



**THE CENTER FOR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT &
CAREER COMPETITIVENESS**

Service-Learning Handbook

Revised: May, 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TOPIC	PAGE
Welcome from Dr. Billy Wooten, CCECC Executive Director	3
Center for Community Engagement and Career Competitiveness	4
An Introduction to Service-Learning	
• What is Service-Learning?	5
• How is service-learning different?	6
• Ten Principles of Good Practice in Service-Learning	6
How to Develop a Service-Learning Course	
• Steps for Developing and Carrying Out a Service-Learning Course	7
• Integrating Service-Learning Into the Course Syllabus	10
• Working with Community Partners	11
• Considerations for Students in a Service-Learning Course	12
• Reflection in Service-Learning	13
Service-Learning Resources Via The CCECC	14
Examples of Service-Learning Courses	14
Service –Learning Plan and Agreement Contract	16
Service-Learning Support Grants & Stipends Application	19
Community Partner’s Evaluation Survey	22
Student’s Evaluation Survey	24

WELCOME TO THE CCECC's SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM

Faculty, Community Partners, and Students:

Thank you for joining us in helping transform the Dan River Region by engaging in deep and meaningful experiences. Our communities are true learning laboratories where all involved are able to put their skills, their knowledge, and their hard work to good use. At The Center for Community Engagement and Career Competitiveness (CCECC), we strive to develop collaborative partnerships between our Averett University, Danville Community College, and Piedmont Community College students and faculty and our 200+ community partner organizations. As we connect students with community partners through service and service-learning opportunities, we work to develop projects and relationships that are mutually beneficial to all involved.

We value the knowledge provided by our community partners, and we see our community partners as co-educators of our students. We also value the time and energy that our community partners and faculty dedicate to working with our students. We hope that our work will be of benefit to all of you, and please know that we are here to help on every step of the journey.

This handbook is designed to provide an overview of our service-learning program, and we hope it will provide you with some ideas and resources to get started in service-learning or to enhance the service-learning work that you are already doing.

Thank you for all you do for our community. We look forward to collaborating with you!

Sincerely,

Dr. Billy Wooten
Executive Director of the CCECC
bwooten@averett.edu
(434) 791-7212

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CAREER COMPETITIVENESS

What is The CCECC

The Center for Community Engagement and Career Competitiveness (CCECC) was established to serve as a hub to catalyze human capital, expertise, partnership, and pooled student engagement with Averett University, Danville Community College, Piedmont Community College, local public schools, businesses, and non-profit partners across the Dan River Region.

The CCECC is unique among the Region's other non-profits serving the community in that we have the ability to access and catalyze approximately 350 traditional students at Averett University, 4,260 students at Danville Community College, and 107 students on the Caswell campus of Piedmont Community College as servant leaders. Each institution has a strong commitment to transforming student lives and bettering our surrounding communities through offering experiential learning opportunities via the CCECC as the hub for all three institutions.

CCECC Mission

The CCECC serves as the catalyst to connect students, staff, and faculty from Averett University, Danville Community College, Piedmont Community College, and local primary and secondary schools to community partners to lead capacity-building transformations in the Dan River Region, centered on three areas of need: economic opportunities, youth and education, and civil and human rights.

CCECC Staff

Dr. Billy Wooten, Executive Director, Averett 101 & Service-Learning
434-791-7212
bwooten@averett.edu

April Love-Loveless, Director of Bonner Leaders Program
434-791-7228
alove@averett.edu

Angie McAdams, Director of Career Competitiveness
434-791-5629
amcadams@averett.edu

Ryan Taube, Coordinator of Career Competitiveness
434-791-5656
rtaube@averett.edu

Tia Yancey, Director of Volunteerism
434-791-7214
tyancey@averett.edu

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning has been described as “learning by doing,” a form of experiential learning in which students participate in an organized activity that meets identified community needs. In service-learning classes, students work in the community on issues that make education relevant and exciting. Course materials such as lectures and readings improve the quality of service, and in turn, the service experience enhances the classroom dialogue, student understanding, and student learning.

