faculty, staff, and students are expected to inform an appropriate administrator (i.e., deans or vice presidents) or other university officer (i.e., director of Human Resources) if they have reason to believe sexual harassment is occurring. Program administrators and department heads/chairs are responsible for taking appropriate steps to disseminate this policy statement to students and employees in their respective areas. All faculty, staff, and administrators will be held accountable for compliance with this.

**Definition of Sexual Harassment** – Sexual harassment is defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as follows: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment or academic advancement
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for affecting an individual's employment or academic standing
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work, learning, or social environment
Types of Sexual Harassment

- Verbal or physical contact with the intention of sexual relations may be quid pro quo (i.e., "in exchange" for favors such as promotions, employment perks, better grades etc.). The power of the person in authority (employer, supervisor, professor, etc.) to sexually harass increases in direct correlation to lack of organization of the potential victim group – i.e., women laborers in the informal sector, temporary workers, students, women in institutions for the mentally/physically handicapped etc. are most vulnerable.

- Sexual harassment by colleagues
- Sexual harassment by clients – particularly in professions where women's role is "sexually packaged" – such as airhostesses, workers in beer bars, etc.
- Sexual objectification of an individual though sexual relation not intended (harassment on the road etc.). This can also include negative comments like "you're fat/ ugly" etc.
- Hostile, anti-woman environment (pornography in public places, foul language etc.). This may not be directed at any woman employee in particular, but the effect on women is one of discomfort.

Additional Resources:

- Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
  http://www.discriminationattorney.com/harasswk.html

- Sexual Harassment at the Workplace
  http://www.fullerton.edu/diversity/policies.asp?mode=policiesbrochure
CSUN Video/Photo Release form

If you would like to take video or photos at your learning site please ask your subjects to sign a CSUN Video/Photo Release form that can be found at http://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/form-CSU-Visual-Audio-Image-Release-Form.pdf

Share Your Experiences With Us

The office of Community Engagement would like to hear about your Service Learning project. Help us showcase the difference CSUN students are making in the community every semester. Submit your photos, videos and reflections using the timesheet link below. http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/community-engagement/timesheet-submission-form

Stay Connected! Like Us On Facebook

Like us on Facebook to stay up to date with Community Engagement Events and connect with community organizations.

https://www.facebook.com/CSUNCE
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The Office of Community Engagement is located in the CIELO Suite located on the Sierra Hall 4th floor "rooftop" corridor. There is an elevator located in the southwest corner of Sierra Hall just around the corner from the large Geography Department globe.