

Service Learning Planning Committee
Meeting Friday, November 29, 2006

In Attendance: Co-chaired by Jerome Kukor, and Isabel Nazario.
Amy Michael, Kamal Khan, Joana Regulska, Raphael Ortiz, Roland Anglin, Jeff Rubin,
Peter Guarnaccia, Monica Devanas, Monica Mazurek, Becky Sapora-Day, Susan Keith,
Martin Markowitz.

The meeting opened with Isabel Nazario recapping the discussion of the previous meeting and reviewing the seven guiding areas that were established: define language, identify current service activities, set benchmarks, identify best practices for service learning, suggest marketing and development strategies, collaboration across disciplines and assessment strategies.

After IN provided a summary of the previous meeting the committee focused on describing the kinds of experiential learning programs that are currently taking place in schools and departments.

M. Mazurek discussed the need for a mechanism to track their performance and place students in community organizations and local municipalities in New Jersey. She commented that the School of Engineering has a good program called Engineers without Borders, whose faculty advisor is Don Brown. The program was initiated and is run primarily by students. She added that within the Environmental Civil Engineering Program students need more experience and could be placed in public works offices. On another related topic, she expressed concern that within the Co-op programs in her department there is little communication between faculty and students other than the reports the students submit at the end of the semester.

Regarding best practices in Co-op Education **Joanna Rogulska** commented that faculty are under contract with the student and the site to facilitate communication.

M. Mazurek responded since students have different schedules this prevents them from being able to network with one another.

Kamal Khan asked how do we measure student performance? He said with his program the students go to the site as assigned in the course and are required to report their experiences back to the classroom. He finds that the students who participate in this process tend to apply to and most are accepted to medical school.

Peter Guarnaccia commented that (Khan's comments) is about the impact on students, but Phil wants us to discern what constitutes a better impact on communities.

Ralph Ortiz questioned what do we mean by community? He asked is the corporate sector also a community? He commented if students are placed in a corporation are they participating in civic duties?

IN redirected the conversation to remind the committee that we need to develop a mission statement, define community, and engaged pedagogy in order to prepare to make recommendations.

Joanna Rogulska asked in what directions do we want our students to go? She said do we want students to have a sense of responsibility which is embedded in civic responsibility? She added we have students for four years to influence their development.

Peter Guarnaccia responded that service learning in Cook College focuses on meeting the needs of the agricultural community. He said as a land grant institution Cook serves a broad spectrum of constituencies including making agribusiness more profitable to providing nutritional guidance for minorities. Regarding the focus of this committee he said there are four areas that we may focus on, 1) recommend that ALL students have to participate in experiential learning opportunities, 2) or that a subset of students participate in community-based social transformative experiential learning, 3) or individual students participate in Co-op professional development education, 4) or is it a course based experiential learning, similar to CASE ?

M. Mazurek said service learning should include professional development where students work with large or small corporations. She added it should stress economic development or workforce training.

Ralph Ortiz asked are we bypassing civic responsibility?

Becky Sapora-Day said that we will do a disservice if we broadly categorize the type of activities related to experiential learning, since things, such as civic minded service learning and development of professional and career oriented co-op education, all would serve to strengthen the larger (service) mission.

IN asked should we define experiential learning broadly? This committee is not making recommendations for Co-op education, there is another committee charged with this responsibility. Unlike service learning in Co-op education they are salaried and work 40 hours a week as opposed to 40 hours a semester for community service work.

Joanna Rogulska inquired as to what key elements of service learning entail social and civic responsibility in Rutgers and how do we implement this in each of the Schools when each has a different trajectory, even within departments? The common thread is to instill a sense of social responsibility.

M. Mazurek asked how do students get credit for this?

JK noted that we have to reinvent and work out of the box. Departments will be expected to do things differently. There are issues of rigid curriculum and we should agree on working philosophies.

Jeff Rubin asked how do we assess that a student is less discriminatory or has gained a sense of social responsibility? He added this is not what we get from service learning. Is the objective volunteerism?

