

Service-Learning Internship

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.

A SERVICE-LEARNING INTERNSHIP is a special approach to service learning adopted by higher education institutions. It combines service learning with a traditional internship program in order to produce the best outcomes of both forms of experiential education.

A service-learning internship is a semester-long, supervised, career-related work experience characterized by elements of service learning – notably a civic dimension, reciprocity, and reflection.*

- ❖ A *civic dimension* is the element of the experience that is focused on the knowledge (e.g., social change model of leadership), skills (e.g., advocacy), and values (e.g., ethic of care) that students need in order to play their roles as active citizens in a participatory democracy.
- ❖ *Reciprocity* is the notion that the community (or community agency) and the student benefit equally, or at least mutually, from the experience. Reciprocity also indicates that everyone involved in service learning, including student peers and community partners, functions as both a teacher and a learner.
- ❖ *Reflection* should occur regularly and may be done individually with the faculty member/facilitator or as a small-group exercise.

Center for Service Learning
Western Carolina University

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In support of the implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

* Glenn A. Bowen, *Reflection Methods and Activities for Service Learning: A Student Manual and Workbook*. Kendall/Hunt (Dubuque, IA), 2007.

SERVICE-LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **INTELLECTUAL GROWTH:** Students employ critical-thinking skills to address social issues in the community; use complex information from a variety of sources, including personal experience and observation, to form an opinion or make a decision; and apply previously understood information and concepts to a new situation or setting
- **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:** Students write and speak coherently and effectively; listen effectively and be able to engage in controversy with civility; make presentations or give performances; and be able to influence others through writing, speaking, or artistic expression
- **CAREER EXPLORATION:** Students articulate career choices based on an assessment of interests, values, skills, and abilities; document knowledge, skills, and accomplishments resulting from community-based learning; and articulate the characteristics of a preferred work environment
- **COLLABORATION:** Students work cooperatively and seek the involvement of others; elicit feedback from others; contribute to the achievement of group goals
- **SOCIAL AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY:** Students demonstrate civic engagement in campus, local, national, and global communities; understand, abide by, and participate in the development, maintenance, and/or orderly change of community, social, and legal standards or norms; appropriately challenge unfair, unjust, or uncivil behavior in the community
- **APPRECIATION OF DIVERSITY:** Students seek involvement with people different from themselves; articulate the advantages and challenges of a diverse society; challenge appropriately the abusive use of stereotypes by others; develop an informed perspective on issues of diversity and democracy; reflect on issues of power and privilege



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