**Service Learning/Student Engagement Task Force**

**Final Report**

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*Imagine giving Penn State students the opportunity to spend an exciting, cross-cultural, immersive semester in rural South Africa. Envision building partnerships between Penn State Global Programs, Student Affairs, and local South African communities to create a rigorously assessed, “hands-on” experience using community-based learning, experiential education, public scholarship, and social entrepreneurship. Think of the unique opportunity that Penn State students would have to learn alongside diverse teaching teams of faculty and community members—the global leadership skills these students could develop and take with them upon graduation.*

*As exciting as the above scenario sounds, unfortunately fewer than 100 students per semester could participate. Penn State, however, comprises more than 38,000 undergraduates across 19 campuses—a diverse student population ranging from freshmen through adult learners, online distance learners through returning military veterans on campus.*

*What would it take to make study abroad, undergraduate research, social entrepreneurship, and other types of service learning experiences available to* ***all*** *Penn State undergraduate students? What would it take to provide multiple service-learning opportunities over the course of a student’s Penn State career? What would it take to make Penn State a leader in providing engaged learning experiences for undergraduate students across Pennsylvania and around the world?*

**Introduction**

“A considerable body of research indicates that students who are more engaged in….service learning are more successful in their college experiences and upon graduation are more likely to be engaged citizens in their communities…..These learning opportunities help to reinforce connections across the curriculum and co-curriculum and encourage application of learning to communities that may not be otherwise encountered in the educational experience…..The University must provide more opportunities to engage…undergraduate students.” (The Penn State Strategic Plan, 2009–2014. Strategy 1:2)

Institutional assessments of student success are frequently measured by retention and persistence to completion. It is important to highlight that the positive effect of service learning, one well-documented type of student engagement, is connected to both outcomes[[1]](#endnote-1). In addition, service learning has positive effects on learning outcomes[[2]](#endnote-2), on career development[[3]](#endnote-3), and on satisfaction with college[[4]](#endnote-4). It also strengthens students’ connections with faculty[[5]](#endnote-5), a key factor in college success[[6]](#endnote-6), especially for students of color and underrepresented students[[7]](#endnote-7), and in persistence to completion[[8]](#endnote-8). Moreover, the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement report (2012)—“A Crucible Moment: College Learning & Democracy’s Future”, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education and the White House—highlights the significance of student engagement in general and service learning in particular to student success.

Beyond the cold hard facts of retention and completion, however, researchers find that college service learning is correlated with important personal and interpersonal aspects of rounded student development. Service learning builds self-confidence and efficacy, affirms commitment to equal opportunity, and fosters feelings of responsibility for the wellbeing of others[[9]](#endnote-9). It is also associated with leadership and communication skills, facilitating cultural understanding, and with later participation in community service as an adult[[10]](#endnote-10). “Community service and community service learning experiences represent some of the most important spaces for college students to encounter new and different understandings of the world….These experiences can promote a heightened and broadened sense of connection to other people….[and] encourage reflections on moral and political questions”[[11]](#endnote-11). Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) underscore that wise is the institution that balances dedication to college attendance and completion with commitment to preparing students as informed, engaged, and globally knowledgeable citizens. An untapped opportunity awaits Penn State to understand how service learning’s in- and out-of-class synergies contribute to student development.

Student Perspective

“I volunteered with the Uganda Village Project in the summer of 2009. Volunteering in Uganda allowed me to observe a startling lack of hand-washing facilities for elementary-aged schoolchildren to use after going to the latrine or playing outside. I came back to Penn State, formed a student–faculty team, and our team designed a low-cost hand-washing program specifically for young schoolchildren in resource-limited contexts. In the future, I would encourage Penn State students to think about addressing domestic and global problems not only through volunteering, but also through scholarly research. Implementing an intervention is the first step, but in order to prove that it’s effective, quantitative and qualitative evaluation through research is critical.” *Ce Chang, Class of 2012*

The last two decades were marked by significant growth of service learning courses, reaching nearly 60 percent of graduating college seniors[[12]](#endnote-12), with some institutions requiring service learning for all undergraduate students (e.g., California State University at Monterey Bay, Tulane University). The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012) stressed, however, that, “the percentage needs to climb significantly if all students are to benefit from this powerful, proven pedagogy….The vast majority of courses are still random electives that students encounter in no particular order or time sequencing” (p. 59). Uneven institutional commitment to service learning nationally—and at Penn State specifically—provides a unique opportunity to examine the contribution of a coordinated service learning program to engaged learning.

