

I am convinced that...The academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, and must reaffirm its historic commitment to what I call the scholarship of engagement. The scholarship of engagement means connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems...Campuses would be viewed by both students and professors not as isolated islands, but as staging grounds for action. The scholarship of engagement also means creating a special climate in which the academic and civic cultures communicate more continuously and creatively with each other.

-Ernest Boyer (1996)

*The Journal of Public Service and Outreach*

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## SERVICE-LEARNING

STUDENT HANDBOOK



WELCOME to service-learning, where students provide a service to the community that reinforces class learning goals. Service-learning is fun and benefits both the learner and the community. Reading this booklet will make your experience even more enjoyable and rewarding.

Part One: Before You Serve  
 Part Two: Your Project  
 Part Three: Safety  
 Part Four: Learning Outcomes

## PART 1: BEFORE YOU SERVE

### WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning reinforces academic knowledge and skills to or through a community partner. It is a hands-on approach to learning that allows students to effect change in their community, reinforcing what they learn in the classroom. Service-learning inspires new perspectives for and enthusiasm from students participants, while providing real-life experience to build skills and enhance résumés.



Service-learning is NOT:

- Volunteerism
- Internship, practicum, or co-op
- Add-on work to a course's regular requirements

### HOW DOES THE COMMUNITY BENEFIT?

Students provide skilled service and expertise, address a community organization's unmet needs. This real world experience and interaction expands the walls of the classroom. The service can result in multiple outcomes: face-to-face interaction, a concrete product, or community-based research.

- **The student will analyze ethical interactions in local and global communities.**

Service-learning involves examining your own values and bases for choice, considering questions in your chosen field, and participating in group decision making, and these experiences will shape your ideas about the role of civic values in a diverse democracy.



**Remember, this is engaged learning. You are expected to be an active participant in your education, your community, and your life!**

**ENJOY!**



**IF SOMETHING HAPPENS:**

- If an incident occurs or if you are injured, contact your agency supervisor and your instructor to discuss what actions the agency and school should take to insure your physical and emotional well-being.
- Report any incidents within 48 hours to the local police and our campus police.
- Stay calm. Your instructor, the agency, and the service-learning staff will help you.

**PART 4: LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Service-learning reinforces ways of knowing and being, called learning outcomes:

- **The student will communicate effectively using multiple literacies and forms of expression.**  
Service-learning involves writing, speaking, multi-media, technology, and cross-cultural dialogue.
- **The student will demonstrate analytic, contextual, and holistic thinking.**  
Service-learning activities requiring you to use argument, quantitative reasoning, diverse viewpoints, problem solving, and re- search will help you develop these skills.
- **The student will engage in integrative learning.**  
Service-learning helps you to make connections across courses, disciplines, and co-curricular activities and to make connections between liberal arts and professional fields.
- **The student will reflect critically and take informed action individually as a citizen.**  
Through service-learning activities you will learn to analyze issues, to consider your own role and the role of competing values in these issues, and to contextualize them within real-life perspectives.

**HOW DOES THE STUDENT BENEFIT?**

The benefits of service-learning are often as simple as opening the student's eyes to the needs of the community. They can also be as far-reaching as igniting a change in the student that ultimately benefits society as a whole. Students

- Learn new skills
- Learn in an engaged, hands-on way
- Build their résumés
- Meet new people and make valuable contacts
- Gain leadership skills
- Increase retention of course material
- Make a difference in their community!

**PART 2: YOUR PROJECT**

*This section should offer insight into what a student may encounter and is to be used with information provided by your professor. It should not supersede your professor's requirements.*

**WHAT ARE YOUR PROFESSOR'S EXPECTATIONS?**

Your professor will discuss the parameters of the service-learning project with the class. Identify the goals and outcomes expected of your class to ensure you have a complete understanding of the project.

**TIPS TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF YOUR PROJECT:**

- **Be Proactive!** Find out early what is expected of you by your professor and agency supervisor. By being proactive, you can avoid misunderstandings and ensure successful completion of requirements.
- **Communicate!** If you have questions, concerns, or reservations about your assignment, express them to your professor or agency supervisor.

- Schedule! Come to an agreeable schedule with your professor and agency supervisor and obtain contact information on your supervisor so you can notify them if you will not be on time or available on a scheduled work day. Also, track your hours on the „student time-log“ (if required) to ensure time requirements are being met.
- Be committed! Be prompt, reliable, conscientious, and willing to work through challenges. Remember you are representing not only yourself, but also the university when working with the community.



## PART 3: SAFETY

### COMMUNICATE

- Tell someone your destination and travel times.
- Ask your supervisor about any safety concerns.
- Talk to your professor or the service-learning staff if you feel unsafe at your current assignment.

### PLAN AHEAD

- Plan for “what if’s” (what if my car breaks down, what if I can’t find the agency, etc.).
- Wear appropriate, modest, easy-to-move-in attire, consistent with agency policy.
- Don’t engage in activities beyond the scope of your class or your student/agency agreement.
- Plan to go in pairs if visiting people in private homes.

### TRANSPORTATION

- Drive carefully; the university is not liable for risks involved in students getting to and from their service sites.
- Do NOT give a client a ride in your personal vehicle.

### BOUNDARIES

- ONCE AGAIN: Even if asked, don’t give a client a ride in a personal vehicle.
- DON’T give or loan clients money or other personal belongings
- DON’T share too much personal information (phone number, address, etc).
- DON’T tolerate talk or behavior of a sexual nature. If you feel harassed, tell your supervisor and instructor immediately.
- DON’T engage in any type of business with clients during the term of your service.
- DON’T enter into a personal relationship with a client during the term of your service.



### HOME VISITS

- Get information about the client, cultural norms, and their situation prior to the home visit.
- Go in pairs when possible.
- Try not to be alone with clients without adequate supervision.
- Consider meeting at a neutral place (at the agency or at a public building) or going with another student.
- Keep your agency informed of your plans and itinerary and check in by phone on a prearranged schedule.
- When you arrive, think about where to sit (keep an unobstructed path to the door).
- TRUST YOUR INTUITION; if something does not feel right, leave. Talk to your agency supervisor and your professor about your concerns. Ask to switch clients.