

Center for Academic Service-Learning (CASL)

Faculty Handbook

Palm Beach State College
Center for Academic Service-Learning
4200 Congress Avenue MS#49
Lake Worth, FL 33461

<http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/x10427.xml>

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What is Service-Learning at Palm Beach State College and Why?

Adapted from Boise State University

Center for Academic Service-Learning (CASL) Mission:

Service-Learning at Palm Beach State College (State) exists to enhance learning and foster citizenship through active involvement in academically-based community service.

What is Service-Learning?

State defines Service-Learning as “a teaching method that increases student engagement and success through community involvement to apply theories or skills being taught in a course. Service-Learning furthers the learning objectives of the academic courses, addresses community and civic needs, and requires students to reflect on their activity in order to gain an appreciation for the relationship between civics and academics. “

At State we envision a College that is a diverse community of active learners where achievement occurs in an environment without boundaries. We envision a responsive collaborative institution committed to the ongoing renaissance and enrichment of its community. Service-Learning provides a teaching method to assist faculty, students and the community in fulfilling the State vision.

How Do Faculty Benefit?

- ❖ Engages more students
- ❖ Reinvigorates teaching
- ❖ Improves relationships with students
- ❖ Offers professional development
- ❖ Creates research and publishing opportunities
- ❖ Make a difference in the community

What Resources are Available?

Service-Learning Office provides:

- ❖ Sample syllabi and other discipline-specific resource material
- ❖ Workshops and roundtables with other faculty
- ❖ One-on-one planning consultation
- ❖ Supportive network (with other faculty on campus participating in Service-Learning)

What are some examples of this kind of course?

Students in many technical and professional writing courses create websites, brochures, reports, and other documents for local nonprofit agencies rather than for hypothetical audiences. Students in an environmental sociology class use what they've learned to plan and participate in a clean up campaign in a local park. History students collect oral histories of the elderly in an historic area of the city. Science students share their growing knowledge with high school and middle school students to inspire them to pursue science studies in the future. Nursing students reach out to the community and get practice in working with patients by participating in a community health screening event.

How does service-learning differ from other kinds of experiential learning?

Experiential education is a blanket term for all kinds of student activities that take place outside of the traditional classroom. This includes co-op, internships, clinical experiences, and practica. Service-Learning is different from these other models.

Some of the distinctive features of service-learning are:

- ❖ Service-Learning is one component of one course. While students are engaged in typical work like writing papers or performing experiments or designing studies for the majority of the course, one part of the class requires them to participate in an applied activity through Service-Learning.
- ❖ Service-Learning is not paid. While many internships and CO-OP experiences are paid, service-learning is simply a required part of a course. Some students may find opportunities for future paid positions through Service-Learning, but this is not part of the educational experience.
- ❖ Service-Learning is designed specifically to benefit someone besides the student. Whereas many practicum experiences place students in public schools or hospitals for short-term course-related work, these experiences

are designed primarily to give students real world experience, not to benefit the community. Service-Learning projects allow students to learn while helping others.

- ❖ Service-Learning is primarily course content oriented, not career oriented. While students in a CO-OP or internship program are working primarily to gain career-related experience, Service-Learners are primarily working to learn course material. This makes Service-Learning a good introduction or precursor to CO-OP and internship experiences.
- ❖ Service-Learning is not a required part of a program curriculum. Many fields like nursing and education include a clinical requirement. While Service-Learning is appropriate in these areas, it is not a substitute or a new way of looking at the clinical experience that may be required for program accreditation and so forth. Service-Learning is a pedagogical tool that faculty members may choose to implement, but it will not replace other off-campus learning experiences.
- ❖ Service-Learning involves reflection. One of the critical elements of any definition of Service-Learning is student reflection. While these other approaches may involve structured student reflection, they most often focus more exclusively on pragmatic issues than on allowing students to see how their academic learning fits into their civic lives. While students might learn skills in a practicum or internship, they learn integration of the various aspects of that experience—personal, social, emotional, intellectual—through Service-Learning reflection.

Why not just call this volunteering?

Volunteering can be another important aspect of student learning on the college level, and many people confuse Service-Learning with volunteering. They are not the same, however.

