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Message from the Office of Service-Learning

Dear Students,

We are delighted to have you join us on this journey down the path of building a stronger and just society through committed community engagement! Your contribution is important to ensure our sustainable success and growth for the service-learning experience. We hope that you will take advantage of our services and programs we offer to ensure your experience will be a gratifying one. This handbook was developed to act as a tool for you to refer to when needed.

To those of you who are new to the service-learning experience, we extend our warm welcome. Do not hesitate to ask questions, offer suggestions, or address concerns; we want to ensure that we can all come to the table and create a dialogue to find solutions collectively together.

Thank you for your interest in taking part in the service-learning experience at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. The Office of Service-Learning wants to ensure that your experience with us will be a successful one that will be with you long after your time here on campus.

Enthusiastically,

Daniel Fidalgo Tome, M.Ed.
Coordinator of Service-Learning
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What is Service-Learning?

For those of you who don’t know what service-learning is, let us share a brief overview on the different working definitions. Service-learning is a very diverse and versatile term that is used in a variety of ways throughout different programs. The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse defines the term as: “a teaching and learning strategy integrating meaningful service with academic study and reflective practice to enrich learning, build civic engagement, and strengthen communities.”

Sigmon (1996) describes the diversity in service-learning by playing with the graphic presentation of the two concepts that make up the term as seen in this table below:

A Service and Learning Typology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE-LEARNING</th>
<th>Learning goals primary; service outcomes secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE-learning</td>
<td>Service outcomes primary; learning goals secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service-learning</td>
<td>Service and learning goals separate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE-LEARNING</td>
<td>Service and learning goals of equal weight; each enhances the other for all participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Office of Service-Learning follows the goals and outcomes of the bolded SERVICE-LEARNING as it endorses the equal enhancement of both Service and Learning goals for all participants.

Different Types of Service: Direct Action, Indirect Action, and Research/Advocacy

According to Corporation for National and Community Service, service-learning projects can involve direct action, indirect action, or research/advocacy:

- **Direct service**: students respond to a community need by interacting with and impacting the service recipient or site. (ie. working in a local food pantry)
- **Indirect service**: students build infrastructure or capacity to respond to the community need. (ie. working in a warehouse assisting the CEO of a nonprofit)
- **Research/advocacy**: students find, gather and report on information to raise awareness of a problem and/or advocate for change in the condition underlying the community need. (ie. grant writing, research)

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Another visual used to describe service-learning is also the Venn diagram models. Howard (2001) offers the following diagram to represent the elements that comprise service-learning:\(^2\)

Clayton, et al (modified from 2005) similarly uses a set of three Venn Diagrams to define service-learning in terms of the components, learning goals, and partners that it brings together.\(^3\)

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**A. Components of Service-Learning**

- relevant service
- critical reflection
- academic material

**B. Partners in Service-Learning**

- community
- students
- faculty/staff

**C. Learning Goals of Service-Learning**

- personal growth
- academic enhancement
- civic engagement

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Why Should I Want to do Service-Learning?

The benefits of participating in service-learning are more worth wild than some may expect. “Service, combined with learning, adds value to each and transforms both” according to Honnet and Poulsen (1989). Your skills that you develop through service-learning will be with you far after you have finished your course. Here are some key skills which your service-learning experience will help you develop:

- Learning from experience; hands-on experience
- Personal and interpersonal development
- Social problem solving
- Civic innovation and responsibility
- Building personal connections with yourself and others
- Forming relationships with potential employers, recommendations for jobs, experience that you can add to your resume/portfolio
- Learning in a different atmosphere (not just texts and lectures)
- Ideas become clearer when you are putting them to use
- More actively involved; more active in-class participation
- Critical thinking through social/current issues

For more information on how to enhance your service-learning experience, schedule a time to meet with the Office of Service-Learning staff. Remember that this is the time to take opportunities that will continue to enhance your toolkit of skills as an emerging student. Students walk away from their experiences with a stronger approach to problems and issues, “students’ thinking and reasoning become more complex after taking community service-learning courses.”

The Office of Service-Learning works together with students, faculty, and community partners to encourage experiential learning experiences through service-learning, critical thinking activities, promoting change and social justice to create a community all working towards the same purpose.

