1) Executive Overview

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 leaning 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 initieirmv-5(es)-3(.)A6(tu)-9(i)5(n s-3(t)-10(o)5(t)t)-7(i)5(o)-9(n,s-3( )-10(wi)1(i)

2) Service Learning Curricula

Most Service Learning Occurs Through Courses; Some Full Program s 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:

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

> **Knowledge Application**
> Service learning provides the opportunity for students to use knowledge and skills in real-life situations to promote active learning

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.

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

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

Survey Student s 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

I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.

Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.

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 with

Graduation Requirements Create the Strong est 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

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

Connect Service Learning to   Professional Development and Citizenship

Strategies to Encourage Student Participation in Service Learning

Include Service Learning in Prospective Student Materials

ƒ 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

ƒ Service learning administrators should collaborate with the student government (i.e., student union) to jointly encourage student organization

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

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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.

Create Service Learning Programs that Fit Mission 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]

ƒ Administrators at **small liberal arts institutions** can often lead the entire campus in supporting service learning ci

6) Research Methodology

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

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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

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