COMPONENTS OF SERVICE LEARNING

The following are essential elements of Service Learning and should be considered in course development:

**Reciprocity:** The service and learning must be worthwhile and valuable for both the student and the community. In other words, there must be reciprocity between the server and those served.

**Reflection:** Students should be guided through a process of frequent and varied reflection activities such as journaling, group discussions, reflection papers, and presentations about their community experience and how it resonates with course content in order to promote critical thinking. Such reflection also encourages students to be introspective about other aspects of their lives, thereby promoting meaning before, during, and after the service.

**Development:** Service Learning projects should be recognized as a process, which can move service and enable activities toward empowerment, observation, experience, and leadership.

**Meaningful service:** Service tasks need to be worthwhile, challenging, and a reinforcement of course goals in order to strengthen students' critical thinking.

**Diversity:** A priority is placed on involving a broad cross-section of students working in diverse settings and with a diverse population within the community.

**Sustainability:** For Service Learning projects to truly make a difference, long-term benefits to the community, students, and faculty should be considered with every community-engaged course.

**Asset Building Model of Service Learning:** In its early years, Service Learning sought to aid community partners and community members by ascertaining their needs and working to fulfill those needs. This need-based model of service provides temporary solutions to problems that are potentially societal in their scope. An asset building approach to Service Learning seeks to find ways to assess and then increase the assets of community organizations and their constituents with the goal of seeking long-term and even permanent solutions.
In addition to including these elements, the following practices should be observed:

- Engage students in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.
- Provide structured opportunities for students to reflect critically on their service experience, both verbally and in written form, as individuals and members of teams.
- Articulate clear service and learning goals and responsibilities for everyone involved. From the outset of the project, participants and service recipients alike must have a clear sense of what is to be accomplished, what is to be learned, and how that is to occur.
- Allow for those with needs to define those needs.
- Match students and service needs through a process that recognizes potentially changing circumstances.
- Include or insure training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.
- Insure that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved.
- Make a commitment to program participation by and with diverse populations.

Specific Academic Criteria and Desired Outcomes for Service Learning can be found in the section on Planning and Course Development.