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# SERVICE-LEARNING HANDBOOK: A RESOURCE FOR INSTITUTIONS



**UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
OF GEORGIA**

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Faculty Development

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## SERVICE-LEARNING HANDBOOK: A RESOURCE FOR INSTITUTIONS

This handbook is intended for an audience of administrators and faculty members charged with beginning a service-learning, experiential learning, or similarly focused program on a college or university campus. Our hope, as authors, is that this handbook will help you think about the complex world of community-engaged types of learning and to consider the six key focus areas that encompass a service-learning or experiential learning program: 1) Institutional support and program development; 2) Community support, participation, and partnership; 3) Faculty development, support, and involvement; 4) Student support and involvement; 5) Marketing, promotion, and events; and 6) Assessment development and implementation.

### 1. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

#### 1.1 PURPOSE STATEMENT:

Think about how service-learning (S-L) or experiential learning (EL) fit into your institution's mission statement, vision statement, strategic plan or similar documents. Institutions with the USG system are expected to prioritize support for those things that are in line with their mission, vision, and strategic planning be sure to identify which aspects of yours apply. For example, Clayton State University specifically cites community engagement in its mission statement and one of the strategic plan initiatives is focused on building up recognition for the institution through academic community engagement.

You may ask... Why would my institution want a S-L or EL Office? The benefits to having a centrally located office or program are multifaceted. Many of your institution's faculty, departments, and schools are probably already doing this type of work and either don't know it or there is no formal way to recognize it. Bringing these activities under one roof allows for some level of standardization, structured training and professional development, the ability to coordinate activities and avoid duplication of efforts, send a unified message to the campus and external communities, and allows meaningful data to be tracked, analyzed, and reported.

#### 1.2 KNOWING YOUR SCHOOLS', DEANS', DEPARTMENTS' AND CHAIRS' MISSIONS:

In addition to knowing the institutional mission, it is also important to understand the various missions of different schools and departments across the university as well as the curricular goals of important academic stakeholders. This knowledge is especially valuable for those initiatives that are academically focused (part of coursework or curricula). School and departmental missions are the easiest of the four missions to find. The tricky part is getting to know what Deans and Chairs expectations for curricular integration of a service-learning program are. Do not underestimate the power of an informal meeting over a cup of coffee or tea. Find out their hopes for the school/department, independent of the service-learning agenda. Then, see how your goals align with what the schools and departments are already doing and the direction they are headed.

#### 1.3 WHO ARE YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE CHAMPIONS?

Service-Learning Initiatives in most colleges and universities are housed in either academic or student affairs or a combination of both. Two places to start for support would be the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office of Community Engagement. They are connected to the institution's strategic plan and mission and would be able to support the efforts of Service-Learning. They are also familiar with possible community partners.

#### 1.4 CAMPUS SUPPORT:

As stated in 1.3, seek help from the Office of Community Engagement, Center for Teaching and Learning, or a similar office at the institution. Those offices will be able to support the initiative and offer suggestions for course development and community partnerships to intertwine service and academic learning.

#### 1.5 DEFINING SERVICE-LEARNING OR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING:

Service-learning and, to a lesser extent, experiential learning are quite nebulous terms. If you look in 100 dictionaries, you get around 100 different definitions. Most researchers and institutions adopt a definition that fits the style of S-L / EL that the institution will value. Others take a collaborative approach and create an institution-specific definition of service-learning that encompasses the basic elements from many definitions. It will be up to administrators and campus constituencies as to which elements of S-L are most important.

The phrases *service learning* and *service-learning* are similar. However, those who use the hyphen often note the strong connection between the service and learning and add that the hyphen is symbolic of critical reflection, which ties the service to the learning and vice versa.

Some institutions choose to use more inclusive terminology that captures service-learning under an umbrella of similar teaching and engagement methodologies. One example of a flexible definition is "academic community engagement" which is defined as "intentional efforts within courses to engage students in planned and purposeful learning related to service experiences within the community to impact student learning outcome" ([Clayton State University – PACE](#)). This was chosen by Clayton State University to allow for more flexibility in project and course planning. Under this definition, projects are aligned with specific learning outcomes or content within a course, and may comprise a small portion of the course plan (a single project aligned with a single outcome) or be integrated throughout the course (a project that is ongoing, focused the entire semester on a community need and output).

