

## SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is Service-Learning?

College should offer you the opportunity to learn and explore your future in exciting ways. ***Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service opportunities into a student's coursework.*** Students become active participants in the learning process by using what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems. By working with community members, students can enhance their group, organizational and interpersonal skills. They also can gain important experience working with diverse members of their communities. They work with the staff of a partnering community organization and then reflect on their experience through written assignments and class discussions. ***Service-learning may be incorporated successfully into courses from all academic disciplines; it may involve a single student, groups of students, or an entire class.*** Students build character, gain a sense of civic responsibility, and have an opportunity to explore potential careers by working in their community to create service projects.

### What have studies shown about the success of Service-learning?

- Research data show that Service-learning has a significant impact on student retention
- It has been proven that Service-learning enhances the quality and quantity of faculty interaction and promotes positive academic experiences for students in their adjustment to college.
- Studies indicate that Service-learning provides students with opportunities to practice learned skills, encouraging them to engage in out-of-class interactions with faculty, as well as with other students.
- Several research studies report that students who participate in Service-learning courses are more likely to graduate and remain connected to their original academic discipline.

### What are the key components of Service-learning?

One commonly used definition of Service-learning is that it is "a teaching and learning method that upholds a commitment to appreciating the assets and the needs of a community partner while enhancing student learning and academic rigor through the practice of intentional reflective thinking and responsible civic action." The following are four essential characteristics that are clearly reflected in the definition:

- Commitment to community partnership
- Connection of academic coursework to real-world experience
- Intentional, reflective thinking
- Practice of civic responsibility

## How is Service-learning different from volunteerism?

Volunteerism focuses on giving one's time and talent to share concern for the well-being of others. The experience as a volunteer is measured by the number of hours a student serves. The partnering community organization is the intended beneficiary. In contrast, by participating in Service-learning, a student focuses on what he or she can learn while serving and making a difference in the community. The service connects with specific learning objectives shared by the student, faculty, the partnering organization, and community. The benefit to the student and the community is mutual. **EVERYBODY WINS!**

## How is Service-learning different from an internship?

Internship programs engage students in service activities primarily for the purpose of providing students with hands-on experiences that enhance their learning or understanding of issues relevant to a particular area of study. In this case, it is the student who mostly benefits from the experience.

## Are there different options for Service-learning?

### Direct Service-Learning

Involves student engagement directly with the population served by the partnering community organizations. The engagement is performed at the site of service. Examples of direct service include tutoring, reading to the elderly, coaching a youth activity in a low-income area.

### Indirect Service-Learning

Students fulfill a community need identified by a community partner by working on and developing a project or product for a partnering community organization without engagement with the client population. By progressing through the necessary processes to achieve a goal, students have a valuable learning experience. Examples of indirect service may include planning fundraising activities for a community organization, developing a social media strategy for a community action group, designing posters or flyers for a local nonprofit, building low-income housing, cleaning a community park. Another example, students in a Sociology or Mental Health course will develop a program for educating the community about the ramifications of domestic violence. They do not visit the site on a weekly basis but rather work on a project that may be a one-time presentation.

### Research-Based Service-Learning

A type of service that involves collaboration with a community partner to conduct research that addresses community issues or needs. Partners may be nonprofit groups, government agencies or community leaders. Examples of community-based research projects would include testing water reports provided to a local community, auditing energy use in public housing, gathering data for a community grant application, gathering research that assists in the development of a video for a nonprofit or government agency.

### Advocacy-Based Service-Learning

A type of service where students create awareness or educate others on public topics that are of concern to the community partner and/or the greater community. Examples of this type of service would include planning and executing public forums that address community issues, writing and distributing information that illuminates a problem experienced by the community, helping to draft legislation that helps solve a community need, organizing a letter-writing initiative that addresses a social issue.

Service-learning can take place through the course of the semester, as students complete a set number of hours per week. Or, the Service-learning component can be a one-time event, such as a fundraiser or an awareness workshop.

## What does Kingsborough's Service Learning (S-L) Program strive to do?

- Kingsborough's S-L Program places students in community sites related to their coursework in any discipline with the dual goal of enhancing student learning and benefiting the community.
- Provides training, support, and resources to participating faculty, students, and community organizations.

## Why should a student participate in Service-learning?

For students, Service-learning:

- Emphasizes the relevancy of education by bringing academic instruction to life and allowing students to apply concepts from the classroom to their service.
- Enhances learning of values, citizenship, and leadership skills and provides a platform for discussing those qualities.
- Gives students a chance to gain knowledge and expertise from the community and learn about their capacity for serving others.
- Prepares individuals for potential internships and field research.
- Allows exploration of career options and other career-related skills.
- Develops contacts within the community
- Teaches workforce skills.
- Fosters connections with people of diverse cultures and lifestyles.
- Increases a sense of self-efficacy, analytical skills, and social development.
- Provides legitimate workplace experience that can be added to a student's resume.

## What are the benefits for faculty members?

For faculty, Service-learning:

- Enriches and enlivens teaching by offering real life situations that relate to text and concepts being taught in class.
- Offers an alternative means of learning course material, thereby increasing student mastery of core competencies.

- Offers the opportunity for faculty to encourage students to impact social change.
- Provides new areas for research and publication, thus increasing opportunities for professional development.

