

Academic Service-Learning Faculty Handbook

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1. The Basics

1.1 Service-Learning, Defined

Many definitions of service-learning exist at different colleges and universities. The definition used here is partly based on the definition used by [Campus Compact](#), the premier professional organization for service-learning. Scholarly articles and books were also used to develop the definition.

Service-learning is a community-based form of real-world learning that involves students in service activities that have connections to the course content and student learning outcomes. Reciprocity is developed between the college and community avoiding the “white knight” syndrome (Butin 2010, Sigmon 1979). A reflection component is necessary to provide context and meaning via critical thinking (Strait & Lima 2009). The “4 R’s” are essential components of a well-developed service-learning activity – respect, reciprocity, relevance, reflection (Campus Compact 2000, Sigmon 1979).

According to Howard (2001) service-learning must be relevant and meaningful to the community, and “developed and formulated *with* the community.” Important here is that the community is involved in all parts of the activity – not just receivers of charity work. The term “service-learning” itself indicates the flow of knowledge and beneficial outcomes in both directions by including a hyphen between the two words. Early literature argued the use of the hyphen. Literature in the 1990s debated the use of different terminology including *academic service-learning*, *community service-learning*, *co-curricular service-learning*, and *service-learning internships* (Furco 2009). Today, the term “*service-learning*” with the hyphen is used to signify this complex form of academic, community-based service.

Service-learning is a High Impact teaching Practice (HIP) defined by [Association of American Colleges & Universities](#) (AAC&U) as a type of experiential learning that is a *required component of a course*. Some teaching faculty on this campus mistakenly believe that if service is required for the course, then it cannot be service-learning. Quite the contrary – being a required assignment that is structured is part of what defines service-learning. Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are developed for the service-learning assignment highlighting the importance of giving back to the community while developing civic responsibility in students (Kuh, 2008).

Other definitions worth sharing include the one developed by Learn and Serve America’s National Service-Learning Clearinghouse that is a part of the Corporation for National and Community Service. They (Seifer and Connors, Eds. 2007) define service-learning as:

“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. Service-learning is a

structured learning experience that combines community service with preparation and reflection. Service-learning provides college and university students with a “community context” to their education, allowing them to connect their academic coursework to their roles as citizens.”

The bottom line: while students serve, they learn. Communities collaborate and benefit. Activities are connected to course curriculum and SLOs. Reflection provides context and opportunities for utilizing and improving critical thinking skills.

1.2 How is Service-Learning Different than Volunteer Service?

Volunteer service has its own merits but lacks a few components that service-learning contributes to the students’ academic experience. Volunteer service typically does not incorporate connections to course curriculum and SLOs. In fact, it can and often does happen completely separate from the classroom. Volunteer service also does not always possess the academic meaning that service-learning does. For example, picking up trash on the side of the road is not a recommended activity for service-learning because the students would not necessarily interact with the community nor would they make clear connections to course content.

1.3 Bottom Line: What Must be Included in an Assignment to be Considered Service-Learning?

There are several necessary components to a service-learning assignment:

- The assignment is connected to Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
- The assignment is connected to course content and those connections are discussed during class time
- The service activities are organized and executed *with* the community partner, not *for* or *to* the community partner, eliminating the “white knight” syndrome
- The community partner is a nonprofit
- Students and faculty do not receive payment for their service
- There is a reflection component included in the assignment
- Students conduct a significant number of hours serving the community partner (*20 hours over the course of a semester is recommended*)
- The service activities are a graded, required (*or in some cases optional*) component of the course

1.4 Academic Connection

The AAC&U identifies service-learning as a high impact teaching practice (HIP) that incorporates active learning benefitting the students, the faculty, and the college. Specifically, the service activities need to be aligned with SLOs and assessment practices (discussed later in this document).

Careful planning is necessary for a successful service-learning activity. What does the course cover? Are there SLOs that could be accomplished via service-learning? How can it be assessed? What community partners have connections to this course material? Do those community partners have needs that aren't being met? Can students realistically help in the course of one semester? These are some of the questions to ask yourself while planning. Communication with community partners prior to the start of the semester is strongly encouraged so there is time to iron out the details. However, in some cases, community partners already have an established working relationship with the volunteer center (CSRC: Center for Social Responsibility and Community) and students can simply join in on these existing activities. For example, if working at a soup kitchen would give your students insight to economic situations, social services, or community relations (to name a few examples), then you can simply have students sign up to work at a soup kitchen at the CSRC (Alumni Hall 101C).

With preexisting and ongoing service opportunities, it is strongly recommended that students sign up during the first 2 weeks of the semester, as these activities are popular and spots are taken quickly. Arrangements can also be made for 12 students from your class to attend Saturday's Bread on the same day, which can be beneficial. These types of scenarios need to be planned out well in advance with the CSRC.

Possibilities are endless. Faculty can arrange a meeting with Linda Drake, *Executive Director* of CSRC, to hear ideas and gather helpful information. The benefits of working with the CSRC are discussed in detail later in this document.

