

**Citizenship and Service-Learning
Southwest Missouri State University
ASSESSMENT REPORT
Fall 2004**

Assessment Process

The assessment of service-learning was conducted using the *Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education* developed by Dr. Andrew Furco, University of California, Berkeley.

The assessment activities were done in the spring and summer of 2004. Activities included oral and written surveys to faculty, students and community partners; looking at statistics for service-learning activities; and reading SMSU and service-learning documents.

Each component was evaluated (using a three-stage continuum described below) and a rating assigned to each. From the component assessments, an overall rating could then be assigned to the five dimensions. Language used to describe the stages for the components is taken from the rubric.

Dimension I: Philosophy and Mission of Service-Learning

Stage 2: Quality Building

Campuses are focused on ensuring the development of “quality” service-learning activities; the quality of service-learning activities begins to supersede the quantity of service-learning activities

Components:

1. Definition of Service-Learning: Stage 2: Quality Building

There is an operationalized definition for service-learning on the campus, but there is some variance and inconsistency in the application of the term.

2. Strategic Planning: Stage 2: Quality Building

Although certain short-range and long-range goals for service-learning have been defined for the campus, these goals have not been formalized into an official strategic plan that will guide the implementation of these goals.

3. Alignment with Institutional Mission: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

Service-learning is part of the primary concern of the institution. Service-learning is included in the campus’ official mission and/or strategic plan.

4. Alignment with Educational Reform Efforts: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

Service-learning is tied formally and purposefully to other important, high profile efforts on campus (e.g., campus/community partnership efforts, establishment of learning communities, improvement of undergraduate teaching, writing excellence emphasis, etc.)

Recommendations:

Goal: Produce an operational definition of service-learning for the campus

- Develop a consistent service-learning definition to be used campus-wide. The definition will include: service-learning as a teaching pedagogy, integration of academic study with community service, importance of reflection, and the goal of developing actively engaged citizens for democracy. CASL staff will develop the definition by October 2004.

- Bring focus groups together to discuss the resulting definition to ensure clarity and understanding. Focus groups should be completed by December 2004.
- Publish this definition in any and all CASL information (e.g. web site, catalog, brochures).
 - These materials will be identified and corrected by August 2005
- Add/include service-learning and the appropriate definition to relevant university publications (e.g. catalog, long-range plan).
 - These items will be identified and edited by August 2005 (specific publications having earlier deadlines will receive immediate attention)

Dimension II: Faculty Support for and Involvement in Service-Learning

Stage 2: Quality Building

Campuses are focused on ensuring the development of “quality” service-learning activities; the quality of service-learning activities begins to supersede the quantity of service-learning activities

Components:

1. Faculty Awareness: Stage 2: Quality Building

An adequate number of faculty members know what service-learning is and understand how service-learning is different from community service, internships, or other experiential learning activities.

2. Faculty Involvement and Support: Stage 2: Quality Building

While a satisfactory number of faculty members is supportive of service-learning, few of them are advocates for infusing service-learning in the overall mission and/or their own professional work. An inadequate or unsatisfactory number of KEY faculty members are engaged in service-learning.

3. Faculty Leadership: Stage 2: Quality Building

There are only one or two influential faculty members who provide leadership to the campus’ service-learning effort.

4. Faculty Incentives and Rewards: Stage 2: Quality Building

Although faculty members are encouraged and are provided various incentives (mini-grants, sabbaticals, funds for service-learning conferences, etc.) to pursue service-learning activities, their work in service-learning is not always recognized during their review, tenure, and promotion process.

Recommendations:

Goal: Sustain and recruit faculty for service-learning

- Increase the number of faculty participating in service-learning to 105 (about 15% of the faculty) by 2008 (approximately 72 or 10% of the faculty participated in 2003-04).
- Increase the number of faculty participating in service-learning to 140 (about 20% of the faculty) by 2010.
- Announce Faculty Fellows program and Research Stipends, Fall 2004 (first awards announced Fall 2004). These two initiatives are intended to strengthen service-learning course offerings and encourage research with community partners or in the service-learning area.
- Explore avenues to define service-learning as a method of teaching in the SMSU faculty culture. Nationally, service-learning is considered an innovative teaching pedagogy.

- Communicate the service-learning definition (see Dimension I plan) to faculty and administration
- Work with Academic Affairs, Service-learning Oversight Committee, and other relevant academic divisions to make opportunistic changes

Dimension III: Student Support for and Involvement in Service-Learning

Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

The campus has fully institutionalized service-learning into the fabric or culture of the institution

Components:

1. Student Awareness: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

There are campus-wide, coordinated mechanisms (e.g., service-learning listings in the schedule of classes, course catalogs, etc.) that help students become aware of the various service-learning courses, resources, and opportunities that are available to them.