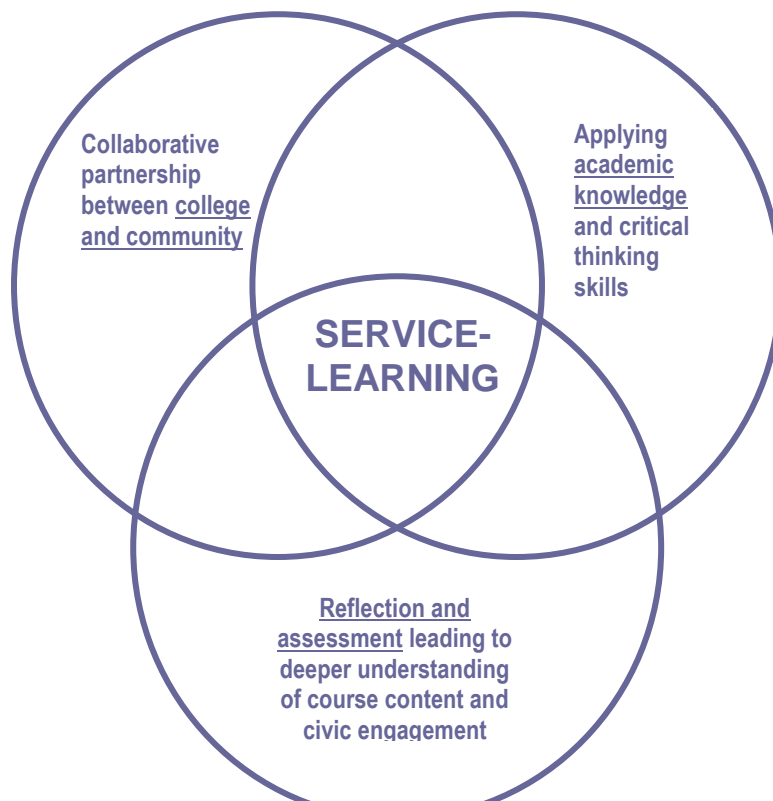
At the CCECC, we use the following definition:

Service-learning is an experiential learning method that goes beyond volunteerism by creating course-based, credit-bearing, educational experiences in which students: a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility.

An experience must include three necessary components to be considered service learning:

1. A collaborative partnership between college and community. The community organization and the college representatives together identify a project or activity that addresses a community need or contributes to the necessary work of the organization.
2. Applying academic knowledge and critical thinking skills. The project or activity is directly related to learning goals that the students are already working to achieve. The project contributes to their understanding and knowledge of academic concepts or skills.
3. Reflection and assessment leading to a deeper understanding of course content and civic engagement. Students participate in a structured reflection or assessment process which facilitates the integration of the service experience and course content.

The diagram below illustrates how these three elements work together to create a service-learning experience:



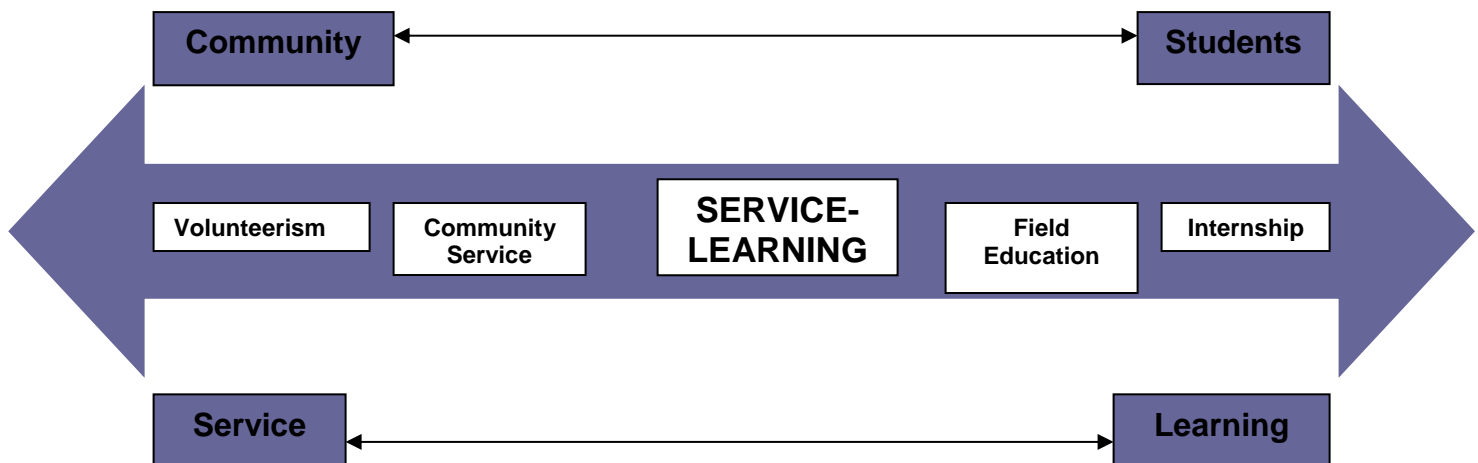
HOW SERVICE-LEARNING IS DIFFERENT

Service-learning is different than other community outreach and academic experiences because it attributes equal weight to both service and learning goals.

