

Point Series

students as colleagues

Often times educators claim to value student-centered learning, yet the relationships between students and faculty tend to be teacher-centered. Therefore, we need to head in a direction that establishes forums for dialog about student-centered facilitation, practices, and learning (Promoting Student-Centered Learning in Experiential Education by Cheryl Estes). “Putting Students as the Center of Civic Engagement” by Richard Battistoni and Nicholas Longo, argues that administrators and faculty must reframe the way they think and collaborate with their students in community-based work “in order for civic engagement to successfully address second-order changes”. One way this might be done is for students to be a part of this collaborative pedagogy at the beginning steps of course and project design rather than being integrated at a later time in the process (assigned to research and tasks such as data aggregation or teacher assistant).

This research was conducted through a set of guiding questions that served as a foundation to understand best practices and models for implementing intentional practices centered around students as colleagues:

What roles can students possess?

What trainings do students need?

What existing models/structures are there?

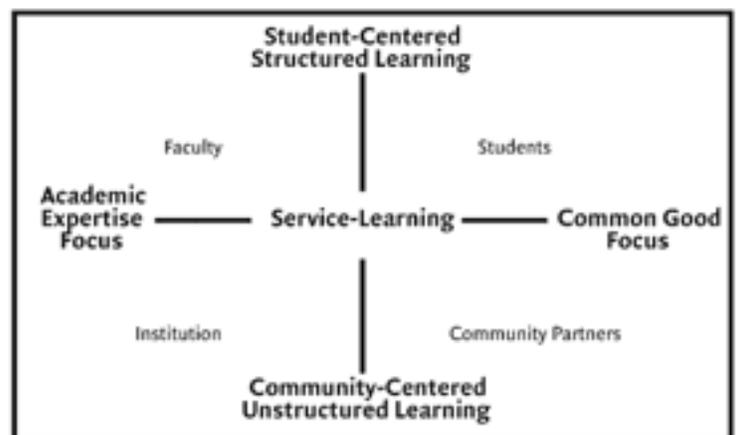
What benefits are provided for faculty/students?

What challenges are faced when making this effort?

These questions were asked to administrators at **Allegheny College, Berea College, Oberlin College, Saint Mary’s College and Siena College** to understand how they executed this practice. Additional research on theory and models from other schools allow for insight and recommendations for all participating High Impact schools to make commitments to viewing students as colleagues.



The Four Quadrants of Service-Learning Program Design



research

students as colleagues

Three types of relationships in which students can serve as colleagues:

in the classroom

Seven principles that can help to improve undergraduate education are identified. Based on research on college teaching and learning, good practice in undergraduate education: (1) encourages contacts between students and faculty; (2) develops reciprocity and cooperation among students; (3) uses active learning techniques; (4) gives prompt feedback; (5) emphasizes time on task; (6) communicates high expectations; and (7) respects diverse talents and ways of learning. Examples of good approaches include: freshman seminars on important topics taught by senior faculty; learning groups of five to seven students who meet regularly during class to solve problems set by the instructor; active learning using structured exercises, discussions, team projects, and peer critiques, as well as internships and independent study; and mastery learning, contract learning, and computer-assisted instruction approaches, which required adequate time on learning.

in project design

A collaborative student led model that placed student teams as researchers and central actors in the planning, organization and implementation of their own community action projects.

The model included: 1) facilitated democratic group decision making and a collaborative process for choosing projects; 2) in class "work days" to support students' independent action and scaffolding the skills they needed to engage community organizations responsibly; 3) regular "theory-to-practice challenges;" 4) written work emphasizing theory connections in community life, including reflection papers, a theory paper, and a final paper integrating course texts and the action project; and 5) comparative case studies for context and empirical grounding in human rights issue areas.

on campus

As faculty members, academic administrators, and student life staff, time is spent on trying to understand students, colleagues, institutions, and the personal self. There are seven principles of good practice when integrating relationships with students: (1) encouraging contacts between students and faculty, (2) developing reciprocity and cooperation among students, (3) using active learning techniques, (4) giving prompt feedback, (5) emphasizing time on task, (6) communicating high expectations, and (7) respecting diverse talents and ways of learning.

school

Allegheny College

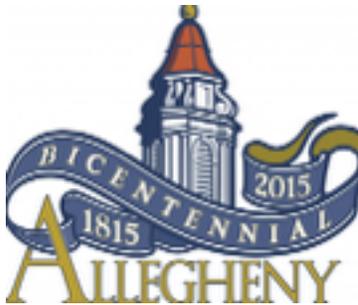
Eleanor Weisman

Assistant Professor, Dance and Movement Studies



What roles can students possess?

