

Partnerships and Pedagogy

Two of our priorities this year are to foster partnerships between faculty and community agencies and to help faculty strengthen their service-learning pedagogy. These two priorities go hand-in-hand. We've been conducting a preliminary survey of service-learning students and select faculty to assess our student learning in service-learning. The results of these surveys support the many studies demonstrating that service-learning courses are most successful when faculty and community partners have dynamic relationships, understand each other's needs, participate as co-educators, and work towards some larger defined goal. Some of the best service-learning courses are "project-based" and designed around specific activities. When students are working at the same agency(ies) and collaborating on the same project, faculty can much more successfully integrate discussion of the service activities into their course.

If you are currently sending students to more than 3 -5 sites, we'd encourage you to meet with us to consider narrowing the number of community sites to which you send students. Better yet, make your "site" a real "partner" and develop a project for your students. Would you allow your students to choose their textbook for the course? If not, you might think twice about allowing them to choose their own agency. Their service-learning experience is, after all, a text that needs to be "read" and interpreted in the context of the class. We realize your time to meet with community partners is limited and want you know know that we're here to help you make those connections and design projects.

Community Engagement Conversations

As many of you know, on Friday, February 8 Amy Driscoll moderated a successful and thought provoking conversation about Community Engagement at CSULA. Thanks to all who attended. And for those of you who weren't able to attend but are interested in participating in future conversations about Community Engagement on our campus, rest assured, there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved. Stay tuned...

SL Page in the Schedule of Classes

The schedule of classes now has a page devoted to service-learning. We believe this will help students learn about and enroll in classes that take them outside of the classroom and give them an opportunity to make a difference in the communities they serve.

Community Engagement Column in University Times

Check out the brief editorial on community engagement in the 1-31 edition of *University Times*:
http://www.calstatela.edu/univ/ut/ut_pdf/ISSUE184.5.pdf

This is the first editorial in what will be a regular *UT* series highlighting community engagement activities at CSULA. In the coming months, we'd love to feature an article about any of the projects or service-learning courses you're involved with. You're all doing important and exciting work, and the students and campus community should know about it.

Comments or Inquiries? Contact Michelle Hawley, Faculty Director of Service-Learning, at mhawley@calstatela.edu or 323-343-4472