Think of community outreach activities on a continuum, as illustrated below. At one end, the focus is on the community as the beneficiary of service. On the other end of the continuum, the focus is on the student as the beneficiary of learning. Service-learning differs from:

- Volunteerism and community service, where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the benefit of the service activities to the community or recipients.
- Internships, which provide higher-level students with opportunities for service where they can apply concepts and skills from their major field of study, as they develop a substantial project that benefits the community, or field experiences, which provide students with co-curricular service-opportunities that are related to, but not fully integrated with their formal academic studies.

Service-learning places equal emphasis on community and student and on service and learning.



TEN PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Research identifies ten principles of good practice concerning academic service-learning pedagogy. These focus on the academic course, the service experience, and new experiences for the faculty member:

The service-learning course should be rigorous and challenging:

1. Academic credit is for learning, not for service.
2. Do not compromise academic rigor.
3. Establish learning objectives.

The service experience should enhance student learning:

4. Establish criteria for the selection of service placements.
5. Provide educationally sound learning strategies to harvest community learning and realize course learning objectives.
6. Prepare students for learning from the community.
7. Minimize the distinction between the students' community learning role classroom learning role.

Teaching a service learning course offers new opportunities for faculty:

8. Rethink the faculty instructional role.
9. Be prepared for variation in, and some loss of control with, student learning outcomes.
10. Maximize the community responsibility orientation of the course.

Howard, J. (2001). Principles of good practice for service-learning pedagogy. In J. Howard (Ed.), *Service-learning course design workbook* (pp.16-19). Ann Arbor, Michigan: OCSL Press.

STEPS FOR FACULTY TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE

This section describes steps involved in developing a service-learning course and provides instructors with information about how the CCECC can support your service-learning work.

Before the service-learning course:

- **Conceptualize the service-learning component of your course.**
 - Think about how service-learning can enhance the goals of your course.
 - What do you want your students to learn from the service-learning experience?
 - How does the service-learning experience help students apply and understand specific course concepts?
 - Meet with Dr. Billy Wooten to brainstorm ideas for service-learning projects and discuss other questions that may arise.
- **Establish a relationship with a community partner.**
 - If you already know a community partner with whom you'd like to work, you can contact her/him directly, but please involve the CCECC's Dr. Billy Wooten in the communication.
 - If you do not already have a community partner, contact the CCECC for help connecting you with a community partner organization.

- **Develop a service-learning project with your community partner.**
 - The project should accomplish two goals:
 - It should help to advance the work of the community partner organization.
 - It should help the students to achieve specific academic learning goals of the course.
 - As you develop the service-learning project, you and your community partner will need to communicate frankly about the needs, goals, and limitations of the organization and about the needs, goals, and limitations related to you (the faculty partner), the students, and the course.
 - With your community partner, negotiate the scope of the service-learning project. In your planning, make sure you cover these topics:
 - Determine length of commitment.
 - Discuss the number of students needed for the project.
 - Identify faculty and community partner liaisons.
 - Discuss type and frequency of communication between you and your community partner.
 - Provide contact information.
 - Discuss expected time commitments for all involved (students, community partner, faculty).
 - Determine important dates. It may be helpful to develop a timeline.
 - Clarify final product(s) to be completed by the students.
 - Discuss the student orientation plan.
 - As the faculty partner, you should provide your community partner with an orientation to the course and course learning goals.
 - Discuss the evaluation process.
 - *Plan to have students present at the fall or spring Engage Showcase.*
 - With the community partner, you must complete and submit the Service-Learning Agreement Contract (see the end of the handbook for an example)
 - Determine whether there will be costs related to the service-learning project, and decide with your community partner who will apply to the CCECC for funding (see the end of the handbook for grant information).
- **Develop your course syllabus.**
 - See the next section, “Integrating Service-Learning into the Course Syllabus,” for details.
 - Make sure you provide your community partner with a copy of the course syllabus.

