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TRANSFORMING SERVICE:
A STUDY OF COLLEGE SERVICE CULTURE AND THE NECESSARY SHIFT
FROM VOLUNTEERISM TO SERVICE-LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the current service opportunities among university campuses, both nationally and specifically at Penn State University Park, and argues the shift from the “volunteer” program model to the “service-learning” program model for all institutions of higher education. The purpose and possibilities of the service-learning model will be explored and unpacked, as well as the benefits and challenges of such programs. Current studies and statistics on volunteer and service-learning experiences of college students will be utilized, as well as the learning outcomes of such programs. Specifically, the “Day of Service” volunteer model will be reviewed, using case studies of two Penn State University Park Days of Service: State Day of Service and MLK Day of Service. The goal of this study is to explore the existing literature on service-learning, and propose an improved model to replace Days of Service; a program that would follow a service-learning model. Additionally, I outline the need for service-learning ownership and execution to be grounded in academic scholarship – through both an understanding of the complexities of the service-learning model, as well as an academic lens for students and community members in understanding the multi-faceted processes of community engagement. Lastly, I will propose standardized criteria for Penn State service-learning projects, and a new program that would replace the Days of Service and result in improved learning outcomes for students, and better-suit the needs of the Centre County community.

Key Terms

In order to guide the reader, these are key terms that are fundamental in understanding the progression of the study. While not the only definitions, in order to keep consistency and clarity throughout this study, these are guiding definitions that will be most beneficial.

Service-Learning

According to Jacoby (1996), service-learning is “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning…the hyphen in service-learning symbolizes the symbiotic relationship between service and learning” (p. 5)

Volunteerism

According to Anderson and Schaffer (1998), volunteerism is, “The act of engaging in service that addresses immediate social needs, but does not necessarily address the conditions from which those needs emerge” (p. 208). Another definition by Furco (1996), details volunteerism as “the engagement of students in activities where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the primary intended beneficiary is clearly the service recipient” (p. 11).

Reflection

Kendall (1990) described the reflective component of service-learning as “explicitly designed to foster learning and development…Learning goals will vary, including, “intellectual, civic, ethical, moral, cross-cultural, career, or personal. This learning includes a deeper understanding of the historical, sociological, cultural, economic, and political contexts of the needs or issues being addressed (as cited in Jacoby, 1996, p. 7).
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

I began my Penn State career four years ago, knowing that I wanted to get involved in extra-curricular activities – and as many as possible. Time and time again, I found myself drawn to the volunteering, service, and leadership opportunities, and I threw myself into them. Soon after, I became a volunteer project coordinator, a service trip leader, and an alternative spring break coordinator. It was through these different experiences that I was introduced to the concept of service-learning and the possibilities embedded in the model.

I was used to volunteering; to picking up sticks for a few hours, to washing windows at animal shelters, to playing bingo at an elderly home. But suddenly I was exposed to a different kind of service, and a different kind of learning. I knew the format of my first alternative spring break trip to Rural Appalachia in West Virginia was different than my past service experiences, but I was not sure in what ways. We had orientations before the trip in which we studied the challenges that the Rural Appalachian region faced, including watching a documentary, looking at statistics and articles written about the region, and doing personal research encouraged by the trip application. At the orientations, participants were thrown into interactive activities; the first I remember being unequal resources in which our group was split into three, and with three differing bags of materials we were asked to build a structure. I understood the point of the activity; that the cards we were dealt would impact our ability to execute, and that a lack of resources is sometimes out of your control. However, as we discussed and pulled apart the activity, I found that my understanding had only scratched the surface of possibilities. What resources had I ever lacked personally, if any? How did that feel? Why do people lack resources? Is there anything you can do if you lack resources from the beginning? Why had our groups decided not to share resources – there had been no instruction that we could not. And what resources are most important in Rural Appalachia? What kind of role does coal play in the lives of community members there? What are examples of unequal distribution in the region, and how may corruption factor into this?

The more questions that were posed, and the more I explored opinions of my fellow participants, I quickly saw that the trip would become a platform for my most static, one-dimensional values that perpetuated stereotypes, judged others, and accepted and ignored privilege, to be shattered. The opportunity for my shift from judgment and impatience to empathy and growth occurred as a result of the multi-faceted, immersive and reciprocal nature of the service-learning model. Only through the combination of embedded education, performing basic home repair services alongside community members and volunteers who shared in learning with us, and consistent reflection, was I able to challenge my accepted judgments and to have challenging conversations with people who thought differently than myself.

In my many experiences in and out of the classroom, the learning and growth I’ve experienced and seen as a result of the service-learning model has not been achieved elsewhere in any other format. While I recognize that not every service project will be a weeklong, immersive opportunity, I argue that the service-learning model can transform other volunteer opportunities in different capacities, and maximize learning outcomes for volunteers. Service-learning, if
executed systematically and consistently, can produce more socially conscientious, empathetic, and civically engaged college graduates and global citizens.