#### 1.6 CONSIDER EXISTING INITIATIVES THAT FIT THE SERVICE-LEARNING OR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL:

The University System of Georgia has several existing initiatives that can help jumpstart your program, whether it's the LEAP initiative, Complete College Georgia (CCG), Momentum year, etc. The outcomes of service-learning and experiential learning align completely with these initiatives. Check with your Academic Affairs leadership or with Academic Affairs at the USG to see how your service-learning program fits into each of these initiatives.

## 1.7 PROPOSING A COORDINATING OFFICE OR CENTER:

Each university's organizational structure is different, but an office or center can be integrated within almost any structure. Whether it be part of an Office of Experiential Learning or its own Office of Service-Learning, a Director and a coordinator/admin will help you get the office off the ground. Hiring student assistants or a graduate assistant is also cost effective. Not only cost effective, but students who have had experience with service-learning are great advocates for your program. They are excellent with social media and manning tables at special events to get the word out. Working closely with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is also important. Providing training opportunities for faculty in coordination with CTL will provide the awareness you will need to move forward.

An office should be placed in Academic Affairs or Student Affairs to ensure that the entire university is included. Placing an office in a college may alienate departments not within that college. Although, if one department or college has a strong service-learning presence, the office may need to be located within that college.

## 1.8 ORGANIZATION CHARTS – WHERE DOES SERVICE-LEARNING OR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FIT?

There is no right or wrong area to place a service-learning or experiential learning office. Those with an academic focus to S-L typically place that office in Academic Affairs. Quite commonly, other institutions pair academic service-learning with volunteer offices which fall under Student Affairs. Some institutions focus on the career aspects of S-L or experiential learning and place that program within a Career Services department. Each type of placement will have its pros and cons but the most important part of the equation is where will it make the most sense for *your* institution? Consider oversight, accountability, and budget when deciding on where to place a S-L or EL office or program. Budgetary limitations on how money can be spent is a big consideration, as some Student Affairs funding can only be spent on students and student activities.

## 1.10 HOW ARE COURSES DESIGNATED?

Service-learning courses can be designated in several different ways. The benefit of designating service-learning or experiential learning courses are to: identify to students the type of course they are registering for, give students credit for a service or experience-based course, to add rigor and a process for faculty to follow in creating a service-learning experience, and for administrators to easily distinguish S-L or EL courses for data collection and analysis.

[The Service-Learning \(S\) course designation-The University of Tennessee Knoxville](#)

[The Service-Learning \(s\) course designation-University of Georgia](#)

## 2. COMMUNITY SUPPORT, PARTICIPATION, AND PARTNERSHIP

### 2.1 GETTING TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY AND ITS NEEDS:

Time and again, the literature states (e.g., Bringle and Hatcher, 1996) that planning should be reciprocal and directly involve community representatives in designing and delivering service-learning initiatives. You and your students should work \*with\* the community.

### 2.2 IDENTIFY SIMILAR INITIATIVES ALREADY ENGAGING COMMUNITY AGENCIES:

If your initiative is academic in focus, consult with the co-curricular and extracurricular groups on campus (such as the Campus Life office, student organizations and clubs, or continuing education offices) to ensure that there is a common, cohesive message coming from your campus. While there may be differences in how your respective office and initiatives work with these groups, both should still complement each other in serving the community's needs.

### 2.3 WHO ARE YOUR COMMUNITY AGENCY / PARTNER CHAMPIONS?

Most college and universities already have pre-existing community contacts through student volunteerism, boards of trustees, or other advisory groups. Identifying those voices in the local community who both know and are favorable toward your institution will benefit partnerships. Many community partners are invested in youth and/or economic development, and service-learning is a perfect place for both to be supported.

### 2.4 CONSIDER A COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP:

Identify community champions and those who are connected to the communities you serve. Members of the advisory group can come from 'conveners' such as the United Way or other consortia, from governmental entities such as the Department of Public Health or the local county commission, or from groups who serve the community. Try to have a breadth of representation (cutting across the major demographics of the community, representing groups of various sizes, from both for-profit and non-profit areas) to ensure that you're capturing as accurate and complete a picture of the community needs at the time.

### 2.5 AGREEMENTS, MOUS, AND INSTITUTIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT:

Articulating clear expectations of projects and partnerships can smooth the work of any community interaction. Identify responsible parties, state reciprocal goals for the community partner, your institution, and your students, and any preparation or paperwork that may be required for the partnership and for students to serve.

