

**Sonoma State University
Center for Community Engagement
Strategic Plan: 2008-2013**

I. INTRODUCTION

Strategic Planning Process

In 2007, Sonoma State University (SSU) Center for Community Engagement (CCE) designed and implemented an intentionally inclusive strategic planning process. A diverse Strategic Planning Committee comprised of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community partners (see Appendix A) utilized the World Café Method to work collaboratively on a five year plan for the CCE.

Michelle Edwards and Erica Peng, graduate students in the SSU Organizational Development program, guided the CCE strategic planning meeting. Following this, a draft was prepared using notes from this meeting, feedback from participants, materials that were reviewed in preparation for the meeting, and the 1999 OCBL Strategic Plan. Feedback was gathered from faculty, staff, students and community organizations. The CCE Strategic Action Committee and Provost Eduardo Ochoa officially approved the amended plan on July 27, 2008. The Strategic Action Committee then began work on developing a list of scenarios to focus the work of the CCE for the next five years.

The CCE based our strategic planning process on two previous and on-going SSU strategic planning efforts (one in the Division of Academic Affairs and one through the University Planning Steering Committee), the CCE utilized the structure of those strategic planning processes, including a review of the mission, an analysis of the external environment, a clarification of our culture and values in order to develop a general strategy, with specific strategic initiatives, and specific objectives (2 year and 5 year), as well as assessment measures to determine whether the CCE is meeting those objectives. In preparation for the planning process, the group reviewed:

1. Introduction

- Welcome letter
- SSU Campus Map
- Agenda
- Overview of Strategic Planning
- Introduction to World Café Method

2. National, California and CSU Framework

- Campus Compact mission and vision
- California Campus Compact mission
- California Campus Compact strategic plan
- CSU mission statement
- Access to Excellence
- CSU Office of Community Service Learning draft mission and goals
- CSU Office of Community Service Learning feedback request
- Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification

3. SSU Framework

- SSU mission statement
- University Planning Steering Committee (UPSC) Framework Nine Strategic Areas
- SSU Academic Affairs strategic plan
- Division of Academic Affairs Organizational Chart

4. SSU Office of Community Based Learning (OCBL) and CCE Framework

- OCBL & CCE Timeline of Highlights
- OCBL 1999 Strategic Plan
- CCE mission
- Definition of Service-Learning
- Definitions of Community Based Participatory Research and Community Based Research and Action Research
- University and community input collected at CCE Grand Opening
- CCE Coordinator's position description
- CCE budget

History

In support of SSU's longstanding tradition of involving students and faculty in the local community, the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) provides support to new and existing activities that engage SSU students in active exploration of their community. The CCE works to establish and strengthen partnerships in the community and with faculty members to help them integrate learning pedagogies for the common good into their curricula. This includes service-learning, community-based participatory and action research, public service, civic engagement, problem-based learning, and activism. Additionally, we help non-profit and governmental organizations working on diverse issues such as poverty, education, the environment, the arts, elderly, domestic violence, historical preservation, health, sexual assault, disabilities, and community organizing, access the resources of the University. We assist faculty and staff to connect with leadership positions such as Boards of Directors and committees and support students in connecting with careers for the common good.

The CCE facilitates faculty-student-community connections and their integration into curriculum in order to create active and powerful learning experiences that address community needs. The CCE serves as a resource by providing information, training, and support services to expand community-based learning opportunities. The previously existing OCBL is housed in the CCE and is the primary office for service-learning initiatives at SSU.

Current Context: Expansion from Service-Learning to Community Engagement

SSU's OCBL community engagement roots are largely based in service-learning, with a great deal of past attention to developing and supporting courses with service-learning components. The opportunity and challenge before the CCE is to continue to be forward-thinking in incorporating a broader spectrum of community engagement¹ (sometimes

¹ There are several definitions for community engagement, and we are using a definition from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning – "Community Engagement describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state,

referred to as civic engagement) efforts that advance our purpose as a public institution that serves the public good.