Beginning the service-learning course:

- **Provide your students with an orientation to service-learning, to the specific service-learning project, and to how service-learning will relate to the course and to specific academic learning goals of the course.**
 - Dr. Billy Wooten is more than happy to visit your class to provide an overview of service-learning for your students. Contact her in advance to arrange a time for her to come to your class.
 - It should be clear to you and your students how the service-learning project will help students achieve specific academic learning goals of the course.

- **The community partner should provide an orientation to the community partner organization for the service-learning students.**
 - The community partner is the expert on the organization and the work of the organization. It will be important for students to have a basic understanding of:
 - The mission and work of the community partner organization.
 - The issues and/or client population with which the organization works.
 - Any behavior, dress, or confidentiality requirements that the organization has for the students.
 - Along with your community partner, make sure each student has a specific task, role or piece of the project.
- **Along with your community partner and the service-learning students, complete a service-learning project agreement contract.**
 - See the back of the handbook for an example. You are welcome to copy and/or modify this example agreement form to fit the specifics of your service-learning project.
 - The goal of the service-learning project agreement contract is to insure that all partners – faculty, community partner and student – are in agreement about the role of each partner, the goals of the project, and the steps that will be taken to reach the goals.
- **Make students aware of transportation options.**
 - Some community partner organizations are within walking distance of campus, but many are not. The CCECC has a van available for transportation, but it must be reserved.

Throughout the Service-Learning Course:

- **Maintain clear and honest communication with the community partner and students.**
 - Check in throughout the duration of the project to make sure that everyone is “on the same page” as the project develops.
 - If problems or challenges arise, address them with the students and community partner so that they can be resolved.

Ending the Service-Learning Course:

- **Provide the community partner and students with a service-learning project evaluation form to complete.**
 - See Appendix for examples.
 - In addition to providing feedback about your specific service-learning project, these forms provide valuable information about the service-learning program in general, as well as with ideas for future service-learning projects.
- **Provide Dr. Billy Wooten with information on your course, including:**
 - A copy of the syllabus
 - The number of students in the course

- Copies of completed evaluations from community partners and students
- Electronic copies of pictures of the service-learning project
- Copies of deliverables from the service-learning project

INTEGRATING SERVICE-LEARNING INTO THE COURSE SYLLABUS

To be truly effective, service-learning must be well-planned and integrated into the course syllabus. The syllabus should define the service-learning assignment, identify the expectations for the students participating in the service-learning assignment, and connect the service-learning assignment to specific course learning goals. Some instructors also distribute a handout to describe the service-learning project in greater detail.

Many resources exist to help you develop your service-learning courses. The following information has been adapted from *The Fundamentals of Service-Learning Course Construction*, by Kerrissa Heffernan.

As you create your service-learning syllabus, consider the following elements.

A. Use course goals and objectives to connect the service-learning assignment to academic learning goals.

The course instructor should introduce the service-learning component and clearly articulate the relevance of service-learning to the course.

- a. What specific course learning goals will service-learning help students attain?
- b. How will service-learning effectively help them attain those outcomes?
- c. What student behaviors will serve as evidence that those outcomes have been achieved?

B. Clearly identify the specific service-learning requirements of the course.

The syllabus should introduce the students to the service-learning project(s) assigned to them, as well as lay out the specifics of the service-learning component.

- a. What are the specific deliverables of the project?
- b. What is the timeline for the semester?
 - When should the service-learning assignment be completed?
 - What are the required training and reflection activities?

C. Provide information about the community partner organization(s).

The syllabus should also introduce students to the community partner organization(s) with which they will be collaborating.

- a. Include a description of the community partner organization(s), along with contact information and relevant information about orientation and training.
- b. Students' responsibilities to the community agency should be mentioned in the syllabus and discussed in class. Their responsibilities will include demonstrating professional behavior, following through on commitments, maintaining communication with all involved in the service-learning project, and dressing appropriately at the site.
- c. There might be specific requirements of the community partner organization (regarding dress, confidentiality, or other issues) that you also want to include in the syllabus.

D. Clearly describe how the service-learning project will be assessed and graded.

This section should include an overview of the grading policy.

