



Integrating Service Learning into the Curriculum

Strategies for Development and Institutionalization



Academic Affairs Forum

John Nelson

Research Associate

202-568-7815

JNelson@eab.com

Allison Thomas

Research Manager

202-568-7168

AThomas@eab.com

LEGAL CAVEAT

The Advisory Board Company has made efforts to verify the accuracy of the information it provides to members. This report relies on data obtained from many sources, however, and The Advisory Board Company cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided or any analysis based thereon. In addition, The Advisory Board Company is not in the business of giving legal, medical, accounting, or other professional advice, and its reports should not be construed as professional advice. In particular, members should not rely on any legal commentary in this report as a basis for action, or assume that any tactics described herein would be permitted by applicable law or appropriate for a given member's situation. Members are advised to consult with appropriate professionals concerning legal, medical, tax, or accounting issues, before implementing any of these tactics. Neither The Advisory Board Company nor its officers, directors, trustees, employees and agents shall be liable for any claims, liabilities, or expenses relating to (a) any errors or omissions in this report, whether caused by The Advisory Board Company or any of its employees or agents, or sources or other third parties, (b) any recommendation or graded ranking by The Advisory Board Company, or (c) failure of member and its employees and agents to abide by the terms set forth herein.

The Advisory Board is a registered trademark of The Advisory Board Company in the United States and other countries. Members are not permitted to use this trademark, or any other Advisory Board trademark, product name, service name, trade name, and logo, without the prior written consent of The Advisory Board Company. All other trademarks, product names, service names, trade names, and logos used within these pages are the property of their respective holders. Use of other company trademarks, product names, service names, trade names and logos or images of the same does not necessarily constitute (a) an endorsement by such company of The Advisory Board Company and its products and services, or (b) an endorsement of the company or its products or services by The Advisory Board Company. The Advisory Board Company is not affiliated with any such company.

IMPORTANT: Please read the following.

The Advisory Board Company has prepared this report for the exclusive use of its members. Each member acknowledges and agrees that this report and the information contained herein (collectively, the "Report") are confidential and proprietary to The Advisory Board Company. By accepting delivery of this Report, each member agrees to abide by the terms as stated herein, including the following:

1. The Advisory Board Company owns all right, title and interest in and to this Report. Except as stated herein, no right, license, permission or interest of any kind in this Report is intended to be given, transferred to or acquired by a member. Each member is authorized to use this Report only to the extent expressly authorized herein.
2. Each member shall not sell, license, or republish this Report. Each member shall not disseminate or permit the use of, and shall take reasonable precautions to prevent such dissemination or use of, this Report by (a) any of its employees and agents (except as stated below), or (b) any third party.
3. Each member may make this Report available solely to those of its employees and agents who (a) are registered for the workshop or membership program of which this Report is a part, (b) require access to this Report in order to learn from the information described herein, and (c) agree not to disclose this Report to other employees or agents or any third party. Each member shall use, and shall ensure that its employees and agents use, this Report for its internal use only. Each member may make a limited number of copies, solely as adequate for use by its employees and agents in accordance with the terms herein.
4. Each member shall not remove from this Report any confidential markings, copyright notices, and other similar indicia herein.
5. Each member is responsible for any breach of its obligations as stated herein by any of its employees or agents.
6. If a member is unwilling to abide by any of the foregoing obligations, then such member shall promptly return this Report and all copies thereof to The Advisory Board Company.

Table of Contents

1) Executive Overview	4
Key Observations	4
2) Service Learning Curricula.....	5
Options for Service Learning	5
Components of Service Learning	6
3) Service Learning Administration	7
Service Learning Centers	7
Community Partnerships	7
Course Development.....	8
Student Supervision and Assessment	9
4) Institutional Support for Service Learning	12
Institutionalizing Service Learning	12
Faculty Incentives.....	12
Student Support	13
5) Impediments to Institutional Service Learning	15
Low Residency and Commuter Students.....	15
Logistics and Transportation.....	15
Institutional Liability	15
Replicating Pre-established Programs.....	16
6) Research Methodology.....	17
Project Challenge	17
Project Sources	17
Research Parameters.....	18

1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Contact institutions most commonly provide service learning opportunities through courses; opportunities exist for self-directed service learning and for required service learning in programs of study. Writing courses, public affairs, social work, and education are the most common disciplines that include service learning in course work. Courses at most institutions carry a transcript designation (e.g., course numbers, service learning notation, etc.) to indicate that service learning occurred. Service learning courses can include both standard volunteer work and project-based consulting for area non-profit organizations.

A central director of service learning or a center for service learning supports faculty development of service learning courses and facilitates community partnerships. Administrators should hire a director for service learning from within the local non-profit community because of their expertise and strong working relationships with area non-profits. The provost's office (i.e., Vice Principal for Academic Affairs) typically funds the service learning director position, while faculty budgets subsidize the material costs for service learning courses. Students incur standard course fees when they participate in a service learning course; students often cover any additional transportation or other logistical costs.