## How does the partnering community organization benefit?

For partnering community organizations, Service-learning:

- Enhances positive relationships between partnering community organizations and the college, thereby facilitating additional collaborative ventures between the college and the community.
- Develops short- and long-term solutions to pressing community needs.
- Provides opportunities for the partnering community organization to participate in the educational process.
- Enriches roles for supervisors in partnering community organizations.
- Contributes to positive exposure in the community for both the college and the partnering community organization.
- Provides access to college resources (i.e. facilities).

## How does a partnership work?

The Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) organization has set a number of principles for establishing strong partnerships:

- Agreed-upon goals and values on how to progress towards accomplishing those goals
- Mutual trust, respect, authenticity, and commitment
- Intentional working out of identified strengths, addressing areas that need improvement
- A balance of power and a sharing of resources
- Open and accessible communication
- Collaborative processes established through the interaction of all involved
- Feedback for improvement
- Sharing credit for accomplishments
- Commitment to spending the necessary time to develop these elements

## Who provides supervision to students?

- The on-site community agency supervisor provides direct supervision to students and is also the person who signs student timesheets.
- While faculty members can visit the field site, individual faculty members are not required to supervise students at the community site.

## **What are the responsibilities and expectations of the students?**

- 15-24 field hours (1 ½ - 2 hrs. per week over the course of a 12-week semester)
- Being open to learn about the community and the partnering organization within that community
- Being prompt, respectful, and positive at the partnering community organization site
- Fulfilling all agreed upon duties and responsibilities at the partnering organization site
- Arranging hours with partnering community organization
- Complete forms, surveys and reflection as provide in the Service Learning Handbook
- Complete Written assignments as decided by individual instructor
- Reflecting, in writing, on the service-learning experience and how it pertains to the course learning objectives
- Time sheets appropriately completed and submitted to the instructor

## **What are the responsibilities of participating faculty?**

- Assigning written assignment to students (based upon a significant body of research, it is recommended that the S-L written assignment be a type of reflection paper or journal designed by the individual faculty member according to his/her course requirements and goals for students - many resources on developing reflection paper and journal assignments are available through the S-L office)
- Attending 1 orientation meeting prior to the implementing S-L into the individual course
- Attending 2 progress meetings during the semester in which S-L is being offered
- Monitoring project activities of students to assess/discuss needs of students and projects
- Collecting completed student time sheets and handing in time sheets to S-L office at the end of the semester

## What are the responsibilities of the Kingsborough Service-Learning Program?

- Learning and understanding the needs of the partnering community organization
- Training partnering community organizations about the goals/objectives of the program
- Referring students to the partnering organizations for placement
- Monitoring project activities of the organization to assess and/or discuss the needs of students and the project
- Providing appropriate recognition, appreciation, and reassurance to S-L students
- Maintaining ongoing communication and being available to partnering community organization regarding service projects

## What are the responsibilities of the partnering community organization?

- Completing training and necessary agreements with the college
- Providing adequate training for assigned tasks
- Assigning work that is significant and/or challenging to the student
- Ensuring a safe work environment and reasonable hours for the student to perform their service
- Monitoring student work hours and signing student timesheets
- Communicating with college staff and informing them of issues/needs

## What is Co-Curricular Service-Learning?

Co-Curricular Service-Learning is a service opportunity for on-campus clubs/organizations to participate in meaningful service based on the group's mission and skills. Co-curricular Service-learning provides personal development and unity to the group while fulfilling a community need. Members of club and organization at Kingsborough can use their groups' skills to simultaneously carry out a service to the community and enhance the student's knowledge civically, academically, and professionally.

## What is the difference between Co-Curricular and Academic Service-Learning?

Co-curricular Service-learning differs from Academic Service-learning in that it is not connected to a specific course or discipline. This allows students not enrolled in an Academic Service-learning course the opportunity to participate in service activities related to their hobbies and interests outside of the classroom. These programs utilize structured reflection to encourage students to learn more about themselves and their communities while engaging in a meaningful service experience.



## Why participate in Co-curricular Service-learning?

For campus clubs and organizations, service-learning:

- Enhances learning of values and leadership skills and provides a platform for discussion.
- Provides an opportunity to gain knowledge and expertise from community organizations.
- Allows exploration of career options.
- Fosters connections with people of diverse cultures and lifestyles.
- Increased civic responsibility

## What are your responsibilities as a co-curricular Service-learner?

- Be open to learn about the community and the partnering organization.
- Fulfill all agreed upon hours, duties, responsibilities at the partnering organization site.
- Reflect on the service-learning experience and its alignment with your club's mission.
- Be prompt, respectful, and positive at the partnering community organization site.
- Submit all required service-learning forms and written reflections as provided in the Service Learning Handbook.

## Can you tell me about a recent service-learning project at Kingsborough?

Absolutely! Junior Achievement in collaboration with P.S./I.S. 206 partnered with a KCC students to teach students about financial literacy and ways they can earn, spend, save and donate to help the financial growth of their community. The students led interactive activities that allowed the elementary school students understand the value of money and their impact on the local community.

## Okay, I'm interested, what do I have to do?

1. Check out our Current Opportunities
2. Email the Service-Learning Advisor for more details and next steps at [Servicelearning@kbcc.cuny](mailto:Servicelearning@kbcc.cuny).