Throughout the nation and within the CSU, the community engagement movement has taken hold and expanded the roles of service-learning offices in higher education. National organizations, such as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), spearhead initiatives that have elevated the importance of community engagement in higher education. Acknowledgment of this reality has led directly to both this strategic planning effort and the renaming of the CCE.

Parallel to this initiative, in September 2006, the CSU launched a wide-ranging strategic planning effort, *Access to Excellence*, which will set the direction of the CSU for the next 10 years. The current *Access to Excellence* draft references dimensions of the public good, and challenges the community engagement field to broaden its reach into political engagement among other goals.² This congruent initiative has provided a significant opportunity for the CCE to leverage closely aligned themes from our work with the CSU's "commitment to educational opportunity and student success and to knowledge development and creative activity to serve the economic and cultural needs of our state."³

Physical/Organizational Location

The CCE is on the first floor of the library in the Schulz Information Center. This location is readily accessible for faculty, students, and community members alike. The CCE currently has a coordinator and three student workers. Appropriate staffing for the CCE should include a full time Director, part time Faculty Fellow, and full time clerical support positions. Future growth plans could include several other staff members such as a community liaison position, other coordinator positions (see scenarios), and a grant writer.

The organizational location of the CCE is critical. As the research suggests, the CCE is housed within the Division of Academic Affairs but maintains strong connections to the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management.

Relationship of the Center to the Mission of SSU

Research indicates that successful community engagement programs build on the tradition and mission of the University. Part of Sonoma State University's mission is to prepare women and men to "have a broad cultural perspective" and develop as "active citizens and leaders in society," "concerned with contributing to the health and well-being of the world at large." The Sonoma State University mission statement reflects the priority placed on engaging students in the creation and development of productive community partnerships.

Development of a Mission Statement for the Center for Community Engagement

national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity." It is important to mention that service-learning continues to play a prominent role in community engagement efforts; however, there is a range of other activities that encompass the definition of community engagement (e.g., voter registration drives, community research, community-centered forums, and sometimes volunteerism, community service and internships).

² Access to Excellence, CSU's draft strategic plan, page 13, goal 2

³ Access to Excellence, CSU's draft strategic plan, page 2

In the development of the mission for the Center for Community Engagement, several factors were identified as central to the mission of the office, including:

- Value placed on collaboration and reciprocity
- Integration of community work into the curriculum to provide learning opportunities that are relevant and impactful
- Supporting community-university partnerships
- Bridging faculty, students and community
- Providing coordination and resource development services
- Providing services across disciplines
- Supporting existing programs/services
- Developing new programs
- Fostering a campus-wide community and building connections
- Responding to community needs
- Creating awareness and enabling the process of developing a civic perspective

Mission Statement

The Center for Community Engagement (CCE) advances community-based programs on the Sonoma State University campus. The CCE supports faculty in developing community-based teaching that integrates academic theory with community service and research that is inclusive of community partners and students to address local problems. By incorporating these projects into the curriculum, we teach students to be active citizens and that the theories taught in the classroom do apply to real-world issues.

Central to the mission of CCE are several goals:

- To integrate service-learning and community-based research into the curriculum;
- To support and promote high quality, reciprocal community-university partnerships that are firmly rooted in the curriculum;
- To foster the development of a civic perspective in education.

Environmental Exploration

This section represents an exploration of the benefits and liabilities of the environment that the CCE functions within.

Internal Benefits -- University

- Contributes to a campus community that is active and engaged
- Increases visibility and vitality of campus–community partnerships
- Provides a means to meet the goals outlined in Access to Excellence, the SSU Strategic Plan, and the Academic Affairs Division Strategic Plan
- Increases the student diversity
- Increases student retention and graduation

Internal Benefits -- Faculty

- Assists faculty with logistical support in creating and maintaining quality service-learning courses and community research experiences
- Provides faculty a way to share with students knowledge that is held outside of the institution
- Provides professional development support and opportunities in the area of community engagement
- Provides support for faculty to be innovative and creative in their teaching

- Provides faculty with research opportunities and presentation and publication outlets
- Provides faculty with support for their RTP process
- Helps faculty connect with their community
- Helps faculty identify the type of experiential learning that fits with the desired learning outcomes
- Provides a means for faculty to exercise control over how the demands for increased community involvement will be met
- Provides a mechanism to connect faculty to research opportunities through the application of theory