Community partner and service learning staff supervise students during service learning programming; professors develop and execute service learning assessment and curricular integration. Service learning staff also survey students at the end of service learning courses to collect basic information on student experiences and development. Service learning courses primarily serve as a real-world connection to existing curricular content (e.g., tutoring students as part of an introduction to educational psychology).

Most students require little encouragement to participate in service learning. Students at most contact institutions are generally excited to participate in service learning courses, which they view as a professional development opportunity and a way to learn about and support the local community. Students who commute to campus often do not participate in service learning coursework due to other obligations (e.g., off-campus jobs, family obligations, etc.). Professors should maintain flexibility with service learning requirements to accommodate the unique needs of commuter students.

Professors are not required to participate in service learning initiatives; those who participate do so based on their personal and professional interest in service learning. Younger, less tenured professors demonstrate the greatest interest in integrating service learning into their courses. When institutional leadership identifies service learning as a key strategic initiative for their institution, some faculty members are subsequently compelled to explore service learning initiatives. At institutions with service learning curricular requirements, administrators work with faculties to identify professors willing to include service learning in their courses.

Administrators provide grant funding to professors to develop innovative service learning pedagogies, which encourages overall professorial interest in service learning. Contacts also recommend that institutions explore reduction of teaching load requirements or increasing the number of credit hours associated with service learning courses to encourage professors to integrate service learning into their courses. Institutions should also explore integrating service learning into the promotion and tenure criteria as another incentive for professor participation; contact institutions have not successfully accomplished this, but one institution expects integration within the next two or three years.

2) Service Learning Curricula

Options for Service Learning

Most Service Learning Occurs Through Courses; Some Full Programs of Study and Independent Study Options Exist

Institutions rely on service learning courses as the primary option for service learning; faculty work with service learning staff to develop community partnerships and pedagogies for each individual course. Contacts at **University A** explain that degree programs in public policy, social work, and education require experiential learning; some non-course summer programs (e.g., non-profit internship, summer practicum, etc.) fit these requirements in addition to service learning courses. Departmental staff assess student learning in non-course based service learning programs. Institutions occasionally allow students to pursue a service learning independent study under the guidance of a professor; this type of service learning occurs rarely and on an ad hoc basis through independent study petition processes.

Considerations for Service Learning Options:

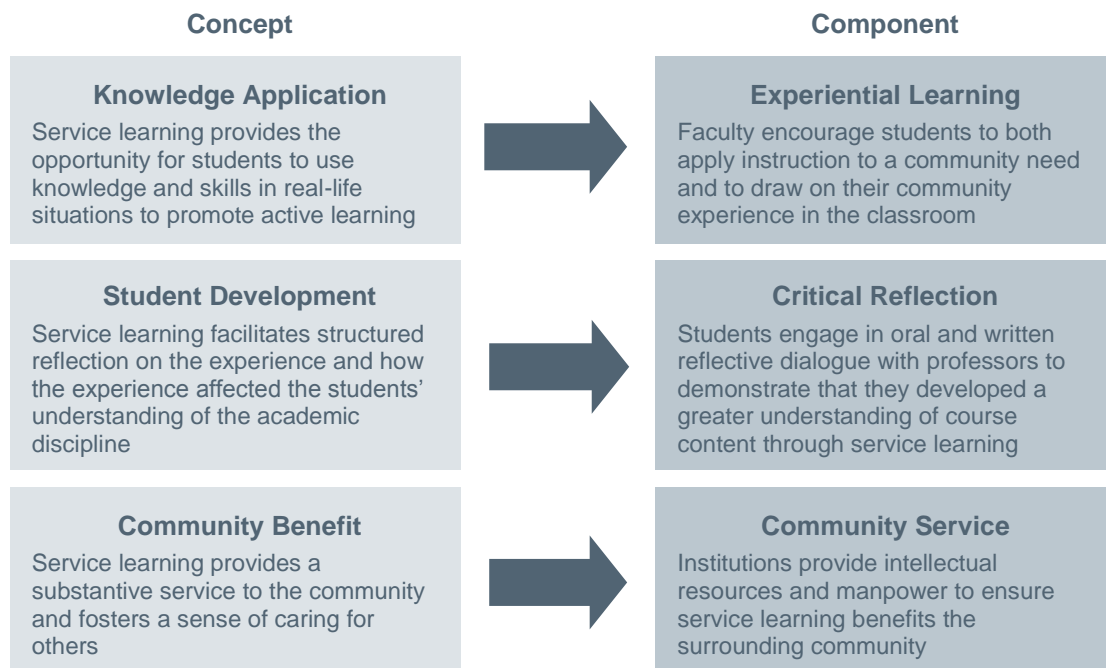
Service Learning Courses	<p>Course curriculum requires students to participate in either volunteer work or a service project outside of class; this co-curricular experience is assessed as part of the course and integrated into the professor's teaching pedagogy.</p> <p>Benefits: Flexible service learning option; professors can develop courses at their discretion. Students gain real-world experience that expands their capacity to apply knowledge, their understanding of others, and their professional development skills.</p> <p>Drawbacks: Since professors maintain autonomy over teaching methods, administrators face challenges to incentivize professorial participation in service learning. Without curricular requirements, there is no guarantee that all students will participate in service learning during their collegiate career.</p>
Service Learning in Programs of Study	<p>Departments, faculties, or an institution implement a graduation requirement for service learning participation (e.g., two courses). Students either take service learning courses or participate in other programs (e.g., summer civic engagement program).</p> <p>Benefits: All students accrue benefits from service learning participation. Institutions can market service learning focus to prospective students and parents. Largest community impact of all service learning options.</p> <p>Drawbacks: Administrators must allocate staff time and funding to solicit and support faculty participation in service learning programs. Some institutions struggle to ensure a sufficient number of service learning courses for all students.</p>
Independent Study	<p>Students develop and direct a service learning project under faculty guidance. Students are typically upperclassmen with prior experience with service learning.</p> <p>Benefits: Flexible option for unique student interests.</p> <p>Drawbacks: Difficult to increase in scale due to a limited number of available professors who oversee independent studies.</p>
Community-based Research	<p>Professors conduct scholarly research on problems raised by community partners; informal service learning classes organically arise during the research project.</p> <p>Benefits: Decentralization allows flexibility in service learning offerings.</p> <p>Drawbacks: Difficult to create an institutional requirement; resources and staffing are typically limited.</p>