Because students will be participating as representatives of the institution, ensure that your initiative has risk management documentation that has been officially vetted and approved by the institution, and that your community partners are aware of any special needs or concerns regarding your students working with them. Many community partners will also have their own risk management processes and procedures; it is best to identify what these are (such as health checks, background checks, waivers) and consult with your institution's legal representatives to ensure that all is in order.

## 2.6 ENGAGING PARTNERS - TACTICS FOR ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION, AND EVENTS:

Consider staging larger events inviting community partners from your surrounding area. These can be formal conferences, informal networking events, meet-and-greets, or a mixture of these. Identify institutional representatives who may already be serving on advisory boards or similar bodies for community groups. Stage 'traveling road shows' where representatives of your initiative or institution present to community groups such as the Rotaries or Boards of Education regarding ways to partner with your institution.

## 2.7 COMMUNITY PARTNER HANDBOOK:

Not all community partners are familiar with the academic calendars, timelines for academic work, or the varying backgrounds and skillsets students bring. Additionally, community partner agencies are familiar with hosting volunteers but are may find it foreign to provide service experiences that contribute to both the organization's goals and academic goals of students. Handbooks can help educate partners on the practice of S-L / EL and set expectations as to what activities are acceptable for these types of experiences. Do not sugar-coat the collaboration. Service-learning and experiential learning are harder than volunteer projects. So, be sure to sell the benefit of organizations hosting students with developing expertise but don't hold back on expressing the challenges and work that the collaboration will take to be successful.

## 2.8 COMMUNITY PARTNER CLEARINGHOUSE:

Community participation in service-learning and other community based experiential learning is important. As such, institutions will need a mechanism to collect community partner agency information including proposed service needs as well as to identify community issues (even if you think you know what the issues are in your community). A clearinghouse of self-identified service needs can help 1) promote college-community partnerships, 2) provide a sounding board for identification of community issues, 3) deliver options for faculty members to brainstorm how they can infuse service projects into courses and student academic learning experiences. Surveys or one-on-one meetings are excellent strategies for capturing service needs information from community agencies. Institutions will need to market this clearinghouse both externally to agencies and internally to faculty and staff stakeholders.

# 3. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORT, AND INVOLVEMENT

## 3.1 KNOW YOUR FACULTY:

Find which faculty are already engaging students in S-L or EL projects. Depending on your annual evaluation and promotion/tenure process, these may be captured already through those mechanisms. Consult with your institutional research office regarding faculty publications or presentation with a community focus. Conduct regular surveys and departmental meetings to gather additional details regarding faculty interactions with the community through their courses.

## 3.2 WHO ARE YOUR FACULTY CHAMPIONS?

Identify those faculty members who are already engaged with the community, or those who are interested and willing but not yet teaching community engaged courses. Involve them in the training and mentorship of their fellow faculty. Quite often, faculty who are willing to give a new academic endeavor a try are the ones who hear or see that it is successful from a trusted peer.

### 3.3 FACULTY DEVELOPMENT:

Develop a training program, workshops, professional development, and potentially a conference travel budget to educate and promote faculty. Where possible, provide modular training (online or otherwise) in addition to full academy-style workshops. Synthesize service-learning reading materials and present content in a way that shows an understanding that faculty are busy. Some faculty may already have experience in community engagement pedagogy but need additional support in assessment or in finding community partners. Use multiple venues to recruit and train/support faculty. Be flexible where possible.

### 3.4 FACULTY REWARD STRUCTURE:

Work with faculty governance to ensure that community related pedagogy and scholarship are represented in the evaluation process (annual or promotion/tenure). If funding is available create mini-grants, fellowships, or provide stipends for course development and implementation. Encourage the creation of department- or college-level awards for service. Professional development stipends or course releases have also been utilized to promote initial faculty buy-in.

### 3.5 FACULTY HANDBOOK, RESOURCE DOCUMENTS, AND WEBPAGES:

A faculty handbook is helpful to provide more in-depth information regarding incorporating service-learning into courses. Consider providing various sections in the handbook to cover the novice to the seasoned service-learning faculty member. Potential sections include a discussion of the service-learning pedagogy, information about facilitating and grading reflection, any required university waivers, sample syllabi, sample dress code and student contracts, links to service-learning journals and articles, and information for logging hours.

