Service-Learning at TCC

A Faculty Handbook for Service-Learning Courses

Questions?

Email: servicelearning@tulsacc.edu

Tulsa Community College
Division of Engaged Learning

Updated Spring 2018
An Introduction to Service-Learning at Tulsa Community College

A message from TCC’s president: “Perhaps there can be no higher purpose than service to community. As President of Tulsa Community College, I am very proud of the leadership our faculty and students have taken in creating a Service Learning program at TCC. The result is an educational process that is richer, shared, and remarkable. Thank you!” – Leigh B. Goodson, PhD

What is Service-Learning?
Service-Learning is a method of experiential education which combines practical experience in the community with the academic theory of the classroom. Through service-learning, students develop intellectual, personal, career, and civic skills while also assuming a more active role in their education.

TCC relies on Abe, Jackson, and Jones’ definition (2002) which says that service-learning is a form of experiential education characterized by students participating in:
• an organized service activity that meets identified community needs
• service activities that are connected to specific learning outcomes
• structured time for student reflection and connection of the service experience to their learning

All of these must be present for effective service-learning to take place.

Why Hyphenate Service-Learning?
Just as a hyphen joins two words together, usually of equal value, so the hyphen shows that we place an equal value on the service components and on the classroom learning opportunities. Further, the hyphen is symbolic of the element of reflection in the classroom that helps students make the connection between their service experience and their learning.

What is Service-Learning NOT?
• **Volunteerism**: Volunteers engage in service for a variety of personal reasons. They do not necessarily link their service to academic studies nor do they receive academic credit for their efforts.
• **Community Service**: People engaging in community service do so for a variety of reasons. This is a broad term that can encompass court ordered, stipended, or volunteer service. It also does not necessarily link to academic studies.
• **Work Study Internship**: Student interns frequently work at for-profit business as part of a program requirement or to further their future career prospects. They are not necessarily working to improve their communities through these internship experiences. That said, there

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can be overlap between work study internships and service-learning. If students are working to improve the health or welfare of their community while linking this to their academic studies through their internship, then it can count as service-learning. (Maryland State Department of Education)

Benefits of Service-Learning
Service-Learning is considered a high impact educational practice (Kuh 2008). There are numerous benefits for incorporating Service-Learning into a school curriculum to staff, faculty and the community and to the student.

Key Benefits to Students include

- Making curriculum relevant to life
- Clarifying values
- Promoting community and civic responsibility
- Encouraging multicultural awareness
- Developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Fostering social and personal development
- Networking to job contacts and potential career fields
- Broadening horizons
- Providing active, relevant learning
- Increased retention rates
- Increased student satisfaction with course content (Jacoby 2015)

What are the program goals for service-learning at TCC?
1. Enhance student learning and retention by providing opportunities to connect course content with real-life experiences
2. Support faculty in the development and implementation of service-learning projects and courses
3. Establish positive relationships with a variety of community partners
4. Promote personal and social responsibility in students in faculty through service opportunities in their community

Who can offer Service-Learning in courses at TCC?
Any faculty member (part time or full time) can include a service-learning component in their course with or without a designation. But there are several advantages to officially designating your course as service-learning:

1) The Service-Learning designation helps TCC keep track of how many hours we are serving in the community. We report estimates for this information in our annual Campus Compact report.
2) The Service-Learning designation shows up on students’ co-curricular transcripts and looks great on transfer and job applications
3) Tulsa Achieves students can look for service-learning courses to help them get their 40 volunteer hours in.

What do I need to commit to in order to designate my course as service-learning?

Service-Learning courses should add the following outcomes to their syllabus. . .

Upon completing this service-learning course, students will be able to

- Recognize needs in the community
- Respond to community needs with service, and
- Reflect on how the service experience reinforces course learning outcomes.

Service-Learning professors should also plan on students serving a minimum of 2 hours per course credit hour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 credit</th>
<th>2 service hours minimum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 credits</td>
<td>4 service hours minimum</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 credits</td>
<td>6 service hours minimum</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 credits</td>
<td>8 service hours minimum</td>
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If your project doesn’t quite meet these criteria, contact servicelearning@tulsacc.edu. It’s possible we can grant an exception. But generally speaking, the more hours of service, the more impactful the project is on student success.