Components of Service Learning

Service Learning Consists of Community Service, Experiential Learning, and Critical Reflection

Institutions structure service learning around both community service and student development. Concepts used to inform service learning directly translate into the components of all service learning activities. Institutions with service learning requirements expect students to complete either two courses (i.e., one lower-division and one upper division course) or a minimum number of service learning hours (e.g., 60 hours of on-site participation). Service learning courses typically include between 20 and 40 hours of community service during the term; courses at **University B** typically require 40 to 50 hours of service.

Relationship between Service Learning Concepts and Components



Source: Bryan Beaudoin and Katie Sue Zellner. "Defining and Implementing Service Learning in the Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. February 2012.



Importance of Content over Delivery: *University D* and *University H*

Contact stress that the content of a course primarily defines service learning rather than the manner in which the course is taught. Administrators at **University D** and **University H** allow paid internships and employment relevant to the course content to count toward their service learning graduation requirement. For example, a paid position at a medical center is considered service learning-relevant if students can demonstrate that they gain experiential knowledge of patient-first care methods and considered training from the patient's perspective (i.e., working through a lens toward service).

Source: Bryan Beaudoin and Katie Sue Zellner. "Defining and Implementing Service Learning in the Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. February 2012.

3) Service Learning Administration

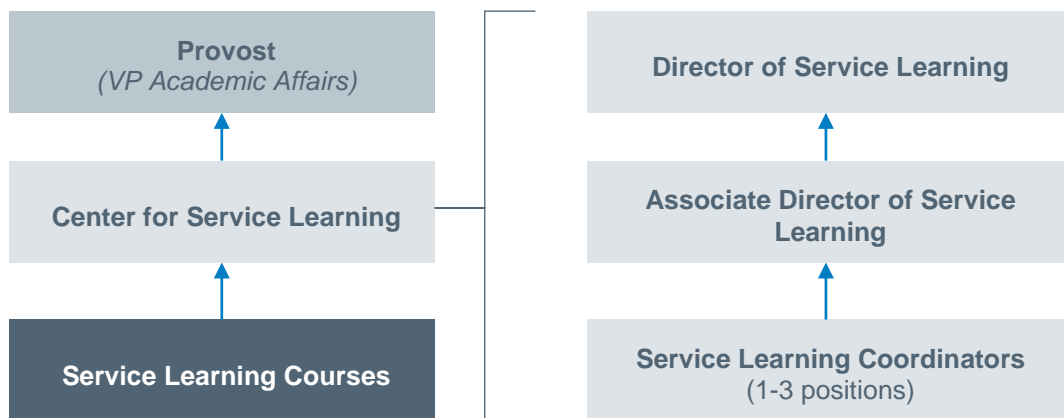
Service Learning Centers

Centralize Service Learning to Ensure Service Learning Consistency

Most institutions consolidate service learning within a center for service learning. All institutions employ at least a director of service learning who reports to the provost. Service learning at some institutions reports to the vice president for external affairs. Centers typically receive between \$200,000 and \$300,000 in annual funding from the provost's budget.

University B allocates \$1.8 million dollars to their service learning center; University B also supports the largest service learning center of all contact institutions. Funds are largely used for staff salaries, office space, and innovation grants.