While statistically, the number of college-aged volunteers are increasing, universities’ focus on achieving volunteer numbers, as opposed to a focus on learning outcomes of participants, has resulted in surface-level and less impactful volunteer initiatives. At many institutions, the difference between service-learning and volunteering has not been distinguished. Service-learning is defined as a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key components of service-learning. This contrasts with the traditional concept of volunteerism, based on the idea that “a more competent person comes to the aid of a less competent person” (Jacoby, 1996). The rapid growth of volunteer opportunities seems to ignore the differentiation of volunteering vs. service-learning, and many services provided by students are not meeting students’ expectations, or community needs. In order to make connections between students’ desires, community needs, and the actual service, service opportunities need to be approached from a service-learning perspective.

In this study, I will explore a case study of Penn State “Days of Service” in which large numbers of students log volunteer hours during one-time service opportunities. I will specifically be looking at “State Day of Service” and “MLK Day of Service.” In drawing conclusions between the established body of literature and studies on college volunteerism and the service-learning culture, I will pinpoint the necessary changes in college volunteer efforts to result in better learning outcomes and a direct connection between motivations, needs, and the actual service being provided when serving. While there are plenty of students volunteering, colleges need a more coherent approach to service-learning, and I will propose what that would look like at Penn State.

**Personal Experience**

Throughout my four years as a student at Penn State, I have been involved with service opportunities in varying capacities, both as a participant and as a leader and organizer. Currently I serve as Outreach Director for Students Engaging Students, a service and leadership organization, within which I oversee the “Into the Streets” program that provides any Penn State student with a one-time service opportunities on the weekend in which students go into a local Centre County nonprofit, learn about the agency, volunteer for a few hours, and participate in a short reflection discussion led by a member of Students Engaging Students. I also have served as a leader and coordinator for the Service Trips Planning Team, in which we plan and lead alternative spring break service trips for Penn State students. For these trips, students typically travel to Rural Appalachia to spend the week performing basic home repairs, learn about rural poverty and challenges the region faces, and participate in reflection activities and discussions touching on difference, prejudice, social injustice, civic engagement, and personal reflection. I have also personally volunteered for Days of Service, and have learned the ins and outs of the programs and planning of such events, seeing as they come out of the Office of Student Activities in 209 HUB, the same office that Students Engaging Students and Service Trips Planning Team come out of. Most significantly, I have seen and experienced the difference in impact and learning outcomes of volunteer programs as opposed to service-learning programs.

With similar service, similar time commitment, and a similar group size, the takeaways from a volunteer model pale in comparison to that of service-learning. When a service day is stripped of the educational, reflective, and reciprocal learning components, participants are likely
to take away only surface-level, temporary lessons. However, when service-learning is implemented, participants are able to grow in complex, life-changing ways, and non-profits are benefitted in more ways then just the service provided. As a result of these four years, I have come to see the benefits of these service-learning programs for students and the community, as well as the challenges the current Penn State programs face and the inherent room for improvement in them.

Motivation

In the mission statements of land-grant universities, often the value of “service” and “giving back” appears as an integral part of the university’s foundation and as a desired outcome of their students’ education. For Clemson University, their mission ends with, “Our distinctive character is shaped by a legacy of service, collaboration, and fellowship…” (Clemson, 2014). Auburn University’s mission begins with, “Auburn University’s mission is defined by its land-grant traditions of service and access. The University will serve the citizens of the State through its instructional, research and outreach programs and prepare Alabamians to respond successfully to the challenges of a global economy” (Auburn, 2011). Washington State University describes itself as, “A public research university committed to its land-grant heritage and tradition of service to society…through local and global engagement that will improve quality of life and enhance the economy of the state, nation, and world” (WSU, 2014). Pennsylvania State University’s mission also aligns with this focus on “serving”: “Penn State is a leader in higher education and carries out its mission of teaching, research, and service with pride and focus on the future” (Penn State, 2014). So why is service so important to most university missions? “Research finds that participation in volunteer activities during the undergraduate years also enhances the student’s academic performance and life skill development as well as his or her sense of civic responsibility and moral development. Higher education institutions, nonprofit organizations, and state governments should invest in maximizing the benefit of the increasing student interest and engagement in volunteer and community service work” (Boss 1994; Astin and Sax 1998). “Rudolph (1962) reminds us: From the beginning, the American college was cloaked with a public purpose” (as cited in Lee & Won, 2011, p. 10). Specifically considering land-grant universities, Lee and Won (2011), wrote, “In 1862 the passage of the Land-Grant Act inextricably linked higher education and the concept of service, specifically related to agriculture and industry” (p. 11).

