

## Program Review and Assessment Committee Grant Proposal

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7. **Project Title:** Assessing Civic Learning Outcomes of Service Learning Courses and Community-Based Scholarship Programs
8. **Project Dates:** January 2012 to December 2012
9. Project Checklist:
  - a. A letter of support will be sent by Dr. Robert G. Bringle, Executive Director of the Center for Service and Learning

- b. Budget:

Description	Expense Amount
Wages for 3 work-study students to assist in rating narratives, data analysis, and report production	\$2,200
Conference travel/registration	\$300
TOTAL	\$2,500

- c. IRB approval: IRB approval has already been obtained for the relevant portion of this project. Copies of the approval letter and informed consent form are available upon request.

## **Assessing Civic Learning Outcomes of Service Learning Courses and Community-Based Scholarship Programs**

### **Abstract**

This project will evaluate the civic learning outcomes of students in service learning courses at IUPUI. A second component of the project will evaluate the civic learning outcomes of students involved in community-based scholarship and community work-study programs through the Center for Service and Learning (CSL). The aim of the project is to inform and improve the work of CSL, by identifying student progress areas in different programs, which can then be addressed in future planning. Additionally, project results will inform CSL reports for campus initiatives (e.g., 2012 reaffirmation), faculty and staff development efforts, and faculty documentation for promotion and tenure.

### **Purpose of Project**

This project will add to our understanding of civic learning outcomes among IUPUI students involved in service learning courses and community-based scholarships or community work-study. There are two components of the project; the first component will focus on students in service learning classes. Information collected in this component will help us document student perceptions of their learning and other perceived benefits of service learning classes. By sampling courses across a number of schools and course levels (100, 200, etc.), we hope to gain a picture of the contributions of service learning to student learning at IUPUI.

The focus of the second project component is on student learning outcomes that are specifically civic in nature. We have developed a model, called the Civic-Minded Graduate (CMG), which outlines civic learning outcomes for students in higher education. (See Bringle and Steinberg, 2010; and Steinberg, Hatcher & Bringle, 2011). This project will provide information about the civic learning outcomes for students involved in community-based scholarships and community work-study through

the Center for Service and Learning. In addition the project will help us validate and further refine the model and related instruments.

### **Intended Outcomes**

The analysis of student perceptions of service learning classes will provide insight into how students feel those classes contribute to their growth in relation to both general and civic learning outcomes. In addition, this component of the project will help us evaluate student perceptions about reflection activities in service learning classes; this information can help guide our planning of faculty development workshops around student reflection. Finally, the results will help us inform deans and other campus personnel about the contributions of service learning to student growth.

The results of the second project component will help provide a clearer understanding of how our scholarship and work-study programs contribute to student development in the area of civic learning. Specific domains of interest include: (1) civic identity; (2) understanding of how social issues are addressed in society; (3) active participation in society to address social issues; (4) collaboration with others across difference; and (5) benefit of education to address social issues. Evaluation of data collected from program participants will help inform program planning and improvement for enhanced student learning around civic outcomes.

### **Assessment Methods**

Two main assessment tools will be utilized in this project. For the first component, students in service learning classes will complete an End-of-Course survey (attached) at the end of the fall or spring semester. This instrument asks students to complete a self-assessment of their growth in the course in relation to the Principles of Undergraduate Learning (PULs) or Principles of Graduate Learning (PGLs), as well as a number of civic learning outcomes and other course evaluation items.

In the second project component, students involved in CSL community-based scholarships or community work-study will write narrative reflections based on prompts (attached) developed around

the Civic-Minded Graduate (CMG) model. We will conduct ratings of reflections from the 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 cohorts. Reflections for 2009-10 were gathered by paper copy; 2010-11 and 2011-12 reflections are gathered through an online survey tool and ePortfolios. Reflections will be evaluated using rubrics developed around the same CMG model. (See Steinberg, Hatcher & Bringle, 2011 for a description of the psychometric properties of this instrument.)

### **Data Analysis**

The End-of-Course survey will be analyzed using standard descriptive statistics (means, crosstabs). Results from the PUL section of the survey will be compared to results from the 2011 IUPUI Continuing Student Survey. The PRAC grant will support work-study students, who will analyze the data and produce reports for each course or section separately, as well as for the aggregated data.

The PRAC grant will also support work-study students in rating student reflection narratives around the Civic-Minded Graduate model. Three students will rate each reflection; ratings will be compiled and tallied according to program type (i.e., each scholarship or work-study program) and by reflection prompt. Additional analyses may include comparisons across student level (freshman, sophomore, etc.)

### **Evaluation and Dissemination**

A final written report will be submitted to PRAC at the end of the fall 2012 semester detailing use of the funds and outcomes of the project.

Reports from the service learning course assessments will be shared with the faculty members teaching the courses. Faculty can use these reports to support their credentialing efforts. In addition, the aggregate report will be used to inform CSL reports for campus initiatives (e.g., 2012 reaffirmation), and to provide information to deans and other administrators about the value of service learning pedagogy.

Findings from student narrative ratings will be shared with program coordinators of the community-based scholarship and work-study programs. In addition, we hope to present the findings at the Assessment Institute and the annual conference of the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement.

### **Use of Findings for Program Improvement**

The findings from the service learning course survey will be used to improve the quality of information CSL is able to provide for campus initiatives (e.g., 2012 accreditation, Carnegie Foundation classification in civic engagement). The results may also be useful for campus award nominations around service learning and civic engagement. Faculty will be able to use the findings to improve their service learning courses. In addition, CSL will be able to use the information gleaned from the survey to target and improve faculty development efforts.

Results based on ratings of student reflection narratives will be used for program planning and improvement. Results from one year's assessment can be used to inform program development for the next year to support student learning. For example, program coordinators can use the information to plan discussions, reflection activities, and trainings designed around the civic learning outcomes being assessed. The findings from this assessment project will prove invaluable in developing the strategic plan for enhancing the civic learning of students in CSL programs.

### **References**

- Bringle, R.G., & Steinberg, K.S. (2010). Educating for Informed Community Involvement. American Journal of Community Psychology, 46, 428-441. (Peer-reviewed).
- Steinberg, K.S., Hatcher, J. A., & Bringle, R.G. (2011). Civic-minded graduates: A north star. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 18(1).