1.5 Reflection Component

Students need to be assigned a reflection assignment as part of the service-learning component of the class. It must also include feedback from the professor, peers, and/or those served. Reflections can be done in a variety of ways: research paper, reflection paper, oral presentation, poster presentation, or reflection journal. Presentations can be conducted as individuals or groups of students who all participated in the same activities.

The distinction between the research paper and reflection paper is negligible. In both types of papers students should connect service activities to course content, discuss relevance of service activities to both the course and the community partner, and should discuss the meaning of the service activities. A research paper may be heavier on researched content that connects to what was learned/observed during the service activity. A reflection paper

may be more concerned with the meaning and relevance of service activities to the course content. A combination of the two types of papers can also be used where the students research a topic, and the service activities serve as another source of information in the form of observations, discussions with community members, and interviews of community partners.

An oral presentation or poster can incorporate the essence of a research and/or reflection paper and is often more beneficial to the entire class. Students hear what their peers experienced and how connections were made to course content. In addition, a meaningful class discussion can be facilitated after the presentations. Students are often excited and proud of what they accomplished, so presentations provide an outlet for the students to share their experiences. The entire class benefits by hearing other connections to course material and it reinforces what they have been learning in the course.

A reflection journal can be useful as well. Typically, a reflection journal is less formal and gives students an opportunity to share more of their personal feelings. All entries should include connections to course material and not be a minute-by-minute account of what they did during the service activity. It tends to be somewhat philosophical in nature. A reflection journal can be assigned in conjunction with a paper or presentation if a faculty desires – it can stimulate thought about connections and meaning throughout the service activities, instead of students trying to synthesize it all at the end.

Faculty can also lead reflection “sessions” during class. But care must go into the planning and facilitation. Some students may dominate the discussion. The best reflection discussions are inclusive of all students. For example, the professor can ask all students to share their “a-ha” moment when the connection between the course and the service activity became obvious. This can take a long time, depending on how many students are in the class. An alternative, would be for students to share in smaller groups.

Reflection is crucial to a service-learning assignment. The format will vary per faculty member and by the nature of the service activities.

1.6 Avoiding the “White Knight” Syndrome

Collaboration with community partners for service activities should result in a reciprocal relationship (Butin 2010). Students help others by participating but not in such a way that the students are removed from those they are helping. The college should not be seen as swooping in and saving the day. Instead, the college and community partners need to build harmonious relationships that benefit all involved. The relationships should be formed so that the students are immersed in the environment in which they serve. Not only will this cultivate healthy relationships, but the students will also gain more insight and be exposed to diverse environments. If the community partners see the college as a comrade instead of from the elusive and elite ivory tower, the entire community will benefit in powerful ways.

How is this accomplished? Working together with community partners to develop plans and cultivate ideas is a start. Requesting community partners to interact with students in specific ways will also help. Encouraging students to strike up conversations with those served is integral for forming reciprocal relationships. For example, students can be required to include informal/conversational interviews in their reflections – informal conversations because formal interviews can make many people uncomfortable. Ask students to submit a list of topics to discuss or questions they will ask others during their service activities.

A number of strategies can be used to cultivate a healthy, reciprocal relationship. For example, during a community event eradicating invasive species led by an environmental organization, students worked side-by-side with community members, the environmental organization, and their faculty member. Students were instructed to ask the community members questions. In addition, the environmental organization leader gave informal instruction during the event. Everyone was working together, sharing ideas and accomplishing a positive outcome.

2. Why Service-Learning?

2.1 Service-Learning Pedagogy

Service-learning is a form of high-impact teaching practices (HIPs) (Kuh 2008) that provides an avenue for deliberate thought and action to bring together students, faculty, administrators, nonprofits, and community members to create change with reciprocal benefits (Kaye 2010). Service-learning has become representative and the measuring stick of engaged learning practices (Butin 2010). The scholarship of service-learning has moved away from fighting for legitimacy and has moved on to issues of institutional norms and policies, and embedding across academic disciplines (Furco 2002, Hartley et al. 2005).

The community and the college are seen as partners in the exchange of knowledge and exposure to diversity (*culture, race, religion, gender, values, social status, etc.*). Service-learning is tangible. Students learn civic and social responsibility while applying their knowledge to something concrete. For example, business students at SUNY Oneonta collaborated with Andrew Marietta (*Regional Manager at NYCON: New York Council of Nonprofits*) to review and update policy for local nonprofits. The students met a recognized need of the community and produced tangible documents that contributed to an academic learning experience.

Service-learning increases student engagement in academics, in civic-related activities, and socially with faculty, peers, and community members. Research indicates that service-learning leads to positive results for SLOs, openness to diversity, fosters a more inclusive and equitable society, and cultivates civic engagement during and after graduation (Eyler et al 2001; Bell et al 2007; Cress 2014; Myers-Lipton 1996). The potential is high for using service-learning to meet [college mission goals](#) and [strategic plan pillars](#) at SUNY Oneonta. Service-learning is naturally infused into all of the pillars as it facilitates inclusive learning environments, community-centered critical consciousness, applied learning, commitment to helping communities (local, regional, global), and sustainable and just action (Cress 2014; Furco 2009; Butin 2010; Butin 2005; Kaye 2010; Kuh 2008; Myers-Lipton 1996).