### 3.6 FACULTY PEER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM:

Mentorship can be both informal and formal. If you are new to Service-Learning and if your institution does not have a formal process, partner with a faculty member who has extensive experience utilizing Service-Learning and can help design your course. Utilize expertise in your Center for Teaching and Learning as well. They can pair you with an experienced faculty member that both supports your academic needs as well as Service-Learning Interests.

### 3.7 SCHOLARSHIP:

Work with faculty to determine their research interest and how service-learning may assist them. Publications and presentations are an essential part of promotion and tenure, therefore, the more you can relay and assist faculty in the connection between their research and service-learning the easier it will be for both parties. Distribute to faculty any calls for proposals from journals and conferences. Seek ways to collaborate with faculty on research projects that will also benefit the service-learning program.

### 3.8 FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITIES:

Faculty learning communities (FLC) are intended for faculty members to gather and share tactics, strategies, or useful tips to *improve student learning outcomes*. Once a S-L or EL program is initiated, a FLC can help build bonds between your cohort of S-L/EL faculty members. Ultimately, the goal of these gatherings are to improve teaching and engagement practices with student outcomes in mind.

### 3.9 LEARNER ANALYSIS:

What do you know about the students who participate in your service-learning classes? What are their entry behaviors, prior knowledge, attitudes towards the course, academic motivation, attitudes towards projects, and what is their level of professionalism?

When designing service-learning courses, we want to know as much as we can about the students who participate in these courses and the challenges these students face. You can use the information you gather about the learners to develop instructional content that removes obstacles and helps students achieve learning goals, objectives and outcomes. When you are preparing a learner analysis, remember to include the learner characteristics and the targeted instructional content you can include in your course to remove or mitigate barriers to learning.

### 3.10 CONSIDER DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL OF STUDENT AND COURSE LEVEL:

When planning a service-learning or experiential learning project, think about the level of students you will be teaching and learning with. For example, a freshman introductory biology class will be ill-prepared to create their own water monitoring program, but would be a better project for a senior seminar in biology. Students need to enter a service-learning (S-L) project prepared with the knowledge and skills to complete the task at hand. Typically, a faculty member including S-L into their freshman/sophomore or introductory-level courses will provide a structured project (faculty identify topic, population, community partner, and will lead communications with agency representatives). As students get deeper in their content area, faculty begin to cede control of the project and increase student autonomy. By their senior year, students should be well-equipped to select the partner and lead the project with supervision of, but limited input from, their faculty supervisor.

## 4. STUDENT SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

### 4.1 ADVISING AND MARKETING TO STUDENTS:

Students enjoy hearing from other students. When possible, allow a student within your program to charge your marketing efforts. Work with the student to develop slogans, posts, etc. that convey the voice of the office but from a student perspective. If this is not possible, talk with students within your program about platforms they use to find out about opportunities on campus. Students are also drawn to pictures of themselves and colleagues. Use action pictures of students participating in opportunities as part of your marketing efforts.

### 4.2 STUDENT ORIENTATIONS, RESOURCES, AND HANDBOOK:

Students need to understand their role in a service-learning or experiential learning course. In-class orientations are useful, but nothing can supplant the instructor's role in preparing students for the service and priming them for the intended learning outcomes. Handbooks are helpful to outline resources, useful information, risk management, and student rights and protections under the institution. However, handbooks will not be read or reviewed without prompting from faculty or staff members.

#### 4.3 SERVICE-LEARNING FACILITATORS PROGRAM AND STUDENT EMPLOYEES WITHIN THE OFFICE:

Service-learning facilitators are students who are trained to assist faculty members with the service-learning portion of their course. When devising a facilitator program, you must consider if these students will receive monetary compensation for their time, the dedicated amount of time the students will work, the type of training they will receive, and how you will recruit and retain these students. A description of the facilitator position is also helpful.

#### 4.4 REWARDS / REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS:

Although monetary rewards are ideal, there are several non-monetary rewards that will also compensate students for their time and effort. Students enjoy receiving SWAG specific to their interest yet relevant to their everyday life. When considering these rewards ask students their thoughts as they have seen and received a plethora of SWAG. Additionally, if you are rewarding students for participating in your program, be clear about program requirements. Use of a one-page job description outlining expectations and benefits promotes transparency with respect to your program expectations. Additionally, bullet points on the one-pager provides students with language for their resume and talking points for discussing the program with others.