Allegheny is in a unique transition that is circumstantial. Students have truly taken the initiative to take on higher leadership roles within the institution. Students worked with faculty members to develop courses centered around service learning theory and practice. The courses were a two semester sequence. Therefore, cohort 2 students would mentor cohort 1 students. Students not only had the opportunity to work alongside faculty members, but community partners as well. These courses were focused on Values Ethics and Social Action (VESA), which was a new major and minor. The product were students who were well verse in pedagogy to help faculty interface with a community project. Students acted as leaders to work collaboratively with faculty. Cohort 1 focuses on grasping knowledge through reading materials while cohort 2 applies what they learned while taking on more leadership. Other roles that students could act as colleagues are with the Gateway project, with regards to the strategic plan on civic engagement, global perspectives, and social justice. According to Eleanor, Allegheny is directing students and faculty to open the door for the community to enter campus activities.



What trainings do students need?

Currently, Allegheny does not have special trainings for ACES students. The training is centered around the ground work where the rising senior works as a mentor/leader to the other students. This model is fixing to change next year though as the cohort course system will no longer take place.

What existing models/structures are there?

Allegheny's structure is typically through their academic work with co-curriculum.

What benefits are provided for faculty/students?

Include a variety of different levels with the institutional design evolving and implementing a strategy for integrating student, faculty, and partner voice. There is a strong heritage of student faculty relationships, where faculty is very open and excited to work with students.

What challenges are faced when making this effort?

When it comes to the old model pertaining to cohort 2, where students act as co-teachers, that model was less excepted and definitely had the potential to be problematic.

Another challenge is that once a faculty member has an idea, they tend to rely on themselves to make it happen. It is difficult to discover best practices and find a balance with their other responsibilities.



school

Berea College

Heather McNew Schill

Assistant Director, Center for Excellence in Learning through Service (CELTS); Coordinator, Bonner Scholars Program

Ashley Cochrane

Director, Center for Excellence in Learning through Service (CELTS); Director, Bonner Scholars Program

Student Leadership Team		
Service-Learning Associate (Academic Service-Learning)	CELTS Student Director (Student-led Community Service Programs)	Bonner Senior Intern (Bonner Scholars Program)

What roles can students possess?

We envision an educational system that successfully combines community service with academic learning to create an environment, which challenges and prepares students to be critical thinkers, reflective learners, and active members of just communities near and far. The Center for Excellence in Learning Through Service (CELTS) educates students for leadership in service and social justice through promotion and coordination of academic service-learning, student-led community service and Bonner Scholars Program. Students work in teams, creating a mentorship where the younger students learn from the older students.



What trainings do students need?

Heather and Ashley wrote a chapter in a book on Deepening Community Engagement, titled “Learning throughout Service: Structures that Promote Student Leadership”. Heather then facilitated several webinars and presentations. She also developed handouts about their coalition model.

Skill Trainings		
Personal Skills	Leadership Skills	Professional Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision making Organization Active listening Planning Budgeting/financial & communication Reflection Time management Goal setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict resolution Delegation Planning Public speaking Building & creating teamwork Understanding civic engagement Understanding public policy Working with diverse groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation/research Event planning Fundraising Grant writing Marketing / public relations Mediation Networking Public education / advocacy Volunteer management

No one can become a team member in a program without first being a volunteer. Therefore, Student Program Coordinators are responsible for the leadership of their specific program. They are responsible for the selection and training of their volunteers. Each student-led program has a Student Coordinator and a team of 2 to 4 students working for them. Student Coordinators are responsible for the orientation, reflection and accountability of their team members and volunteers.



Project Leaders participate in a comprehensive training program which covers all the different areas of project management, including volunteer recruitment, funding, program development, community relations, reflection, etc. Sometimes this training is also offered as an academic course.

school

Berea College



Heather McNew Schill

Assistant Director, Center for Excellence in Learning through Service (CELTS); Coordinator, Bonner Scholars Program

Ashley Cochrane

Director, Center for Excellence in Learning through Service (CELTS); Director, Bonner Scholars Program

What existing models/structures are there?