2.2 Benefits for Faculty and the College

The college can benefit on many levels. Service-learning has become effective in attracting new students, increasing eligibility for federal grant dollars, impressing donors (Butin 2010), and leading to a culture of service at an institution (Butin 2010; Carnegie 2006). The Administration can foster service-learning practices and the Admissions office can use success stories to promote the college.

Simonet (2008) demonstrates how service-learning as a process leads to higher levels of student engagement and therefore results in higher rates of student retention (Bringle et al. 2010). Research shows that, for students, service-learning practices leads to positive relationships with faculty (Bringle and Steinberg 2010; Gallini and Moely 2003; Kuh et al. 1991), a strong sense of self-efficacy (Bean and Eaton 2002), a sense of belonging (Tinto 1993), a commitment to service (Vogelgesang and Astin 2005; Fenzel and Peyrot 2005; Eyler and Giles 1999), and a sense of social and civic responsibility (Westheimer and Kahne 2003; Moely et al 2002; Astin and Sax 1998). All of these positive impacts of service-learning enhances the ability of the college to retain students and eventually graduate them from the college.

Faculty who use service-learning in their classrooms are engaging in high-impact teaching strategies that can be invigorating and rewarding. Faculty often find themselves in a rut, teaching similar content every semester. Using service-learning keeps both the faculty and the students more engaged as well as keeping things fresh. In addition, students learn complex content on a deeper more profound level (Eyler and Giles 1999) while they are contributing to the betterment of the community. It grows the level of interaction and exchange of ideas between faculty and students.

Faculty and other members of the college community also benefit on a personal and professional level. Helping community members while utilizing their expertise in an applied manner can be extremely satisfying. The exchange of ideas flows in both directions. Community members can enrich faculty scholarship and material for the classroom. Entire data sets are sometimes shared with faculty when helping a local nonprofit. It can change a person's world of awareness outside of the college community opening up new realms of scholarship possibilities.

2.3 Benefits for Students

Research shows that students who engage in service-learning have a heightened awareness of civic and social responsibility (Kendrick 1996). Students' moral development, academic learning, and critical thinking skills are all enhanced by well-developed service-learning pedagogies (Astin and Sax 1998; Eyler and Giles 1999; Rhodes and Howard 1998). Students gain mastery of content through reflection that is difficult to achieve otherwise (Pasek et al. 2006; Eyler & Giles 1999) and are able to analyze increasingly complex problems (Eyler & Giles 1999; Batchelder & Root 1994). Motivation for learning course-based material also increases with service-learning experiences (Furco 2003; Covitt 2002).

The advantages gained by using service-learning are numerous: significant improvements in writing abilities (Wurr 2002), higher performances on examinations (Mpofu 2007), development in critical thinking skills (Prentice & Robinson 2010; Bringle et al 2006; Eyler & Giles 1999) are all gained through well developed service-learning pedagogy. Students also learn more about their career possibilities by serving in discipline-specific areas of interest. Students in an Introductory Geography course are encouraged to serve in

locations with connections to their majors. Some students find they absolutely are dedicated to their career plan and others realize the career path is not the right fit. Other students find passion in areas they never anticipated.

Depending on the service-learning activities, students can improve upon their technical abilities in a discipline (Prentice & Robinson 2010; Langley 2006). This is common in a service-learning internship situation where upper level students serve a nonprofit by using their learned technical skills to improve upon things such as policy, GIS maps, surveys, data collection/analysis, web design, and social media promotion. Students build a more robust résumé gaining experience that can lead to better graduate school and job opportunities after graduation. Potential employers and members of scholarship committees are typically impressed with students who are engaged with service. Kaitlin Jewel, a graduate of the Geography program, was involved in numerous service projects – disaster relief in New Orleans, disaster relief in Texas, local service through service-learning geography courses, to name a few. After graduation she applied to work for the federal government in Washington, DC. A representative from Homeland Security traveled to Oneonta to interview Kaitlin's references and what impressed him the most were her volunteer efforts. *Students can position themselves well for their future by enrolling in service-learning courses.*

Outside of the classroom, students develop a deeper sense of civic responsibility and become committed to community service (Vogelgesang 2005; Fenzel & Peyrot 2005). They gain self-esteem (Furco 2003; Colby et al 2003), feel a greater sense of empowerment (Tapia 2007; Furco 2003), and are less likely to engage in at-risk behaviors (Eyler & Giles 1999; Eccles & Gootman 2002; Astin & Sax 1998). Benefits to the students are robust and meaningful – other sources listed in sections 8 and 9 expand upon the many included here.

