

Service-Learning in Higher Education: Trends, Research and Resources



by Erin Bowley with Jennifer Meeropool

Introduction

This article seeks to provide an overview of service-learning in higher education. It begins with a brief history of important events in the twentieth century that contributed to the current state of service, service-learning, and campus civic engagement. An overview is presented on the average numbers of students and faculty involved in service and service-learning, institutional structures that support service-learning, and the most common areas of focus, based on work by Campus Compact. An overview of important developments in research on service-learning and civic engagement follows. National organizations that contribute to the development of service-learning are listed, followed by a description of important national initiatives such as Campus Compact's Integrating Service With Academic Study Project, the American Association of Higher Education's project on service-learning in the disciplines, and national developments in the use of federal work-study for community service. Finally, a partial list of resources and websites for service-learning in higher education is presented.

Early Milestones For Service-Learning in Higher Education

Active, community-based learning in both higher education and K-12 schools traces its roots to the Progressive Education movement of the early twentieth century and innovators such as John Dewey.¹ It is not until the 1960s, however, that formal support structures for service-learning in higher education—such as funding and professional development events—emerge and involve multiple higher education institutions.

Key milestones in the development of service-learning in higher education through the early 1990's include:²

1965 College work-study programs established

1966 "Service-learning" phrase used to describe a TVA-funded project in East Tennessee with Oak Ridge Associated Universities

1969 Atlanta Service-Learning Conference held (sponsors included Southern

Regional Education Board, U.S. Dept. HEW, City of Atlanta, Atlanta Urban Corps, Peace Corps, and VISTA)

1971 The National Center for Public Service Internships and the Society for Field Experience Education were established (these two merged in 1978 and later become the National Society for Experiential Education, adopting service-learning as one focus in 1987.)

1982 National Youth Leadership Council formed, eventually hosting a campus service initiative in Minnesota

1984 Campus Outreach Opportunity League formed

1985 Campus Compact formed

1989 Wingspread Principles of Good Practice in Service-Learning written

1990 National and Community Service Act of 1990 authorized funding for service in higher education through Serve America (later Learn and Serve America)

1993 Service-learning network formed on the internet, hosted by the University of Colorado Peace Studies Center

Significant Growth in the 1990's: From Service to Engagement

Since the early 1990's, a tremendous number of resources have emerged in the field of service-learning in higher education, and the number of students, faculty and institutions involved has significantly grown. Hundreds of articles, books, toolkits, and research papers provide guidance to educators, students and community partners. Professional development events are regularly available to support learning and networking. Funding from federal, state, local, and private sources helps service-learning practitioners build programs, conduct research, and disseminate best practice.

Programmatic and philosophical changes in the 1990s have slowly shifted the focus of many institutions from co-curricular student service to include significant initiatives that combine service with academic study. Most recently, greater attention has been paid to the broader idea of campus civic engagement.

Recent milestones demonstrating this

interest in civic engagement include the release of Campus Compact's President's Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education in 1999, the first Student Wingspread Summit on civic engagement in 2001, the creation of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) in 2001, and the launch of Campus Compact's "Raise Your Voice" campaign promoting student civic engagement in 2002.

National Trends Among College and University Programs

The majority of what is known about national trends among colleges and universities is available through the work of Campus Compact (additional information on Campus Compact is available in the Organizations section of this article). Each year, Campus Compact conducts a Members Survey to gather data on activities, structures and priorities. While Campus Compact's 914 member institutions do not include all institutions of higher education in the nation, its members represent all types of institutions and are geographically dispersed.

The following information was provided by Campus Compact, based on member surveys since 1991.

Growth In Student and Faculty Participation

The number of college and university members of Campus Compact has grown from 235 in 1991 to 914 in 2003. The number of students involved in service has also grown from an average 10 percent of the student body in 1998 to 33 percent just four years later in 2001. In 1991, 59 percent of campuses reported the extent of their faculty's involvement in developing service opportunities for students as "little" or "not at all." In 2001, 87 percent of campuses offered service-learning courses. On average, institutions offered 27 of these courses.