Internal Benefits -- Students

- Increases the relevance of education to students
- Increases lasting learning by deepening class work through connecting theory with practice and engagement
- Teaches job skills and prepares students for careers after college
- Facilitates student choice in community engagement activities by providing information about the range of programs/options
- Helps ensure high quality experiential learning opportunities
- Empowers students as learners, teachers, achievers, and leaders
- Invites students to become active members of their own communities
- Provides opportunities for students to work with diverse populations and broaden their perspectives
- Provides values education and builds an ethic of service
- Builds commitment to civic engagement

Internal Benefits -- Community

- Provides a way to share wisdom and knowledge with the University
- Provides a mechanism for the community to develop positive and productive relationships with faculty members and the University
- Provides information about different ways for the community to connect with the University
- Creates vital partnerships between University and surrounding community that addresses community needs
- Receives thousands of hours of service to people in need through community-based learning experiences
- Receives University knowledge, support and prestige

Internal Liabilities -- University

- Stirs up turf issues regarding ownership of the CCE
- Creates the perception of prescription or “top-down” development if presented as a mandate or positioned incorrectly

Internal Liabilities -- Faculty

- Involves too much faculty time given all of their other duties
- Creates resistance among faculty if it is viewed as prescriptive
- Sharing or recognizing alternative sources of knowledge can be threatening to some faculty

Internal Liabilities -- Students

- Creates a negative student impression if students are not well prepared
- Creates a negative student impression if students feel pressured to participate
- Sets a barrier to lifelong service if the experience is a negative one

- Without correct reflective analysis activities, students can have stereotypes confirmed

Internal Liabilities -- Community

- Increases training and supervision demands on community agencies
- Engenders negative results if roles and responsibilities aren't clear
- The semester schedules of higher education can be challenging for community agencies

External Benefits -- University

- Assists the University in meeting its state mission and strategic plans
- Attracts donors to Sonoma State University
- Creates recognition for the University for the work done in the community through positive media attention
- Connects to system-wide initiatives that contribute to increased recognition
- Provides a mechanism to assist the University in meeting the proposed learning requirements

External Benefits -- Community

- Builds civic leadership in future community members through student involvement in community engaged activities
- Creates direct connection between the University and the community that ultimately improves services provided by and to the community

External Liability -- University

- Creates a negative impression of the University in the community and the media if students aren't well prepared
- Creates potential for the University to appear non-representative if the CCE does not meet the expectations created in the community
- Involves risk management issues

External Liability -- Community

- Creates liability for community agencies if students fail to meet requirements

Environmental Analysis

This section provides analysis of the benefits and liabilities of the environment that the CCE functions within.

There is a need to develop expanded teaching and learning opportunities at Sonoma State University. An important factor in understanding the need for the Center for Community Engagement is an appreciation of the important role service-learning can play in the modern University. The integration of knowledge in the real world facilitates “moving from theory to practice, and from practice to theory, which in fact makes theory more authentic.” Service-learning can be used to address large numbers of educational concerns and practices including problem-based learning, collaborative learning, critical thinking, multiculturalism and diversity, civic awareness, leadership skills, and professional and social responsibility.

There is a need for coordination across the campus community outreach efforts to provide community, faculty, and students with one point of access to community-based programs. Sonoma State University has a variety of excellent programs doing extremely valuable work in the community. There is, however, an ongoing need for a mechanism that can provide campus-wide coordination. Additionally, a central support service

provides a contact point for the community as well as a means for developing future possibilities.

This cross-disciplinary support service is ideally positioned to assist a myriad of community activities that already take place as well as develop new partnerships. The CCE is able to approach pressing social issues and engage students in the application of theory and the transformative reflective process of self-discovery. The CCE serves as an informational linkage as well as a partner in the development of community engaged programs that provide experimental learning opportunities while meeting community needs.

There is a need for a coordinated knowledge base of best practices and previous community engagement experiences. In addition to the CCE library, this could include best practice guides for faculty, community partners and students and stronger communication tools.