For additional information refer to: Eyler, Janet and Giles, Jr., Dwight Where’s The Learning In Service-Learning?. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

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Student Standards

As a Stockton student, you should conduct yourself in a manner consistent with the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey Student Handbook, *In Black and White*.

Please review the college’s standards for on- and off-campus behavior in addition to the following suggestions:

**Reliability:** Scheduling commitments must be fully honored.

1. Fully participate for the minimum number of hours committed.
   (1 hour per week per course credit, unless otherwise indicated by the professor)
2. Record your hours on a timesheet.
3. Emergencies that prevent you from meeting your commitment require a phone call to your supervisor.

**Professionalism:** Staff at the community agency will be your guide in developing a professional approach to working with community and addressing their individual needs.

1. Follow the community partners’ policies and procedures. If you have any problems, report them to your supervisor as soon as possible.
2. Dress appropriately at all times! You should abide by the community partners dress policy for professional staff.

**Confidentiality:** In many fields, information about community members or partners is covered by strict rules of confidentiality. Your supervisors know how your service might be affected by obligations of confidentiality, and you may be asked to submit a signed confidentiality agreement. Honor that contract, even if it’s only verbal!

**Sensitivity:** Be concerned about the needs and feelings of the community members in the learning experience. This project is based on the concept of reciprocal learning and respect between you and the community partner.

**Safety:** When you are in the community, be aware of situations and experiences that may affect your own safety. Ask your supervisors to give you instructions and then take the steps to safeguard yourself.

**Service-Related Injuries and Illness:** We release our community partners from any liability for you during the course of your work. Make sure before beginning your assignment that you are covered by independent health insurance or through the student insurance program at Stockton.

**Education:** To ensure the complete holistic experience please refer to Reflection and Dialogue sessions.
Reflection and Dialogue Sessions

Reflection and dialogue sessions serve as companions to the service-learning experience. In order to have the most impact and meaningful experience, reflections and open dialogues are necessary to open the lines of communication. Speaking about experiences with others helps with comprehension and absorption of the experiences being discussed.

**Reflection Sessions**

Reflection sessions are to serve as a bridge to connect the service-learning project and the class in which the project is completed. Without this important connection, the goal of SERVICE-LEARNING is not accomplished, as both the service completed in the community and the materials learned in the classroom play equally important roles to the student’s development.

Each service-learning student, in accordance with the student standards, is to attend three reflection sessions throughout the course of the semester. Preferably, students should attend a reflection session each month (one in the beginning of the project, one in the middle, and one at the end). Reflection sessions last for an hour and fifteen minutes, so please arrive on time and be prepared to stay for the duration of the session. Students are to sign up for reflection sessions prior to arrival to ensure their place in the session. Dates and times for reflection sessions are available online.

Open doors and open minds!

**Dialogue Sessions**

“What is the For the Greater Good Dialogue Series?” you may ask… For the Greater Good Dialogue Series is a collection of dialogue sessions which engage students, faculty, staff, and members of the community in discussions of issues which affect both Stockton and the surrounding communities. Enrich your mind and life with enlightening dialogue sessions that illuminate issues which impact our lives!

For the Greater Good Dialogue Series is open to all Stockton students, faculty, staff, and the greater south Jersey community. Topics range from education, to immigration, to charity and service work. Refreshments will be available and bring a friend! Each service-learning student, in accordance with the student standards, is to attend at least two sessions sponsored by the Office of Service-Learning, which may include dialogues, throughout the semester. Each dialogue session lasts an hour and fifteen minutes, so invite all to enjoy the invigorating conversations and interesting topics. The schedule of sessions is available online.
Communicating with Your Site

Communication is crucial to building any type of relationship. We strongly encourage students to review these tips for a successful semester...

- **Be enthusiastic about the partnership.** The community agency staff and community members should know you want to be there.

- **Remember that the job is your responsibility.** If you missed the pre-service orientation, it is your job to reach out to the appropriate staff member and introduce yourself.

- **Be as flexible with your schedule as possible.** Our partner organizations are usually willing to work with your existing class and work schedules, but you must also be willing to work with them.

- **Always communicate respect.** Respect is shown through a professional appearance, a willingness to listen and learn from supervisors, and the ability to think carefully before you speak.

