CLU's CTL SESSION ON– EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION: UNDERSTANDING THE NUTS, BOLTS, AND RIGORS OF SERVICE-LEARNING
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<u>Center for Academic Service-Learning:</u>
(1) Places a high priority on increasing institutional support for Service-Learning as a valued form of Experiential Education, and (2) includes in its core functions CLU's commitment to its mission: to educate leaders for a global society who are strong in character and judgment, confident in their identity and vocation, and committed to service and justice.

For the second year, CLU was named to the 2012 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll

I. SERVICE-LEARNING –KEY COMPONENTS

<u>Definition:</u> Service-learning is a type of experiential education that intentionally integrates relevant, meaningful community service with academic instruction and critical reflection in order to promote personal growth, including in leadership and character, to help strengthen our communities. The goal of service-learning, by linking academics to the community, is to gain valuable knowledge and skills necessary to promote civic engagement and social responsibility (adapted from Missouri State University and Service-learning.org)

<u>Five Key Components of Service-Learning:</u> (1) Connecting relevant community service with academic instruction, (2) Experiential education, (3) Critical reflection, (4) Reciprocity, (5) Social Responsibility

<u>(1) Connecting Service with Academic Instruction</u> Service-learning must include relevant, meaningful service and be academically rigorous. High-level Service-Learning is achieved when the student is actively engaged in community service that has a significant positive impact on the student, community, and service provider. Also, the student should meet or exceed the academic objectives stated by the instructor or in the syllabus through the service-learning.

<u>(2) Critical Reflection</u> Service-learning critical reflection includes the following activities by the student:
-Assess knowledge skills and attributes that will be useful in performing the Service-learning project
-Reflect on how to effectively participate in the community to meet the identified need (s)
-Evaluate throughout the process the challenges and progress of the service and fine-tune actions to best reach the desired outcome (for example, through intensive journaling)
-Reflect at the conclusion of the service project the personal impact and the impact on the community (eg. Knowledge gained, skills acquired, changes in perception, personal growth, community benefit)

<u>(3) Experiential Education</u> Service-learning includes direct hands-on learning in order for the student to assume responsibility, as well as to improve communication, collaboration, and leadership skills. Students should grow in knowledge, skills, and awareness and understand the commitments that help promote meaningful involvement and engagement in the community. Service-learning is a type of experiential education that when done properly enhances student learning and teacher effectiveness.

<u>(4) Reciprocity</u> Not only does the student gain knowledge through the experiential learning process, but service-learning must fulfill a specific, meaningful need for the community. Both academic study and community service must be maintained in equal importance for service-learning efforts to be successful. The interests of the community must be served; students are not sent to placements merely for academic enhancement. The academic objectives of the course must also be enriched by the community service, otherwise the service-learning effort becomes irrelevant to the educational purposes of the course and may seem a disjointed, unrelated act of volunteerism, distracting to the course's educational purposes. Through reciprocity, collaboration between the service provider and student also occurs, students gain real-life practical knowledge that may include professional advice from community service providers and faculty while contributed their time, energy, knowledge and creativity in order to help the community in a meaningful way.

<u>(5) Social Responsibility</u> Though there are many types of experiential education, each with its own learning objectives, Service-learning is a type of experiential education that has enhancing personal and social responsibility as its goal. It seeks to contextualize academic subject matter within the greater society, highlighting for the students the role that the academic disciplines play in building stronger and healthier communities. Students should come away with a sense of connection with the community and with a greater commitment for civic purpose, and possibly to serve the community through their careers and throughout their lives.

II. GETTING STARTED

There are two avenues for Service-learning: Faculty-Directed and Student-Directed

<u>Faculty-Directed</u> – The instructor either assigns a Service-learning project to the student or provides the student with a list of Service-learning providers/projects to choose. The instructor oversees the student and monitors the project's progress to make sure it meets the academic requirements of the class.

<u>Steps include:</u>
(1) Review syllabus to identify academic course objectives and ensure that the assignment is understood and the learning objectives are clear
(2) Identify learning goals and areas of interest and contact community service provider (call, email, meet, visit, etc.)
(3) Student identifies and meets with community service provider and drafts a plan of action
(4) Student completes required training or screening if required by service-provider, and university's liability forms
(5) Make time commitments and commence service
(6) Complete periodic journals, reflection, and assignments

<u>Student-Directed</u> - The student identifies and researches a specific need in the community and develops a Service-learning project that addresses that need. The instructor oversees the student and monitors the project's progress to make sure it meets the academic requirements of the class.

<u>Steps include:</u>
(1) Review syllabus and meet with instructor to ensure understanding of the assignments and learning objectives
(2) Identify a service-learning project that you find meaningful that meets your course objectives. (The instructor must approve your service-learning project.) Student signs necessary liability forms.
(3) Conduct research on the needs in your community.
(4) Meet with your instructor to draft a Plan of Action, including identified service, step-by-step plan to fulfill the service, vision of the service project and goals, including projected impact on the community service agency, on you, and the community.
(5) Make the time commitment and commence service project
(6) Complete periodic service logs, reflections, and assignments

Other general steps to consider: clear understanding of how service-learning complements and enhances the learning objectives, how to mentor service projects, course structure and learning constraints, what resources are available, who are "good" community partners, how many hours should I require for the service component and how to verify hours completed, how to assess the student's learning and evaluate the service-learning component (students are not graded based on the service or hours they provide, but on the rigorous integration of the service experience with the course objectives).

III. SERVICE-LEARNING IS DIFFERENT THAN:

Volunteerism: Volunteers engage in service for a variety of reasons. They do not necessarily link their service to academic studies nor do they receive academic credit for their efforts.
Internships: Student interns frequently work at for-profit businesses to benefit the financial standing of that business. They are not necessarily working to improve their communities through these internship experiences, but focusing on pre-professional development and occurs near the completion of the degree.

<u>Notes:</u>
Do not compromise academic rigor. Reflection should be rigorous. Learning objectives need to be clearly linked to service activity. Just like teaching any academic course, improving a service-learning course takes time. Teaching a service-learning course also may require more faculty flexibility.
<u>Recommended websites:</u>
Campus Compact - www. Compact.org   National Service-Learning Clearinghouse - www.Servicelearning.org
Service-Learning Higher Education Guide - ServiceLearningHigherEd.com American Association for Higher Education –
www.aahe.org/service UCLA Service-Learning Clearninghouse – www.gseis.ucla.edu/slc/basics.html
Indiana University Purdue University Center for Service Learning- csl.iupui.edu/
Augustana http://www.augie.edu/academics/service-learning-programs

Contents here are adapted and modified from the following websites: http://www.missouristate.edu/casl/4567.htm
http://www.servicelearning.org/   csl.iupui.edu