A prime example of how service-learning activities change students' lives is that of Adam Cox, 2013 graduate of SUNY Oneonta. Adam was enrolled in a service-learning course, *Geography of NYS & the Northeast*. During September 2012, Adam volunteered for Cooperstown Rotary at a fundraiser event held at the Fly Creek Cider Mill where he happened to get stationed at the ticket stand with a community member. The two men chatted most of the day – the community member asking Adam numerous questions about his academic career and plans for the future. Adam was planning to be a social studies teacher and the man he was stationed with unbeknownst to Adam was the Superintendent of Cooperstown Schools. By the end of the day, Adam had been so impressive that the Superintendent wanted Adam to do his student teaching at the Cooperstown Middle/High School. Adam followed up on the opportunity and not only did he successfully student teach at Cooperstown during the spring 2014 semester, but he also landed a permanent job teaching social studies beginning in the fall of 2015. Adam now uses service-learning assignments for his students to bring it all back full circle.

2.4 Benefits for Nonprofits and the Community

The benefits to nonprofits and the community (local, regional, global) are also numerous. Many have already been discussed in previous sections of this document. To put it succinctly, nonprofits are given assistance to fill needs that are not being met otherwise. This service ranges from basic labor to skilled technical assistance. The possibilities are only bounded by our imagination.

The community will develop feelings of appreciation and respect as the college works as partners to achieve goals. This has been seen first-hand in Oneonta. For example, the director of *Turning Point* (an addiction support center) was thrilled to have students and faculty helping with an awareness project. The staff and members of the center were impressed that the students were dedicated to helping and worked hard, changing their stereotypical views of the college students.

2.5 Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement

The [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching](#) created an elective classification for “*Community Engagement*” in part to acknowledge collaborative teaching and learning practices that involves and benefits communities (Carnegie 2014). The Classification is defined by [Carnegie](#) (2014):

“Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.”

The fairly new Classification is based on voluntary participation by colleges and universities and involves extensive evidence-based data and self-assessment on an institutional level. Alignment among the college mission, practices, resources, and college culture is crucial to earning the prestigious Classification.

At SUNY Oneonta, under the charge of the President, [the application process began](#) during the spring 2010 semester. An appointed committee of relevant players at the college put together an application. SUNY Oneonta [successfully received the recognition](#) in January 2011. Among SUNY schools, SUNY Cortland was the first to earn it in 2008. Other SUNY schools to earn the Community Engagement classification include Oswego, Stony Brook,

and ESF (Environmental Sciences and Forestry). There are only a total of 311 institutions nationwide who have earned this classification.

To maintain the Classification, the college will have to reapply every 5 years. The college will have to show improvement and progress. Some of that progress includes the adoption of the Service-Learning Designation for courses (discussed in section 5.4). The Designation for courses will have to be used college-wide to show our continued dedication to community engagement. One of the most difficult challenges of applying for the Carnegie Classification is gathering the data – we *know* that faculty and students college-wide are engaged with the community in meaningful and significant ways. Not all activity funnels through the same office so data is scattered and often not recorded. The importance of documentation and working with the *Center for Social Responsibility and Community* (CSRC) is discussed in section 5.1.

2.6 Obstacles and Challenges

Adopting service-learning into a curriculum can be daunting, especially for pre-tenure faculty. Rewards for innovative pedagogical practices are historically not appreciated during the tenure and promotion process. Figurative slaps on the hand are dolled out for investing “too much” time with these practices even when scholarship records are solid. Many institutions continue to silo service-learning scholarship into the service category and only recognize other forms as scholarship for promotion and tenure (Driscoll 2008).

Currently, SUNY Oneonta is reviewing its tenure and promotion process in hopes to improve upon its equity and transparency. Hopefully, service-learning will be given its due respect. In the meantime, faculty who engage in service-learning should also be publishing about their methodologies and experiences with close attention to what is valued at this institution. Attending workshops run by *Campus Compact* (premier organization for service-learning) regarding scholarship in service-learning is also highly recommended. Administration has been financially supportive for these activities in recent years benefitting our college in numerous ways. However, institutional change takes time. Faculty also needs other support such as release time, stipends, professional development funding, and serious recognition. As a college, we need to keep pushing and expanding service-learning awareness to generate a new college culture.

Logistically, service-learning can be challenging for faculty. Significant time may be needed to develop relationships with nonprofits and coordinate service activities for students. Of course, this is where support is needed for faculty. The CSRC supports faculty in these ventures, with preexisting relationships with nonprofits and help with coordination of service activities. The CSRC is lacking only in manpower with only one professional staff member and one keyboard specialist. Currently, they are practically at their limit of what time will allow and needs more professional staff to assist faculty in expanding service-learning. This isn't “news” – during the 2014 AMP II phase (*Academic Master Plan*), the

Experiential Learning task force recommended fulfilling the need at CSRC with expanded professional staff.

Perception is reality. As the saying goes, perception of service-learning can be powerful even when it isn't based in reality. Some faculty believe service-learning is not rigorous or that it isn't relevant to their discipline. In fact, service-learning can be more rigorous than other pedagogy depending on how the faculty sets up their service-learning assignments. It is up to the faculty to make an assignment truly service-learning, which by definition has a high level of rigor. The assignments that aren't rigorous aren't actually service-learning. In addition, service-learning can be applied to *any* discipline. Again, the possibilities of service-learning are only bounded by our imagination and the willingness of nonprofits to work with the college. If faculty are interested but are having trouble developing an assignment, they should seek out assistance from the CSRC or look at section 6 of this document for ideas.