- ❖ Volunteerism isn't necessarily linked to course content. Students sent out into the community as "volunteers" might wind up filing paper work or sweeping out a kennel. These activities are important contributions, but they are not relevant to courses.
- ❖ Effective Service-Learning is a required part of a course; therefore students are not "volunteering" to do it.
- ❖ Volunteerism is a great precursor to and outgrowth of service-learning. Many students who sign up for Service-Learning classes have backgrounds of working with nonprofit agencies and even more choose to follow up with this kind of work after taking a Service-Learning course.

What is the history of Service-Learning?

Civic commitment has been a major emphasis of education around the world since ancient times. In the United States, public education was founded on the notion that people need to be trained in basic skills in order to serve their communities as effective citizens and leaders. The more recent roots of Service-Learning in the United States can be traced to the 1960s, when political activism among students was a major cultural influence. In that time, students began to demand a connection between their civic commitments and their educational experiences. Since then, the movement has grown steadily. It surged in the late 1980s with the formation of the Campus Compact, a nationwide organization of university presidents who pledge to emphasize service on their campuses. Today, over 860 institutions of higher education are part of the growing Compact, and on average 28 percent of the students at those institutions participate in Service-Learning.

There is also a national listing of 101 ways to combine Service and Learning. This very helpful list is published on Florida International University's website. To access the list, please [click here](#).

The following list offers some quick ideas for the incorporation of Service-Learning into course curriculum.

- ❖ **Marketing** students create and implement a marketing plan for a non-profit organization
- ❖ **Accounting** students serve in the business offices of non-profits
- ❖ **Business** students study minority entrepreneurs, create a publication and coloring book, and present to low-income school children
- ❖ **History** students complete oral histories with senior citizens, create booklet, and hold event to celebrate the participants
- ❖ **English** composition students help non-profit agency write manuals/brochures; organize writing contest on civic responsibility for high school students; choose an issue, serve, and do all their writing about that issue and their service
- ❖ **Nursing** students adopt a homeless shelter and provide health care services once a week, every week
- ❖ **Intro to Computers** students help teach at a local technology center

Common Questions Faculty Ask About Service-Learning

Adapted from Indiana Campus Compact

How does Service-Learning differ from internships?

Internships provide students with experiences to develop *professional skills*. **Service-Learning** links service experiences to course learning objectives, while fostering *citizenship skills*. Like internships, Service-Learning integrates theory and practice, but Service-Learning also emphasizes civic responsibility and community awareness. **Service-Learning** experiences can often lead to **internships**. Service-Learning provides students with shorter-term community experiences which can help them refine or redirect their goals for longer internships.

Will Service-Learning take a lot of time?

It does take time to set up the logistics of a Service-Learning class, to respond to individual students, and to work through the unanticipated challenges of agency partnerships. But there are ways to minimize the impact on time by garnering assistance from the Service-Learning Program Coordinator. It does get easier each time you teach the Service-Learning course. The amount of time required lessens as faculty/agency partnerships develop.

Does Service-Learning take too much class time?

You are still in charge of how class time is used. Students can reflect on the experience outside of class through journals, on Blackboard, in chat rooms, or in more formal papers. Research, however, indicates that devoting time in class to discussing experiences that emerge from the service will increase student learning and satisfaction with the course. If students' experiences become a text for the class, participants will integrate what they are learning, make connections to course material, and listen to the experiences of others.

How do I evaluate students' performance and learning?

Instructors frequently use traditional evaluation techniques: papers that are graded on how well students relate their service to specific course concepts, theories, and objectives; oral presentations that show critical thinking; exam questions that ask students to describe a community application of a particular theory; or final products developed during the service experience that illustrate skill proficiency.

How can my involvement in Service-Learning strengthen my professional research?

National conferences and professional academic associations now include sessions on Service-Learning and the scholarship of engagement. Involvement in Service-Learning can augment and redirect your professional research interest, especially when a strong partnership is created with the community agency. Service-Learning can contribute to research by engaging students in action research and applied research projects. **The Florida Campus Compact lists "Publishing Opportunities"**.

What risks are involved in Service-Learning?

Faculty and students should talk with the agency about its volunteer insurance.