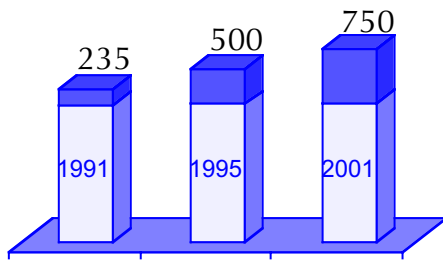
According to two American Association of Community Colleges national surveys, nearly 50 percent of all community colleges offer service-learning in their curricular programs. Another 35-40 percent of colleges are interested in starting service learning programs.



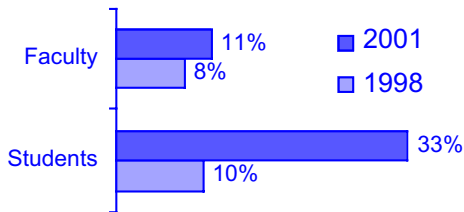
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Number of Colleges or Universities Who are Members of Campus Compact



Average Percent of Students and Faculty Involved in Service-Learning



Percentage of institutions that support service-learning in the following ways (based on the 2001 survey):

- 64% Have department chairs take a leadership role in institutionalizing service-learning
- 44% Have a service-learning center
- 42% Include service-learning in campus publications
- 40% Incorporate service-learning into departments
- 30% Incorporate service-learning into majors
- 23% Incorporate service-learning into core curriculum
- 21% Incorporate service-learning into honors program
- 9% Have a service-learning graduation requirement

Faculty Involvement

Faculty cite promoting engaged learning, developing critical thinking skills, and exposing students to diversity as their key incentives for integrating service into academic study. Regarding challenges to

extending service-learning at colleges and universities, time and pressures on faculty teaching loads (81 percent), and a lack of common understanding of the concepts and models of service-learning (57 percent) were the most commonly cited obstacles to the extension of service-learning.

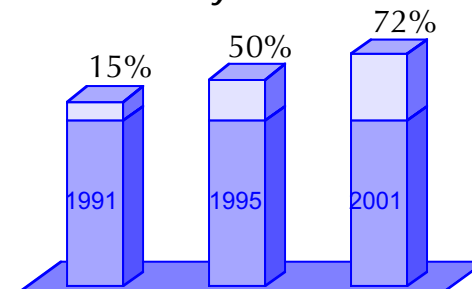
Percentage of institutions that provide support for faculty engagement in the following ways (based on the 2001 survey):

- 64% Provide reflection and assessment materials
- 62% Make curriculum models and syllabi available
- 57% Encourage faculty to attend service-learning conferences
- 56% Offer faculty workshops
- 46% Provide grants to faculty for curriculum redesign
- 35% Discuss service-learning during faculty orientation
- 29% Provide faculty incentives for service-learning
- 28% Recognize faculty with service awards
- 16% Consider service-learning in tenure and promotion

Infrastructure and Leadership

An important factor in service-learning development in higher education is the infrastructure and professional leadership available to coordinate and support it. Often, this infrastructure takes the form of an established office for service or service-learning. In 1991, 15 percent of Campus Compact's members had such an office. In 2001, 72 percent of institutions had an established community service office. The number of fulltime staff and the budgets for these offices have also grown.

Percent of Member Institutions of Campus Compact with Established Community Service Offices



75 percent of institutions in 2001 report the president's office provides support for community service on their campus. Respondents most frequently note presidential support for service-learning as the key indicator of the institutionalization of service on their campuses.

The percent of institutions that consider community service in their admissions process rose from 20 percent in 2000 to 24 percent in 2001.

Percentage of institutions that serve the following populations...

- 89% Low-income people
- 77% Minorities
- 76% The homeless
- 74% The elderly

Percentage of institutions with service projects that focus on the following issues...

- 86% Reading/writing tutoring
- 81% Housing/homelessness
- 79% Environmental
- 73% Hunger

Interest in voting issues increased from 36 to 46 percent between 2000 and 2001.