Organizational and Staffing Structure of Service Learning Centers



Most institutions employ two to three full-time equivalent staff members; **University B's** service learning center has a staff of 22. Staff are generally responsible for¹:

- Faculty seminars, workshops, and one-on-one consultations
- Campus-community partnerships
- Student training and leadership development, co-curricular service projects, and student mentorship
- Community-based outreach programs

Community Partnerships

Service Learning Staff Build and Maintain All Community Partnerships

Institutions unify engagement with community partners through the service learning center. Staff coordinate with partners to define the scope of service learning courses and the supervision of students during each term. Multiple courses can work with a single community partner over several years; service learning staff are best situated to ensure consistency and unity in the institution's relationship with the partner across all courses. Service learning staff

1) Geraci, Lisa, Katie Sue Zellner, and Sarah Moore. "Structuring, Encouraging, and Assessing Community Service Learning within the Academic Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. January 2011. p. 9.

also actively engage with the community's broader non-profit industry to identify potential future partners.

Models of Community Partner Relationships

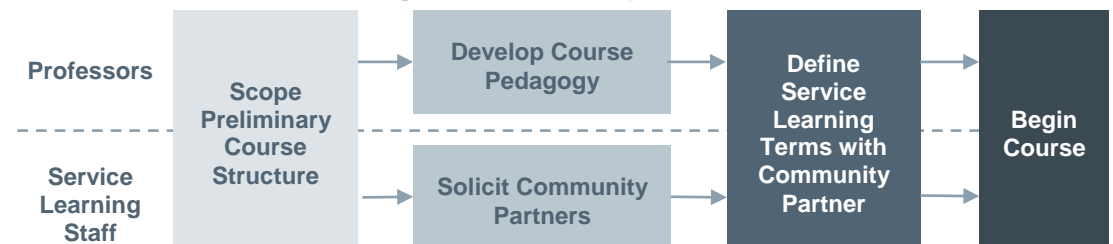
Professors / Community Partner Initiated	Community Partner Initiated	Institution / Community Partner Initiated
Professors and community partners with existing relationships approach the service learning center with a proposal for a service learning course. Service learning staff coordinate course development between all parties.	Community partners approach the service learning center with a proposal for a service learning course. Service learning staff solicit faculty interest and coordinate course development.	In long-term, on-going partnerships, service learning staff regularly communicate with community partners to identify and maintain service learning opportunities. Professors are solicited as necessary.

Course Development

Faculty Initiate Course Development with Service Learning Staff

University A and **University C** require professors to initiate the development process for service learning courses; service learning staff at **University B** solicit department interest in service learning course development due to their institution's service learning general education requirement. Staff typically host workshops and brownbag lunches to introduce service learning to professors; colleagues present on their work with service learning, which provides professors with additional resources for advice. Professors are responsible for developing the course's service learning pedagogy; each course employs its own unique pedagogy while service learning staff advise professors on the basic components of service learning. Service learning staff use their relationships with the community to identify community partners for a service learning course and work with professors to define the terms of the partnership. Service learning staff and professors jointly administer the service learning components of courses.

Process for Service Learning Course Development



Contact institutions do not subject service learning courses to additional review beyond usual course approval processes. Two institutions identified in prior research formalize the review process for service learning curricula through an independent review of service learning courses by the general education curriculum review committee; one institution also requires

the director of the service learning center to review all credit-bearing service learning projects outside of a formal course.²

Identify Service Learning Courses in Course Catalogs Using Letters and Numbers and on Transcripts with Notations

The registrar at most institutions denotes courses that include service learning through either an 'SL' notation next to the course name or a standard numbering system; service learning course designation facilitates:

- Student identification of courses that satisfy service learning graduation requirements (if applicable), which aids in the accurate development of an undergraduate course plan
- Student understanding of course requirements before formal enrollment in the course, which allows students to effectively plan and balance the semester workload

Institutions also often include notations in the academic transcript that denote service learning courses. Contacts attribute greater student awareness of and interest in service learning in part to the formal recognition of service learning in transcripts. Transcripts signify institutional learning priorities and the most relevant information about academic performance to admission officers and potential employers.

Student Supervision and Assessment

Service Learning and Community Partner Staff Ensure Student Welfare and Participation

Although professors are responsible for integrating the community service into the course's instruction, only service learning staff and community partners supervise students while they conduct community service. Community partner staff oversee day-to-day supervision of students while they conduct their service; service learning staff make site visits throughout the term to ensure that students are:

- Fully contributing to community partner and service learning project
- Engaged in productive work
- Participating in a safe environment

Service learning staff also host one-on-one advising session with students as necessary to identify and solve any workplace problems (e.g., lack of motivation, student non-participation etc.), as well as discuss the long-term relevance of service learning to the student's professional development.