**Task Force Charge**

*Background*

To achieve these outcomes at Penn State, there are currently a number of academic and administrative entities actively engaged in facilitating aspects of service learning, including, for example, the Schreyer Honors College, the Service Programs area within Student Affairs, the Laboratory for Public Scholarship and Democracy, and the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence. In addition, many faculty members across Penn State successfully integrate service learning into their teaching methodology. The process by which such faculty–student connections are made, however, tends to be ad hoc, with limited coordination of service learning activities at the institutional level. The net result of limited coordination is that faculty, students, staff, administrators, and community members have uneven awareness of service learning teaching, research, and co-curricular opportunities, support services, and the unique opportunity afforded by investing in this resource to secure Penn State’s role as a pioneer in student engagement and success.

Accordingly, the Vice Presidents of Undergraduate Education, Student Affairs, and Outreach sponsored a University-wide task force to explore the exciting opportunities for a coordinated University approach to service learning and curricular and co-curricular[[13]](#endnote-13) undergraduate student engagement that meets the charge outlined in Strategy 1.2 of *The* *Penn State Strategic Plan*.

Faculty Perspective

“When students step beyond their comfort zone and become personally involved with people in their localities, they are more likely to perceive community rhythms and forces, whether for good or ill. When resident participants share their stories and are exposed to critical and creative thinking, they see greater possibility in the future of their place. Together, they form a community of practice that promises more relevant knowledge and interventions than could any introverted campus classroom. Students become aware of the inseparability of community development from broader issues of power, race, and class. It is during this period of new realizations and creativity that double-loop, higher-order learning can take place.” *Professor Kenneth Tamminga, College of Arts and Architecture –Pittsburgh Studio Class*

*Charge*

The Vice Presidents’ Task Force on Student Engagement will determine how to coordinate and extend the full spectrum of curricular and co-curricular student engagement experiences available at Penn State for undergraduate students.

Specifically, the Task Force was asked to:

1. define what service learning and student engagement mean for Penn State, encompassing active learning, community-based research, applied research, experiential learning, and other similar teaching and learning pedagogies;
2. benchmark other higher education institutions nationwide with a focus on Penn State peer institutions and on those with a national reputation in student engagement;
3. identify what is currently being done well at Penn State, and how to make those efforts scalable;
4. recommend an alternative University strategy for providing student-centered coordination of service learning opportunities across Penn State.

Given Penn State’s large undergraduate population and the complexity of the institutional structure and educational delivery systems, the Vice Presidents asked that the Task Force pay particular attention to ***scalability***, to the ***unique contributions*** of service learning–student engagement to Penn State, and to the ***cost and structure*** of the coordination mechanism.

**Task Force Process**

To gather wide-ranging, comprehensive data, the Task Force employed a two-phase approach.

*Phase 1: Initiation and Organization*

After much discussion about the complexity of service learning, links to other types of student engagement, scaling opportunities, and the strengths of varied perspectives, the co-chairs of the Task Force assembled a group of nineteen individuals in late September 2011 (see Appendix 1 for a list of members and affiliations). The goal in assembling students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community professionals was to tap into the richness of expertise about service leaning and student engagement at Penn State.

At the September Task Force meeting, Task Force members hosted the Vice Presidents, who presented the Charge and provided additional topics to ponder as the Task Force set about its work.

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education Perspective

“Students Consulting for Non-profit Organizations [SCNO] don’t want to hand in a term paper that sits in my file cabinet; they want to make a difference in the world. They have proposed and implemented solutions that are real and meaningful. The students in SCNO have moved from volunteerism to problem identification, engaged consultation, and implementation of solutions.” *Augustus Colangelo, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, The Smeal College of Business, and Adviser for SCNO*

At the first meeting—given scope of the charge, logistics in assembling the group, and the agreed-upon timeframe for presenting the Final Report (May 2012)—the Task Force decided to:

* establish a Group Site on ANGEL to provide members with a forum for communication, education, discussion, reporting, managing, and reviewing materials;
* form five sub-committees, each with a charge integral to Final Report construction:
  1. *Definitions sub-committee:* define what service learning and student engagement mean for Penn State;
  2. *Benchmark sub-committee:* benchmark other higher education institutions nationwide;
  3. *Identify sub-committee:* identify what is currently being done well at Penn State;
  4. *Faculty sub-committee*: assess barriers and incentives to faculty participation in service learning;
  5. *Cost and Structure sub-committee:* propose a structure and budget for Final Report recommendations.