Finally, another obstacle that is challenging is that in order to adopt a service-learning assignment, other assignments must be eliminated from the course. Old assignments that are successful are hard to eliminate. But once a new, well-developed, service-learning assignment is adopted, it can be far more successful than the old assignments.

3. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Student Learning Outcomes vary with the course. Below are suggestions of generalized SLOs to adopt for a variety of courses. Edit them to better fit individual courses. One may also add SLOs specific to the generic academic learning objectives (critical thinking, writing skills, etc.) that are achieved through service-learning assignments.

- I. Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement: Students develop an understanding of the connections between their service activities and the needs of the community
 - a. Identify and analyze individual actions that contribute to the health of the community
 - b. Develop a critical understanding of ethical behavior in the context of their discipline/profession related to the health of the community
 - c. Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of civic responsibility

- II. Self and Social Awareness: Students develop an understanding of the social, cultural, and civic aspects of their personal identities
 - a. Articulate and analyze their own identities within the context of social and cultural identities
 - b. Demonstrate critical analysis of assumptions, values, and stereotypes of population groups
 - c. Reflect upon how service applies students' discipline-specific knowledge to help solve community problems

- III. Multicultural Community Building: Students learn from and work with diverse individuals, groups, and organizations
 - a. Demonstrate communication skills, reciprocity and responsiveness in service work with a diverse community
 - b. Reflect on how attitudes and beliefs are different from those in populations from other cultures
 - c. Develop an appreciation of diverse identities

- IV. Community Building and Sustainability: Students develop an understanding of how collaborative work can build a community and work towards goals of sustainability
 - a. Exhibit an understanding of the importance of social justice
 - b. Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively to reach goals
 - c. Articulate the connections between service to the community and positive change for that community

4. Assessment of Service-Learning Using SLOs

Assessment is important to developing meaningful and successful service-learning pedagogy. Alignment is necessary along the trajectory of SLOs, reflection (*learning strategies*), and assessment.

To meet the SLOs above, the following standards of performance must be met:

- Students must be contributing meaningful service to the community
- Service activities must have link(s) to the course goals and curriculum
- Agencies must be nonprofit and students are not to receive payment
- Reflection of service activities integrated with discipline-specific connections must be completed
- Instruction must include connections to social and civic responsibility and an appreciation of diversity

To accomplish *basic* assessment, a number of measures can be used, depending on the assignment and the course. The following metrics can be used at a variety of levels: individual courses, majors, departments, schools, or the college as a whole.

- Number of service-learning courses offered each academic year
- Funding and resources dedicated to service-learning activities
- Number of nonprofit agencies engaged in service-learning activities
- Number of students engaged in service-learning activities
- Number of departments/disciplines at the college that include service-learning
- Number of majors that require at least one service-learning course

Assessment that is more in depth will require more specific measures best developed by those using the metrics. Reflection is a primary tool in the expression of and evaluation of service-learning. It demonstrates the connections to the community and the discipline through experience. Students are able to reflect upon ways that service-learning activities have enhanced their ability to achieve specific course goals. Through reflections students may demonstrate their application of knowledge, effectiveness of communication, developed awareness, and understanding of the community in which they served.

Measurements will depend on the assignments and rubrics may be developed. Example rubrics are located in section 7.1. Effective reflection includes the *5 Principles* or *5 C's*: it should be continuous (*before, during, and after the service activity*), connected (*links to SLOs*), challenging (*includes opportunities for critical thinking, problem solving, analysis*), contextualized (*within the students' academic level*), and coaching (*ongoing feedback*) (Eyler et al. 1996). Assessment metrics should include these 5 principles in some manner.

5. Using Service-Learning on the SUNY Oneonta Campus

5.1 Working with the Center for Social Responsibility and Community (CSRC)

The CSRC is located in Alumni Hall 101C. The *Executive Director* is Linda Drake and the support staff is Sue Sorbera. There are also several student workers during the fall and spring semesters. They are available to assist instructors with the development and execution of a service-learning component. Linda can assist with ideas, resources, pre-existing relationships with nonprofits, and information about professional development. Sue and the student workers can help with the placement of students at nonprofits and the administration of the logistical aspects. For example, a student worker entered timesheets into a spreadsheet for each student enrolled in Urban Geography, helping record all hours and other data needed for assessment.

The office is one of team work and cooperation – thanks to the management style of Linda Drake. They welcome anybody to visit and discuss service-learning opportunities. They have a substantial binder with all current volunteer service opportunities – components of which could be adopted into a service-learning course.

5.2 Relationships with Nonprofits

The CSRC has *longstanding* positive relationships with most of its nonprofits in the local area developed over more than 20 years of CSRC's existence on campus. Continuously establishing new relationships, currently the CSRC works with up to 100 nonprofits on an annual basis. With this breadth of involvement with the local community, the CSRC can connect any instructor with a nonprofit that will have relevance to their discipline. A sample list of nonprofits is provided in section 8.2. CSRC has the specific contact information for the nonprofits depending on what type of service activity is desired.