Clearing House

- Gather all volunteer opportunities available in the community
- Database/filing system
- Volunteers find what they want to do and do all the follow up
- Staff may or may not follow up

Coalition of Projects

1. Umbrella organization of multiple projects
2. Issue or neighborhood focused projects
3. Group coordination of volunteers
4. Cascading leadership structure
5. Coalition-wide support functions for the projects
6. Systematic training of project leaders
7. Systematic exchange of challenges and best practices among projects
8. Systematic quality improvement process
9. New project incubator
10. Office space that's student-oriented, "hang-out" quality



What benefits are provided for faculty/students?

Project Leaders (students) feel the primary responsibility for their project, not their staff supervisor. Often students start as a volunteer, become an assistant project leader, project leader and then serve in some support or leadership role for the overall organization. This structure allows for students to develop skills and experiences to run their projects independently. Student leaders develop skills which they in turn help teach the younger students- both volunteers and team members. The framework is important for developing leaders. It allows freedom within parameters and support from staff and student leaders as you are not re-inventing the wheel.

What challenges are faced when making this effort?

Regular opportunities exist for projects to share successful practices and challenges with each other. This helps to uncover innovative and effective approaches to different issues. Student Coordinators are provided with an opportunity to share both best practices and challenges at a weekly meeting, we call the Core Staff meeting.



school

Oberlin College

Trecia Pottinger

Program Director, Bonner Scholars Program; Assistant Director, Bonner Center for Service and Learning



What roles can students possess?

Oberlin College's High-Impact Intern Gian Parel created a High-Impact Initiative wiki. The wiki draws on resources from the Bonner Foundation to provide an overview of the initiative's goals and identifies the rationale, goals, and objectives of Oberlin College's three high-impact projects. Gian also interviewed faculty members already involved with community-based learning, and his intention was to develop profiles of these faculty members and upload them to the wiki. While he was unable to complete this goal due to other commitments, Melissa Moore, the Bonner Center for Service and Learning (BCSL) faculty outreach coordinator, has built on Gian's work and is moving forward with developing faculty profiles this summer.

Students also serve as teaching assistants for community-based learning courses. In their roles as teaching assistants, they connect students with community partners, facilitate reflections, and plan end-of-semester celebrations. The teaching assistants also participate in a private reading led by Beth Blissman, director of the BCSL, in which they study best practices in community-based learning pedagogy. Other student leaders serve as Bonner Congress Representatives, senior interns, site-leaders, program assistants, and community-service outreach interns.

What trainings do students need?

Student staff typically participate in group trainings once per semester. In order to avoid repetition for returning student staff members, there is often a thematic focus to the trainings. For instance, when the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement published *A Crucible Moment: College Learning & Democracy's Future*, Beth Blissman shared highlights of this report and discussed the current state of the civic engagement field. At these trainings, new student staff members learn how to operate office equipment such as telephones and the copy machine; they also learn about professionalism, the BCSL's procedures, and other expectations.

BCSL staff members conduct entrance and exit interviews with student staff to establish goals, reflect on accomplishments, and discuss ideas for improvements.

Trecia Pottinger has led individual trainings on effective use of the wiki, Google calendar, and Google forms for members of the Bonner Leadership Team. In the future, she would like to lead a training for student staff members on facilitation.

school

Oberlin College

Trecia Pottinger

Program Director, Bonner Scholars Program; Assistant Director, Bonner Center for Service and Learning



What existing models/structures are there?

The BCSL typically follows three models for “Students as Colleagues”:

1. Student leaders who are elected by their peers
2. Bonner Leaders, Bonner Scholars, or work-study students who serve as program assistants
3. Site-leaders who emerge through programs like America Reads or the Ninde Scholars Program



What benefits are provided for faculty/students?

Benefits for Students: Students are able to connect with peers as leaders, build their skills, and develop themselves as young professionals.

Benefits for Faculty Members: Students who serve as teaching assistants help faculty members in managing the additional demands that come with teaching a community-based learning course.