*Phase 2: Data Gathering and Analysis*

It is important to stress the iterative nature of the data-gathering and analysis phase. Although the Task Force presents what they did in table format (Appendix 2)—including presentations to and from key players; focus groups with faculty and students; meetings and conversations with community experts, faculty, and administrators; benchmarking other institutions; conversations with peer institutions about structure and cost; and extensive reading and background research—the reality was a cycle of educating, learning, hearing, discussing, and synthesizing. This shared process enabled Task Force members—and consequently the five sub-committees—to come to a deeper, more informed understanding of service learning and its potential to spearhead pedagogical, research, outreach, and endowment synergies to enhance other forms of student engagement at Penn State.

Through the data-gathering and analysis cycle, with informative sub-committee input (Appendices 3–6), we concurrently learned that five dimensions are critical to understanding institutionalization of service learning[[14]](#endnote-14) at Penn State: (1) institutional philosophy about and mission of service learning; (2) faculty support for and involvement in service learning; (3) student support for and involvement in service learning; (4) community participation and partnerships; (5) institutional support for service learning. Appendix 7 provides detail about Penn State’s maturity in each dimension, reinforcing exciting opportunities for a coordinated, sustained service learning–student engagement initiative to contribute to undergraduate student recruitment, retention, and success at Penn State.

Finally, as a result of the data-gathering and analysis cycle, we identified five overarching themes that frame Task Force recommendations:

Campus Faculty Perspective

“Service learning and community-based research can be powerful pedagogies. They are circular, as students apply the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom to a public activity, thus contributing to community needs and enriching student-learning course content. Our work reverberates through the community and back to Penn State Berks.” *Laurie Grobman, Professor of English and Women’s Studies and Director of the Center for Service Learning and Community-Based Research, Penn State Berks*

1. Institutionalization of service learning and student engagement across the University’s structural- and educational delivery systems requires innovative thinking and sustained commitment. A leadership opportunity awaits Penn State—the time to seize the opportunity is now.
2. Few institutions use digital technology to provide service learning and community-engagement experiences for students; yet, “anywhere, anytime learning” through the Internet, cell phones, social networks, and global connectivity make this an innovative, efficient, cost-effective way to up-scale service learning–student engagement experiences. A leadership opportunity awaits Penn State—the time to seize the opportunity is now.
3. Few large institutions provide progressively challenging, rigorously assessed service learning–student engagement experiences for the student majority. A leadership opportunity awaits Penn State—the time to seize the opportunity is now.
4. The Student Engagement Continuum Model (Appendix 8) demonstrates the educational and developmental importance of creating introductory, milestone, and cumulative levels of student engagement, and in making that differentiation evident to students, faculty, administrators, and the broader community. A leadership opportunity awaits Penn State—the time to seize the opportunity is now.
5. A Center for Student Engagement will create multiple pathways to enhance student engagement, secure Penn State as a pioneer in providing engaged learning experiences for students, and deepen Penn State’s commitment to and relationship with communities across Pennsylvania and around the world. A leadership opportunity awaits Penn State—the time to seize the opportunity is now.

**Task Force Recommendations**

The Task Force makes the following recommendations for an alternative University strategy for providing student-centered coordination of service learning opportunities across Penn State:

* Establish a Center for Student Engagement with strong academic and professional links among Undergraduate Education, Outreach, and Student Affairs, reflecting a unique, powerful triad (see Appendix 9 for proposed structure).
* Establish an academic home for the center in Undergraduate Education, reflecting the scholarship of student engagement (see Appendix 9 for proposed structure).

Penn State Parent Perspective

“Our son strengthened his German language skills acquired at Penn State, in an international service-learning project in Berlin, where he helped restore gravestones in a Jewish cemetery. Today, as a history professor directing his university's historic preservation program, he engages his students in service-learning projects in local historic cemeteries. Through the service work of his students, the gravestones are restored and cemeteries preserved for the benefit of the community, while his students, majoring in historic preservation, gain valuable hands-on lessons in restoration techniques.” *Marianne Alexander, Penn State Alumna*