There is a need for increased resources to engage faculty and students in community engaged learning activities. The CCE works with both faculty and community organizations to assist matching curricular demands with community needs. The CCE serves as a linkage to both intellectual and financial resources for the development and expansion of community engaged programs on campus.

There is a need for an interest in community partners understanding the concepts of service-learning, community service, internships, community research, and other ways they can connect with the University. The CCE works with community organizations to help them understand and connect with appropriate programs and individuals to best meet their needs.

Future Steps in the Planning Process

Summer and Fall 2008: Work begins on developing “scenarios” for implementation.

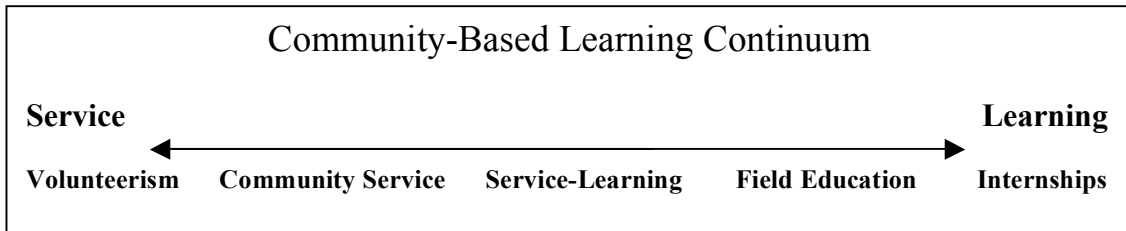
November 2008: Final plan is publicized with scenarios.

II. COMPONENTS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The University engages and collaborates with the community in coursework, research and scholarship.

A. Coursework and other community service programs

There are many courses and programs that engage or collaborate with the community at Sonoma State University. Many of them can be thought of as existing along a continuum that balances service and learning (Furco, 1996). In the center is the balance of both service and learning outcomes.



What follows is an explanation of these broad categories of community-based learning programs. Many campus programs may have characteristics of community-based learning programs. Many campus programs may have characteristics that cross several of these categories. The program types are included here to facilitate discussion.

University Approved Definition of Service-Learning

Service-learning is a pedagogy that utilizes community service projects within the context of an academic course. Academic service-learning distinguishes itself from internships and other credit-bearing community experiences in several ways. First, the service experience is designed in partnership with community to address an expressed and measurable community need. Second, the community experience is a fully integrated component of an academic course. Third, structured reflective analysis activities are utilized to help students understand how their community experiences link with the academic objectives of the course and to inspire a lifetime commitment to community and civic engagement.

Community Service

Community Service activities focus on the service provided but may also consider learning outcomes for students. These programs are often more structured than volunteer programs and tend to be of longer duration. The CCE can support these programs by facilitating their integration into the curriculum and assisting faculty to create powerful reflective analysis opportunities.

Community Involvement Program (CIP)

The community involvement program is designed to facilitate experiential learning and service to the community while assisting students in clarifying career or academic goals. Elective credit is granted from one to four units (30 hours/unit) on a credit/no credit basis. A paper or culminating project is required at the culmination of service. Service hours are certified by the on site supervisor and submitted to a faculty advisor. A total of six CIP units may be applied towards an undergraduate degree. (SSU Community Involvement Program Guidelines, Revised 2/02).

Service Programs (AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve)

Service programs provide students the opportunity to participate in a year of service work during their college experience. These programs are primarily funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service and offer students a living allowance as well as an educational award at the conclusion of their services. All participants in these service programs are AmeriCorps members and all participate in reflective, personal development of course work.

Work Study

All CSUs are required to spend 5% of work-study funding in support of students working in the community. Currently, this goal is met through on-campus service-related (such as through the CCE) positions.

Volunteer Programs

Volunteer programs provide students the opportunity to engage in activities with the primary purpose of benefiting the service recipient. Volunteer programs like community service programs can benefit from the support the CCE by receiving support in linking the activities to course work and creating opportunities for reflective analysis.