Service Learning professors should further plan to

- introduce students to the concept of service-learning (feel free to use the orientation on our service-learning website) including safety guidelines,
- have students fill out the appropriate placement agreements
- email placement agreement to Lynn Richmond (Honors office) by the end of each semester. (For legal reasons, we are required to keep these for several years after the service event.)
- provide/arrange for appropriate training and pre-reflection on the group/s that students will be serving, and
- report any issues to the service-learning coordinator, and
- report the total number of hours of student service to the service-learning coordinator in December and May.

How do I officially designate my course?
In October and March, an email will be sent to all faculty from servicelearning@tulsacc.edu requesting info about the course/s you would like to designate.

Types of Service-Learning Community Partnerships
- **Group project** – A common type of service-learning project is to schedule a time, (either class time or out of class time) to work on a project together. An example of this would be a Food-themed Composition class studying food who all goes over to Iron Gate twice during the semester to serve at their food pantry. This approach yields the most benefits to class comradery and building teamwork and collaboration skills.
• **Individual Project** – Possibly the easiest kind of service-learning project to coordinate (especially if you are new to service-learning) is to let your students choose their own projects. Many students will already be volunteering someplace, and this option allows them to continue doing that valuable work but apply your class content to that experience. The downsides are
  o the burden of proving the application to your class is on the student (and they may not make the connections you hoped they would) and
  o best practices for service-learning recommend that faculty try to follow up with community partners at the end of the semester. This can be very difficult to do with 20 or more different community partners.

• **On Campus Project** – On campus projects can be either group or individual. See the list of on campus service-learning options for a list of opportunities.

What resources are available to help TCC Service-Learning Faculty?
• A Service-Learning Certification will be open to 10 faculty twice per year. In this certification, faculty will learn about service-learning, will experience 2 hours of service, will plan their service-learning project, and will receive feedback from the service-learning coordinator.

• Campus Compact is a national service-learning organization that TCC belongs to. Their website has a [syllabus archive](#) that allows you to see what other service-learning courses in your discipline are doing.

• The Oklahoma Service-Learning Conference is a free in-state conference. Attending this conference can help you network with other service-learning faculty and community partners, build your service-learning project, and form a framework for best practices.

• One-on-one meetings or phone conversations with the service-learning coordinator, available by appointment.

• Our Faculty service-learning website contains information on planning a course, course ideas, potential reflection activities, and sample assessment rubrics.

Risk Management
Any time faculty take students out of the classroom, they increase the chance that something negative could happen to a student. TCC believes that the benefits that come along with service-learning far outweigh possible risks, but there are a few things faculty and students can do to minimize those risks.

• Faculty should not give students a ride to the community partner site or coordinate student travel
• If a student has a bad experience with a community partner, please communicate this with the service-learning coordinator.
• Students and Faculty should not enter individual homes.
• Make sure students are receiving appropriate training prior to their service
• Make sure all students and community partners fill out placement agreement; this functions as a type of contract. Placement Agreements should be scanned and emailed at the end of the semester to Lynn Richmond in the Honors Office at Metro Campus.
• Make sure students know where they are going when they travel to a site.
• Students should not leave valuable items exposed in their cars or out in the open.
Are there any Faculty Promotion and Rank Considerations I should be aware of?
TCC recognizes that developing a service-learning course can be more time-consuming than developing a standard course. Some faculty might worry about how this use of time could impact their yearly review or promotion and rank considerations. Know that TCC fully supports faculty who wish to grow in the area of service-learning and has a history of promoting and recognizing faculty who have demonstrated significant professional development in this area. A faculty member may choose to attend several service-learning workshops as a small part of their professional development or may choose something like the service-learning certification to count as a major piece of their faculty development for a given semester. Faculty who are interested in demonstrating their growth in this area may also wish to consider presenting their ideas at a state-wide conference, regional conference, or TCC workshop. For professional development documentation, service-learning falls under the TCC faculty development framework of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.