Overview of the Center for Service Learning (CSL)
The mission of the CSL at Western Carolina University is to promote service-learning as a specialized form of experiential education whereby students engage in organized activities designed to enhance their understanding of course content, meet genuine community needs, develop career-related skills, and become responsible citizens. The primary objectives of the CSL are promoting engagement among the members of the university community, and strengthening the bond between the campus and wider community. We work with students, faculty, staff, and community partners to facilitate involvement and connectedness.

QEP Related Outcome: Practice Civic Engagement
1) What methods or capture points did you create, access, or implement?
   a) Tracking Volunteer(s) Hours (Tracking):
      i) The CSL has used several methods to track civic engagement among members of the campus community. This particular effort is intended to determine the extent of awareness and participation in civic engagement. To measure co-curricular service and engagement, we track the number of volunteers who participate in our service projects and programs, as well as the number of hours that they contribute.
   b) Service Learning Faculty Fellows (Fellows):
      i) Service Learning Faculty Fellows have played a major role in collecting information about course-based service learning initiatives. These faculty members, each of whom represented an academic college, contacted their colleagues to gather data on the number of service learning courses, involved students, and community partnerships in each academic department.
   c) Creating a Portrait of Community-Based/Engaged Courses by Department (Portrait):
      i) This initiative, which is currently being implemented, is designed to capture, analyze, and report information from each of WCU’s 29 departments with regard to their community-based learning experiences. It is also a time for reflection upon what we are doing as a university and community partner. The report on each department will consist of a one-page, systematic, descriptive presentation of data collected from each department’s faculty. IP&E data will supplement the data collected from department heads and be used as a departure point for future civic/community engagement and service-learning initiatives occurring on campus.

2) How effective were the methods or capture points you used?
   a) Tracking – This works well for projects that we sponsor, but we are not always able to get comprehensive information about volunteer opportunities that are sponsored by other groups.
   b) Fellows – This strategy has seen mixed success: not all colleges have been willing to participate in the program; and the thoroughness of the fellows’ reports has varied widely. Due to budget cuts, this program has been on hiatus for the past eighteen months.
   c) Portrait – This is currently being implemented, but we believe that to date, it will be the best, most systematic attempt to identify the extent of community-based learning that is occurring on our campus.

3) What main, summary results did you find?
   a) From Tracking and our Fellows program we have found that service learning and other civic engagement efforts are thoroughly integrated into some departments, while they are not used widely in others. Moreover, we have identified the information we need in order to move forward in an intentional way (with the Portrait initiative).
   b) Portrait – Again, the summary results of this initiative will be useful in better understanding the current state of community-based learning at WCU and will help guide us accordingly.

4) What changes to your program or unit will you do as a result of your findings?
   a) Tracking – We are identifying new ways of tracking hours and engagement. It is imperative that we track engagement hours so we can assess impact of experiences. Particularly important is the impact community engagement has on the awareness, participation, value, reflection, and development of our participants.
   b) Fellows – We are reestablishing and redesigning our Fellows program to include a wider range of faculty.
   c) Portrait – It is assumed that this information will illuminate the most “active” departments with regard to community-based learning efforts.