

.Service-Learning Curriculum Policy Creighton College of Arts and Sciences

Rationale. Service-learning is a holistic, experiential educational strategy that integrates into academic courses community service in a context of personal growth, shared reflection, and moral and social responsibility. By adding to course content the learning of social reality through experiences outside the classroom, service-learning deepens the student's appropriation of knowledge.

The methods and goals of service-learning are entirely consistent with those of Jesuit education. In his address "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education," Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus, asserts that "personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is the catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection." At its highest level, then, Jesuit leadership supports and Jesuit pedagogy is consistent with the addition of service learning to the college curriculum.

The Creighton College of Arts and Sciences likewise recognizes the value of this pedagogical tool insofar as it supports the University's mission to educate the whole person - in body, mind, heart, conscience, and spirit. Furthermore, such learning contributes to the University's mission of teaching, research, and service, in ways that promote the "betterment of society," that stimulate "critical and creative thinking," and that provide "ethical perspectives for dealing with an increasingly complex world." By their very nature, service-learning courses in the College's curriculum would encourage the promotion of justice, service to others, and the appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity-all embedded in the mission statement.

Specific Learning Objectives. Integrated within the *disciplinary learning objectives* of every course seeking status as a service-learning course, these *additional objectives* specific to service-learning would be found:

1. Students will integrate learning of disciplinary knowledge, gained through classroom exercises, with experiential knowledge, gained through direct contact with the everyday problems of real people;
2. Students will encounter, serve, and form relationships through structured opportunities with individuals and communities that might otherwise remain outside their personal experience;
3. Students will develop skills of critical thinking and reflection about self, moral values, and social reality, within the institutional context of commitment to diversity, social justice, and the common good;
4. Students will foster the habit of community building and responsible citizenship.

Guidelines: Service-learning courses must be approved by the Curriculum Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. These courses would normally include the following practices.

General Practices

- A general orientation to service-learning and an orientation to the service site will be provided so as to acclimate students and community partners.
- Student will normally engage in a minimum number (determined by the course instructor in collaboration with the service partner) of hours of well-planned and documented service with a community partner during the semester in which the course is taught. These contact hours will not be substituted for classroom contact hours. Students will be alerted to the need to plan additional time to travel to and from the service site.
- Service opportunities will allow students to direct their knowledge and energies toward the service of a real need in the community, determined through collaborative and continuing partnership with service organizations and personnel. Both instructor and students will sign letters of agreement with the community partners, reflecting an understanding of the responsibilities of participation in the service-learning course.
- In-class assignments and discussions will require students to think reflectively, critically, and in the context of traditional course materials about their service.
- Any expectation that students or faculty would use the service-learning site as a source for research subjects must have prior IRB approval.

Course Guidelines

- By the beginning of class, a list of community partners and their service sites will be available and attached to the approved course syllabus.
- Students will earn the credit hours normally attached to the classroom contact hours of the course, numbered 100-level or higher. The course will not provide an additional credit as an add-on service-learning credit.
- Course grades will be based on the evaluation of both in-class requirements (examinations, papers, discussions) and service requirements (determined with the assistance of the student's service-site supervisor).
- All courses will be accompanied with an assessment plan that demonstrates how the instructor will determine if he or she has met his or her learning objectives.
- Any change in the traditional enrollment limits must have the approval of the Department Chair and the Dean of the College.