ST. CHARLES
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SERVICE-LEARNING & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Service-Learning Handbook

An overview for faculty, staff, students, and community partners

Service-Learning at SCC

Welcome to service-learning! This handbook provides you with information about learning through service and some basic guidelines for working with service-learning student volunteers.

Definitions
Service-learning combines academic studies with community engagement, enhancing student learning through a hands-on service experience while assisting with community projects and service opportunities.

According to the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, "Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities." Through hands-on, experiential education, service-learning classes combine academics with activities which meet a community need.

What is the difference between service-learning and community service?
Community service participants volunteer for the primary or sole purpose of meeting the needs of others and bettering the community. People engaged in high quality service-learning meet the needs of their communities while increasing their academic achievement. Service-learning students also take part in structured time designated to investigate community needs, thoughtfully plan an appropriate project, and complete a guided reflection regarding the relationship between their service experience and their more traditional in-class learning. Overall, the most important feature of an effective service-learning program is that students engage equally with learning and service and reflect on the connections.

Benefits for Community Partners:
- ❖ Develop equitable programming with SCC.
- ❖ Co-educational opportunities.
- ❖ Short-term and long-term volunteers.
- ❖ Potential recruits for agency employment.
- ❖ Expanded network for promoting agency services within the community.

Benefits for Faculty:
- ❖ Provide experiential learning opportunities for students.
- ❖ Take on new pedagogical challenges.
- ❖ Reinvigorate the content of a class.
- ❖ Helpful experience for promotion and professional development.

Benefits for Students:
- ❖ Link academic theory to real-world experience.
- ❖ Develop civic responsibility
- ❖ Learn new skills.
- ❖ Connect with the community.
- ❖ Explore careers.
- ❖ Learn about diversity.

Service-Learning and Volunteer Opportunities at SCC

The below are the opportunities SCC offers each semester. Additional opportunities are announced as available.

Service-Learning Classes and Transcript Designation

Each semester, SCC offers a variety of service-learning classes. Each class will involve different types of service projects, depending on course objectives and content. For a three-credit hour class, fifteen hours of service work is required. Please check with the individual instructor regarding the intended project for a class.

When perusing the online course schedule, students may look up most classes (with the exception of distance-learning and classes which do not take place on the main SCC campus) by selecting "Service-Learning" in the "location" drop-down menu. You may also email Bryonie Carter at bcarter@stchas.edu for a full list of classes.

All service-learning classes are marked with a "S" designation (i.e. ENG 101-01S). This designation specifically marks a class as service-learning and, upon completion, triggers text on a student's transcript that specifically notes it is a service-learning class, effectively acting as a permanent record of a student's participation in service-learning.

Day of Service

Each semester, SCC hosts a Day of Service on campus. SCC students, faculty, and staff are invited to participate. Participants will register for on or off-campus volunteer projects in advance. On the day, participants will come to campus, enjoy breakfast, volunteer at their sites, and then come back to campus for lunch. Most Day of Service opportunities will count for at least three hours of service, which may be used towards various volunteer requirements as deemed appropriate by each instructor or supervisor.

Semester of Service

This is an extracurricular volunteer opportunity available for free to all SCC students. Students will log at least 45 hours of volunteer work within the start and end dates of one semester. Upon acceptance, each student will receive a certificate of recognition, letters of recommendation, and other documents of support. Students may participate in the Semester of Service over the course of multiple semesters and, when appropriate, may count same-semester service-learning class hours toward this project.

Community Partner Expectations

- ❖ Identify service needs and clearly define meaningful associated tasks for student volunteers.
- ❖ Verify that the tasks assigned can be accomplished within the time limits of the agreement.
- ❖ Interview and screen student applicants to verify suitable matches between the needs of the agency and the educational objectives of the student.
- ❖ Help the student connect their service-learning experience with academic and personal objectives.
- ❖ Discuss with the student the Placement Confirmation (part of the Service-Learning Contract).
- ❖ Orient the student to the job, facility, staff, and clients.
- ❖ Provide supervision for the student volunteer.
- ❖ Initial the Service-Learning Activity and Time Log each time the student serves your agency and fill out the Service-learning Supervisor Evaluation Form at the end of the student's service.
- ❖ Discuss with the student and/or contact the student's instructor if any problems or concerns arise regarding the placement.