Benefits for Community Partners: Students can support community partner capacity building through their work. One such example is in the area of social media as many students come with social media skills that community partners may not have. Students can also provide connections to faculty members and to other college resources. By working with students, community partners have the opportunity to serve as co-educators, and many value this experience.



Benefits for Staff/Administrators: Student staff members provide valuable input on programming and policies from student perspectives, and this allows the BCSL to serve all students more effectively. Students can assist in building relationships with faculty members interested in community-based learning and in connecting the BCSL with other students. They also support the BCSL’s social media outreach through their work on the center’s wiki, Facebook page, and weekly electronic newsletter.

What challenges are faced when making this effort?

Student staff members support civic engagement in diverse and important ways. However, they balance these responsibilities with commitments to academics as well as athletics and student organizations. At certain times during the semester, it can be especially difficult for students to manage these competing demands, and this can impact ongoing projects. Thus, clear communication from all sides is critical.



school

Saint Mary's College

Sarah Dempsey

Coordinator, Engaged Teaching & Learning



What roles can students possess?

Students have the option of participating in Student Leaders in Community Engagement taking two semesters as juniors and seniors to engage in a combined Independent Study, Cohort Seminar, and Community-Based Project. The students work with faculty and community partners as they do research in the first course and then implement their project in the second course, the following semester, where they write a paper and give a presentation.

Another way “Students as Colleagues” are exemplified on Saint Mary’s campus is through a paid position (10 hours a week) for sophomores, juniors, and seniors. This role was designed to assist faculty to provide the opportunity to create service-learning courses and link these courses with a community partner.

What trainings do students need?

Student Leaders in Community Engagement (SLICE):

The Coordination Committee is a group of mentors selected by the student. A committee will consist of:

1. The Instructor of Record, who ensures academic quality.
2. A representative of the community organization serving as the beneficiary of the student’s project, who acts as a co-educator, sharing their perspective and community knowledge and aiding the student in creating a project that meets community needs.
3. A CILSA staff member, who provides support related to service-learning and community-based research.

The committee will meet a minimum of three times: community-based project conceptualization (early-mid Fall), project proposal and approval (late Fall), final report and presentation (Spring).



school

Saint Mary's College

Sarah Dempsey

Coordinator, Engaged Teaching & Learning

**"Campuses should be viewed by both students and professors not as isolated islands, but as staging grounds for action."
- Ernest Boyer**

What existing models/structures are there?

Faculty have challenges when it comes to being integrated with more campus events.

Student Leaders in Community Engagement (SLICE):

- Student-Driven
- Faculty-Supported
- Community-Based

Engaged Learning Facilitator (ELF):

Their mission is for student leaders at Saint Mary's College to serve with enthusiasm, flexibility, professionalism and integrity, support service-learning and community-based research courses and actively cultivate a culture of service and social justice on campus and in the community with the aim of opening minds to new perspectives and creating personal and social change.

What benefits are provided for faculty/students?

Student Leaders in Community Engagement (SLICE) are able to receive college credit for the independent study courses. Students also gain the skills and knowledge of how to write a thorough research paper and give an impressive presentation. Some papers even get published.

Engaged Learning Facilitator (ELF):

Students develop their professional, leadership, and issue awareness skills.

Overall, the relationship between students, faculty, and community partners is rewarding for everyone. Saint Mary's College has a strong infrastructure, training, and open communication.

What challenges are faced when making this effort?

Challenges mainly evolve with students schedules and the commitment aspect. Students schedules must be open.



school

Siena College

Ruth Kassel

Assistant Director, Academic Community Engagement; Coordinator, Service Learning



What roles can students possess?

Students are able to serve in many roles with faculty, but when it comes to course design work, there is a goal that students are included in the design of the course as well as the implementation of the course. While this may not always work out to be true, when the expectation to be inclusive with students from beginning to end - faculty are able to work best with students.

What trainings do students need?

Before students work with faculty, they typically are trained by Ruth Kassel by using a guide to course design that teaches them how to turn goals to assessment to activities. Once they have experience working with Ruth, they are paired with faculty.



In addition to course design, students are taught how to develop faculty rapport, facilitation skills, and finding ways to design effective workshops outside the classroom.

What existing models/structures are there?