5.3 Timesheets

Service-learning timesheets should be filled out by each student and signed by the supervisor at the nonprofit. Documenting the hours completed helps in several ways. First, it gives proof to the professor that the student conducted the required hours. Second, timesheets provide data for the CSRC regarding how many students participated, how many hours conducted, and which nonprofits participated. This data is used for assessment purposes and for the *Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement*. The data is useful to different offices across campus including admissions, enrollment management, and individual academic departments. Third, the data is sometimes used for scholarship

qualifications, grad school applications, and job references. The CSRC regularly gets inquiries from faculty and professional staff regarding this data. If the students do not fill out time sheets when conducting service, they may miss out on opportunities.

Students often aren't aware of the timesheets and the potential they provide. Individual faculty have a *responsibility* to make students aware of timesheets, even if they have some other documentation system in use. Students can pick them up at CSRC – they are in a mailbox holder outside the door – or they can print the form from the [CSRC website](#).

5.4 Service-Learning Designation for Courses

The College Senate, in a May 2014 meeting, voted into use a service-learning (SL) designation for courses. This designation can be placed on sections of courses using service-learning on a semester-by-semester basis. It will be assigned by CRN numbers so that not all sections of a course need to use service-learning. It is done on a voluntary basis.

After classes are submitted to the Registrar by department chairs, there will be a brief time during which a professor can submit an application, along with a course syllabus, for the SL designation. Individual instructors should submit one application per course. Any instructor (*adjunct, lecturer, pre-tenure, tenured*) may apply for the designation. The [application](#) needs to be submitted, along with a syllabus, to CSRC by March 10th for a fall semester course, October 1st for a spring semester course, and by February 1st for a summer course.

As it stands, the Curriculum Committee will be reviewing all applications during this fast turn around time. Since this is a new process, changes are likely to occur and updates will be found on the CSRC website or by contacting [Linda Drake](#).

The following parameters are required in order to receive the SL designation:

- a. The *Service-Learning Designation Process* is followed
- b. Required service activities are connected to the academic material and curriculum goals of the course. The service-learning component is part of the requirements for a credit-bearing course.
- c. The service activities are meaningful to the community in which the students are volunteering.
- d. The service activities are meaningful to the students
(*e.g. simply picking up trash on the side of the road might be helpful to a community but has little academic or personal impact for a student*).
- e. A minimum number of hours per student per semester are required. We **suggest** a range of 20-30 hours, as that is the general standard stated in the [SUNY Service-Learning Toolkit](#) (*University Faculty Senate*). Fewer hours can also be successful, depending on the activities.
- f. Some classroom time (or individual time) is spent discussing the service-learning component prior to participation in service activities.

- g. Reflection is an integral component to the assignment (*this includes classroom discussions, journal entries, project evaluations, and/or classroom presentations*).
- h. The service activities foster and promote civic and/or social responsibility towards the community
- i. No payment is received in exchange for the service activities (*a paid internship, for example, is not service-learning*).
- j. The CSRC is notified of any changes from the original syllabus (submitted during the Service-Learning Designation Process) to the service-learning component of the course during the semester.
- k. Students will arrange their community service activities through the CSRC and fill out volunteer time sheets unless otherwise arranged.

In addition to the required parameters above, instructors are encouraged to read the service-learning handbook. Ideally the service-learning component will also:

- i. Provide problem-solving opportunities
- ii. Foster critical thinking skills
- iii. Promote teamwork and cooperation
- iv. Include recognition of students' efforts by peers, community members, and/or instructors
- v. Connect the college with the community in positive ways

6. Examples of Service-Learning in Courses

In no way is this meant to replace the expertise of faculty in their own disciplines. Listed are some examples of what could possibly be done locally in each discipline. In some cases, they are examples of successful service-learning assignments. In addition, examples may work for several disciplines so you will see them listed more than once.

6.1 School of Social Sciences

Africana and Latino Studies

- **Free health clinics in Oneonta:** What population groups lack access to health care and therefore need to visit free health clinics?
- **Local schools:** Awareness activities with students in individual classrooms or during after school programs
- **Job Corps:** Tutoring or create programming for those attending Job Corps
- **Opportunities for Otsego:** Study social inequalities while helping with programming

Anthropology

- **Elderly Facility:** Write down their oral histories to learn about culture of the area and/or compare the culture of elderly now to another time period
- **Elderly Facility:** Serve at many facilities to inquire about a particular time period in Oneonta/Otsego County to get their perspective
- **Halfway House (Crossroads Inn) in Otego:** Record oral histories
- **Elderly Facilities:** Explore folklore through oral stories

Communication Arts

- **Various nonprofits:** Spread awareness or help fundraise by writing a newsletter, creating and managing a social media campaign, shooting a documentary
- **Local nonprofits:** Broadcasting students help with oral history projects in Oneonta
- **Schools, OCCA:** Students in Public Speaking course develop story telling presentations or environmental education presentations

Cooperstown Graduate Program – At this time, it is uncertain if graduate courses are eligible. Contact [Linda Drake](#) for more information.

