

# Service Learning Course Design Checklist

The checklist below describes a way to integrate service learning into your course. The Community-Based Learning Coordinator is available to you and your course at any time. We can be particularly helpful in making connections between the theory and practice of service learning and between your course and possible service and reflection activities.

## **SEVERAL MONTHS PRIOR TO THE SERVICE LEARNING SEMESTER:**

- Review your course content and objectives and consider the best ways service learning might enhance student learning.
- Discuss your ideas and the service learning project approval process with colleagues and the Community-Based Learning Coordinator.

## **Contact the Community-Based Learning Department**

- Discuss resources related to your discipline and service learning in general.
- Review sample syllabi and discuss how service learning might be successful in your course.
- Explore potential agencies and service activities.
- Begin to think about opportunities for critical reflection and assessment.
- Discuss if project will be optional or a class project were all students will participate in to achieve learning outcomes.
- Get help with logistics, such as travel, scheduling and training.

## **Connect with Community Partners (This must occur after meeting with the Community-Based Learning Coordinator FIRST!)**

- Meet with agency (s) chosen for project and explore the potential benefits of working together. Not all agencies may be a good match, thus the request to meet with the agency. Meetings can occur in person or through a conference call. The Community-Based Learning Coordinator may attend these meetings as needed.

- Be sure to communicate with the person who will supervise students and any others who will assist the process. Work together with the agency and Community-Based Learning Coordinator to detail the training and guidance that students will receive.
- Gather background materials that can be incorporated into your syllabus.
- Explore the possibility of a classroom visit by an agency representative. This is strongly requested by the Community-Based Learning Coordinator.
- Establish routine communication throughout the semester to troubleshoot any problems, to learn about student experiences, and to see if the agency is satisfied that your students are being able to serve in the ways most needed.

### **Begin to Develop Language for the Syllabus**

- Describe where students will work (on or off campus), if the project is optional, the service activities, and the time required on a cumulative and regular basis.
- Summarize the training and support students will receive from you the professor, the Community-Based Learning Coordinator and the agency representative (s).
- Explain practicalities, such as transportation.
- Invite students' questions about any aspect of the project, including concerns about disability (ies) and access.

### **Attend to Practical Details**

- Identify needed liability forms, background checks, and medical forms for project.
- If the course will be designated as a service learning course, contact Community-Based Learning Coordinator a semester prior to course being taught, so that the course designation will be completed in a timely effort.

## **FOUR TO SIX WEEKS PRIOR TO SEMESTER:**

### **Finalize Your Syllabus**

- Communicate learning outcomes for the course and how the service learning project contributes.
- Describe assignments that integrate course content and the service learning experience.
- Adjust reading list (as necessary) to better incorporate service learning.
- Provide ample time for preparation and training (possibly one class session).

- Plan touch points throughout the semester when you explicitly discuss the service learning experience. Allow time for general thoughts and feelings as a way to invite more complex critical thinking.
- Include reflection assignments to assist in inviting complex critical thinking into the classroom.

### **Solidify Practical Details**

- Travel: Public transportation, DCC Bus
- Risk Management: necessary release forms from DCC and the agency must be completed before visiting the agency or beginning the project.
- Other: potential vaccinations, TB tests, criminal background checks, emergency procedures.

### **THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER:**

- Maintain open communication with the agency partner and the Community-Based Learning Coordinator.
- Be flexible, project plans are subject to change.
- Be alert for teaching moments that link the service with the course.

### **AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER:**

- Retrieve student and faculty evaluations from the Community-Based Learning Coordinator.
- Have students complete service learning evaluations about their experiences with the project and submit by the last day of the semester.
- Complete faculty evaluation which is due by the last day of the semester.
- Meet with Community-Based Learning Coordinator to debrief the experience.