#### 4.5 TRACKING INVOLVEMENT:

Tracking involvement with service-learning courses is crucial to a service-learning program. Having a university wide course designation is ideal for tracking the number of service-learning courses offered each semester. Consider how the collected data will be used to help determine categorization of this information (e.g. graduate or undergraduate course, college or department, faculty name, etc). This longitudinal data will provide "next steps" around the use or non-use of service-learning on campus. If a course designation does not exist additional suggestions include asking faculty to identify their course as service-learning in the course description, to contact the Service-Learning office so they will know, and to note the service-learning component in their syllabi. Another suggestion would be to email known service-learning faculty, individually or collectively, and ask if they are utilizing service-learning in their courses this semester.

As you track courses, also consider hours served. Some universities require or suggest a minimum number of hours be obtained by students within the service-learning courses. If your university does not have this stipulation, then reach out to faculty to inquire about how or if their students are tracking hours. Knowing how many hours students are committing to a service-learning project is ideal. Before tracking this information, you should determine whether or not service-learning hours are equal to or different from traditional volunteer hours.

## 5. MARKETING, PROMOTION, AND EVENTS

### 5.1 SERVICE-LEARNING LOGO AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS:

Any new program should begin with a marketing plan. Consider how you will reach your stakeholders. For S-L or EL, stakeholders are typically faculty members, students, community partner agencies, and the campus and external community as a whole. Marketing a logo and program slogan provides opportunities for stakeholders to recognize the brand/program. Promotion materials and give away items can help build this recognition and raise awareness around the program definition and purpose. Consider promotional materials and give away items relevant to your program as this will assist in branding effort. Branded pens, keychains, coffee/team mugs, t-shirts, notepads, hand sanitizer, and work gloves are items that can typically be purchased for branding purposes at low cost.

### 5.2 WEBPAGE AND SOCIAL AND PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE:

Think about your stakeholder audiences as you plan a communication plan. Students are more accepting of social media and digital communication, while older stakeholder groups may be more engaged by print media or personalized communication efforts.

Social media is essential in getting the word out about service-learning opportunities and value. At this point in time (2018), students are more engaged with Instagram and Snapchat than they are with other social media platforms. Faculty seem to be more engaged with Facebook and Twitter, so having a broad spectrum of social media tools is important to engage your target audiences. Get students involved in helping you coordinate your social media strategy and entrust them to develop the images and messages. Using QR Codes on social media to take viewers back to your webpage are easy and effective, but an updated website is crucial. Be sure to have all events and information updated on the website. Always be sure that contact information is easy to find.

### 5.3 SERVICE-LEARNING / EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING SHOWCASE:

The eighth principle of good practice for experiential learning ([National Society for Experiential Education, 2013](#)), which includes service-learning, is acknowledgement. According to NSEE, the National Society of Experiential Education, recognition of learning and impact occur through the sharing of accomplishments. All parties to the experience should be included in the recognition of progress and accomplishment. Culminating documentation and celebration of learning and impact help provide closure and sustainability to the experience.

Hold service-learning week, highlighting faculty and students who have completed successful service-learning endeavors. Have a call for proposals to present these endeavors during the week. Ask faculty and students to participate, create a schedule of events and market these through your university communications and social media marketing. Initiate service-learning day, to do the same thing, but it has to be a celebration. If you have funds to encourage or award service-learning activities on your campus, acknowledge these awards at a faculty recognition event. The opportunities for acknowledgement abound. Acknowledging and celebrating faculty will give them the extra incentive and encouragement to see that what they are doing is valuable and valued and they will continue.

## 5.4 PROGRAM DISTINCTION:

Often your institution's activities may qualify it for recognition in regional, national, or even international venues. Some of these include:

President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/honor-roll>

(from the website) The President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll recognizes institutions that support exemplary service programs and raise the visibility of effective practices in campus community partnerships.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) first administered the award in 2006 in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as the American Council on Education, Campus Compact, and the Interfaith Youth Core.

Carnegie Community Engaged Campus Classification

Recently transitioned to <https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/swearer/>

(From the website) The Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement is an elective classification, meaning that it is based on voluntary participation by institutions. The elective classification involves data collection and documentation of important aspects of institutional mission, identity and commitments, and requires substantial effort invested by participating institutions. It is an institutional classification; it is not for systems of multiple campuses or for part of an individual campus.

