

## Helpful Hints for Creating a Service Learning Syllabus

### *Revising an Existing Course*

Step 1: Consider the type of service learning that best meets your course needs.

- Pure service learning: The whole focus of the course is service to the community and direct experience with a local community agency.
- Discipline-based service learning: Combines discipline content with service in the community to reinforce and reflect on how theory and practice are integrated.
- Problem-based service learning: Students are placed in the community to work with an agency to solve a problem. This is sometimes called client or consultant based service.
- Capstone course: Students in a specific discipline create a culminating project in the community that combines discipline based content with service to the community.
- Undergraduate community based action research: Students work closely with faculty to engage in action based research to learn research methodology and apply it to the field. Usually designed for small seminars.

Step 2: Consider your content learning outcomes in your discipline-based course.

Questions to consider:

How can service learning enhance or integrate best with your content?

How can you infuse service learning into existing readings, lectures, and activities in your course.

How can service learning opportunities in the community reinforce content?

How many service hours will meet those content goals?

Step 3: Create a matrix of content goals and correlate service learning goals that match. This will help you determine which assignment(s) you will create for the service piece and what you might eliminate as part of your non-service course.

Step 4: Determine which community partners might align best with your course and service goals.

- Plan in advance. Don't wait until the beginning of the semester to determine with which Learning Site to partner. Meet with the managing director from the Community Engagement office if you need help identifying a community partner for your course.
- Students should not be allowed to randomly select their learning sites for service learning assignments.

- Students should not be allowed to complete their service learning hours in only one or two sessions, but rather distribute the service learning hours over a consistent period of time.

### **Recommendation for Setting up the Syllabus**

\*\* Create and distribute a syllabus that clearly explains or defines the service learning goals, objectives, criteria and requirements. It will save you headaches later.

\* Include the official campus definition of Service Learning.

- Include a description of the service learning assignment as an expressed goal.
- Include a description of the nature of the service learning placement and/or project.
- Specify the roles and responsibilities of students in the placement and/or service learning project.
- Include whether or not the service learning project/experience is mandatory. If it is mandatory, offer an alternative for students who cannot do, for any reason, the specific type of service learning assignment you have identified.
- Include time requirements (how many hours total/per week/per semester).
- Include contact information for the Learning Site(s) and the Learning Site Supervisor(s).
- Identify the needs of the community that will be met through this service learning placement.
- Explain how students will be expected to demonstrate what they have learned in the service learning placement, such as journals, term papers, and in-class presentations.
- Include reflections as part of the learning process. These can be journals, on Moodle, or assignments.
- Include an explanation of what will be evaluated and how it will be evaluated. (In terms of the course grade).
- Explain how the course assignments link the service learning placement to the course content.

- Require a *Student Service Learning Plan & Agreement* for each student that defines the scope of service to ensure the faculty member, student and learning site supervisor meet educational objectives, create measurable outcomes, and understand the risks inherent in the particular placement.