Community-Engaged Learning: Collaborating with Community Partners in Educating University Students

Michelle LaPorte, Director of the Center for Academic Service-Learning (APU)
Arturo Ortega, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services (AUSD)
Charlene Heydorn, Founder and CEO (Redeeming Love)

May 15, 2018
Session Objectives

- Articulate the reciprocal nature of community-engaged learning
- Gain increased understanding of academic service-learning at APU
- Hear about and gain ideas for engaging conversations of reciprocity in community-based education

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

The purpose of community engagement is the partnership (of knowledge and resources) between colleges and universities and 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.

(Carnegie Foundation)
Academic service-learning is a teaching & learning method that promotes student learning through active participation in meaningful & planned service experiences in the community that are directly related to course content, with a focus on:

- connecting theory to practice
- critical reflective thinking
- personal & civic responsibility
- faith integration
- relationship to planned vocation
Conceptual Framework

Components of Service-Learning

- Academic Material
- Relevant Service
- Critical Reflection

Learning Goal Categories

- Civic Learning
- Personal Growth
- Academic Learning

(adapted from Ash and Clayton, 2009b)
Service-Learning at Azusa Pacific University

**Academic:** The service-learning experience is integrated into the course content.

**Reciprocal:** Service-learning at APU must be intentionally reciprocal.

**Making a Difference:** Service-learning at APU is intended to make a difference.
As a co-educator, the community partner with the expertise derived from education and practical experience can enable students to ground the theories and methods studied through text and lecture in real life situations.

In truly reciprocal service-learning relationships the community partner plays an educational role that is a critical addition to that of the classroom.

(Nola L. Freeman, 2003. A Meeting of Minds • A Handbook for Community-Campus Engagement)
AUSD Partnership

- 2017-2018:
  - 75 APU courses/sections
  - 29 APU faculty
  - 18 AUSD school sites
**COMM 230 Small Group Communication**

Prerequisite course: COMM 201 (Introduction to Communication Studies)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Learning Outcome</th>
<th>IDEA Objective</th>
<th>Assignments Used to Assess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define small group communication.</td>
<td>Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories</td>
<td>Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify, define, and explain the major theories associated with the study of small group communication.</td>
<td>Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories</td>
<td>Exams Reading Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflectively participate in and analytically observe communication practices in a variety of small group situations.</td>
<td>Learning to apply course materials (to improve rational thinking, problem solving and decisions)</td>
<td>Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team</td>
<td>Service-learning project + presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate how group social structures are constructed and constrained through communication.</td>
<td>Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view</td>
<td>Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify applications of small group communication theory and practice through a Christ-centered perspective in real world issues.</td>
<td>Learning to apply course materials (to improve rational thinking, problem solving and decisions)</td>
<td>Service-learning project + presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Small Group Communication Community Partners

REDEEMING LOVE

Homework House

DCFS Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Shepherd’s Pantry Hope and a Helping Hand

REASONS TO BELIEVE

Foothills Pregnancy Resource Center

ELIZABETH HOUSE Where Love Embraces Life

Mt. San Antonio Gardens

THE LET IT BE FOUNDATION Caring for Children and Families

TM
Community Partner Survey/Feedback

- 40 responses
- 70% local schools
- 25% 5+ years working with service-learning
- 95% agree/strongly agree: The partnership with APU academic service-learning has contributed positively to my relationship with the university.
- 92.5% agree/strongly agree: I recognize the strengths & assets I/we contribute to APU students’ education.
- 90% agree/strongly agree: I was well equipped in my role as a co-educator in the APU students’ experience.
# Community Partner Survey/Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Participated, +</th>
<th>Participated, not +</th>
<th>Did not participate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with faculty instructor to discuss project, goals, and/or logistics.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with Center for Academic Service-Learning (CASL) staff to discuss project, goals, and/or logistics.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing on-site orientation for students serving at my site.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the APU class to share about the organization and/or project.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing materials provided before the project began (overview of service-learning, student learning outcomes/goals, course information, etc.).</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending APU academic <strong>service-learning events</strong> (such as workshop, lunch, etc.).</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contacting the faculty</strong> instructor with questions or concerns over the course of the semester.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contacting CASL staff</strong> with questions or concerns over the course of the semester.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participating in student critical reflection</strong> (i.e. attending presentations, participating in discussions with students, etc.).</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Providing feedback</strong> to the faculty instructor regarding the APU students.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reviewing the Co-Education Summary</strong> of feedback from the APU students regarding their service-learning experience.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Partner Survey/Feedback:
strategies to ensure reciprocity

- Additional check-ins from service-learning or faculty
- Access to student goals or overview of goals, class/project expectations
- Thorough conversation with me about what they plan to do, so we can bounce ideas off each other.
Continuing to partner with APU academic service-learning: why/why not?

There is mutual benefit for both participants.

... because I love the co-education model. Not only are these students providing essential activities for our site, but I also get to pour into them as individuals as well... Every class/student I have worked with have been professional, great team players, and ready to learn. They bring quality work to our site and I can trust that whatever they are in charge of will be extraordinary.

With our specific group, the time commitment was something I wasn’t fully prepared for and may not be able to accommodate for future groups.
Service-Learning Course Designation Process

Purpose:

- Provide structure & accountability in ensuring meaningful and reciprocal experiences
- Ensure the “Service-Learning Course” attribute is accurately assigned
- Collaborate with and support faculty, students, and community partners in the development and logistics of projects

Components:

- Course Information
- Establishing Service-Learning Experiences & Partnerships
- Preparing Students for Service-Learning
- Service-Learning Project Details
- Reflection & Assessment
- Support from Center for Academic Service-Learning
Working with the Service-Learning Staff

**Director & Program Coordinators**

- **Verifying** S-L projects and partners
- **Working with faculty** to determine the scope and objectives of the S-L experience, appropriate partners, and the effectiveness of programs
- **Assisting faculty** to develop and improve S-L projects
- **Addressing and resolving issues** that arise during the course of S-L projects
- **Serving as a primary point of contact** for urgent matters relating to S-L programs

**Service-Learning Advocates (SLAs)**

- **Working with faculty** to prepare orientation materials
- **Conducting** service-learning orientation & evaluations and providing reports to faculty
- **Communicating with campus partners** regarding chapel absences, university service credits, on campus visits, etc.
- **Providing** project support through site visits, mid-project check-ins, end-of-project reports, etc.
Questions?

Michelle LaPorte, Director of the Center for Academic Service-Learning
(mlaporte@apu.edu)