The classification is not an award. It is an evidence-based documentation of institutional practice to be used in a process of self-assessment and quality improvement. In this way, it is similar to an accreditation process of self-study. The documentation is reviewed by a National Review Panel to determine whether the institution qualifies for recognition as a community engaged institution.

American Association for State Colleges and Universities

<http://www.aascu.org/programs/AwardSubmissions/>

(from the website) Civic Learning and Community Engagement Award

The Civic Learning and Community Engagement Award honors institutions that demonstrate a strategic commitment to prioritizing, institutionalizing and advancing student civic learning and community engagement in regional, state and/or national communities. This award recognizes colleges/universities that are working to develop campus cultures that recognize and reward engagement that 1) fosters student learning and civic skill building; 2) rewards faculty teaching and scholarship for civic purposes and with engaging pedagogies and practices; and 3) partners meaningfully with community members and organizations to solve pressing problems and build more just and equitable communities.

## 6. ASSESMENT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLIMENTATION

### 6.1 COURSE-LEVEL VERSES INSTITUTION-LEVEL ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING:

Always think of assessment on at least two levels. Course-level assessments occur with those stakeholders closest to the service-learning or experiential learning experience – faculty, students, and community partner agencies. When staff or faculty implement an institution-level assessment, the emphasis is on the S-L or EL program itself and how well that element has permeated the culture of the organization.

## 6.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

When performing course-level or institutional level assessment, there are many different ways to capture data. Some of the most common include surveys, interviews, content analysis, artifact collection, interviews, focus groups, and observations. Surveys provide self-reported quantitative data obtained through questionnaires or check-lists. With surveys, you can create your own or use existing survey instruments. Many surveys related to service learning already exist measuring attitudes, satisfaction, learning improvement, etc. Surveys usually provide good numerical and counting type of data.

Qualitative data techniques like interviews, focus groups, and observations are generally used to gain more in-depth information. Interviews are generally conducted one-on-one either in person or by telephone whereas focus groups are more of a group interview with generally no more than 10 participants interviewed together. For observations, you as the researcher would view and document behaviors or operations occurring in real-time.

Content analysis, artifact collection, or document review all focus on analyzing artifacts or documents. Content analysis could be used for institutional assessment by analyzing existing policies and procedures for S-L or EL programs to ensure efficiency or quality for example. It could be particularly useful in course-level assessment since faculty could evaluate artifacts or documents like reflection journals, presentations, essays, products, portfolios, etc.

## 6.3 DATA SHARING AND REPORTING:

When starting a S-L or EL program, think about the types of data that will be useful for sharing ahead of time. You may be asking what information is important to capture and share? Think about your data collection on three fronts: Institution (faculty, staff, course), students, and community. Institutional data, or internal data, is information like number of: faculty engaged in teaching S-L courses, individual courses offered and number of sections of each course, courses with new S-L or EL designations, upper vs lower division courses, and course/section counts for each academic school and department. Student counts per course, school, department are also useful, as well as unduplicated student reach per semester and academic year (unduplicated student S-L count / total student population). Community data includes data sets like number of: partner organizations (unduplicated), instances of partnership (duplicate count), new partners per semester/academic year, and locations of partnerships (county or neighborhoods). Project descriptions for each S-L/EL course is always good qualitative data for reporting or media.

## 6.4 MEASURING COMMUNITY NEEDS AND IMPACT:

There is no easy way to measure community needs or impact. The areas of need may be more apparent and easier to answer, but you will need help. Community surveys are one way to capture thoughts from a large audience, especially if one of these has been conducted recently by your institution or a community entity. If there are community partners you work with consistently, consider incorporating an annual survey of those entities that specifically capture their needs. Personally, I have found that anecdotal one-on-one conversations with community leaders and non-profit service agencies are a great way to informally gather community needs. Regularly attending community meetings and events geared toward your partners will also provide insight. Focus groups are also an option. To measure impact, start with identifying the area in which your program is wanting to have an impact, be specific. Set a baseline for where your impact is already and set incremental goals for increases over a 5-10 year period. Remember, change is slow so do not get frustrated if impact is not where you want it to be just a couple years into the program.

## 6.5 DATA TEAM AND THEIR ROLE:

Talk with the people in charge of data collection and analysis on your campus. See what it is they already collect and what it would take to automate the collection of the data you need. Work with them to establish their role in data collection and the types of data-related activities that the office/program director will have to complete.