Service Learning Includes Reflective Assignments throughout Term

To successfully integrate service experiences into the classroom, professors require students to actively reflect throughout the term. Students complete regular written reflection assignments, include service experiences in class discussions, and often complete a written

2) Beaudoin, Bryan, and Katie Sue Zellner. "Defining and Implementing Service Learning in the Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. February 2012. p. 18.

research project inspired by their service experience (e.g., a paper on the ethics of victim advocacy for a student working at a domestic violence support center).

Schedule of Reflective Assignments during a Service Learning Course

Week:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Class Discussions										
Written Reflections		Essay #1				Essay #2				
Research Project	Observation and Participation									Due

Survey Students Pre- and Post-Course to Ensure Satisfaction, Reflection, and Learning

Service learning administrators continually seek new and improved ways to assess student outcomes from service learning participation. Currently, most institutions rely on pre- and post-course surveys to assess student outcomes, which include program satisfaction, critical reflection of the service experience, and core competencies. Competencies include communication, critical thinking, civic engagement, leadership, impartial judgment, and understanding social justice. Contacts at **University C** note that students require instruction and prompting for critical reflection of their service learning experience; service learning staff reiterate reflection expectations in every meeting with students.

Some institutions combine reflective surveys with a post-course debriefing dinner. Students complete surveys ahead of the event as preparation. The debriefing allows staff to engage students through their experience in a structured but relaxed format, which ensures students are learning from the service engagement.

Sample Pre- and Post-Course Assessment Questions

	Not at All True	Hardly True	Moderately True	Exactly True
<i>I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

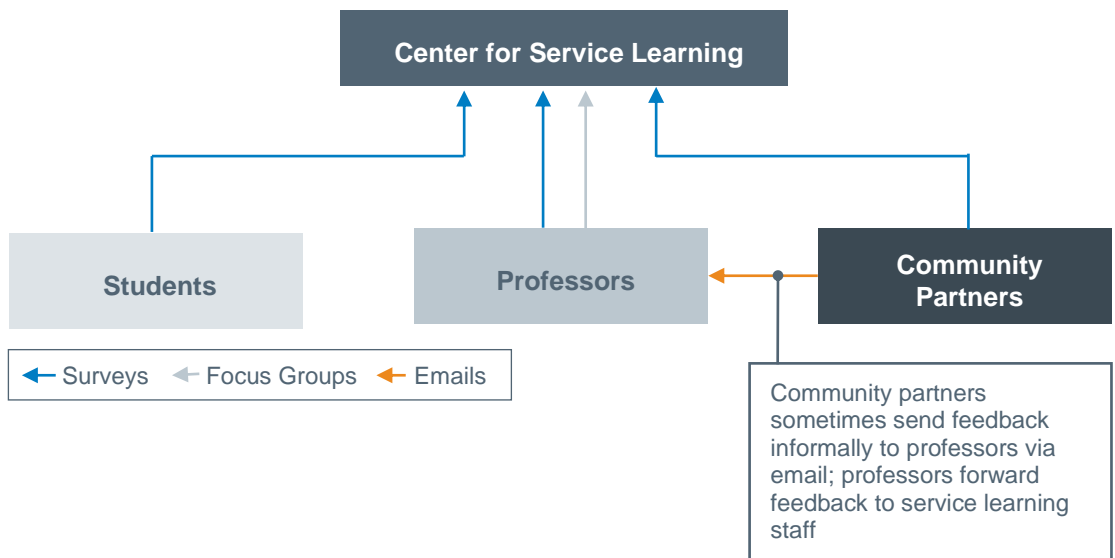
	Strongly Agree ←		Neutral		→ Strongly Disagree
<i>I enjoy meeting people from backgrounds different from my own.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>The things I learn in school are useful to my life.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>It is important to me to find a career that directly benefits others.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: Geraci, Lisa, Katie Sue Zellner, and Sarah Moore. "Structuring, Encouraging, and Assessing Community Service Learning within the Academic Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. January 2011. p. 19.

Collect Feedback from Faculty and Community Partners through Debriefing Meetings and Surveys

In addition to collecting insights from students, administrators should also collect feedback from professors and community partners at the end of service learning courses. Service learning staff either conduct focus groups or surveys to solicit information from faculty and community partners; surveys are the most common method. Administrators and professors use feedback to revise individual course content and improve services provided through the service learning center. Administrators at **University F** recommend community partners complete feedback assessments before the end of term, which allows faculty to incorporate partner feedback into student evaluations.³

End of Term Feedback Structure for Service Learning Courses



3) Geraci, Lisa, Katie Sue Zellner, and Sarah Moore. "Structuring, Encouraging, and Assessing Community Service Learning within the Academic Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. January 2011. p. 20.

