

Got Questions? We've got Answers!

## Frequently Asked Questions

... With Answers from the Center for Service Learning  
Western Carolina University

**Q: What is service learning?**

A: Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates community service with academic instruction and structured reflection in such a way that students gain further understanding of course content, meet genuine community needs, develop career-related skills, and become responsible citizens.

**Q: I would like to include service-learning in my course but I'm not sure where to start. What resources are available to me on campus?**

A: The Center for Service Learning functions as the campus clearinghouse for volunteer, community service, service-learning, and civic engagement opportunities and resources. The Center collects, creates, classifies, and disseminates a variety of relevant resources for planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment/evaluation.

**Q: What do you mean by *community*?**

A: When we use the term *community*, we're referring primarily to the neighborhoods and towns surrounding the WCU campus. Our community is both local (Jackson County) and regional (Western North Carolina). However, we do not define community solely by geography. When we use the term *community*, we're also referring to people and relationships – to a social system. Accordingly, a community is a group of persons with shared values or norms, common interests, mutual influence, or commitment to meeting a shared need. Our Community Partners are nonprofit agencies, educational institutions, nongovernmental and community-based organizations, local governments, and small businesses.

**Q: I would like to find a community service site. Where can I find a list of sites or agencies?**

A: You can find Agency Profiles, including opportunities offered to students and contact information, at the Center for Service Learning Web site, [http://www.wcu.edu/studentd/service\\_learning/](http://www.wcu.edu/studentd/service_learning/).

**Q: Where can I find information about service-learning courses and activities in my discipline?**

A: Information, including exemplary syllabi, is available from the Center for Service Learning (in the Faculty Fellows Office/Faculty Resource Room). Syllabi for a variety of disciplines are available also through the (national) Campus Compact Web site, <http://www.compact.org/syllabi/>, and the North Carolina Campus Compact Web site, <http://org.elon.edu/nccc/resources/syllabi.html>.

**Q: Is any paperwork required for participating in service learning?**

A: Very little paperwork is required. Each instructor **or** student should submit an Application Form. All students should submit the "Conduct & Waiver of Liability" form,

which is attached to the “Application for Service Learning (for Course-Related Service).” Forms may be picked up in the Center or downloaded from [http://www.wcu.edu/studentd/service\\_learning/forms.html](http://www.wcu.edu/studentd/service_learning/forms.html).

**Q: I will be teaching a course with a component that reflects the definition of service learning. Is there a special designation for service-learning courses in the catalog?**

A: Yes. The Faculty Senate’s Academic Policy & Review Council unanimously approved the “SLC” (“Service-Learning Component”) designation on September 14 and, similarly, the full Senate unanimously approved the designation on October 5, 2007. “SLC” will be added not only to courses in the catalog but also to students’ transcripts. Procedures for the “SLC” designation are available from the Center for Service Learning.

**Q: What professional development opportunities in service learning are available to Western Carolina University faculty?**

A: The Center for Service Learning coordinates a **Faculty Fellows Program** through which such opportunities are made available to, and facilitated by, a core group of faculty colleagues. Fellows attend monthly Faculty Development Sessions and they, in turn, coordinate workshops and seminars for faculty in each college. Furthermore, the Center hosts an annual **Symposium on Service Learning & Civic Engagement** here at WCU on the second Thursday of June. In addition, Campus Compact – a national coalition of college and university leaders dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service learning in higher education – provides various professional development opportunities for faculty and administrators throughout the year. North Carolina Campus Compact organizes an annual service-learning conference primarily for faculty and recently launched a Faculty Engagement Initiative to promote civic engagement among its member-campuses. The International Research Conference on Service-Learning and Community Engagement is a major professional development opportunity.

**Q: What opportunities are there to publish in the field of service learning?**

A: The Center for Service Learning has a list of journals and other publications to which manuscripts may be submitted. The premier service-learning journals are the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, <http://www.umich.edu/~mjcs/>, and the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, <http://www.uga.edu/ihe/jheoe.html>.

**Q: Will using service learning as a teaching strategy count in the promotion and tenure process?**

A: Yes. WCU’s tenure, promotion, and retention guidelines now reward the range of scholarly activities proposed by Ernest Boyer (1990). Of course, you will need to demonstrate, or document in your portfolio/dossier, that you have used service learning effectively in the teaching process and/or in your research.

**Do you have more questions?**

We’ve tried to anticipate all of your questions. If we’ve missed any, please e-mail your question to us at [gbowen@email.wcu.edu](mailto:gbowen@email.wcu.edu) or call (828) 227-7184.

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