- **NYSHA:** Curate museum displays educating the public about the history of baseball or the history of Oneonta's transportation, etc

Environmental Sciences

- **Oneonta Reservoir/City of Oneonta:** Develop water resource awareness programming
- **OCCA (Otsego County Conservation Association):** Help with invasive species eradication
- **College Camp:** Trail cleanups, trail construction
- **Local Nonprofits or City of Oneonta:** Establish recycling programs
- **OWL:** create and deliver science programming to children

Geography

- **Elderly Facilities:** Explore folklore through oral stories
- **See examples from other disciplines and adapt to Geography**
- **Soup Kitchens:** Explore services provided for low income populations and study social inequalities
- **Local Community:** Lead walks (nature walks, urban walks, architecture walks) locally to educate the public
- **Local Planning Boards:** students help with comprehensive plans, environmental site assessment evaluations, use GIS skills to create maps
- **OWL:** create and deliver science programming to children

Health and Fitness

- **Hospice, Springbrook, Pathfinder Village, or Family Resource Center (special needs in schools):** Help special needs population with health and fitness
- **Therapy Equine Centers:** Assist with horse-riding therapy sessions
- **After school programs (schools, Boys & Girls Club, YMCA):** Coach community sports programs
- **Elderly Facilities:** run fitness activities

History

- **Schools:** Develop and lead a history walk for school children
- **NYSHA:** Promote and create programming for NYS History Day
- **Hanford Mills Museum:** Create displays; give presentations to public
- **Oneonta Historical Society:** Create display comparing 60's hippie movement to the Occupy movement

Political Science

- **Consumer Advocacy Groups:** work to influence change
- **Local political or activist groups (anti-fracking group, Occupy, etc):** participate in civic action and help organizations accomplish goals
- **Schools:** presentations to local school children regarding basic government structure and processes

Psychology

- **LEAF:** volunteer at addiction centers and study behaviors of those who attend AA or Driving courses for drunk driving offenses
- **Domestic Violence Shelter/OFO:** study the behaviors of abusers and the abused

Sociology

- **Elderly Facilities:** explore issues of aging
- **Homeless Shelter/OFO:** explore housing issues in the area
- **Domestic Violence Shelter/OFO:** explore women's issues
- **Schools:** Observe behaviors of different population groups (gender, income, etc)

Women's & Gender Studies

- **Domestic Violence Shelter/OFO:** explore women's issues
- **Schools:** volunteer in classroom or after school and explore expectations and realities for girls compared to boys

6.2 School of Natural and Mathematical Sciences

Biology

- **Schools:** Bring school children into the field for a Biology lesson at the Susquehanna Greenway or another local park
- **Oneonta City Parks:** Conduct a water study or flood awareness project
- **OWL:** create and deliver science programming to children

Chemistry & Biochemistry

- **OWL/schools:** create and deliver science programming to children
- **Schools:** create and deliver "science is fun" programming

Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

- **Working with the City of Oneonta or local activist groups:** lead a community talk on the science of hydrofracking and other resource options
- **OWL/schools:** create and deliver science programming to children

Mathematics, Computer Science, and Statistics

- **Various nonprofits:** Design web pages, facebook pages, other social media
- **Schools, Job Corps:** tutor math skills
- **Nonprofits:** Computer science students help with IT issues

Physics & Astronomy

- **OWL:** create and deliver science programming to children
- **College Camp:** Lead presentations on astronomy

6.3 School of Arts and Humanities

Art

- **Schools, various nonprofits:** Create a mural to beautify the building or grounds
- **Schools, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA:** Develop afterschool art programming
- **Schools:** Help students with an art show on campus or in a venue downtown
- **CANO:** Assist with art shows, art programming, or events
- **Various Nonprofits:** Students volunteer and then create art representing their service experiences
- **Hospitals; Elderly Facilities:** Art therapy for patients
- **Local soup kitchens and Art Galleries:** Create bowls and sponsor an “empty bowls” fundraiser and awareness event – raised funds are donated to soup kitchens

English

- **Job Corps, local schools:** Run a writing center for those who need help writing
- **Turning Point or Catholic Charities, LEAF, OFO, other community support center:** Help with résumé writing
- **Lantern Hill:** Help students with writing, English tutoring
- **Elderly Facilities:** Record oral histories and create a book for all of the oral histories from the semester; publish and give copies to the elderly

Foreign Languages & Literatures

- **Schools:** language lessons; tutoring; ESL lessons

Philosophy

- **Elderly Facilities:** Explore folklore through oral stories
- **Elderly Facilities:** Run programming and explore concepts of death and dying
- **Audubon:** Lead nature walks to better understand environmental ethics

Music

- **Springbrook:** Participate in the music therapy program
- **Schools:** Create music activities for after school programs
- **Schools:** Lead instrument drives and donate instruments to music classrooms