2. Student Opportunities: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

Service-learning options and opportunities (in which service is integrated in core academic courses) are available to students in many areas throughout the academy regardless of students' major, year in school, or academic and social interests.

3. Student Leadership: Stage 2: Quality Building

There are a limited number of opportunities available for students to take on leadership roles in advancing service-learning in their departments or throughout the campus.

4. Student Incentives and Rewards: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

The campus has one or more formal mechanisms in place (e.g., catalogued list of service-learning courses, service-learning notation on students' transcripts, etc.) that encourage students to participate in service-learning and reward students for their participation in service-learning.

Recommendations:

Goal: Continue current efforts to market service-learning to students

- Continue our presence during SOAR and participation in the Majors Fair
- Enhance student growth and involvement by positive faculty recruitment efforts. Increased faculty recruitment efforts as stated in Dimension II will impact this goal.
- Increase awareness of the availability of courses across the disciplines and the service-learning designation that students receive on their transcripts
- Continue to advise, support and cultivate the Association of Civically Engaged Students (ACES) and the Public Affairs Week (PAW) initiative through the CASL office.

Dimension IV: Community Participation and Partnerships

Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

The campus has fully institutionalized service-learning into the fabric or culture of the institution

Components:

1. Community Partner Awareness: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

Most community agencies that partner with the college or university are aware of the campus' goals for service-learning and the full range of service-learning opportunities that are available to students.

2. Mutual Understanding: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

Both the campus and community representatives are aware of and sensitive to each other's needs, timelines, goals, resources, and capacity for developing and implementing service-learning activities. There is generally broad agreement between the campus and community on the goals for service-learning.

3. Community Partner Voice and Leadership: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

Appropriate community agency representatives are formally welcomed and encouraged to serve as advocates and ambassadors for institutionalizing service-learning on the campus; community agency representatives are provided substantial opportunities to express their particular agency needs or recruit student and faculty participation in service-learning.

Recommendations:

Goal: Strengthen and build on the current Community Partner involvement and support

- Continue efforts to sustain current relationships and add additional appropriate community partners (current efforts include the annual community partner/faculty luncheon, Community Action Fair, celebrations at the end of each semester, and staff on-site visits to community partners).
- Consider a plan for a future advisory board to include community partners.

Dimension V: Institutional Support for Service-Learning

Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

The campus has fully institutionalized service-learning into the fabric or culture of the institution

Components:

1. Coordinating Entity: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

The institution maintains coordinating entity (e.g., committee, center, or clearinghouse) that is devoted primarily to assisting the various campus constituencies in the implementation, advancement, and institutionalization of service-learning.

2. Policy-making Entity: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

The institution's policy-making board(s)/committee(s) recognize service-learning as an essential educational goal for the campus and formal policies have been developed or implemented.

3. Staffing: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

The campus houses and funds an appropriate number of permanent staff members who understand service-learning and who hold appropriate titles that can influence the advancement and institutionalization of service-learning on campus.

4. Funding: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

The campus' service-learning activities are supported primarily by hard funding from the campus.

5. Administrative Support: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

The campus' administrative leaders understand and support service-learning, and actively cooperate to make service-learning a visible and important part of the campus' work.

6. Departmental Support: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

A fair to large number of departments provide service-learning opportunities that are a part of the formal academic program and/or are primarily supported by departmental funds.

7. Evaluation and Assessment: Stage 3: Sustained Institutionalization

An ongoing, systematic effort is in place to account for the number and quality of service-learning activities that are taking place throughout the campus.

Recommendations:

Goal: Advance the foundation of institutional support for service-learning

- Institutional support is a strength of the program, as evidenced by the funding of the CASL office itself, as well as of the Faculty Fellows and Community Based Research initiatives.
- The continued funding of this office and, specifically, these two initiatives is important to the support of faculty who will be the future of service-learning.

CONCLUSION:

Using Dr. Furco's rubric as our guide for self-assessment, service-learning on the SMSU campus is at Stage 3 (Sustained Institutionalized) on three out of the five Dimensions and at Stage 2 (Quality Building) on the remaining two Dimensions.

The Stage 3 areas or strengths of the development of service-learning are:

- Student support for and involvement in service-learning
- Community participation and partnerships
- Institutional support for service-learning

Stage 2 areas which will receive concentrated effort are:

- Philosophy and mission of service-learning
- Faculty support for and involvement in service-learning

This assessment process is a tool for service-learning to plan current and future priorities and goals. As the University goes through the process of long-range planning, the CASL office would like to support that process and contribute to the University's achievement of the Public Affairs Mission.

The same assessment process will be completed again during the 2008-09 academic year to determine progress on recommendations and the on-going development of service-learning on campus.