- a. Because service-learning is a pedagogy, or teaching tool, students should be evaluated primarily on demonstrated learning outcomes. (Grade the learning, not the service.)
- b. Clearly indicate the portion of the grade that will be based on the graded service-learning project.
- c. An assignment or reflection activity, such as a journal or class report, can provide evidence of learning and of students' on-going ability to connect the service to the course content.
- d. A final product, such as media materials, a research paper, or a community presentation, may also demonstrate students' achievement of learning outcomes.
- e. Evaluations by the community partner may be considered in grading.
- f. The community partner should have at least 10% of the grade input.

E. Include a section on the reflective components of the course.

Service-learning literature concludes that reflection about the experience is the aspect that most influences student learning.

- a. Reflection is the key by which service-learning experiences are transformed into learning. Effective reflection:
 - Integrates the service-learning experience with academic learning goals;
 - Occurs regularly throughout the course;
 - Includes components that can be evaluated according to well-defined criteria;
 - Provides opportunities for both public and private reflection;
 - Fosters a deeper sense of civic engagement.
- b. Reflection can take a variety of forms. Consider these examples:
 - Writing (journals, directed writings, summary reports, essays)
 - Telling (end of semester presentations for your community partner, in-class presentations, class discussions)
 - Multimedia (collages, photo or video essays)
 - Activities (role-playing, interviewing classmates)
- c. It is imperative that you set aside enough time for reflection, to allow for student processing of the service-learning experience. An explanation of the purpose and requirements for reflection should be conveyed clearly and prominently in the syllabus.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Collaborative partnerships are at the heart of successful service-learning experiences. Here are some guidelines to consider as you work to develop a collaborative partnership with your community partner.

All partners are teachers and learners.

A basic assumption of service-learning is that all partners – faculty, students and community partners – are considered teachers and learners. Each partner brings experience, knowledge and expertise to the project. For example, community partners have knowledge and expertise in their fields and in the organizations for which they work and are considered co-educators in the service-learning process.

Clear, honest, on-going communication is essential.

Each service-learning course is different, and the relationship between each faculty partner and community partner is different. For these reasons, clear, honest, and on-going communication is key to the success of a service-learning

partnership. I suggest you designate one student for the class, or one student per team if using a team-based approach, to email and/or call the community partner.

Be aware of differing schedules.

A frequent challenge of service-learning projects is finding a common time when all the partners can meet. Most community partner organizations do not follow the schedule of an academic year. In developing and carrying out the service-learning project, students and faculty should be aware of this and work to make the community partner aware of the unique rhythm of the academic term. For example, it may be helpful to share a copy of the Academic Calendar with your community partner.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN A SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE

As a service-learning student, you will be working with professionals to address real and vital issues in our community. It is assumed that you will approach your service-learning project with professionalism, respect, and sincerity. Below are some guidelines to help you prepare for and engage in your service-learning partnership:

Learn about the community and your partner organization. Seek out useful information about the community, organization, and project on which you will be working. The information you need will vary depending on your particular project, but you may consider learning about:

- The population and/or geographic area being served by your partner organization
- The organization's mission statement
- The names of the organization's staff and their responsibilities and roles within the organization
- A brief history of the organization
- The role that volunteers play in the organization

In service-learning, all partners – faculty, students, and community partners – are considered teachers and learners. Open yourself to learning from the community and the organization with which you are working.

- Be careful that you do not assume that you know how to solve perceived “problems.” Often problems are more complex than they initially appear.
- You may come from a very different community than the one you work with during your project. Be open to seeing things in new way. Seek out other people's viewpoints and ask questions.
- Make an effort to identify community strengths, as well as community needs.
- Work to understand the relevance of your service-learning project to your learning goals or course objectives.

Establish a positive working relationship.

- Discuss the community partner's expectations for you.
- Understand that your community partner has other responsibilities and priorities in addition to the project on which you are working together.
- Remember that your community partner might have limits on the time they can spend on your service-learning project.
- Strive to be non-critical and non-judgmental. Approach challenges and detours in your service-learning project as opportunities to learn and grow.
- Be prepared to learn from your community partner.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- If you have concerns, contact your instructor, your community partner, and/or the CCECC.

Be accountable.

- Keep appointments and commitments that you set with your community partner, and let your community partner know when you are not able to be present.
- Be accountable to other members of your group. Make sure that you are carrying your share of the load.
- Recognize your limits. If you are given something that you think you cannot handle, make sure you discuss the situation with your community partner and your professor.