Minimize risk by using the Memorandum of Understanding (copy available on Service-Learning website <http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/x10427.xml>). Discuss (in class and at the agency) the risks related to the service, as well as the benefits and skills required.

Applying for Service-Learning Designation

Send your adapted syllabus to the Service-Learning Coordinator MS#49, along with a one-page response to the following criteria:

Nine Criteria for Designation of Service-Learning Classes

***Based on** to the "National Principles of Good Practice in Community Service-Learning"

1. What service will students provide to individuals, organizations, schools, or other entities in the community?
2. How does the service relate to the subject matter of the course?
3. What methods will you use to encourage students to think about what they are learning through the service and how it relates to the subject of the class?
4. What reflective strategies will you use to assess the learning derived from the service? (Explain how credit will be given for the learning and its relation to the course, not for the service alone).
5. Explain how the service recipients (clients or agency) will be involved in the planning and evaluation of the service.
6. What methods or resources will you use (Web links, articles, etc.) to illustrate how the causes of (or solutions to) the community issue(s) relate to the discipline?
7. How does the Service-Learning experience, which may also be associated with career preparation, foster civic responsibility?
8. What methods will you use to help students learn from each other (e.g. through reflection sessions) as well as from the instructor?
9. Explain how course options ensure that no student is required to participate in a service placement that creates a religious, political and/or moral conflict for the student.

USEFUL LINKS

- ❖ Palm Beach State College Service-Learning Program
<http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/x10427.xml>
- ❖ Florida Campus Compact
<http://www.floridacompact.org>
- ❖ Campus Compact
<http://www.compact.org>
- ❖ The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
www.servicelearning.org

Suggested Faculty Checklist *not all items may apply

1. EXPLORE NEW CONCEPTS AND TECHNIQUES

- Attend a Service-Learning Course Integration Workshop.
- Schedule a one-on-one discussion with the Service-Learning Coordinator to overview service-learning in your discipline and learn about service-learning options, models, and resources specific to your course.
- Review sample syllabi for ideas: <http://www.compact.org/syllabi/> or <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/S-Lc/modelp.html> gives helpful models.

2. ESTABLISH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Articulate, in writing, the objectives of the service component:
 - To gain “SL” designation, complete the “Application for Service-Learning Designation” documents and submit to Service-Learning Coordinator by the course catalog deadline date.
- Identify service activities or issues that relate to your learning objectives [OPTIONAL: not if students will propose sites]:
 - Ask Service-Learning Coordinator to draft a list of possibilities or identify community needs via your own professional contacts.
- Contact potential community partner(s) [OPTIONAL: not if students will propose sites]
 - Discuss mutual goals, expectations, and parameters for service projects (hours, product, timeline, and assessment), training requirements, onsite orientations, schedule flexibility, and method/frequency of exchanging feedback.
- Consider inviting agency or community representatives to visit the class.

3. DEVELOP THE SYLLABUS

- Explain the service activity and learning objective(s) of the service in the syllabus. Convey the incentive(s) for successful completion of the experience.
- Link the service to course content:
 - Use writing assignments, discussion topics, readings, presentations, and other activities listed in the syllabus as connections to the service.
- Describe how students will be assessed on the experience:
 - Provide consequences for students who do/do not follow-through with their agency commitments.
- Establish benchmarks or a timeline for contacting the agency, meeting with supervisor, signing contracts, beginning and completing the service. INCLUDE DATES IN YOUR “CALENDAR”.
- Clarify the procedures for reporting problems (should they contact the agency, CASL, or you?); give a cut-off date for changing agencies (week six is manageable; after that the agencies cannot be expected to reschedule).

4. ORIENTATION/TRAINING

- Talk about the service-learning experience on the first day of class:
 - Touch on the each of the topics listed under “Developing the Syllabus” (above).
- Invite agency or community representatives to visit the class (Service-Learning Coordinator can assist).
- Facilitate students connecting with agencies. Have students complete an agreement with their agency supervisor.