There is a strict one-to-one student-faculty ratio. There are required weekly meetings between the student and faculty where discussions on power dynamics, course strategy, and possible student leverage is discussed. The goal of these meetings is to help make the student an expert in course design as well as course content material.

Student roles are integrated into the ACES Fellow Program, which is purely student designed as well as the Gateway Project and VESA (Values, Ethics, and Social Action)

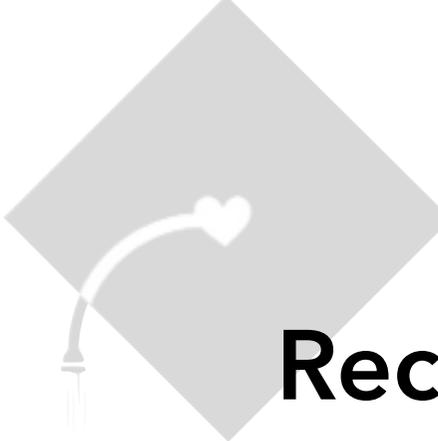
What benefits are provided for faculty/students?

Students gain professionalism skills (learn how to turn goals into assessments and activities, develop faculty rapport, facilitation skills, and design effective workshops). Faculty have successful courses that are co-designed by faculty and students working collaboratively.

What challenges are faced when making this effort?

Faculty have challenges when it comes to being integrated with more campus events.





5

Point Series

students as colleagues

Recommended Steps:



Roles

- Teaching assistants for community engagement courses
- Mentoring fellow students (older mentoring younger)
- Coordinating academic service-learning and student-led community service
- Bonner Scholars Program- Congress Representatives and Senior Interns
- Site Leaders for Community Partners
- Program Assistants
- Community Service outreach interns
- High Impact Intern
- Develop a web-based resource
- Community-Based Project, paper, and presentation



Training

- Leadership levels (volunteer, student program coordinator, project leader)
- Specific program training, orientation, reflection, collaboration, project management, volunteer recruitment, funding, program development, community relations, academic course (requirement), facilitation skills, develop faculty rapport, effective use of wiki, Google calendar, and Google forms, find ways to design effective workshops, operate office equipment (telephones and copy machine), professionalism, expectations, and follow a guide to course design that teaches how to turn goals to assessment to activities before students work with faculty
- Student staff participate in group trainings once per semester
- Thematic focus to the trainings (A Crucible Moment)
- Staff members conduct entrance and exit interviews with student staff to establish goals, reflect on accomplishments, and discuss ideas for improvements

Additional Helpful Resources:

- <http://www.hol.edu/syllabusuploads/Student-Centered%20Learning.pdf>
- http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1997640
- http://www.umb.edu/ofd/community_engagement/cesi
- <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED282491>
- <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=sExEavrOxrQC&oi=fnd&pg=PA45&dq=related:j7McmwbNnLYJ:scholar.google.com/&ots=f1hA-uIuTn&sig=W2bxWq68hZmo-MWr6YYxohQv5Es#v=onepage&q&f=false>



5

Point Series

students as colleagues

Recommended Steps:



Models/Structures

- Academic work with co-curriculum
- Clearing House
- Coalition of Projects
- Students Leaders
- Bonner Leaders
- Site Leaders
- Student Leaders in Community Engagement (SLICE)
- Engaged Learning Facilitator (ELF)
- ACES Fellow Program/ Gateway Project



Benefits

Schools implement strategies to integrate student, faculty, and partner voice as the institutional design is evolving

Students: Students are responsible for their project (not their staff supervisor), structure allows for freedom within parameters, support from staff and other leaders, able to connect with peers as leaders (mentor one another), more awareness to different issue areas, build skills, develop young professionals, receive college credit for independent study courses, and sometimes their work gets published

Faculty: Teaching assistants help faculty (who are open and excited to work with students) manage additional demands with teaching a community-based learning course.

Community Partners: Serve as co-educators (working with students), students can support community partner capacity building through their work and provide connections to faculty members and other college resources.

Staff/Administrators: Student staff members provide valuable input on programming and policies and assist in building relationships with faculty members interested in community-based learning.



Challenges

- Students acting as co-teachers have potential to be problematic
- Faculty struggle balancing responsibilities and integrating themselves in campus events
- At certain times during the semester, students struggle managing competing demands with academics, athletics, and student organizations, which impacts ongoing projects.