Student-Led Activities/JUMP

The service experiences available to students through Join Us Making Progress (JUMP) are strictly voluntary and can be short or long term in the duration. Student-led volunteer activities engage students in the development of leadership skills as well as civic responsibility. Student-led activities can be, but are not necessarily, tied to academic programs. Student-led service activities are vital to a thriving community engagement program.

B. Community Research

In addition to various forms of service, the university engages and collaborates with the community using one of several community research techniques. These may be integrated into coursework in a service-learning course, provide internship or employment opportunities for students, or be an independent faculty project.

Action research can be described as a family of research methodologies that pursue action (or change) and research (or understanding) at the same time.

Community-Based Participatory Research is a “collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community, has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change to improve (health) outcomes and eliminate (health) disparities.”

WK Kellogg Foundation Community Health Scholars Program

Community-based research takes place in community settings and involves community members in the design and implementation of research projects, demonstrates respect for the contributions of success that are made by community partners, as well as respect for the principle of “doing no harm” to the communities involved.

C. Community-Based Scholarship

The CCE works towards strengthening the value of faculty's community engaged scholarship in the retention, tenure and promotion process (RTP) and provides information and resources to assist faculty in leveraging their community-engaged scholarship in their RTP process. Additionally, the CCE supports faculty attendance and participation in conferences and events focused on community engagement. In particular, we assist faculty with identifying presentation and publication opportunities for their community work and encourage research on community engagement in higher education.

III. THE PLAN: MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

This description of CCE activities is a combination of existing responsibilities as well as ideas generated by the strategic planning activities. The CCE has both management and leadership responsibilities. Management activities work in the system to accomplish work effectively and efficiently. Leadership activities work on the system to create a better system. Both are vital to the CCE and of course, some activities fall into both categories (Franklin Covey Co. 2003).

A. Management Activities

Ongoing Data Collection and Database Development

Concurrent with the search for funding, data must be collected on campus regarding academic community engagement activities. The CCE documents faculty and community involvement with community-based activities currently underway and provides a mechanism for stakeholders to have input into the development process. This data collection process also provides an opportunity for education and dialog around community engagement, makes it easier for students to identify service-learning courses, helps connect community partners and faculty, and provides necessary data to the Chancellor's Office.

This data will be entered into a database that documents and helps connect community partners and faculty for continued relationship building. Stories will be collected for public relations and risk management paperwork will be built in to this multi-dimensional non-linear web-like system.

Ongoing Responsibilities

Each year, the CCE provides programs to support community engagement and assist faculty, students and community partners to work better together. These include:

- Faculty training opportunities through on-campus workshops and information and support for off-campus conferences and publishing opportunities
- Collaboration with JUMP and Career Services to provide an annual Service and Internship Fair
- Collaboration with JUMP and Career Services to provide an annual panel discussion on Careers for the Common Good
- Collaboration with Study Abroad to provide an event for students to connect with international service opportunities
- Annual recognition event for faculty, students and community partners
- Opportunities for faculty and community partners to meet and develop relationships
- SSU representation at community meetings and events
- Coordination to procure support and funds for all activities (management and leadership; ongoing, temporary, and future)

B. Leadership Activities

Strategic Action Committee

Similar to the OCBL's advisory board, a committee will be developed consisting of faculty, students, and community members. This committee will serve as the leadership

group in community engagement and focus on the institutionalization of the CCE and community engaged academic work on campus.

Connections throughout Campus

The CCE links with a variety of programs and provides service across disciplines. In particular, the CCE works in collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Professional Development to ensure the resources are available for faculty to engage in academic service-learning and community research. Additionally, the CCE works with various committees as they approach the task of measuring and increasing civic learning goals. The CCE also engages student programs like JUMP to ensure a strong student voice in the integration of community engagement on campus.

Creation of Public Relations Plan

Working with Public Relations, the CCE will cultivate relationships with local media and provide them information on the activities that link the University to the community. The CCE will support both new and existing community programs by telling their stories to the media. Additionally, the CCE will be active on a system-wide, statewide and national level, celebrating the service work done by the Sonoma State University community with service-related as well as higher education focused publications.

