

The Role of Service-Learning in Meeting Institutional Intentions

Institutional Intention	Role of Service-Learning
Improve Town/Gown Relationships	Service-Learning provides an opportunity for the institution to give back to the community by engaging students in activities that directly benefit the community. Because service-learning is tied to the academic curriculum, the service activities directly link the community not just to students, but also to faculty, increasing familiarity and trust.
Realize the Civic Mission of the Institution	In addition to their academic missions, many colleges and universities seek to prepare student to become active and productive members of a civic society. Service-Learning provides the opportunity for students to apply their academic learning to address an authentic social need in the local and broader community and inspire lifelong commitment to service.
Building Learning Communities and Encourage Interaction Among the Disciplines	Many colleges seek to foster collaboration among faculty members and students across departments. Through its focus on complex social issues that require the application of expertise from many disciplines, service-learning can be an authentic academically based vehicle to build learning communities that promote interdisciplinary work and link teaching to research.
Improve Instructions	There is a growing emphasis on the delivery of instruction and ways to improve student learning. As a constructivist and experiential approach to teaching, service-learning helps students to explore more deeply the dimensions of academic content by providing them the opportunity to apply the course content to an authentic community setting.
Fulfill Service and Outreach Mission of the Institution	Along with research and teaching, most institutions also see service as a part of their mission. At some institutions, (e.g., faith-based institutions) the service mission of the institution is especially well supported and emphasized. Service-Learning can provide an academically based approach to fulfill the service mission of the institution and promotes integration of the research, teaching, and service mission of the institution.
Ensure Completion of Programmatic requirements and acquisitions of learning attributes	A growing number of campuses are facilitating capstone experiences for their seniors. These experiences usually engage students in a series of connected courses through which they develop multiple perspectives that students apply to a community-based research project. Service-Learning provides a means to connect the interdisciplinary community-based research project to the series of courses students take.