

Community Service Learning at CSULB: A Student Handbook



California State University, Long Beach
Center for Community Engagement/Community Service Learning Center
Main Library, East Room 120 Mail Stop 2007
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90840-2001
(562) 985-7131
<http://www.csulb.edu/cslc>



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Part One: Community Service Learning

This handbook is designed to aid you in the completion of the service-learning component of your course. We hope that the following information will help you to have a successful service-learning experience. By taking this course you have become part of a unique group of individuals who choose a positive approach to giving back to their communities.

Who We Are

The Mission of the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), previously known as the Community Service Learning Center, is to serve as a gateway for faculty, students and community members toward strengthening community capacity, enriching the educational experience of students, and facilitating shared community-based research through the coordination of civic engagement, effective service learning, and community collaborations.

What is Service-Learning?

Service-learning is the integration of community service into an academic course. It is a method of teaching and learning that allows students to see and experience the relationship between theory and practice as they draw together their community service experience with readings, lecture, research, and classroom discussion. Service-learning :

- Links academic study to community service through intentional learning goals and structured reflection to enhance both learning and service
- Emphasizes active learning in different environments
- Values reciprocity, with the community and academic partners sharing the roles of learner, server, and educator to meet both academic and community goals.
- Engages students in responsible and challenging community service that meets identified community needs
- Allows students to reflect critically on their experiences
- Is *integrated* into the course and not an “add-on” or extra work. Service-learning faculty design courses so that the out-of-class time required for a service-learning course is equivalent to that required for a non-service-learning course.
- It is *not* receiving credit for doing community service. You will be graded on the learning related to the service, not on the service itself.

Service-Learning Benefits Everyone

Students who complete Community Service Learning benefit from:

- Richer learning opportunities, increased information retention, and higher grades
 - Opportunities to apply classroom knowledge to real experience in the community
 - Increased academic and social self-confidence
 - Increased critical thinking skills
 - Greater awareness of community opportunities and the chance to develop community networks
 - Increased sense of community “connectedness” and civic engagement
 - Enriched experiences that strengthen resumes and/or graduate school applications
- Community-based organizations involved with service learning and their constituents gain:
 - Tangible benefits from student community service-learning activities.
 - The possibility to address needs that require specialized knowledge.
 - Opportunities to develop ongoing partnerships with university students and faculty that can help address longer-range goals.
 - Opportunities to serve as “co-educators” in guiding and supporting service-learners.