- **Let your supervisors know if you will be late or absent.** You **must** communicate with your on-site supervisors whenever you expect to be late or absent. **It is not appropriate to send an email – call the community partner and leave a message if you can’t reach anyone.** Additionally, let the Office of Service-Learning know if you are unable to be there at any time so we can attempt to get a substitute.

- **Communicate problems early.** If you run into an issue, it’s imperative you let your on-site supervisor know so that the problem can be addressed before it escalates. If you have consistent and/or major problems, let either the Office of Service Learning or your professor know.
Moving Towards Cultural Competence

A brief introduction to cultural competence…

- **Cultural diversity** is a recognition that people of various cultures exist.
- **Cultural competence** refers to your ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures.
- When we discuss **culture**, we are not only referring to people from different ethnic or racial backgrounds. We might also be talking about people of different ages, socioeconomic conditions, abilities, sexual orientations, languages, religions, etc.
- Being truly culturally competent requires that you:
  - **Value diversity.** Recognize the contributions that people with diverse backgrounds (including you) have made and continue to make in society.
  - **Conduct self-assessment.** Be honest with yourself about how you feel and be willing to critically examine the roots and implications of your thinking.
  - **Manage the dynamics of difference.** Learn how culture impacts the environment in which you are serving and understand the ways that diversity presents itself, the unique needs of different cultures, and individuals’ inherent right to dignity.
  - **Acquire cultural knowledge.** Take advantage of your environment and learn about other cultures by asking questions. Also, share your own cultural knowledge with others.
  - **Adapt to the diversity and cultural contexts of individuals and communities.** Think about your social role and how it fits into the community in which you’re serving. Be flexible and willing to experience life through someone else’s eyes.

So, how do we get there?

- Recognize that childhood, family, and personal experiences can color our perceptions.
- Recognize that our cultural biases and prejudices travel with us out into the community.
- Know that our internal thoughts can unconsciously be reflected in our body language and our words.
- Gain cultural knowledge by reading literature, taking diversity courses, attending cultural fairs and events, and interacting with diverse people.
- Meet people at where they are at. Try to understand his/her priorities or needs. Identify strengths.
- Suspend personal judgments about people with whom you are working.
- Be sensitive to cultural norms that may be displayed through community members’ behaviors towards you.
- Understand that your job as a service-learning student is not to provide **charity care**, but to work **with** the community to help alleviate the immediate impacts of larger social issues.

**The Office of Service-Learning offers reflection and dialogue sessions** to help aid students toward **cultural competency**.

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6 Adapted from the National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child & Human Development, [http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/ncce/](http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/ncce/)
**Appropriate Attire**

Although we continue to emphasize professional behavior and appearance to students, they are not always clear about what they should and should not wear to a site. These guidelines are intended to be as specific as possible without unjustifiably limiting students’ freedom of expression.

**Students SHOULD NOT wear:**

- Revealing clothing, including:
  - Short or tight skirts or shorts
  - Excessively tight pants
  - Low- or high-cut tops
  - Sheer or netted clothing
  - Halter, tube, or tank tops with spaghetti straps
  - Pants that drop below the hips
- Flip-flops
- Torn or ripped clothing
- Unprofessional attire, including pajamas or sweatpants
- Shirts displaying vulgar or inappropriate phrases or images
- *Students serving in a school district should review the school district’s dress code or policy and present themselves accordingly.*

**Students SHOULD wear:**

- Casual clothing, including jeans and t-shirts
- Sneakers, boots, or dress shoes
  - Shoes with rubber soles are highly recommended for safety reasons.

Some sites may also have policies regarding facial piercing and visible tattoos. Although the S-L Office has no specific policies regarding body art, students should always be sensitive to their sites’ policies regarding both appearance and behavior. **When in doubt about an organization’s specific dress code or policy, students should feel free to ask either their agency contact or the Office of Service-Learning for details.**
Grievance & Incident Reporting

Though grievances and incidents are rare within the Service-Learning experience, they do occasionally happen. For instances in which students, faculty, or community partners have **serious** complaints or would like to report an incident, we have established a formal procedure for documenting them and responding appropriately. **Note:** It is best to email the appropriate information to the Office of Service-Learning so that a written record can be maintained.