Course Development

The CCE serves as a resource to assist faculty with integrating community engaged pedagogies into their curriculum and developing and supporting community partnerships. The service-learning course development component of the CCE is central to its functioning. The CCE provides assistance to faculty in curriculum design to improve the quality of both teaching and learning.

Involving faculty is the key to a successful course development. The CCE serves as a resource to faculty by providing information and guidance to encourage the integration of service-learning across the

Programs of the Center for Community Engagement

- Service-Learning Resources
- Resource Library
- Community Partnership Program
- Community Service Internship
- Community-Based Research Support
- Development/Replication Projects

curriculum. This support service helps faculty in the development of curriculum that integrates service-learning and addresses the ongoing needs of students in community-based positions.

The CCE also acts as an advocate for community engagement on campus and in the community. The Center works with the campus community to promote the inclusion of community engaged activities in the faculty hiring, retention, and tenure process.

Resource Library

The CCE serves as a clearinghouse for community engaged resources. The CCE has a physical library where faculty, students, and the community can come to find information and models to assist them in developing community-based learning programs. The library houses the latest research as well as sample syllabi and effective program models.

In the future, the library may exist as an online resource where information can be accessed electronically and dialog can occur.

Community Partnership Program

The CCE identifies and develops relationships with community organizations towards the goal of supporting collaborative development of community-faculty partnerships. The CCE serves as a linkage between community organizations and faculty to facilitate these strong and productive partnerships.

The CCE works closely with community partners to ensure that they are involved in the development and implementation of projects. The CCE conducts training for community agencies on service-learning pedagogy and provides all community partners with resources for building strong and productive relationships with the University. The CCE also conducts visits and ongoing conversations with community agencies to ensure service experiences are successful and results are documented.

Community partners will be included in the leadership of the Center through the Strategic Action Committee and will participate in workshops, trainings and other events at the University. Faculty are encouraged to create co-teaching opportunities for community partners and actively involve them in the development of curriculum.

Relationships with community partners are cultivated and a database kept of community agencies interested in partnering with the University. The Center provides assistance to those members of the campus community interested in identifying and developing relationships with community partners. These resources are available in the office and will be available online through the CCE website. This resource often gives faculty members the jump-start they need to build community partnerships.

SSU Service Scholars Program

The student led component is necessary for an effective community-based learning program. The CCE will develop a program for linking student leaders interested in service-learning with faculty to work as teaching assistants in support of service-learning and provide a stipend for these positions. In connection with the JUMP office, the CCE will develop a training and student handbook on service-learning. The CCE will also ensure students who participate in service-learning receive a distinction on their transcripts. An annual award event is held where students are recognized for their participation in service-learning programs.

Community Service Internships

At this time, an assessment of the Community Service Internship Program is in the CCE Faculty Fellow position description. Once that assessment is complete, a recommendation may be made to work towards providing suggestions and best practices for successful internships for all involved. One possibility is replicating a project developed at Portland State University. The PSU project has a Coordinator, specifically in charge of internships who meets weekly with the interns and community partners to discuss issues, share insights, and reflect on experiences. The project also includes an assessment tool to measure the impact of these internships on all involved. More information is available at www.pdx.edu.

Community–Based Research Funds

The Center for Community Engagement supports community–based research. We are exploring focusing on one project or issue at a time and continue to support faculty in documenting and publishing community–based research.

Service-Learning Development and Replication

The CCE works with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to ensure the development and future funding of new service-learning and community service programs. The CCE also plans to explore funding to replicate successful community engagement programs nationwide.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the last fifteen years, an educational revolution has occurred that has expanded our traditional notions of where learning takes place. Service-learning, as a primary out-of-class teaching method, is now widely accepted and practiced at SSU as a vehicle to prepare our next generation of leaders to be active, informed, and committed to community issues. Ultimately, it is the nexus between this historic momentum and the limitless potential ahead that serve as the driving force behind the Center for Community Engagement’s commitment to build authentic partnerships between the community and the University in serving the public good.

Appendix A – Strategic Planning Team

We would like to thank the members of the team who generously gave their time and feedback in helping to develop a new strategic plan for the SSU Center for Community Engagement.

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