2011-2012 Service-Learning Assessment Summary

Definition - At the University of South Carolina, service-learning is a form of active learning that connects meaningful community service with academic coursework and purposeful reflection. The experience yields reciprocal benefits for all participants, a renewed sense of civic connection, and encourages critical thinking and self-examination while upholding the principles embodied in the Carolinian Creed.

Hallmarks of Service-Learning
- Integrative Learning
- Robust Community Service
- Collaborative Development and Management
- Community Responsibility
- Contemplation/Reflection
- Evaluation and Disclosure

By the Numbers: During the 2011-2012 academic year, 47 sections of 33 unique courses were identified as service-learning classes. This is a 13% increase in the number of sections offered from the 2010-2011 academic year. Service-learning classes were featured in 22 different academic departments representing 9 of the University’s 13 colleges and schools. Enrollment in service-learning classes included approximately 873 students in the 2011 fall semester and 985 students in the 2012 spring semester. This is a total of 1,858 students for the academic year, a 33% increase from 2010-2011. Of the 1,858 students enrolled in service-learning courses, 60% were female and 40% male, and in looking at a class representation from this same population, 8% were first-year students, 18% sophomores, 28% juniors, 45% seniors, and 1% were graduate students.

Pre-post Survey – An instrument was adapted from Diaz, Furco, & Yamada, 1999 by the Office of Student Engagement to measure students learning before and after a service-learning course
- In the Spring of 2012 the post survey was administered to 324 students in 10 courses
- The survey has three scales
  - Personal Growth - .95 Cronbach’s alpha
  - Attitudes and Values - .942 Cronbach’s alpha
  - Course Feedback - .935 Cronbach’s alpha

Quantitative Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: Please indicate the amount of growth you experienced as a result of taking THIS class:</th>
<th>Above Average/Great Deal of Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to articulate the contribution of your service experience in this course to your overall learning as a student at USC</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to connect your service-learning experience to specific theories, concepts, or ideas from the course</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to connect, examples, facts, and/or theories from your service-learning course and apply them to another experience, field or study, and/or perspective</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<td>Ability to apply knowledge you’ve learned through your service-learning experience to solve real world problems</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to identify local community needs and resources</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question: Please indicate the amount of growth you experienced as a result of taking THIS class:</td>
<td>Above Average/Great Deal of Growth</td>
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<td>Ability to recognize diverse cultural identities through working with a local non-profit or community-based organization</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to identify <strong>different social and personal values</strong> and the ways in which they are manifested in the local community and individuals</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to apply <strong>career related skills</strong> to make choices and/or address identified local community needs</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to describe and demonstrate principles of responsible citizenship</td>
<td>69%</td>
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**Qualitative Findings**

Describe how participating in the service component of this course has impacted your learning?

- **Active/hands on learning**
  - “Hands on work through service-learning is far more meaningful and educational.”
  - “I was able to use real-world experience and apply theories and learned materials from this class.”

- **Connection to the community**
  - “Reinforced the value of service to your community as being a vital part of your work experience and service is vital to your personal, business, and spiritual growth”

- **Personal awareness**
  - “The service component opened my eyes to see the problems that so many face every day. I have realized how fortunate I am and have learned to take everything more seriously and nothing for granted. It has reinforced my thinking that even one person can make a difference.”

- **Needs of the community**
  - “I learned how it was very beneficial for the community to grow plants and vegetables for the local community and it was good for the environment.”

- **Importance of giving back**
  - “Reinforced the importance of giving back to the community. Small groups of students can make a difference.”

- **Leadership and job related skills**
  - “It provided me with communication skills, presentation skills, and the ability to converse with those different than me.”
  - “My partnership with my non-profit helped me create a portfolio I could give to future employers.”

- **Appreciation of diversity**
  - “The service learning helped me realized the biases I have, especially concerning gender roles and the intelligence of minority students.”

- **Integration of concepts**
  - “This experience provided a concrete example of supporting local agriculture and of how poverty and malnutrition is very much a real issue in my community. I never really thought about people so close to where I live not being able to eat properly.”

Please articulate how participating in this service-learning experience has prepared you for your future.

- “I firstly, now have a portfolio to show to potential employers, especially when the job has public relations involved. I know how to fully conduct research in addition to planning an event. I feel I have a better grasp on how public relations can be used, aside from ways I previously knew, in the workforce.”

- “It has shown me that what to do in my future.”

- “The service-learning experience gave me a more unique experience to learning leadership. I have volunteered before, but it wasn’t to the same extent to this because I did not have a direct goal to accomplish. For this project, we had to make a significant impact and that brought another light to the service performed. The experiences tested my usual “student leader” mentality to situations outside of the University.”

- “The most solid application of skills I’ve had in college. The kind of stress and concerns related to the course are a lot like stress related to career environments. There are no tests and “homework assignments” at work but editing, revising, and communicating ideas is extremely relevant.”