

Service Learning Institute Review of Evaluation Data (1996-2001)

The Service Learning Institute has developed a number of data gathering and analysis processes that enable it to regularly review various dimensions of program effectiveness. Since Fall 1996, the Service Learning Institute has been able to employ a part-time Program Evaluation Specialist who has assisted the SLI staff in developing and implementing these evaluation tools. While some funds for this position have come from the SLI's general fund budget, the bulk of the funding for this position has been supported by external grants. As a result, the evaluation tools have focused both on general program effectiveness and on evaluating the achievement of specific grant-related goals.

Data on program effectiveness is collected and analyzed through a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods and longitudinal design, including (1) pre- and post-experience self-assessments of students' attitudes related to the core service learning course *SL 200S: Introduction to Service in Multicultural Communities*; (2) student evaluations of the service learning process; (3) community partner evaluations of the service learning process and occasional focus group interviews; (4) faculty evaluations of the service learning process and their experience working with University Service Advocates (USAs); and, (5) USA program evaluations and focus group interviews. Each of these evaluation mechanisms has been implemented semesterly, and has provided vital information to improve program effectiveness and the evaluation process every year.

USER SATISFACTION

Student Satisfaction with their Service Learning Experience

Question	Fall/Spr 1996-97 (N=222)	Fall/Spr 1997-98 (N=270)	Fall/Spr 1998-99 (N=426)	Fall/Spr 1999- 2000 (N=489)	Fall/Spr 2000/01 (N=570)	Total (N=1977)
Would you recommend the site where you had worked to future service learning students? % stating "Yes."	N/A	N/A	94%	94%	94%	94%
Do you plan to continue serving with this community program after completing the course? % stating "Yes."	57%	49%	63%	56%	51%	56%
Would you enroll in another course with a service component beyond the CSUMB requirement? % of students who answered "Yes."	64%	77%	78%	64%	48% (spring only)	67%
As a result of this experience my attitude toward service has become: % stating "more positive."	67%	67%	71%	64%	84%	72%

Community Partner Satisfaction

Question	Fall/Spring 1996-97 1997-98 (N = 66)	Fall/Spring 1998-99 (N=72)	Fall/Spring 1999-2000 (N=66)	Fall/Spring 2000-2001 (n=44)	Total
Percentage rating the overall partnership as "effective" or "very effective"	88%	88%	100%	87%	92%
Would you recommend the service learning partnership to other organizations? % stating "Yes."	98%	98%	100%	91%	97%
Do you plan to continue serving as a placement site? % stating "Yes."	98%	97%	99%	N/A	98%

Faculty Satisfaction

Question	Fall/Spring 1998-99 (N=36)	Fall/Spring 1999-2000 (N=20)	Fal/Spring 2000-2001 (N = 20)	Total
Do you plan to continue teaching this service learning course? % stating "Yes."	100%	75% ¹	90%	91%
Would you encourage other faculty to use service learning pedagogy as an effective method for enhancing student understanding of course content? % stating "Yes."	97%	80%	85%	85%

STUDENT LEARNING GOAL ACHIEVEMENTStudent's Skills in Service and Community Participation

Question	Fall/Spr 1996-97 (N=222)	Fall/Spr 1997-98 (N=270)	Fall/Spr 1998-99 (N=426)	Fall/Spr 1999- 2000 (N = 489)	Fall/Spr 2000-01 (N = 570)	Total (N=1977)
To what extent did your service activities enhance your learning experience? % students who answered "A great deal" or "quite a lot"	89%	91%	93%	91%	78%	88%
I feel more comfortable participating in the community after this class. % Stating "Yes."	85%	94%	93%	94%	88%	91%

¹ The reasons faculty provided for why they were not planning to continue teaching the course were: they were leaving CSUMB, they needed more flexibility in choosing the course readings, they did not have enough students enrolled, or they were going to teach the course the following year.

I feel that the service I did through this class was beneficial to the community. % Agree or Strongly agree	95%	96%	95%	95%	93%	95%
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Students also provided qualitative responses indicating ways that service activities enhanced their understanding of the course content. Their responses can be grouped into four overarching categories:

- Issues, such as “social justice” discussed in class were made “real” in site experience;
- Service provided an opportunity to apply skills and knowledge learned in the classroom;
- Service provided an opportunity to both teach and learn from the community; and,
- Students learned how organizations and agencies serve the community.

Impact of *SL 200S* on Students’ Attitudes.

Pre- and post self-assessments are administered to all students enrolled in the core service learning course, *SL 200S*. Four scales were created from 27 questions, assessing students’ **Civic Responsibility** (the value students place on participating in the community through service), **Career Preparedness** (students’ confidence in a work situation and understanding of job responsibilities in a career of interest), **Academic Relevance** (students’ motivation to enroll in courses that have “real life” applications), and **Service Self-Efficacy** (students’ belief that they have a positive impact on the community and their advocacy working in a multicultural community). The following table summarizes pre- and post-assessment changes, indicating the impact of *SL 200S* over the past 10 semesters on students’ civic participation, career preparedness, academic relevance, and service self-efficacy.

Scale	Pre-to-post change									
	Fall 96	Spr 97	Fall 97	Spr 98	Fall 98	Spr 99	Fall 99	Spr 00	Fall 00	Spr 01
Civic Participation Values	↑	↑	↑	n.c.	↑	n.c.	---	n.c.	↑	↑
Career Preparedness	n.c.	↑	n.c.	n.c.	n.c.	n.c.	---	n.c.	↑	n.c.
Academic Relevance	↑	n.c.	↑	↑	↑	n.c.	---	---	---	---
Service Self-Efficacy*	---	↑	---	↑	↑	↑	---	↑	↑	↑
Number of students completing questionnaire	64	46	60	58	30	22	0	56	33	78

↑ indicates a statistically significant increase in student positive attitudes regarding scale items over the semester.

n.c. indicates no change over the semester

--- indicates that the scale was not administered that semester

*Scale items varied slightly across semesters

COMMUNITY PARTNER GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

Community partner evaluations of the service learning process provide insight into the contributions that service learners make to community organizations. Responses consistently fall into the following four categories:

- ◆ **Increased Person-power**
"We were better able to give individual help especially during busy times."
"We were able to expand our services to reach more people."
- **New Services Provided**
"We were able to begin working with foster care providers."
"We were able to offer a service that would have otherwise been impossible to offer given our lack of adequate funding and resources."
- **Improved Quality of Service**
"We were able to increase the quality of service by making more sources of information readily available."
"They enabled or staff to do their jobs better and more efficiently."
- **New Approaches, Energy, and Enthusiasm.**
"The students brought new approaches and visions of our services."
"We gained knowledge of the collaborative model."

School Partnership Goal Achievement

The most important benefit of the partnership mentioned by teachers and school representatives was that CSUMB students served as great mentors for students in the community. Other benefits teachers and school representatives reported were: individualized attention for students; positive relationships between college student learners and elementary/high school student learners; enabled teachers to work individually with students; and that CSUMB students carried out special projects that school staff alone would not have been able to initiate or complete.

- ◆ "In my class are students who usually 'fall through the cracks' in education. At the beginning only four or five said they would attend college. Now, all say, 'Yes!'"
- ◆ "My students see the service learners as 'cool people' who are going to school. This really strengthens their impact as role models."