IV. Managing Service Learners

Faculty and organization:

1. determine the organization's role in evaluation.
2. evaluate midway and at end of the course; use the evaluations to improve course.
3. agree on the criteria and process that will be used to evaluate student.
4. limit paperwork: perhaps use a phone call interview or email response instead of forms.
5. determine who grades or checks that hours and duties have been completed.

Students:

1. commit to organization's cause.
2. be self-directed and follow professional etiquette of organization.
3. be responsible for their institutional requirements and deadlines.
4. adapt to organization's scheduling and program framework.
5. keep line of communication open with faculty and organization throughout project to avoid potential problems.

Organizations:

1. Complete evaluations as agreed upon.
2. Communicate challenges or problems with students to faculty in a timely fashion.

V. Promoting Diversity

Faculty and organization:

1. work together to develop goals and process for student cultural competency.
2. help students understand and reflect on social status and self-identity.
3. provide feedback on student cultural competency, including student reflection writing.
4. work together, with students, to handle cultural conflicts as they occur.

Institutions:

1. actively recruit more diverse students to service learning.
2. provide comprehensive cultural competency training.

Students:

1. work to understand social status, self-identity, and community strengths in their service learning site.
2. actively reflect on their experience and share those reflections with agency staff.

Community Standards For Service Learning

A guide for community-based organizations and institutions of higher education to build better service-learning relationships
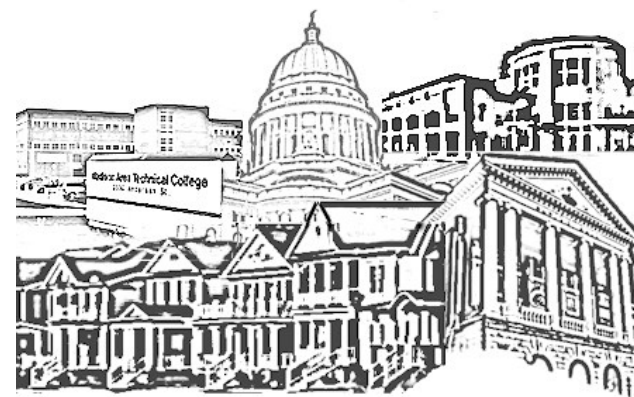
Recommendations from community organizations

February 2007

http://comm-org.wisc.edu/sl

I. Communication

Faculty:

1. provide a course syllabus and/or statement outlining expectations for the service-learning experience.
2. invite organizations to make classroom presentations.
3. give advance notice when requesting to send service learners to an organization, especially if students desire more than 40 hours of experience.

Organizations:

1. provide welcome packets & guidelines to students to clarify commitments.
2. make class presentations to tell students about their programs.
3. ensure there is staff capacity to mentor service learning students.

Organizations and faculty:

1. familiarize students with the organization's programs and mission.
2. agree on how to communicate--phone, email, or the preferred face-to-face meeting--and how often.
3. sign contract or memorandum of understanding with student. Include: definition of service learning, learning objectives, responsibilities, time commitment, timeline, supervision, training, evaluation, and liability/risk management issues (background checks, transportation, etc.).

II. Developing Positive Relationships

Faculty:

1. make a multi-year commitment, and students should commit to at least a semester, preferably 12 months (project outcome of shorter commitments will have less depth).
2. clearly define for organization whether course requirement is for service learning, independent study, or "volunteer work."
3. help agency staff mentor service learners.
4. respect the work of the agency:
   - When possible, collaboratively develop projects.
   - Provide for continuous open communication.
5. "Globalize" opportunities: combine or piggy-back on existing meetings; do group tours for faculty at organization site; group orientations for students/faculty when feasible.
6. protect organizations from being excluded from future SL offers because they have turned down past offers.
7. encourage organizations to interview students for fit and to turn down unsuitable candidates.

For more resources on service learning:

These principles are elaborated in a 2009 book, *The Unheard Voices: Community Organizations and Service Learning,* edited by Randy Stoecker and Elizabeth Tryon with Amy Hilgendorf and published by Temple University Press.

III. Providing an Infrastructure

Institutional service learning offices:

1. help define "service learning."
2. streamline the process of finding matches through either service-learning offices or departments.
3. work to create databases containing:
   - List of professors who teach service learning classes or have community partnerships.
   - Opportunities posted by organizations that faculty and students can access.
   - A listing of organizations that accept service learners and a checklist for students.
4. keep in touch with community partners and do site visits or other face-to-face meetings if possible.
5. run orientations for service learners on office etiquette, professional behavior, and cultural competence.
6. run orientations for organizations on how to access campus resources, and provide service-learning information in a user-friendly environment.
7. provide organizations with "zero-dollar appointments" (which allows for library and other privileges) in exchange for their supervision of students.

To access area service learning offices:

Go to http://comm-org.wisc.edu/sl to get contact information for area service learning offices.