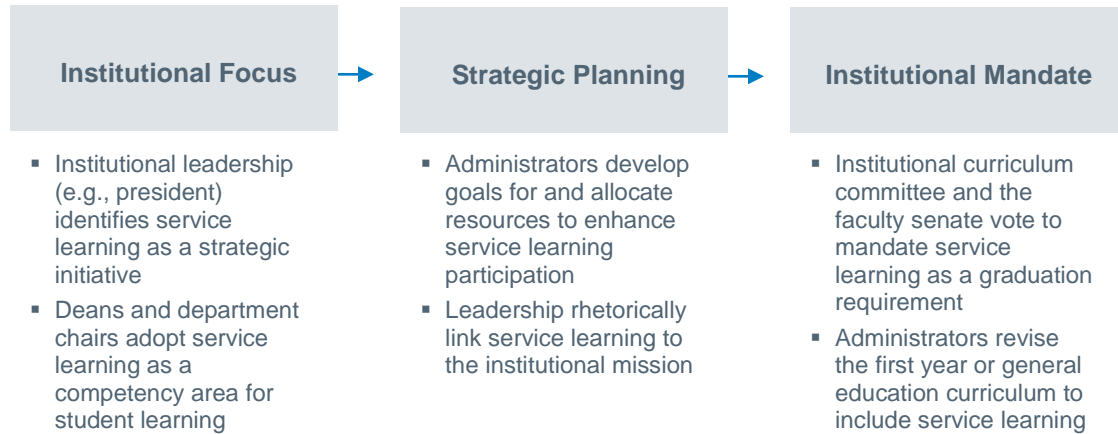
4) Institutional Support for Service Learning

Institutionalizing Service Learning

Graduation Requirements Create the Strongest Culture for Service Learning

Institutions with the largest service learning programs institute graduation requirements that mandate student participation. Administrators institutionalize service learning first through the inclusion of service learning in strategic planning.

Process for Institutionalizing Service Learning



Faculty Incentives

Link Service Learning to Professional Success through Publication Support and the Promotion and Tenure Process

Professors often are unwilling to develop service learning courses because of the additional time required outside of normal teaching and research responsibility, as well as conflicting requirements and redundant efforts. Many departments (e.g., nursing, education, etc.) already administer experiential learning programs; these departments are often hesitant to augment their existing curriculum to meet institutional service learning standards.

Administrators should consider the following strategies for minimizing barriers to service learning development:

Strategies for Incentivizing Professorial Participation in Service Learning

Challenge	Solution
<p>Tenure-track Professors Seek Publication</p>	<p>Create and Support Service Learning Publication Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service learning directors offer to co-author research, provide background research, and train faculty in service learning pedagogy to encourage faculty to develop service learning courses and publish research ▪ University B provides grants to faculty for service learning-based research ▪ University G publishes a peer-reviewed journal on service learning to facilitate faculty publication

<p>Professors Lack Community Connections</p>	<p>Service Learning Staff Serve as a Community Liaison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service learning staff serve as a community liaison between professors and local organizations. Staff meet with professors to identify potential organizations of interest and host meetings with organization leadership ▪ University A and University C work with professors to identify organizations with which they are already affiliated as potential service learning options
<p>Professors Hesitant to Assume Time-consuming Duties</p>	<p>Award Curriculum Development Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service learning directors award grants to professors to incorporate service learning into their courses. University B awards up to \$5,000 to individual professors and \$50,000 to departments to develop and increase the number of service learning course offerings
	<p>Recognize Time Commitment through Teaching Loads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contacts recommend that institutions consider allowing professors to count additional time spent on service learning management toward their teaching obligations (i.e., a service learning course is weighted as a course and a half for teaching load purposes) ▪ Alternatively, administrators can increase the number of credit hours associated with service learning courses (i.e., similar to recognizing courses with laboratory sections)
<p>Professors Do Not Recognize Professional Benefits of Service Learning</p>	<p>Integrate Service Learning into Tenure and Promotion Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow professors to earn additional points or weighted preference for their involvement in service learning when reviewed and considered for promotion and tenure ▪ University B expects to integrate service learning as a component in tenure and promotion review within the next three years

Sources: Forum Interviews; Bryan Beaudoin and Katie Sue Zellner. "Defining and Implementing Service Learning in the Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. February 2012. p.12.

Student Support

Connect Service Learning to Professional Development and Citizenship to Encourage Student Participation

Most service learning administrators attribute student engagement with service learning programs to the history and culture of the institution. Strategies to promote student interest generally reinforce service learning as part of the institution's identify and culture, demonstrate that service learning aids students in professional skills development, and provide flexible opportunities for student service learning.