## 6.6 COURSE-LEVEL ASSESSMENT:

Course-level assessments should be completed for all stakeholders involved. For a typical service-learning course, stakeholders include the faculty member(s), students, and the community partner agency or agencies. Popular assessment methods include surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews.

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### 6.6.1 STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND RUBRICS:

Student learning objectives for service-learning or experiential learning should be included for those courses offering those unique elements of S-L or EL. For example, College of Coastal Georgia (CCGA) asks faculty teaching service-learning course to include one objective from the three outcome areas of civic learning, academic enhancement, and personal growth). Each outcome has three objectives that can be evidenced through various reflection activities. CCGA's QEP S-L Model, Objectives, and Outcomes can be found in the [CCGA Service-Learning Forms and Documents page](#).

The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) created VALUE Rubrics which are helpful when creating goals, objectives, and outcomes for S-L or EL and available at:

<https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>

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### 6.6.2 ASSESSMENT METHODS:

There are multiple methods available for the assessment of the impact of your service-learning courses or initiative. Consider the various constituent groups (institution, faculty, students, and community partners) and determine which outcomes are of interest.

For example, in the case of community impact, collecting community partner feedback directly via surveys following the end of the course project would be informative. Larger group forums or meetings in which global feedback is collected from multiple partners at once could also be conducted.

To assess student impact, you may consider attitude measures such as the Community Service Attitudes Scale (Shiarella, McCarthy, and Tucker, 2000). Other measures include direct assessment of student learning via rubrics or in-class assessments and measures of course completion in service-learning vs other courses.

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### 6.6.3 STUDENT SURVEY LOGISTICS:

As one may know from student opinion of instruction survey collection, getting information from students can be a challenge. Paper surveys distributed to each S-L or EL section should yield a high rate of return. However, inputting data manually is a tall order, especially for a budding or small program team. Digital surveys are much easier to collect and analyze data, but the participation rates tend to suffer, sometimes even to the point of return rates of 20-30% which provides data that is hardly generalizable, if at all. Including these student surveys as a mandatory assignment is one tactic that is beneficial to higher return rates.

Pre-/post-intervention surveys are also a topic of debate. In the typical pre-/post- model, students can sometimes inflate their scores on items like "caring for others" or "commitment to help the community". Once they complete a service-learning course, their opinions of themselves may actually be lower, for a variety of reasons. The post-/then survey model is what my institution ended up going with. Post-/then is a after intervention survey that asks students what levels they are at now, and what levels they believe they were at when they started the course. We felt it was easier to see gains based on student perceptions of growth.

### 6.7 INSTITUTION-LEVEL ASSESSMENT:

[Andrew Furco's \(2002\) Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education](#) is probably the best and most commonly used rubric for S-L institutionalization. This tool allows examination of many areas of the higher education institution to determine how far S-L has permeated into the culture of the organization. Furco's rubric can be used in planning as well as assessment of a service-learning program.

## 7. CONFERENCES, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND JOURNALS / RESOURCES

Conferences, professional development, and publishing are all activities that are valued for faculty members, especially those on the tenure track. As a S-L or EL professional on campus, it is your job to engage faculty in these sorts of activities. It should make for an easier sell to co-publish in a journal or co-present at a conference with a faculty member who will receive credit for these sorts of activities, while simultaneously helping you reach program engagement goals.

### 7.1 JOURNALS, RELEVANT CONFERENCES, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Taking advantage of professional development opportunities is an important tool for expanding knowledge and skills, networking, and ensures you stay up-to-date and relevant in your field. Professional development activities include experiences like attending and presenting at conferences, publishing reviews and scholarly articles in journals, participating in seminars and workshops, obtaining certification, or taking a course at a college or university. Below is a list of conferences and a list of journals related to service-learning, community engagement, or experiential education that may interest professionals. These lists are not exhaustive but will help professionals start to engage the community and literature.

