<u>Standards for Working with Community Partners</u>

Service learning provides an opportunity for universities and community organizations to develop partnerships to address social problems and build social capital. Students are able to have a hands-on learning experience within the community and may continue to be civically engaged after they graduate. Also, partnering organizations obtain access to university resources to ameliorate issues identified by the community. Developing positive partnerships between the campus and the community is essential to our campus' ability to offer service learning opportunities. Within the scholarship of engagement there is agreement on the general characteristics of effective partnerships: (1) cooperative goal setting and planning; (2) shared power, resources, and decision making; (3) trust and reciprocity; (4) partnership management practices in place; and (5) knowledge of community needs and how to work within the partner community. This guide provides recommendations for how to cultivate and maintain successful university-community partnerships and achieve reciprocity of benefits.

- **Identify a compatible partner**
  Prior to entering into a partnership identify the service-learning class objectives. If you have a community partner in mind, understand the service needs of the agency and decide whether your course design can help in meeting those needs.
- **Discuss racial, ethnic, and economic inequalities that exist**
  Faculty, students, and staff must be aware of the resources the community partner has to contribute and what departmental resources are available in order to have a service learning strategy that is appropriate and respectful. Moreover, faculty and students should have an understanding of the specific community culture and traditions. There should be recognition and respect for the fact that community leaders are responsible for making daily decisions about their communities not faculty and students.
- **Facilitate meaningful community partner participation in service-learning**
  Partnership goals should be mutually agreed upon by all partners. Goals should be realistic and take into consideration resources and the amount of time the partnership will last (e.g. over one semester). A candid discussion needs to take place about each partner's limitations. Also, community partners should be invited into the classroom to teach students about, for example, policies that have impacted the community. *Remember, community partners should be viewed as co-educators.*
- **Develop a Partnership Agreement (See Sample Agreement & Worksheet below)**
  All partners need to be involved in the development of the Partnership Agreement. The agreement should clearly set out:
  1. The purpose, goals, and objectives of the partnership
  2. Each partners expectations and anticipated benefits of the partnership

3. The responsibilities and tasks of each partner (e.g. student training)
4. How resources and information will be analyzed, shared, and exchanged
5. How the project will be evaluated (e.g. community partner's input in evaluating student participation/or product)

Sample Service Learning Agreement

Agency Name: _____

Agency Address:_____

                  _____

                  _____

Contact Person Information

       Name: _____

       Email address:_____

       Phone number/s:_____

Service-learning group name:_____

Service-learning group members' names and email addresses:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Brief Description of Project (attach complete proposal):_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Agency Contact Person: I have received a copy of the project proposal and a letter from **Professor X** outlining our expectations for student performance. I believe that the proposed project will be of value to my organization and will support the students' efforts related to it in the manner agreed upon by **Professor X** and this **organization/agency/individual**. I agree to complete a final project evaluation and return it to **Professor X** in a timely fashion. I recognize that I may contact **Professor X** at any time if I have a question or suggestion related to the project. Signature_____

Unit 2 Worksheet: Guidelines for Writing a Partnership Agreement or Memorandum

The following worksheet provides key guidelines of a partnership agreement that the partnership may wish to consider when designing an agreement or memorandum that is unique to its members. All members should be involved in the discussion to identify the important components of the partnership agreement or memorandum. Space is provided to record your responses to the questions below.

Components of a partnership agreement or memorandum	Write your responses to the questions below. Your responses will build the foundation for the partnership agreement or memorandum.
What key partners are involved in the community-campus partnership?	
What is the historical legacy that has existed between the community and campus?	
What are the partnership's purpose, goals and objectives?	
What are each partner's expectations and anticipated benefits of the partnership? (i.e., faculty, community, and student)	
What are the roles, responsibilities and key tasks of each partner? How are these roles identified? Do they reflect the strengths and assets of each partner?	
What is the timeline for small and large milestones?	
How might community partners and representatives from the campus work together to address them?	
What are the partnership's outcomes?	
Whose financial resources will contribute to the partnership's activities?	

How will all partners and stakeholders be oriented to the partnership activities? For example, how will students be oriented to the community agency and vice versa?	
How will fundraising activities be carried out (i.e., grant-writing, etc.)? Who will be responsible for identifying funding opportunities and developing proposals for funding?	
What resources will be allocated to the partnership activities? List these resources.	
What are the anticipated partnership's products, and how will the copyright and ownership issues be addressed?	
What is the partnership's evaluation plan of its work and how will the findings be used?	
How will students be supervised?	
How will students' service activities be monitored?	
How often will supervisors/faculty meet with students to review progress?	
What is the partnership's "feedback" strategy and agreed upon ways to address partner's concerns and achievements?	
What is the partnership's marketing and publicity plan?	

What is the process for sharing information with the community and campus about relevant research findings produced from the partnership's activities?	
What is the process for determining authorship? For example, if articles are written about research findings how will authors be identified and cited?	
How will the partnership share credit and celebrate success? How often will celebratory events take place?	
How will the partnership ensure the inclusion of culturally competent approaches in the partnership's activities?	
What is the process for determining if the partnership will continue? What might be the conditions or criteria under which the partnership might choose to dissolve?	
What is the partnerships' risk management plan?	
What emergency procedures are in place to protect students, faculty, and community representatives?	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	

References

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