* Hard-line budget the center for five years, with the possibility of extension, reflecting sustained institutional commitment to aligning student engagement with the academic goals, purposes, and structures of the University.
* Recruit a director for the Center for Student Engagement, reflecting Penn State’s dedication to providing undergraduate students with unmatched opportunities for student engagement (see Appendix 10 for director responsibilities).
* Recruit an associate director for Student Engagement/director of Service Learning, reflecting Penn State’s dedication to instituting measureable research, teaching, and institutional protocols and their assessment that highlight the unique contribution of service learning to Penn State (see Appendix 11 for associate director/director of Service Learning responsibilities).
* Appoint one Faculty, one Community, and one Student Affairs Fellow to a prestigious one-year position each. The three Fellows, appointed annually on a rotating basis, will collaborate with Center for Student Engagement staff to develop and promote unmatched engagement experiences for Penn State undergraduate students and to advance institutionalization of service learning and student engagement in ways that contribute to student success (see Appendix 12).
* Recruit a full-time development coordinator to secure a robust portfolio of endowments, reflecting the center’s goal to shift from hardline to philanthropic funding over five years.
* Establish a Student Engagement Advisory Council to ensure that Penn State enriches its reputation as a premier institution for student engagement (see Appendix 13).

Administrative Perspective

“Our alumni will like the idea of students gaining practical work experience involving the mentoring of faculty and other University leaders. An opportunity for ‘real-world’ learning as envisioned by this program should be an important part of what a Penn State education is all about.” *Rodney P. Kirsch, Sr., Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations*

**What a Center for Student Engagement Does for Penn State**

A Center for Student Engagement, supported by the triad of Undergraduate Education, Student Affairs, and Outreach:

creates a coordinating mechanism to empower student success;

highlights service learning’s contribution to graduating informed, engaged, and globally knowledgeable citizens;

enables Penn State’s educational delivery system to pioneer cost-effective engagement opportunities to the majority of Penn State students;

provides educational pathways to foster student educational and personal growth;

ties curricular and co-curricular experiences in rigorously assessed learning opportunities;

harnesses Penn State’s partnerships to deepen community connections across Pennsylvania and around the world.

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In a recent study in Engineering (n=369 students across 4 years, 5 departments), for example, 64 percent documented that service learning had a “positive impact” (with 25 percent reporting “very strong impact”) on the probability of remaining in Engineering, 3.5 percent documented negative impact, the balance neutral. See Duffy, J., Moeller, W., Kazmer, D., Crespo, V., Barrington, L., Barry, C., West, C. (2008). Service learning projects in core undergraduate engineering courses. *International Journal for Service Learning in Engineering*, 3 (2), 18–41.

A study about service learning engagement, academic challenge, and retention demonstrated that, “students evaluating their service learning courses (N = 142) were more likely than students evaluating other courses (N = 171) to report that the courses promoted interpersonal, community, and academic engagement, were academically challenging, and encouraged their continued study at the university (retention). A mediation model showed that the academic challenge of the courses and the students’ engagement with course content were most important in determining the influence of service learning courses on plans to continue study at the university. These effects held, as well, when only students in the first two years of college were considered, and when service learning and non-service learning students enrolled in the same academic courses were compared.” Gallini, S., & Moelly, B. (2003). Service learning engagement, academic challenge and retention. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 10(1), 5–14.

See also Astin, A., & Sax, L. (1998). How undergraduates are affected by service participation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 39(3), 251–263.

2 The following studies, for example, demonstrate learning outcomes associated with “complexity of understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development” p. 4 in Eyler, J., Giles, D. Jr., Stenson, C., & Gray, C. (2001). *At a Glance: What We Know about the Effects of Service learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions and Communities, 1993–2000.* 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University. See also Batchelder, T., & Root, S. (1994). Effects of an Undergraduate Program to Integrate Academic Learning and Service: Cognitive, Prosocial Cognitive, and Identity Outcomes. *Journal of Adolescence,* 17, 341–355; Osborne, R., Hammerich, S., & Hensley, C. (1998). Student Effects of Service learning: Tracking Change across a Semester.” *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning,* 5, 5–13.

In a large national study, “longitudinal data were collected from 22,236 college undergraduates attending a national sample of baccalaureate-granting colleges and universities. These students were followed up during the fall of 1998; most of them had entered college as freshmen in the fall of 1994. Thirty percent of the students participated in course-based community service (service learning) during college, and an additional 46 percent participated in some other form of community service. The remaining 24 percent did not participate in any community service during college. The impact of service learning and community service was assessed on eleven different dependent measures: academic outcomes (three measures), values (two measures), self-efficacy, leadership (three measures), career plans, and plans to participate in further service after college.”

