Service-Learning: Where the Cornerstones Connect

Academic service-learning builds community by developing positive, reciprocal relationships between Azusa Pacific University and the local, national, and international private and public sectors in order to enhance scholarship of faculty, students, and community partners through service activities, which integrate faith in Christ with service and learning.

Beyond the difference being made within the community, service-learning positively affects the academic careers of students. Through engaged learning, students increase their understanding of the course material; through real-life experience in the field, they are better prepared for their vocation, resulting in increased employability.

During the 2017-18 school year, 3,341 students in 185 classes within 24 different departments of Azusa Pacific University contributed 46,700 hours of service to over 90 community partners. This large scale impact on the community could not happen without partnership and support of committed faculty and community partners!
Academic Service-Learning Defined

A teaching and learning method that promotes student learning through active participation in meaningful and planned service experiences in the community that are directly related to the course content, with a focus on:

- Connecting Theory to Practice
- Critical Reflective Thinking
- Personal & Civic Responsibility
- Faith Integration
- Relationship to Planned Vocation

Service-Learning Project Quote

“I really learned what it is to be a teacher. I made lessons plans, practiced time and classroom management, and interacted with students. I also learned how to work with other "teachers" by discussing lesson ideas with my group and working towards achieving our goals.” -ENGL 436 Student

GENERAL TIMELINE

BEFORE TERM BEGINS
- Finalize logistics & update specific roles on Co-Education Plan.
- Faculty send syllabus to SLA and community partner.
- Service-Learning Orientation & Evaluation dates scheduled.

BEGINNING OF TERM
- Co-Education Plan completed & sent to faculty and community partner(s).
- SLA lead a 15-minute S-L Orientation.
- On-site orientation hosted by community partner(s) as necessary.
- Upcoming semester schedule draft due to Registrar; schedule published & student registration begins.

MID-TERM
- Upon completion of the project, Service-Learning Evaluation in class facilitated by SLA.
- Faculty and Community Partner Feedback Surveys distributed and collected.
- Prepare next semester’s projects & draft Co-Education Plans.
- Faculty (and community partner, as appropriate) verify student participation & completion of S-L requirements for service credit approval.

END OF TERM
- Report of student evaluations & Co-Education Summary prepared and sent by SLA.
- University service credits uploaded to students’ accounts.
In true service-learning, the roles of faculty and of the community partners are vital in the academic, civic, and personal learning of the students. Community organizations/agencies/schools have assets and strengths upon which to build a solid learning experience for the student.

- 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.

- Thus, in truly reciprocal service-learning relationships the community partner plays an educational role that is a critical addition to that of the classroom.
GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FACULTY, APU

Verify that the course is assigned the “Service-Learning Course” designation with the department
Design & Implement service-learning projects that contribute to the goals and learning outcomes of a chosen course
Include service-learning as an integral part of the syllabus and grading system
Demonstrate the connection between service-learning activities and course objectives
Collaborate with Community Partners in the co-education of the students
Facilitate student reflection activities that relates service-learning to the course
Provide adequate time for a service-learning Orientation and Evaluation during class time
Verify student participation and service credit approval at the end of the project for undergraduate students

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Collaborate with APU faculty and CASL to implement service-learning projects on and off-campus
Serve as a co-educator of APU students
Communicate any concerns with APU faculty & Service-Learning staff
Participate in the evaluation of the service-learning partnership through the community partner feedback form

SERVICE-LEARNING STAFF, CASL

Verify service-learning projects and partners
Work with faculty to determine the scope and objectives of the service-learning experience, identifies appropriate partners, and evaluates the effectiveness of programs
Assist faculty to develop and improve service-learning projects
Provide on-going support for SLAs, faculty, and community partners
Address and resolves issues that arise during service-learning projects
Serve as a primary point of contact for urgent matters relating to service-learning projects and programs

SERVICE-LEARNING ADVOCATE, CASL

Work with faculty to prepare orientation materials
Conduct service-learning Orientations and Evaluations
Coordinate placement of APU students at appropriate agencies (if necessary)
Provide project support through site visits, mid-project check-ins, end-of-project reports, co-education summaries, collecting service credit verification, etc.
Oversee paperwork and inputting evaluation data
*Project-specific roles & responsibilities outlined on the Co-Education Plan for each course

THE STUDENT VOICE

Education to Vocation:
Service-Learning & Employability

Service-learning provides excellent opportunities for students to develop skills and gain experience in the following 14 traits that potential employers have identified as desirable qualities in employees. In support of APU’s “Education to Vocation Initiative,” in 2017-18 students were asked to indicate the top five traits they demonstrated in their service-learning experience.

Evaluations returned by 2,444 students, representing 24 disciplines provided the following rankings.