IN commented that service learning is greater than volunteerism. Volunteerism can be part of experiential, however at Rutgers it is mostly done by student organizations.

Jeff Rubin gave an example. If a student works with the local library to improve funding how does this help the local community solve a problem? He said in other words how is the student gaining social responsibility if they are just helping to write a grant? How is this service learning?

Amy Michael responded if a student is in a grant writing course and their work in the site is to write grants and this task connects theory into practice then it constitutes service learning.

Ralph Ortiz noted that we need to clarify who is being served and how they are being served ?

M. Markowitz said that we need to clarify what we mean by experiential learning? He added that community service is a subset of experiential learning and internships are also a form of experiential learning.

JK said that we have to define all of the above and identify case studies of service learning in each of our area (units).

Ralph Ortiz discussed examples of community service work in the museum field. He shared ideas of how he started a community museum in collaboration with artists and also developed artists' internships with mainstream art institutions. This led to development of community art projects.

JK noted that this is a good model of a structured system that would work.

M. Mazurek asked that the committee refocus the discussion on how the university will support these (service centered) programs? What are we leveraging and what are we designing? She noted that the National Science Foundation is looking for programs that impact communities. She said that as part of the planning process we need to look at fundraising activities and the potential support from the administration, as well as what will be the administrative support structure for service overall.

IN said that we will recommend fundraising mechanisms.

JK said that we need to bring together units that have a similar focus in order to develop fundraising strategies. Therefore, we must create individual task forces.

Jeff Rubin asked will this be department based or School (campus) based. He said that in his department there are 30 faculty and all would not run Co-op education courses in economics. He added that some departments need a lot of help and most faculty will not become involved. He inquired about the current status of the CASE program.

IN responded that currently there are fourteen courses down from seventy five at its highest point ten years. She informed the committee that CASE now reports to her office and she is responsible for reconfiguring the program within the context of the recommendations by this committee.

M. Mazurek commented that the structure of co-op education allows for three credits of equivalent time as a course and is coordinated through career Services with a faculty supervisor but is not a requirement for everyone and it is separate from service learning.

M. Markowitz noted that J&J's credo identifies their stake holders and who they are serving and that we should do the same. He added that the students (through service) are learning outside of the book and classroom structure. So we need to identify who we are serving and how we are serving them.

Joanna Roguslka noted that the principle of service learning is reciprocal both for students and community.

JK said that we were called to testify in Trenton on how Rutgers is engaged in the community and what impact are we making in this area (community service). Unlike Co-op education, our faculty have as part of their scholarship,- active engagement. What are we doing as "public intellectuals"?

Ralph Ortiz commented that our focus is to change the curriculum and how do we design it? He asked what is experiential learning for Rutgers?

Roland Anglin commented that our focus isn't just about curriculum, nor about students, it is about public scholarship and determining the best practices for service learning. He said Rutgers needs to become directly engaged in New Jerseys' communities. He added we need to break ourselves into sub-committees in order to develop the concepts for the final report.

Peter Guarnaccia we need to build coursework that talks about what are the ethical products and the history of the community that students will be working with. He noted that we are involved in engaging the communities of New Jersey to improve the quality of life of the citizens of New Jersey. He added, however this will require a change in faculty focus.

JK said that (service) should not become "component 3 of form 1 A" in engagement when faculty apply for positions in Rutgers. He added some faculty focus on instructional modalities only.

Jeff Rubin said the role of assessment is to recognize how we are transforming and teaching students. He added, what would be the most effective way to assess advocacy? He noted that the potential problem is that advocacy should be impartial and not have a particular (political) orientation. He said for example if a service learning project is to study the effects of a Walmart in a community then the professor's personal prejudice should not color the student's work. He said that this is the right way to pursue service learning.

IN said that it was time to adjourn the meeting at 12:35pm. She informed everyone that she will be sending a list of five subcommittees for everyone to join one committee and will be sending additional information to move into the next stage of the planning process. The next meeting is January 31, 2007.