The study found that in well-designed service learning activities, there was “significant positive effects on all eleven outcome measures: academic performance (GPA, writing skills, critical thinking skills), values (commitment to activism and to promoting racial understanding), self-efficacy, leadership (leadership activities, self-rated leadership ability, interpersonal skills), choice of a service career, and plans to participate in service after college. These findings directly replicate a number of recent studies using different samples and methodologies.” Astin, W., Vogelgesang, L., Ikeda, E., Gilmartin, S., & Yee, G. (2000). *How service learning affects students*. Higher Education Research Institute. University of California. Los Angeles.

3 In a review of studies of service learning, Eyler et al., 2001, fifteen demonstrated service-learning’s positive impact on career development. Eyler, J., Giles, D, Jr., Stenson, C., & Gray, C. (2001). *At A Glance: What We Know about the Effects of Service learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions and Communities, 1993–2000.* 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University.

4 In a study by Eyler and Giles (1999), using “pre- and post-problem-solving interviews to gather evidence about student reasoning” authors concluded that “participation in well-integrated and highly reflective service learning courses was a predictor of increased complexity of analysis in both causes and solutions to social problems” (p. 75). Eyler, J., & Giles, G. Jr. (1999). *Where’s the Learning in Service-Learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. See also Astin, A. W., & Sax, L. J. (1998). “How Undergraduates Are Affected by Service Participation.” *Journal of College Student Development,* 39 (3), 251–63.

5 See Eyler, J. S., Giles, D. E. Jr., Stenson, C. M., & Gray, C. J. (2001). *At A Glance: What We Know about the Effects of Service-Learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions, and Communities, 1993–2000.* 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University.

6 It is well documented that student interaction with faculty is a key to increasing college success and persistence. Unfortunately, for most college students, service learning remains optional, not part of student experience. See Astin, A. W. (1993). *What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

7 There is emerging evidence that service learning plays a role in the college success of students of color and underrepresented students; an area ripe for recruitment, retention, and completion research. In June 2010, for example, thirteen institutions of higher education were awarded grants (via Learn and Serve America’s STEM grants) to bring service learning to the STEM disciplines. See for example, efforts at The California State University. http://www.calstate.edu/cce/stem/.

See also Cress, C., Burack, C., Giles, D. Jr., Elkins, J., & Carnes Stevens, M. (2010). *A Promising Connection: Increasing College Access and Success through Civic Engagement.* Boston: Campus Compact; Berson, J., & Younkin, W. (1998). *Doing Well by Doing Good: A Study of the Effects of a Service Learning Experience on Student Success*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Higher Education, Miami, FL, November.

8 See Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

9 Pascarella and Terenzini stated that evidence for service learning’s contribution to civic engagement is “conclusive” (p. 304). Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

See Astin, W., Vogelgesang, L., Ikeda, E., Gilmartin, S., & Yee, G. (2000). *How service learning affects students*. Higher Education Research Institute. University of California. Los Angeles.

Eyler (2010) reviewed and summarized findings of major studies that compared students who engaged in service learning with those that did not. The review found that service learning contributed to a sense of connectedness to the community, social responsibility, political interest and efficacy, intention to engage in community life after graduation, and life skills. Eyler, J. “What International Service Learning Research Can Learn from Research on Service Learning.” In Bringle, R. G., Hatcher, J. A., & Jones, S. G. (eds.), *International* *Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Research* (Vol. 2, pp. 225–242). IUPUI Series on Service Learning Research. Sterling, Va.: Stylus, 2010.

10 See Eyler, J. “What International Service Learning Research Can Learn from Research on Service Learning.” In Bringle, R. G., Hatcher, J. A., and Jones, S. G. (eds.), *International* *Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Research* (Vol. 2, pp. 225–242). IUPUI Series on Service Learning Research. Sterling, Va.: Stylus, 2010

11 See Seider, S., & Butin, D. (2012). Introduction to a Special Issue on “The Future of Community Engagement in Higher Education”. *Journal of College and Character*, 13(1), 1–6; Yates, M., & Youniss, J. (1996). A developmental perspective on community service in adolescence. *Social Development, 5*(1), 85–111.