Faculty Expectations

- ❖ Make time during the first two weeks of class for a service-learning orientation. Bryonie (or another representative) will visit the class, go over service-learning, and collect release waivers.
- ❖ Clearly articulate service-learning objectives and components in the syllabus.
- ❖ Provide guidance to students for placement at a community site.
- ❖ Collect the Service-Learning Contract (blue) BEFORE the student begins serving at the site he/she has chosen.
- ❖ Structure reflection activities several times within the course of the semester which ask the students to connect their service project(s) with the course material.
- ❖ Monitor Student Procedures steps 1-4 and set appropriate deadlines.
- ❖ At the end of the course, have students fill out the Service-Learning Student Evaluation Form (salmon).
- ❖ At the end of the course, fill out the Faculty Service-Learning Evaluation Form (yellow).
- ❖ Work with students and community partners to resolve any issues that may arise.
- ❖ Report any difficulties /concerns to Bryonie Carter.
- ❖ Make sure students properly submit all paperwork.

Student Expectations

- ❖ **Fill out all paperwork.** All students, regardless of whether they perform traditional volunteer work or an in-class project, must sign a liability release.
- ❖ **Be proactive** – if your class project involves your volunteering at an agency or developing your own project, begin thinking about what you would like to do as soon as possible. As well, contact the community partner with whom you are interested in working as soon as possible. Do not wait for the last possible minute, especially if background checks or applications need to be processed.
- ❖ **Follow up** – if you are having difficulties contacting a community partner or securing specifics for your project, follow up and try multiple ways of connecting with others.
- ❖ **Follow through** – Be sure to stick to your schedule and your commitments. As with any job or class, alert your community partner well in advance if you are unable to attend a shift or an event in which you agreed to participate.
- ❖ Remember that when you participate in community projects, you are representing SCC and your class.
- ❖ Treat your experience like any other professional endeavor--behave professionally and dress appropriately for the part.
- ❖ Keep track of deadlines and paperwork and fulfill all expectations for the service-learning project.
- ❖ When you participate in a project or volunteer experience, continually remind yourself of how the experience links back to the work you are doing in class. You will be asked to reflect upon this often.
- ❖ If you have any concerns about your project, let your professor know well in advance. If needed, you and your professor can reach out to Bryonie Carter to resolve any questions.

COVID-19 Note:

Please note that low contact, contactless/remote and virtual projects are encouraged during the pandemic. While some instructors may opt to give students the option of in-person volunteering service projects, a virtual/remote option must be available. Students should feel free to check with potential community partners whom they are interested in serving to see if there are remote, virtual, or no/low-contact volunteer options.

If a student opts to take on a project which involves traditional volunteer work and might require interaction with others, students must follow CDC guidelines regarding washing hands, practicing social distancing, and wearing masks (and gloves, when appropriate), *regardless* of the county, state, or national requirements.

Regardless of which type of project they pursue, all students must sign the COVID-19 Addendum in addition to the regular liability and media release.

Student Procedures for Volunteering

Below are the step-by-step instructions for students choosing to participate in volunteer work as part of a service-learning course. The instructor of the service-learning course is available to help and guide students through the process to enable everyone to have the most successful experience. Students should follow due dates for the below as outlined by their instructor.

Step 1

Select a Service Site: Using the guidelines provided by the instructor, review the list of community agency partners and select a potential service site that meets the instructor's requirements and looks interesting. In the selection process, remember to take into account the location and times of operation to make sure that the agency will fit into your schedule. You must select an agency from the approved St. Charles Community College list.

Step 2

Contact the Agency/Site: Call the agency and discuss with the agency contact the available service options to identify an appropriate service-learning placement. Be sure to tell the agency what course you are taking and the academic requirements of your instructor. If a background check or other screening is required, be sure that you complete the necessary steps with plenty of time for processing. If an agency does not cover the cost of any background or medical checks, and you have financial need, contact Bryonie Carter at bcarter@stchas.edu.

F-1 Visa international students requiring a social security number for a background check should immediately contact Virginia Guneyli (vguneyli@stchas.edu) for assistance.

Step 3

Complete the Contract (blue) with your agency supervisor and obtain the appropriate signatures.

Step 4

Complete the SCC Service-Learner Activity and Time Log (green) each time you serve and the Service-Learning Student Evaluation Form (salmon) at the end of your service.
- Ask Site Supervisor to initial your SCC Service-Learning Activity and Time Log (green) each time you serve.
- Ask Site Supervisor to fill out the Service-Learning Supervisor Evaluation Form (tan) at the end of your service.

Step 5

According to the due dates your instructor outlines, submit a scan or a clear photo of each piece of paperwork to the appropriate link on the Service-Learning Community Canvas page and any other links your instructor provides. If you are participating in a face-to-face class, turn in the hard copy of your paperwork to your instructor, as well.

If concerns/issues arise regarding your placement/experience, report them to your instructor as soon as possible. If concerns are not reported as soon as possible the instructor may not be able to assist you with finding another placement and/or if these problems interfere with your ability to complete service-learning requirements this will impact your grade.

Any questions? Please contact Bryonie Carter at bcarter@stchas.edu
or 636-922-8266

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