Strategies to Encourage Student Participation in Service Learning

Emphasize Service Learning's Role in Institutional Culture	Connect Service Learning to Institution Mission <ul style="list-style-type: none">Administrators should connect service learning programs to the institution's identity and mission by stressing citizenship and social engagementInstitutions often connect service learning to the social mission: graduates serving society through the application of knowledge
	Include Service Learning in Prospective Student Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">Service learning staff should furnish admissions with content and marketing materials on service learning. Prospective students enter the institution with an understanding that students are expected to participate in civic engagement (and service learning)
	Encourage Student Organizations to Initiate Service Learning Courses <ul style="list-style-type: none">Service learning administrators should collaborate with the student government (i.e., student union) to jointly encourage student organizations to partner with faculty on service learning course development
Demonstrate Professional Value of Service Learning	Co-host Workshops with Career Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">Service learning staff help students understand the professional relevance of service learning through targeted, skill-focused workshops on including service learning experiences in resumes, cover letters, and interviewsStaff should work with career services to host workshops on professional development to demonstrate the long term, post-graduation relevance to students. Hosting with career services clearly indicates relevance to career development
	Note Service Learning on Academic Transcripts <ul style="list-style-type: none">Institutions often denote service learning courses through an 'SL' notation on academic transcripts. The formal recognition of service learning communicates its importanceThe registrar at University E includes the number of service learning hours on academic transcripts; students recognize this as a competitive advantage in graduate school and employment applications
	Create Co-curricular Transcripts <ul style="list-style-type: none">The service learning director at University G collaborates with the registrar to produce a co-curricular transcript that in part features service learning experiences. Students can include these transcripts in graduate school and employment applications
Provide Flexibility for Students with Off-Campus Employment	Leverage External Grants to Fund Student Service <ul style="list-style-type: none">University H participates in a nine-state program that grants low-income and minority students a \$1,300 stipend for completing 300+ hours of service learning; the director of service learning administers the grant
	Emphasize Flexible Hours for Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Administrators should recognize that many students are externally employed and provide night, weekend, and independent service learning programs to accommodate working students' schedules

Sources: Forum Interviews; Bryan Beaudoin and Katie Sue Zellner. "Defining and Implementing Service Learning in the Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. February 2012. p.13.

5) Impediments to Institutional Service Learning

Low Residency and Commuter Students

Maintain Flexibility with Service Learning Requirements to Accommodate Commuter Students

Students who commute to campus often do not have time to participate in service learning coursework due to other obligations (e.g., off-campus jobs, family obligations, etc.). The imposition on students is further compounded when service learning courses are not identified in the course catalog; students have little indication of whether a course includes service learning.

Administrators at all institutions struggle to manage the competing demands of commuter students participating in service learning. At **University C**, professors and students jointly identify alternative service learning projects that still meet the requirements of the courses. As a final alternative, professors may allow students to pursue a related research project instead.

Logistics and Transportation

Consider Transportation in Service Learning Course Development

Students at **University A** and **University C** often face difficulties with service learning participation due to distantly located community partners and a lack of personal transportation or robust public transit options. Service learning staff use transportation availability surveys (e.g., “Do you have a car on campus?”) at the beginning of a service learning course to assign students to service learning groups.

University B developed an institutional transportation service that functions similar to a scheduled taxi service (e.g., Super Shuttle). Students can without cost register trips to and from campus at assigned times and a driver will pick them up from a specific location. Institutional staff manage the taxi service’s scheduling and adjust requested times to maximize the efficiency of taxi trips.

Institutional Liability

Mitigate Service Learning Liability with Risk Management Processes

At most institutions, legal liability and student safety are chief concerns during service learning experiences. Administrators note that many service learning opportunities involve physical work or take place in high-crime areas, both of which threaten a student’s physical wellbeing. Administrators are also obligated to ensure that staff and participants at community partners do not pose a threat to student wellbeing. As an institution-sanctioned activity, administrators retain liability throughout the service learning project, especially when service learning is a mandatory course and degree component.

Past EAB research identifies a unique liability issue where public institutions face intense scrutiny over interactions with religiously-affiliated community partners.⁴ One contact

4) Beaudoin, Bryan, and Katie Sue Zellner. “Defining and Implementing Service Learning in the Curriculum.” Education Advisory Board. February 2012. p. 15.

experienced significant media attention for allowing service learning projects with these types of community partners, which almost ended the service learning graduation requirement. Administrators do not necessarily need to avoid partnerships with religiously-affiliated community organizations; administrators should instead consult with their office of general counsel for legal advice.

Replicating Pre-established Programs

Create Service Learning Programs that Match the Institution's Profile and Culture

Administrators at **University G** emphasize that regional, public institutions often struggle to model service learning programs after more established programs at both large research institutions and small liberal arts institutions.⁵

- Administrators at **small liberal arts institutions** can often lead the entire campus in supporting service learning because the institution's community is much smaller and more homogenous in priorities (e.g., little disagreement between faculties over strategic decisions).
- Leaders at **large research institutions** can leverage greater financial resources (e.g., endowments, donors, etc.) to promote service learning on campus.

Regional public institutions should focus on small-scale service learning pilot programs to demonstrate the value of service learning to both students and faculty; this allows the institution to efficiently mitigate a lack of initial resources to build out a service learning program. As support for service learning builds, senior administrators can investigate additional shifts in institutional resources to service learning or begin soliciting financial support from donors.