Highlights in Research on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement

Twenty years ago, relatively few research studies existed on service-learning in higher education. One of the first studies was commissioned in 1989. Members of Campus Compact's Executive Committee commissioned Tim Stanton of Stanford's Haas Center for Public Service to complete a study of faculty attitudes toward integrating community service into teaching and research. The report, *Integrating Public Service with Academic Study: The Faculty Role* found "if community service was to become successfully institutionalized on campuses, it must be directly linked to the academic mission of higher education."³

An increasing number of individual and institutional research efforts emerged in the mid-1990s. Formal research projects, dissertations, informal studies, conferences, and organizations are available to

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supplement what we know about service-learning, civic engagement, and their effects on students, faculty, and institutions. An area in need of increased research efforts is the effect of service-learning on community organizations and people in communities. Civic engagement is also an area that deserves much more research attention in coming years.

The organizations and studies listed below comprise a partial list of resources and examples of research on service-learning and civic engagement.

The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)

www.civicyouth.org

Founded in 2001, CIRCLE promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. CIRCLE provides grants to researchers and is also a clearinghouse for relevant information and scholarship. CIRCLE was founded with a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts and is based at the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs.

The Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning

www.umich.edu/~mjcsl

Initiated in 1994, the MJCSL is a refereed journal that publishes articles related to service-learning theory, pedagogy and practice. Its goals include encouraging research and pedagogical scholarship related to service-learning, and contributing to the academic legitimacy of service-learning. The editorial board consists of faculty from diverse disciplines at the University of Michigan and other institutions around the country.

Minnesota Campus Civic Engagement Study

This study was commissioned in 2001 by the Minnesota Legislature to better understand and document campus civic engagement at institutions across Minnesota. It is the first study of its kind in the nation. It relied on a system of thirty indicators of civic engagement to compare the work of diverse institutions in service, service-learning and civic engagement. The final report of the study will be released in April 2003. For more

information, contact Julie Plaut at Minnesota Campus Compact at (651) 603-5084 or julieplaut@mncampuscompact.org.

RAND Report: Combining Service and Learning in Higher Education

www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR998.1/

RAND was commissioned by the Corporation for National Service to complete a three-year evaluation on the Learn and Serve America Higher Education program. The final report on this study discusses impacts of Learn and Serve America Higher Education programs on students, communities, and institutions.

UC-Berkeley Service-Learning Research and Development Center

www.gse.berkeley.edu/research/slrdc

The Service-Learning Research and Development Center was established in UC-Berkeley's School of Education in 1994 to help understand the implications of service activities on teaching, learning, and schooling. The Center sponsors the National Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Research Directory including information on research-related conferences, evaluation, funding, jobs, listservs, publications and surveys. The Center also disseminates a "National Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Research E-Newsletter."

UCLA Higher Education Research Institution and Service-Learning Clearinghouse

www.gseis.ucla.edu/slc

The Clearinghouse is a part of the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. Its website is designed to provide resources, tips and links to other sites that offer information on service-learning in higher education. HERI has completed fourteen studies that relate to service-learning in the past thirty years. HERI publications include:

- * How Service-Learning Affects Students
- * 2002 Freshman Survey Results
- * Faculty Participation in Service-Learning
- * Service-Learning Needs Assessment (of Learn and Serve Higher Education grantees)

Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?

www.josseybass.com

This important book by Janet Eyler and Dwight Giles of Vanderbilt University was published in 1999. Their study explores service-learning as a valid learning activity. The study was based on data from a large national survey focused on attitudes and perceptions of learning, intensive student interviews before and after the service semester, and additional interviews to explore student views of the service-learning process.

Resource Organizations For Service-Learning in Higher Education

An array of national organizations promote and support service-learning in higher education.

Campus Compact

www.compact.org

Campus Compact is a national coalition of 914 college and university presidents committed to the civic purposes of higher education. To support this civic mission, Campus Compact promotes community service that develops students' citizenship skills and values, encourages partnerships between campuses and communities, and assists faculty who seek to integrate public and community engagement into their teaching and research. The Compact has produced hundreds of publications, sponsored hundreds of events and institutes, and launched special projects for student leaders, presidents, chief academic officers, and others. It has awarded \$5.8 million in grants since 1992. The national office of Campus Compact in Providence, Rhode Island, is complemented by a network of 30 state Campus Compact organizations and the Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges.

Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL)

www.cool2serve.org

Since 1984, this national non-profit organization has encouraged the development of campus infrastructure, resources and support for effective student engagement and campus-community partnerships. The mission of COOL is "to educate, connect, and mobilize college students and their

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campuses to strengthen communities through service and action." COOL develops model programs and publications to empower college students to create programs on campuses. It holds an annual conference for students engaged in service.

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH)

www.futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph

CCPH is a nonprofit organization founded in 1996 to promote health through partnerships between communities and higher education institutions. CCPH has over 1000 campus and community-based members throughout the United States and the world. CCPH and its members promote health through service-learning, community-based research, community service, and other partnership strategies. One of CCPH's goals is to incorporate service-learning into the education of all health professionals. CCPH coordinates a technical assistance network, training events, a listserv, and other activities to support its members and goals.

The Corporation for National and Community Service: Learn and Serve America

www.learnandserve.org

In 1990, the National and Community Service Act authorized grants to support service-learning through Serve America, now known as Learn and Serve America. Grants are made to schools, nonprofits, and colleges and universities. Learn and Serve grants are used to create new programs or replicate existing programs, as well as to provide training and development to staff, faculty, and volunteers. Approximately \$10 million is awarded to higher education programs each year.

Educators for Community Engagement (formerly the Invisible College)

www.e4ce.org

In 1994, a group called the Invisible College was formed to support faculty leadership in service-learning. This group was an outgrowth of a Campus Compact gathering at the Highlander Research Center in Tennessee and was hosted by Campus Compact for three years. Subsequently, the organization became independent and recently changed its name to Educators for Community Engagement. This group contributed to the creation of a project to produce discipline-specific monographs (later published by the

American Association of Higher Education) and sponsors an annual "National Gathering" of faculty.

National Initiatives Supporting Service-Learning and Civic Engagement

The following is a list of national initiatives that provide resources and leadership to the fields of service-learning and civic engagement in higher education.

AACC's "Broadening Horizons" Service-Learning Project

www.aacc.nche.edu

The American Association of Community Colleges has promoted the value of service learning since 1994. It received a Learn and Serve America grant to create its "Community Colleges Broadening Horizons through Service Learning" project. This project provides hosts an information clearinghouse, funds grants to create model programs, creates publications and provides technical assistance to community colleges and their partners. The Horizons project strives "to integrate service learning into the institutional climate of community colleges, and to increase the number, quality, and sustainability of service learning programs."

American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Service-Learning Project

www.aahe.org

The AAHE Service Learning Project consists of a two-part initiative dedicated to the integration of service-learning across the disciplines. The project is anchored by a multi-volume series of books designed to provide resources to faculty wishing to explore community-based learning in and through the individual academic disciplines. The first of 18 books was published by AAHE in 1996. The second part of the initiative is described below.

AAHE-Campus Compact Consulting Corps

www.compact.org/faculty/consulting-corps.html

The AAHE-Campus Compact Consulting Corps was established in 2001 with support from the Corporation for National Service, to assist colleges and universities in becoming more effective proponents of social and civic engagement. Designed to serve as a major disciplinary and regional resource to service-learning faculty and engaged campuses, the Corps provides on-campus

technical assistance and professional development for interested institutions. The Corps consists of twenty senior teacher-scholars, each a respected leader in the service-learning field.

Campus Compact's Integrating Service With Academic Study Initiative

www.compact.org/faculty

The Project on Integrating Service with Academic Study, or ISAS, was started in 1989. It marks the shift in the work of Campus Compact from promoting community service outside the curriculum to an emphasis on service that is integrally connected to course content. With its curricular focus, ISAS is primarily concerned with the needs of faculty who adopt service-learning as a teaching methodology and seek to deepen its practice in their courses, in their departments, and at their institutions. Through ISAS, colleges and universities that are working to build community service into their teaching and research receive training, technical assistance, and targeted consultation services. Additionally, a course and syllabi database have been compiled and several publications have been produced to assist faculty in course development.

