

Service-Learning Ideas for Political Science Courses

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A Political Science professor asked me for ideas for an upcoming course.

This is what I generated with specific local ideas.

I can do this for ANY DISCIPLINE

Potential SL projects/community partners:

1. Alderman Mike Lynch – super active and involved in local politics and current issues. We have a good connection with him and we could call him to explore options
2. Women's League of Voters – active chapter in Oneonta, we have a campus connection
3. Free Health Clinics in Oneonta – might have interesting policies to examine
4. Seward's office – located in Oneonta
5. City of Oneonta government – The city assessor, Mario, is super nice and I would bet he would be willing to work with us on a project. Likewise for the city clerk. Students could put in hours with these officials, attend council meetings, planning meetings, etc
6. Occupy Otsego – was a fairly active chapter last year, could be explored. They are active again fall 2013 and are planning actions. They have requested student volunteers for help with a variety of tasks
7. OFO: Opportunities for Otsego – a great county-wide non-profit for Otsego County. We have a good relationship with the Director, Dan Maskin. OFO runs programs such as the Violence Intervention Program (battered women shelter, etc), Head Start, HEAP (heat funding for low-income populations), Program for first-time home buyers, and others
8. There are many non-profits in Oneonta that might have policy research on the agenda and we have a contact we could ask at NYCON (NY Council of NonProfits), to find out which agencies need help.
9. Anti-fracking activist groups – The Oneonta/Cooperstown chapter is extremely active and was the impetus for the movement in NYS. There is also a chapter out of Morris, NY that is very active. We have great contacts for both chapters.
10. Controversy over new housing complex – attend zoning board meetings, etc. Perhaps this would link up with #1 or #5 or #7 above as it touches on housing issues for all of Oneonta
11. Immigration issues – we have recent immigrants living in Oneonta. This would need more exploration, but if that was an issue you were interested in, we could make it work. I know of another professor working with this population for a service-learning project, where the students are helping tutor and helping with teaching language, and learning about the experiences of these recent immigrants.
12. Nursing Homes – all sorts of policies in these establishments
13. Department of Social Services – we don't have a contact here yet, but if you were interested in this agency, I would contact them and see if there is any potential
14. Fox Hospital – Former President Alan Donovan works here writing grants, so that might be a great contact – not exactly sure what your students would do yet
15. Office of the Aging
16. Planned Parenthood – just went through a switch in management and policy. The head of the Oneonta office is a lawyer, so that has great potential