5) Beaudoin, Bryan, and Katie Sue Zellner. "Defining and Implementing Service Learning in the Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. February 2012. p. 15.

6) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member institution approached the Forum with the following questions:

- How do institutions define community service learning? Is it inclusive of both paid and unpaid experience (organization-based) or is it exclusively unpaid volunteer work?
- Which offices are responsible for managing service learning programs?
- How do institutions match professors, departments, and colleges with external service partners? How are these relationships maintained over the long-term?
- How do institutions supervise and monitor students while participating in a service learning program?
- How do institutions ensure quality of learning in a service learning program? How do institutions determine objectives for different service learning programs?
- How do institutions build and sustain internal support for service learning?
- How do institutions overcome limited financial resources to support service learning?
- How many credits do students receive for a service learning program?
- How does the institution distinguish between extracurricular volunteering and for-credit service learning?
- What teaching methods are used to integrate service experience with on-campus coursework? And with programs of study (e.g., majors, minors, etc.)?
- What competencies are promoted or developed by service learning? How are these competencies developed?
- How is service learning assessed? What resources are necessary to assess learning?
- How has student interest in service learning changed over time? How do institutions expect this interest to change in the future?
- What aspects of service learning are of most interest to students? Of least interest? How do administrators market these features to prospective and current students?
- What factors or incentives motivate faculties, departments, and schools to offer service learning opportunities?
- How do students benefit from service learning? How do these experiences improve their academic experience? Their employability? Long-term career goals?

Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- Education Advisory Board's internal and online research libraries (www.eab.com)
 - Barnhart, Jon, and Joe LeMaster. "Developing an Institution-wide Civic Engagement Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. June 2012.
 - Beaudoin, Bryan, and Katie Sue Zellner. "Defining and Implementing service Learning in the Curriculum." Education Advisory Board. February 2012.

- Bevevino, David, and Sarah Moore. “Civic Engagement Initiatives: Structures, Services, and Programs.” Education Advisory Board. June 2011.
- Draper, Adrienne, and Jennifer Yarrish. “Structuring a Service-Learning Program at a Master’s University: A Review of Seven Service Learning Programs.” Education Advisory Board. November 2008.
- Draper, Adrienne, and Jennifer Yarrish. “Implementing Service-Learning in the Curriculum: A Review of Seven Service-Learning Programs.” Education Advisory Board. November 2008.
- Geraci, Lisa, Katie Sue Zellner, and Sarah Moore. “Structuring, Encouraging, and Assessing Community Service Learning within the Academic Curriculum.” Education Advisory Board. January 2011.
- Krase, Hilary, and Ehui Nyatepe-Coo. “Facilitating Community Service Programs through Residence Life.” Education Advisory Board. September 2011.
- Krenkel, Anna, and Nalika Vasudevan. “Coordinating Campus-wide Civic Engagement Initiatives.” Education Advisory Board. October 2012.
- Nickelhoff, Laura, and Ehui Osei-Mensah. “Promoting Participation in Leadership and Service Programs.” Education Advisory Board. March 2012
- Tansey, Jay, and Christine Enyeart. “Leadership Development and Service Learning Courses: Partnering across Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.” Education Advisory Board. May 2009.
- Thomas, Allison, and Ehui-Osei-Mensah. “Developing a Vision and Framework for Civic Engagement Initiatives.” Education Advisory Board. March 2012.
- Zauner, Sarah, and Aashna Kircher. “Organizing, Defining, and Assessing Service-Learning Programs.” Education Advisory Board. December 2010.
- The Chronicle of Higher Education (<http://chronicle.com>)
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (<http://nces.ed.gov/>)
- University A’s Center for Community Service Web site
- University B’s Center for Public Service Web site
- University C’s Service Learning Web site

Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed service learning administrators at three institutions across the United States. The Forum also profiled service learning programs at five institutions through previous EAB and secondary research.

A Guide to Institutions Interviewed for this Brief

Institution	Type	Location	Approximate Enrollment (Undergraduate/Total)	Classification
University A	Private	Northeast	14,000/20,000	Research Universities (high research activity)
University B	Private	South	8,000/12,000	Research Universities (very high research activity)
University C	Public	Midwest	22,000/27,000	Research Universities (high research activity)

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

A Guide to Institutions Profiled from Past EAB Research in this Brief

Institution	Type	Location	Approximate Enrollment (Undergraduate/Total)	Classification
University D	Public	Pacific West	4,000/5,000	Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)
University E	Public	South	7,000/9,000	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
University F	Private	Northeast	19,000/30,000	Research Universities (high research activity)
University G	Public	South	15,000/17,000	Research Universities (high research activity)
University H	Public	Midwest	11,000/12,000	Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)

Source: National Center for Education Statistics