#### Conferences:

- National Society for Experiential Education Annual Conference (with optional Experiential Education Academy workshops)
- National Association for Experiential Education International Conference or Regional Conferences
- Gulf-South Summit: Service-Learning & Civic Engagement through Higher Education
- National Service-Learning Conference
- The International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement (IARSLCE) Annual Conference
- Conference of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium
- American Education Research Association

#### Experiential Education, Community Engagement, or Service-Learning Journals:

- Journal of Experiential Education
- Education, Citizenship, and Social Justice
- The International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement
- The Journal for Civic Commitment
- Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education
- Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship
- Journal of Experiential Education
- Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement
- Journal of Public Scholarship in Higher Education
- Journal of Service-Learning in Higher Education
- Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning
- Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement
- Reflections

#### Consider also looking at journals focused on teaching and learning like the following:

- Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice
- Teacher Education Quarterly
- Teaching in Higher Education
- College Teaching
- Journal of Instructional Pedagogies
- International Journal of Pedagogy & Curriculum
- Journal of Learning in Higher Education
- Learning and Instruction
- Journal of College Student Development
- Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice
- International Journal of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education
- Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

## 7.2 IMPORTANCE OF THESE ACTIVITIES:

Engaging in conference attendance and presentation, submitting to journals for publication, and general professional development activities are good for administrators, faculty members, and students alike. Staff members engaging in these activities can learn a great deal from other programs and garner recognition for your institution's S-L or EL efforts. Most faculty members need to engage in professional development, and research for tenure and promotion and for their annual reviews. Be sure to know the importance of teaching, research, service, and professional development at your institution and guide faculty to activities that will help them and meet S-L or EL goals.

## 7.3 FUNDING SOURCES OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND TRAVEL:

Funding sources will be dependent on where the S-L or EL office is located. Some divisions, like Academic Affairs or Career Services, will allow for operational funds to be spent on faculty development. However, in a Student Affairs based center/program, spending funds on faculty professional development may be limited or even restricted. If your institution has a foundation, ask for an annual budget to provide faculty professional development specific to S-L or EL activities. Grants are also a viable route to both start a S-L/EL program and/or provide resources for faculty development.

## 7.4 TOOLKITS, WEBPAGES, AND OTHER RESOURCES:

There are numerous toolkits and resources to use to begin the Service-Learning process. However, it is easy to become overwhelmed when offered to many. A couple of good resources are:

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1996). Implementing service learning in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 221-239.

Shiarella, A. H., McCarthy, A. M., & Tucker, M. L. (2000). Development and construct validity of scores on the community service attitudes scale. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 60(2), 286-300.

Michigan State: <https://servicelearning.msu.edu/resources/toolkits>

Vanderbilt: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/oacs/wp-content/uploads/sites/140/faculty-toolkit-for-service-learning.pdf>

University of South Florida: <http://www.usf.edu/engagement/faculty/service-learning-toolkit.aspx>

Georgia College and State: [Service Learning Resources-Georgia College and State University](#)

John Hopkins University: [Service Learning Toolkit-John Hopkins University](#)

## 8. CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office of Experiential Learning

E-Mail: [oel@augusta.edu](mailto:oel@augusta.edu)

Web: [www.augusta.edu/oel](http://www.augusta.edu/oel)

### **Clayton State University**

Partnering Academics and Community  
Engagement (PACE)

E-Mail: [pace@clayton.edu](mailto:pace@clayton.edu)

Web: <http://www.clayton.edu/academics/initiatives/pace>

### **College of Coastal Georgia**

Center for Service-Learning

E-Mail: [ServiceLearning@ccga.edu](mailto:ServiceLearning@ccga.edu)

Web: [www.cpga.edu/ServiceLearning](http://www.cpga.edu/ServiceLearning)

### **Georgia College and State University**

Office of Service Learning

Center for Engaged Learning

### **Georgia Southwestern State University**

Center for Teaching and Learning

Web:

<https://www.gsw.edu/Resources/FacultyandStaff/TLR/index>

### **Georgia Southern University**

Office of Leadership and Community  
Engagement

E-Mail: [leader@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:leader@georgiasouthern.edu)

Web: <http://students.georgiasouthern.edu/LeadServe/>

### **Georgia State University**

Signature Experiences

Office of the Sr. Vice President of Enrollment  
Management & Student Success

E-Mail: [myexperience@gsu.edu](mailto:myexperience@gsu.edu)

Web: [myexperience.gsu.edu](http://myexperience.gsu.edu)

### **University of Georgia**

Office of Service Learning

Web: [www.servicelearning.uga.edu](http://www.servicelearning.uga.edu)

### **University of West Georgia**

Office of Community Engagement

Web: <https://www.westga.edu/community/index.php>

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