**To report a grievance, please contact the Office of Service-Learning immediately with the following information:**

- Reporter’s name & title (community partner, student, or faculty member)
- Organization (if community partner) or class (if student)
- Contact information, including email address & daytime phone number
- Clear and brief explanation of the problem
- Brief explanation of the desired resolution

**To report an incident (a specific event that should be documented for the safety of one or more involved parties), contact the Office of Service-Learning as soon after the incident as possible with the following information:**

- Name & title (community partner, student, or faculty member)
- Organization (if community partner) or class (if student)
- Contact information, including email address & daytime phone number
- Names & contact information (if available) of all others involved in the incident
- Day, time, & exact location of incident
- Detailed description of the incident, including perceived immediate or long-term consequences
- Brief explanation of the desired resolution

In the case of either a grievance or an incident report, the Office of Service-Learning will respond within one week to the initial report and will act accordingly to remedy the situation in whatever ways possible. In the process of reaching a resolution, the Office of Service-Learning may solicit the assistance of other on-campus entities, including the College’s legal counsel that could provide the appropriate feedback needed to come to a resolution. Additionally, if the grievance or incident has sufficient legal implications, it may be reported to the proper authorities so that it can be handled at the appropriate level.
Checklist/Timeline

Here is a checklist to help you stay on track through your service-learning experience:

- **Attend an orientation session** within the first two weeks of the semester.
- **Complete our online registration form** within two days of the orientation.
- **Find a site** within one week after the orientation. We’ll give you a list of sites available in this region – if none of them work for you, recommend one you think might work! As long as your professor approves your choice and we feel it’s a good fit, you’re good to go. You should also meet one-on-one with the Office of Service-Learning staff before confirming a site.
- **Give the site supervisor a call** within 2 days of receiving contact information for the site. Don’t be shy – call as soon as you can, explain who you are and why you’re interested with working at this site, and set up a meeting. (Before you go, learn everything you can about the organization – check their website; meet with the staff at the Office of Service-Learning, etc.)
- **Make sure you hand in the required service contract and liability waiver forms** following your first meeting at the site-usually about 3-4 weeks into the semester.
- **Attend three reflection sessions** facilitated by the Office of Service-Learning. Try to attend about one a month. Sit, chat, find out what other people are doing. It’s a good time.
- **Attend two out-of-class sessions** facilitated by the Office of Service-Learning. These sessions may be dialogues, roundtables, or community partner spotlights. Try to attend about one a month. Sit, chat, find out what other people are doing and learn a bit in the process.
- **Keep track of your hours.** Some community sites prefer that you use their timesheets to sign in and out weekly. That’s okay with us – you can turn in a copy of the site’s timesheet in addition to filling out the hours on our timesheet, but please make sure it has all the following information on it:
  - Your name, Z-number, and service-learning class(es)
  - Your site name and supervisor’s name
  - Your supervisor’s signature
- **Make sure you start your service by the 4th week of the semester and complete your service the week before finals begin.**
- **Ensure your commitment and willingness to yourself, the course, and the community partner you are working with towards the teaching, learning, and service or this experience.**
Our Code of Ethics

The Office of Service-Learning has established practical norms for our students and community partners. Below is a table created to better understand our terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Community Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• DON’T accept financial or material payment for hours.</td>
<td>• DON’T offer financial or material payment for hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DO be clear about your community site’s policies, including any applicable dress codes, call-out procedures, and confidentiality agreements.</td>
<td>• DO ensure that students are provided with all necessary information about your site’s policies and procedures. Provide an orientation if possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DON’T choose a site where you’ll be supervised by a family member (i.e., parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle, etc.)</td>
<td>• DO choose an appropriate supervisor for the student. Avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DO maintain a proper standard of behavior – you’ll be subject to appropriate disciplinary action if you choose to behave badly.</td>
<td>• DO report a student who is not maintaining a proper standard of behavior. If we don’t know about the problem, we can’t help!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DO review and observe our Appropriate Clothing policy, even if your site does not have an established dress code.</td>
<td>• DO recommend updates and/or changes to our Appropriate Clothing policy if they don’t reflect your agency’s needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DO maintain confidentiality of all clients with whom you work.</td>
<td>• DO have students sign a confidentiality agreement if you have one for volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DO consider your safety and security at all times!</td>
<td>• DO provide a safe, supportive environment for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DON’T engage in direct evangelism (i.e., preaching, proselytizing) during S-L hours.</td>
<td>• DON’T ask or require students to engage in direct evangelism during S-L hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DO observe all agency prereqs (i.e., application, board approval, etc.) before beginning your hours.</td>
<td>• DO keep prereqs to a minimum whenever possible for S-L students.</td>
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Making Service a Lifetime Commitment