CampusCares

www.CampusCares.org

In 2002, a broad coalition of national higher education associations launched CampusCares, a project to "identify, recognize, and encourage the involvement of those on America's college campuses—students, faculty, administration, and staff—who serve their community and contribute to its well-being." CampusCares will highlight exemplary campus programs on its website. Collectively, the higher education associations in CampusCares represent every one of the 3,600 colleges and universities in the United States.

Council of Independent Colleges' "Engaging Communities and Campuses" Program

www.cic.edu/caphe/grants/engaging.asp

The Council of Independent Colleges has worked to support college-community partnerships and service-learning for nearly a decade. The Engaging Communities and Campuses program assists

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independent colleges and universities to establish partnerships with community organizations that can enhance experiential learning activities while addressing community needs. The initiative's central activity is a competitive grants program, complemented by regional teaching and learning workshops and a web-based effective practices network.

Federal Work-Study and Service

See www.compact.org/national/workstudy-index.html for more information.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 included a section on Work-Study Programs, whose goal was to "stimulate and promote the part-time employment of students in institutions of higher education." Students were allowed to work for the institution itself or for nonprofit organizations. Beginning in fiscal year 1994, institutions receiving federal work-study funds were required to use "at least 5 percent of the total amount of funds granted to such institution... to compensate students employed in community service." Beginning in fiscal year 2000, the community service requirement increased to 7%. The bill also required colleges receiving federal work-study funds to have a children's or family literacy project that employs work-study students as tutors. At that time, President Clinton created the America Reads Challenge to promote literacy partnerships between higher education institutions and communities.

President Bush has called on colleges and universities to increase the mandated percentage to 50% over time. In 2002, Campus Compact received funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service to conduct focus groups on the challenges and opportunities in administering the community service portion of the federal work-study program. Campus Compact compiled findings from the focus groups and drafted a set of Principles of Best Practice to help campuses improve their community service Federal Work-Study program.

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
www.servicelearning.org
The Learn and Serve America National

Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC) supports the service-learning community in higher education, kindergarten through grade twelve, community-based initiatives and tribal programs, as well as all others interested in strengthening schools and communities using service-learning techniques and methodologies. The Clearinghouse provides materials, references, referrals, and information. The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse is a project of ETR Associates and is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Raise Your Voice: Student Action for Change

www.actionforchange.org

Campus Compact's "Raise Your Voice Campaign," created in 2002, will engage over 250,000 college students in an effort to: "increase college student involvement in public life and connect these actions with a larger national student movement around civic engagement; document student civic engagement activities and issues that are important to college students; and mobilize higher education in a way that gives more voice to students and makes civic engagement central to student learning." Activities include sponsoring a Raise Your Voice Week of Action each February, creating resource guides, building a coalition of national student organizations as partners; and providing funds for Student Leadership Teams in 14 states.

¹Seals, Gayle (editor), "Service-Learning in Teacher Education: A handbook," National Service Learning in Teacher Education Partnership; available at <http://www/alma.edu/academics/education/service/;revised2000>, accessed 28 March, 2002.

²Based on work by the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse; available at <http://www.servicelearning.org/article/archive/36/>; accessed 28 March 2002.

³For more information, see www.compact.org/aboutcc/retrospective/retro-faculty.html.

Web-Based Resources on Service-Learning in Higher Education

American Association of Community College's "Broadening Horizons" Service-Learning Project
www.aacc.nche.edu

American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Service-Learning Project
www.aahe.org

AAHE-Campus Compact Consulting Corps
www.compact.org/faculty/consulting-corps.html

Campus Compact
www.compact.org

CampusCares
www.CampusCares.org

Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL)
www.cool2serve.org

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH)
www.futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph

Council of Independent Colleges' "Engaging Communities and Campuses" Program
www.cic.edu/caphe/grants/engaging.asp

Education Commission of the States Center for Community College Policy
www.communitycollegepolicy.org

Educators for Community Engagement (formerly the Invisible College)
www.e4ce.org

Federal Work-Study and Service
See www.compact.org/national/workstudy-index.html for more information.

Raise Your Voice: Student Action for Change
www.actionforchange.org