Theatre

- **Local Theater nonprofit:** help with theater programming and fundraising

6.4 School of Education and Human Ecology

Human Ecology

- **Soup Kitchens:** Plan meals after running a food drive
- **Food Pantries:** Food drives; create nutrition pamphlets for people picking up food
- **Schools, YMCA:** Give nutrition presentations to children
- **Schools:** backpack program – sending food home with school children in backpacks

Education

- **Schools:** volunteer in classrooms to learn how they operate
- **OWL:** Lead science demonstrations and activities
- **Job Corps:** tutoring or lead educational programming
- **Schools:** backpack program – sending food home with school children in backpacks

6.5 School of Economics and Business

Business, Accounting, & Economics

- **Various Nonprofits:** Help develop a better system to balance their books
- **Various Nonprofits:** Assist with fundraising efforts, grant writing
- **VITAS:** Tax preparation for low-income individuals and families
- **Hospice Thrift Store:** help manage the second-hand store

7. Important Documents

7.1 Rubrics

Rubrics can be used to grade service-learning assignments. Finding examples online is fairly easy. Campus Compact has an [example](#) on their website. The AAC&U also provides an [example](#) rubric.

7.2 Student Agreement Form

Before sending students into the community, an agreement should be made. Here is an example of a [student agreement form](#) provided by Lisa Curch, Sociology Department.

7.3 Example Syllabi

If you would like assistance creating a syllabus for a service-learning course, contact Linda Drake at CSRC. She keeps several on hand that professors on the SUNY Oneonta campus have shared. There are also many [examples of syllabi](#) located on the campus compact website and at the [National Service-Learning Clearinghouse](#).

7.4 Reflection Questions

Reflection questions can be incorporated into a variety of assignments such as journals, research papers, reflection papers, poster presentations, oral presentations, and portfolios. The purpose of reflection questions, as discussed in section 1.5, is to help students think critically about their service and make connections to course material. Reflection questions also help students achieve SLOs.

Reflection questions should be specific to each assignment. Generalized questions to adapt include:

- What are your expectations (to be answered prior to service)?
- What did you know about the nonprofit prior to serving?
- What do you expect to learn during service that links up to course concepts?
- What observations did you make during service that links to course material?
- What learned skills are you applying while serving?
- What additional skills would have helped you be more successful while serving?
- How is the experience challenging your stereotypes or prejudices?
- How is this experience related to stereotypes and prejudices in American culture?
- Who participated in serving? Why?

- Who benefitted from the service? Why do they need this service?
- Was the service worthwhile for those served? Why or why not?
- Was the service worthwhile for you? Why or why not?
- Did the service help your understanding of course material? Why or why not?
- Was this activity meeting a recognized need in the community? Explain.
- What problems were encountered and how could they be resolved?
- Were you aware of the need in the community prior to your service? Why or why not?
- Would you serve again? Why or why not?
- What was your most valued contribution and who valued it?
- How can you raise awareness and/or educate people about this issue? After serving do you feel compelled to raise awareness?
- What were the most challenging and most satisfying parts of your service experiences?
- Did you have any disappointments or uncomfortable feelings? Explain. How could this be resolved for future service projects?
- How did this service activity impact you emotionally?
- How can you apply what you have learned while serving to your academic future?
- How does the service reinforce what you are learning in class?
- Can you relate your service to the student learning outcomes provided on the syllabus?
- Has this service enhanced your learning beyond what you have learned in the classroom? Why or why not?
- Can you give examples of what you learned during the service that relates to concepts learned during class?
- Is your service related to your future career plans? If so, how has the service helped you better understand your career goals?

8. Resources Available

8.1 Professional Organizations

- [AAC&U](#) – Association of American Colleges and Universities provides a plethora of content on service-learning and [other high-impact teaching practices](#).
- [ACC Service-Learning](#) - Austin Community College Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Center provides engaging information and resources for service-learning
- [Campus Compact](#) – the main professional organization for service-learning and SUNY Oneonta is a member
- [Generator School Network](#) – provides webinars and other resources
- [Learn and Serve](#) – the federal government’s program
- [NYS Campus Compact](#) – the state division of Campus Compact

8.2 Area Nonprofits

There are over 100 nonprofits in this region which the CSRC has previously established relationships including these examples:

Big Buddy	Boys & Girls Club	Calvary Hill Retreat Center	CANO – Community Arts Network of Oneonta	Catholic Charities
Catskill Area Hospice	Child care locations	College Camp	Delaware Humane Society	Family Services Association
Friends of Recovery	Habitat for Humanity	Hampshire House	Hanford Mills Museum	Head Start
Hearts of Hope	Historical Societies	Hospice Thrift Store	Job Corps	Lantern Hill (children’s community center)
LEAF, Inc	OCCA: Otsego County Conservation Association	OFO – Opportunities for Otsego	Oneonta Schools (<i>and other area schools</i>)	Oneonta World of Learning (OWL)
Parks and Greenways	Pathfinder Village	Robynwood Elderly Facility	Salvation Army Thrift Shop	Soup Kitchens and Food Pantries
SSPCA – Animal Shelter	Springbrook	Susquehanna & Leatherstocking Railroads	Unadilla Women’s Elderly Home	YMCA

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