12 See Finley, A. (2012). *Civic Learning and Democratic Engagements: A review of the literature on civic engagement and post-secondary education*. Paper prepared for the US Department of Education. Contract ED-OPE-10-C-0078.

13 The Task Force envisions co-curricular experiences like volunteering and community service as important pathways for undergraduate students to realize the broader educational benefits of student engagement. Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1999), underscore the potential of student volunteering; for example, finding that:

In the behavioral realm, participating in volunteer service during college is associated with: attending graduate school, earning higher degrees, donating money to one’s alma mater, and participating in volunteer/community service work in the years after college.

In the values realm, volunteering is associated with five values: helping others in difficulty, participating in community-action programs, promoting racial understanding, and developing a meaningful philosophy of life.

The long-term effects of undergraduate service participation are consistent with the rationale underlying many service learning and volunteer programs in academia. Volunteering encourages students to become more socially responsible, more committed to serving their communities, and more committed to education.

See Astin, A., Sax, L., & Avalos, J. (1999). Long-Term Effects of Volunteerism During the Undergraduate Years, *The Review of Higher Education*, 22(2), 187–202.

14 Five dimensions combine synergistically to institutionalization of service learning: Philosophy and Mission of Service Learning; Faculty Support for and Involvement in Service Learning; Student Support for and Involvement in Service Learning; Community Participation and Partnerships; and Institutional Support for Service Learning (Furco, 2002). Each dimension is made up of several components, with each component contributing to the maturity of service learning through a three-stage process: Stage One—Critical Mass Building, Stage Two—Quality Building, and Stage Three—Sustained Institutionalization. Movement from Stage One to Stage Three demonstrates progression toward comprehensive institutionalization. Furco also stresses that “while service learning is not appropriate for every course, service learning can be and has been connected to the work of faculty in every discipline” (2002, p. 10).

See Furco, A. (2002). *Self-assessment rubric for the institutionalization of service learning in higher education.* Berkley, CA: University of California.

Bringle and Hatcher (1996) also note maturation of service learning when an institution “transcends a collection of courses. For example, coordinated course sequences in service learning, service learning is integral to general education, and an entire curriculum organized around service learning reflect increasing levels of programmatic development and maturity. Administratively, evidence that service learning is institutionalized would include having service learning as explicit parts of the institution's mission, long-range plans, institutional assessment, and hardline budget allocations.…[It would also include] recognition and use in personnel decisions (hiring, promotion and tenure, merit reviews).” Bringle, R., & Hatcher, J. (1996). *Implementing service learning in higher education*. Journal of Higher Education, 67(2).

The role of faculty in general, and of a critical mass of faculty in particular, to advancement of service learning at institutions is key (see Abes, Jackson & Jones, 2002). For example, a study of forty-five institutions (Bell, et al, 2000) including two-year institutions, and four-year public and private institutions in the western U.S. found that “the strongest predictor for institutionalizing service learning on college campuses is faculty involvement in and support for service learning….even when institutional rewards and incentives are in place for faculty to participate in service learning, faculty members agree to expend the time and energy to develop high-quality service learning experiences for their students only when they are convinced that engaging in service learning will not be viewed negatively by their peers or the campus administration. This finding was true across all types of institutions.” Quoted from Furco, A. (2001). *Advancing Service Learning at Research Universities*. New Directions for Higher Education, no. 114, Summer, 67–78. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Also see Abes, E., Jackson, J., & Jones, R. (2002). Factors that motivate and deter faculty use of service learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 9(1), 1–15. See also Bell, R., Furco, A., Ammon, M. S., Muller, P., and Sorgen, V. *Institutionalizing Service-Learning in Higher Education: Findings from a Study of the Western Region Campus Compact Consortium*. Berkeley: University of California, 2000.

In addition, the Task Force conducted a faculty focus group and found that many faculty members believe in the powerful potential of service learning and its critical role in teaching, research, and scholarship.As reflected in the literature, faculty members understand the importance of linking student education with community issues. The benefits of service learning highlighted by faculty included: enriching student learning, increasing global awareness and citizenship as well as publishing opportunities; however, several reported that efforts are hindered by lack of logistical support. For example, while a faculty member has departmental approval and student enthusiasm to conduct a service learning course, he/she may lack the ability to transport students off campus, time to coordinate with community leaders, or to seek funding sources. Therefore, while faculty members can develop and implement effective service learning courses, often because of personal sacrifice, the scalability and transferability of these programs is severely stunted without additional logistical support.

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
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