REFLECTION IN SERVICE-LEARNING

Reflection is one of the critical components of service-learning. So what is it? Simply speaking, reflection is any activity that helps you to connect what you are learning in your academic program and what you are doing in your service-learning project. Reflection can take a variety of forms. Consider these examples:

- Writing (journals, directed writings, summary reports, essays)
- Oral Reflection (end of semester presentations for your community partner, in-class presentations, class discussions)
- Multimedia (posters, brochures, collages, photo or video essays)

Your instructor will probably guide you through reflection activities that have been designed to work well with your particular course and service-learning project. However, reflection is critical to maximizing the learning potential of service-learning experiences. Here are some questions to consider each time you visit your community partner site:

- Describe what you *did*.
- What did you see or *observe* while at your community partner site?
- What *connections* do you find between the experience and your course readings or lectures?
- What new *ideas* or *insights* did you gain?
- What *skills* can you use or strengthen through working with your community partner?
- What will you *apply* from this experience in your future work with your community partner?

An effective reflection activity is the *three-part journal*. These questions can also be used to guide a discussion. After visiting your community partner site, respond to the following questions. Make sure to differentiate between the three different types of responses.

- *Describe the experience.* Make sure to include useful details, and try to leave out personal thoughts, feelings, and judgments.
- *Connect your course readings, lectures, and discussions to the experience.* Discuss your experience in terms of concepts and themes covered in your course.
- *Describe your personal reaction to the experience.* Include your thoughts, feelings, and judgments. Include what you can learn about yourself and your assumptions from what you did and how you reacted. How does the combination of course materials and your work in the community relate to you personally and professionally? How does it affect your understanding of the community and your role in it?

SERVICE LEARNING RESOURCES VIA THE CCECC

In addition to the resources found in this handbook, the CCECC offers other service-learning resources, including:

- **Service-Learning Workshops**
 - The CCECC regularly offers service-learning workshops. Some of the workshops feature national leaders in service-learning, while others feature our own faculty, community partners, staff and students who are experienced in service-learning. All of our service-learning workshops are designed to provide opportunities to share ideas and information, improve communication, and learn more about best practices in service-learning.
- **Service-Learning Support Grants**
 - The CCECC regularly offers support grants to help faculty and community partners cover the extra expenses that sometimes arise during service-learning projects.
- **Service-Learning Transportation**
 - The CCECC has a van available for use by students in service-learning courses. All Averett motorpool regulations apply to use of the CCECC van. Contact Dr. Billy Wooten at least one week in advance to schedule use of the van.
- **Service-Learning Conferences**
 - The CCECC encourages faculty, community partners, and students to consider submitting proposals for conference presentations to share with others about the high-quality service-learning work that we do together. If you have an idea for a service-learning conference presentation, or if you would like to attend a service-learning conference, please contact Dr. Billy Wooten.

EXAMPLE SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS

- Students helped to coordinate and lead a community workshop titled “Running for Office: What about YOU,” designed for community members who are interested in running for a public office.
- Students and professor made three weekend trips to Charlottesville to get to know the community and to provide support during the Virginia Film Festival, running game and food booths. Students also partnered with community members to produce digital stories, documenting aspects of communities in Charlottesville.
- In collaboration with Counseling Services, students worked in small groups to develop and present interactive and informational stations for an annual Body Awareness Fair. Students presented information related to topics of stress management, physical activity, alcohol and drug abuse, and nutrition.
- Students collaborated with local agencies to provide services, including English as a Second Language (ESL) tutoring for children and adults, Spanish classes for English speakers (children),

translation services, mentoring for Spanish-speaking children, and bilingual community reading events for children and families. The goal of these on-going projects is to build bridges between the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking communities.

- Students completed needed tasks, as directed by the community partner contact for each organization. At the Food Bank, students conducted inventory, checked in receivable items, stocked items in storeroom areas at the Food Bank, and completed clerical tasks. At the Clinic, students purchased supplies, planted flowers and cleaned the front exterior, worked in the Receptionist area, word-processed important clinic documents, and completed clerical tasks.
- Students partnering with the local women's shelter worked on three teams: a.) an event planning team which held a community cookout/donation drive for the shelter; b.) a web team which redesigned the shelter's website; c.) a team which remodeled the shelter's basement space into a community clothes closet, complete with shelves, paint and organizational support.
- Students partnering with EPA developed a comprehensive media campaign about mountaintop removal, complete with a brochure, four poster designs, and a documentary.
- In collaboration with local high school staff and students, our college students planned and conducted a mental health awareness fair and educational program called "Healthy Minds."