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)

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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

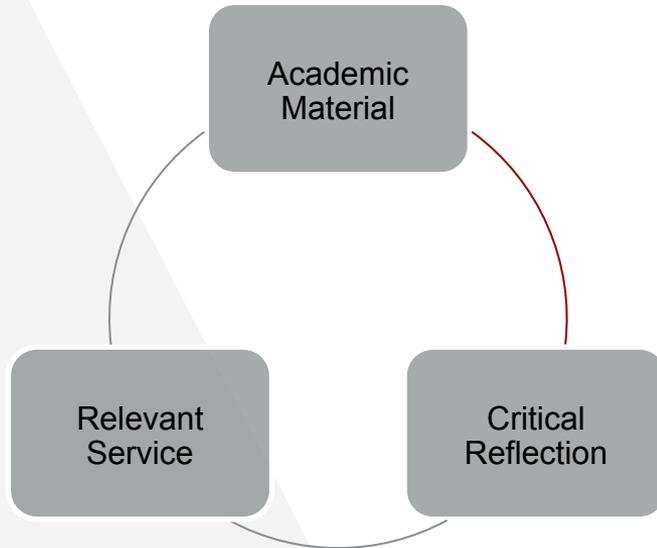**personal & civic responsibility**

faith integration
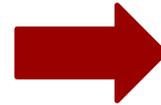
relationship to planned vocation

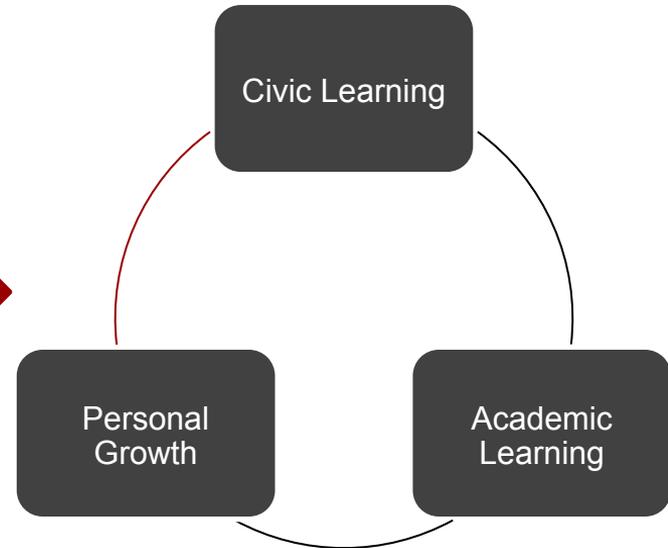# Conceptual Framework

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

CHRIST • SCHOLARSHIP
COMMUNITY • SERVICE

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.

Co-educators: Partners in Service-Learning

Faculty &
University Staff

Students
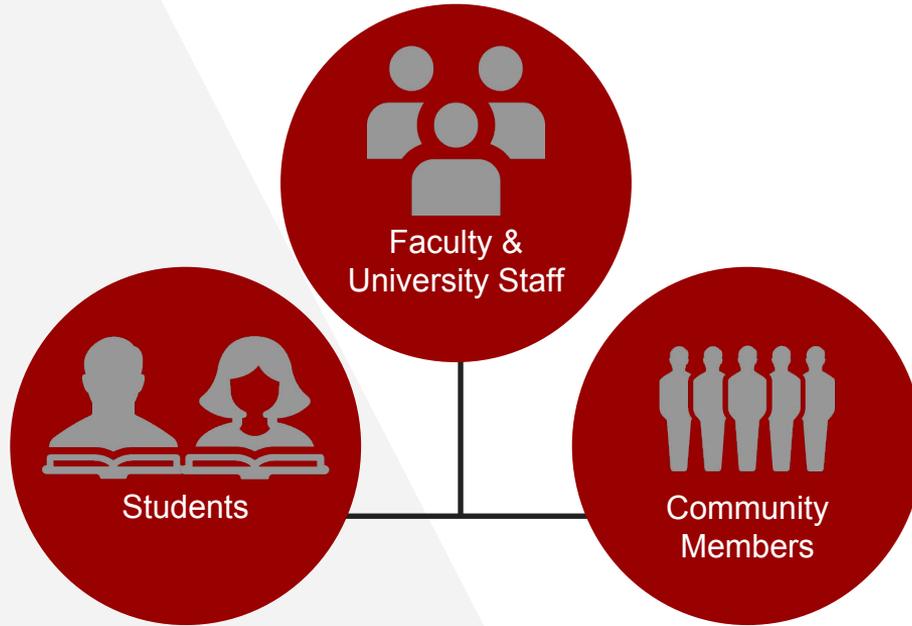
Community
Members

▸ 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)

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

Small Group Communication Community Partners

REDEEMING|LOVE

Neighborhood Homework House

D·C·F·S Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

REASONS TO BELIEVE

Shepherd's Pantry
Hope and a Helping Hand

MT. SAN ANTONIO GARDENS

Foothills Pregnancy Resource Center

ELIZABETH HOUSE
WHERE LOVE EMBRACES LIFE

The Let it Be FOUNDATION.org
Caring for Children and Families

Redeeming Love Partnership

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

	Participated, +	Participated, not +	Did not participate
Meeting with faculty instructor to discuss project, goals, and/or logistics.	31	3	7
Meeting with Center for Academic Service-Learning (CASL) staff to discuss project, goals, and/or logistics.	23	3	14
Providing **on-site orientation** for students serving at my site.	33	1	5
Visiting the APU class to share about the organization and/or project.	11	1	30
Reviewing materials provided before the project began (overview of service-learning, student learning outcomes/goals, course information, etc.).	24	11	6

Community Partner Survey/Feedback

Attending APU academic **service-learning events** (such as workshop, lunch, etc.).	22	3	15
Contacting the faculty instructor with questions or concerns over the course of the semester.	22	1	17
Contacting CASL staff with questions or concerns over the course of the semester.	18	5	17
Participating in student critical reflection (i.e. attending presentations, participating in discussions with students, etc.).	12	2	26
Providing feedback to the faculty instructor regarding the APU students.	25	4	11
Reviewing the Co-Education Summary of feedback from the APU students regarding their service-learning experience.	15	7	19

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)