We hope that your service-learning experience this semester will help you see what a critical role you play in the development of the community. Here are lists of other ways you can get involved with community engagement throughout Stockton, South Jersey, and/or nationally/internationally. Keep an eye out for upcoming events and programs sponsored by the Office of Service-Learning that might

Stockton Programs

- **Office of Student Development**
  - ULTRA College & Community Service Program (mandatory 100 hrs of service)
  - Student clubs & organizations centered on service (for example, Circle K)
  - Stockton Day of Service in Aug/Sept & MLK Day of Service in January
  - Alternative spring break programs

- **The Wellness Center**
  - Stay Safe & Graduate Program (affiliated with Mothers Against Drunk Driving & the HERO Campaign) – Help educate your peers about safe drinking practices.
  - Peer Education Club - Educate your peers about making healthy decisions.
  - Learning Access Program – Offer academic help to a student with a disability.

- **Office of Risk Management**
  - Tobacco Madness Program – Help reduce smoking across campus.

- Consider enrolling in a Study Abroad program that incorporates service.

Local Programs

- **United Way of Atlantic County** – Search the online listing of local nonprofits looking for volunteers.

- Check out the Office of Service-Learning website for a list of member agencies and their websites – lots of them are looking for extra help!

National & International Programs

- **AmeriCorps** – a federally funded “year of service” program
- **Peace Corps** – a federally funded international service program (2-yr commitment)
- **Idealist.org** – a website with service-oriented jobs, volunteer opps, & academic programs
- **VolunteerMatch.org** – a website that matches volunteers up with local and national agencies searching for extra help (many opportunities are virtual)
- **United Nations Online Volunteering Service** – virtual volunteering opportunities
- **Break Away** – alternative service-based Spring and Winter Break programs
- **Cincinnati Urban Experience** – week-long program in poorest part of Cincinnati
- **Cross-Cultural Solutions & Global Exchange** – two different international service and cross-cultural immersion programs
• **Habitat for Humanity** – home-building projects across the U.S. & internationally
• **Oxfam** – international projects addressing global poverty
• **Rebuilding Together** – builds homes for people following disasters
• **Red Cross** – international and national response units following disasters
• **MercyCorps** – addresses issues of global poverty
• **Global Service Corps** – short- and long-term international service projects
• **City Year** – addresses urban poverty in the U.S.
• **Congressional Hunger Center Fellowship Program** – year of service to fight hunger
• **Teach for America** – two-year AmeriCorps program that brings education to low-income urban and rural areas in the U.S.
• **Jumpstart** – early childhood education program in the U.S.
• **Careers in the Common Good** – job search engine hosted by Brown University
• **The Nonprofit Times Job Board** – advertises nonprofit and social service jobs

**We hope you use this list as a jumping-off point to get started on a lifetime of service!**
A Final Note

We hope this book will be of some use to you. Reviewing this handbook, you should make sure you have the following paperwork and information, so please make sure you have everything before you embark on your service-learning journey.

- Service-Learning Registration Form
- Service-Learning Liability Waiver Form
- Service-Learning Agreement Form
- Service-Learning Timesheet
- List of potential placement sites for your course
- Reflection Session Schedule
- For the Greater Good Dialogue Series Schedule
Service-Learning Timesheet

Student ID: Z-_________________  Student Name: ________________________________

Course Number & Section: ______________________  Instructor: ________________________________

Site: ________________________________  Supervisor: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Arrival Time</th>
<th>Departure Time</th>
<th>Total Hours</th>
<th>Brief Description of Activities</th>
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</table>

I attest that this student has completed his/her service-learning hours at our organization this semester.

Total Hours  Supervisor’s Signature  Date

Note to Supervisor: Please note that it is the student’s responsibility to hand this timesheet in to the Office of Service-Learning by the due date specified. However, it is important that you sign the bottom of this form to ensure that the student has completed the recorded number of hours.

PLEASE RETURN TO E-226 BY: ________________