5. GUIDANCE/MONITORING

- Provide a timeline:
 - Students need benchmarks for contacting the agency, meeting with supervisors, signing agreements, beginning and completing the service.
- Have a back-up plan for students with special needs.
 - Consider providing an alternative for those students who are legitimately unable to participate, or for those who miss/ignore agency orientations and start dates.
- Contact the community partner(s) at least once mid-semester to exchange feedback and, if possible, visit the service site(s) to gain first-hand exposure to the experience:
- Evaluate student service activities using frequent “five-minute papers” or other methods of formally assessing student progress. Recommended timeframe: Weeks five and ten.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

- Have you attended an on-site orientation?
- What did you find that you did not expect to at the agency?
- How many hours have you served (or how much progress have you made on your project)? If you have not started, what is your anticipated start date?
- Are you encountering any challenges?

6. REFLECTION

- Implement reflective assignments and activities throughout the semester:
 - Visit the Service-Learning website; click “Reflection” for sample questions, activities, and journal formats.
- Discuss the service in class even if you are using an optional service-learning model.
 - Students who choose not to participate in the experience will still gain insights and knowledge from the comments of students who do participate.

7. ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

- Use reflective assignments to assess student learning and to evaluate performance (class discussion, journals, analysis papers, or oral presentations).
- Have students submit an evaluation to be completed by the service supervisor.
- Administer the Service-Learning evaluation form to students on the last day of class. Return the evaluations to CASL. A report will be sent back to you to help you refine your next Service-Learning course.

Service-Learning Roles and Responsibilities

1. THE AGENCY PARTNER: (non-profit organization)

- Designate a Service-Learning supervisor who will serve as the liaison with CASL, the faculty, and the students.
- Follow the recommended CASL agency checklist, including:
 - Provide Service-Learning project descriptions to the Service-Learning staff before first day of class
 - Schedule orientation dates and times before first day of class, send to CASL
 - Orient the student to the agency partner's rules, policies, procedures, methods, and operations, community issue, and population served (during the third-fourth weeks of semester).
 - Sign student agreement and log sheet (log sheet includes opportunity for you to evaluate the student) These forms will be provided by students
 - Check-in formally with the students regularly (recommended: beginning, middle and end of semester AT THE MINIMUM).
- Notify the faculty partner immediately, preferably by phone, on any cause of dissatisfaction or of misconduct on the part of the student
- Maintain good communication with students, CASL staff, and faculty (return calls/e-mails within 2 days)
- Offer suggestions and ideas for improvement in CASL procedures and opportunities

2. PALM BEACH STATE SERVICE-LEARNING STAFF

- Recruit, support, and facilitate faculty, students, and agency Service-Learning partnerships
- Find, screen, and orient agencies whose needs match class learning objectives
- Provide workshops and trainings about Service-Learning
- Facilitate student placement through classroom visits and agency referral lists, upon request
- Provide contracts and forms that clarify responsibilities and increase accountability
- Support and troubleshoot with students, agencies, and faculty
- Evaluate the Service-Learning experience for students, agencies, and faculty
- Maintain regular contact with agency partners, faculty, and students (at beginning, middle, and end of semester). E-mail upcoming opportunities and information
- Seek and respond to feedback from agency partners, students, and faculty

3. FACULTY PARTNER:

- Set learning objectives for the service experience that relate to course objectives
- Identify community issues or service that relate to the class
- Contact screened agencies to clarify course goals and service expectations
- Adapt syllabus, class assignments, lecture examples, and class discussion to include links between course theory and service experience. Structure and schedule reflection assignments or activities
- Discuss with students the Service-Learning expectations and requirements, agency orientation dates, deadlines for starting service, and evaluation guidelines
- Use written agreements, time logs, evaluation instruments (recommended by CASL)
- Maintain regular contact with agency partners (recommended: beginning, middle, and end of semester)
- Evaluate student learning of service experience

4. STUDENT:

- Complete required amount of service hours and/or service project
- Attend agency orientation at scheduled time
- Sign agreement with agency partner
- Start service by the fifth week of the semester, or as specified in the course syllabus
- Track hours using hour log sheet, or another method specified in the course syllabus
- Maintain regular communication with agency partner regarding service hours and activities (recommended beginning, middle and end of semester AT THE MINIMUM).
- Respect rules, regulations, and confidentiality standards of agency
- Participate in reflection activities and assignments
- Evaluate Service-Learning experience and the agency partner