Universities may connect the learning outcomes that result from service to better all-around success of the student academically and lifelong. However, I argue that the learning outcomes that result in life skill development and moral development will not be achieved unless the service is performed in conjunction with the service-learning model, and not simply as a volunteer experience. And while I recognize the intentions of these universities in educating students to utilize their education to become civicly engaged citizens who actively contribute to social justice in whatever capacity, I question the value and impact of current service programs in place at universities. While many universities are beginning to transform service program models from “volunteering” to “service-learning,” this study will call for the abandonment of the “volunteer” model and ask universities to embrace “service-learning” as a normative formula for students serving their local college community. The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) supports this shift, and suggests the importance of universities in taking control of the transformation based on their premise that “service-learning must be firmly rooted in the mission of the institution, involve faculty, be integrated into the curriculum, and be grounded in sound theory and pedagogical practice” (NSEE, 2014).
There are two realms we can think of service-learning in the context of when it comes to service-learning opportunities in higher education – those being either service-learning courses, offered by academic departments and taught by university faculty, or service-learning programs offered by university services, including the offices of Student Activities and Student Affairs. For the purpose of this paper, I will be focusing on service-learning opportunities related to university services, in that they are extracurricular and not connected to coursework. Specifically looking at Penn State, I will be focusing on service-learning as it pertains to campus wide experiences organized by the institution, especially those out of The Office of Student Activities.

In this study I will be looking at two current service programs at Penn State, referred to as “Days of Service.” I will explore the challenges and possibilities for such programs and their learning outcomes. When looking at these models, I will consider the learning outcomes for students, the community, as well as the university. I argue the push towards service-learning because “studies have shown that socializing with diverse groups of peers, discussing social issues, and participating in cooperative learning will strengthen students' community orientation and their personal feelings of social responsibility” (Markus, Howard, 8; King, 1993). Additionally, Goldberg writes, “Service-learning through volunteer work has thus become an increasingly accepted teaching strategy on college campuses, providing relevant experiences for students. It has been an effective tool for exposing students to diverse populations and positively changing prejudices they might hold” (as cited in Manikowske & Sunderlin, 2013).

In order for universities to achieve their goals of students becoming “global and active citizens,” service-learning must be an integral part of outreach programming, as it has the power to shift student mindsets to think communally and to eliminate prejudice. I believe universities must shift their focus from achieving impressive volunteer numbers and using volunteer days as opportunities for good press, to a focus on learning outcomes that can only be achieved through service-learning.

The discussion of service-learning and volunteerism is pivotal given the culture and climate at Penn State – a disproportionate amount of energy is dedicated to some programming, including athletics and philanthropy, while service is often left at the wayside. For institutions such as Penn State to develop the engaged, informed, and empathetic citizens that higher education prides itself upon and is engrained in their missions, service and service-learning will need to move to the forefront of institutions’ missions. This is evident in lack of focus on learning outcomes of Penn State’s service-learning programs.

For this study I will first be looking further into the definition of service-learning, its many components, and the potential outcomes of the service-learning model. I will then look at current statistics and literature written about service initiatives at university campuses, and then specifically study the service culture here at Penn State. Furthermore, I will explain the difference between volunteerism and service-learning. I will apply this knowledge in looking at the case studies of State Day of Service and MLK Day of Service, and see how the “Day of Service” model could be improved utilizing service-learning. Taking all this into consideration, I will propose a solution for Penn State and a new service model that would incorporate service-learning. The purpose of this inquiry is to identify the strengths and overwhelming benefits of the service-learning model, to analyze the weaknesses of current service programs at Penn State, and to recommend a new and improved service-learning program that could be implemented.
Chapter 2

WHY SERVICE-LEARNING

In order to understand the possibilities and implications of the service-learning model, the many layers of service-learning must first be explored, and compared to the current volunteer models in place. In this section, the importance of defining service-learning, the promise of service-learning, the pillars and standard criteria for a service-learning program, and the service and learning typology are all studied. Only after fully grasping what service-learning should look like, can an appropriate and effective service-learning program be proposed.

Furco (1996) argues, “The confounding use of the service-learning term may be one reason why research on the impacts of service-learning has been difficult to conduct. In order to ‘establish clear goals’ for service-learning, a precise definition is necessary” (p. 1). The National Society for Experiential Education, which for years has focused on various types of experiential education programs, broadly defines service-learning as "any carefully monitored service experience in which a student has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning throughout the experience" (National Society for Experiential Education, 1994). Service-learning programs are distinguished from other approaches to experiential education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service. Jacoby (1996) expands, writing, “Service-learning, with its intentional goals for student learning and development, fits far more clearly into higher education’s missions and priorities than volunteer or community service programs, which lack reflection components and intentional learning goals” (p. 20).

Promise of Service-learning

According to Beaman (1988), studies cited reported, “About 90 percent of student volunteers say service-learning experience was as valuable or more valuable to them than classroom work. Service also has a positive impact on motivation, ability to choose a career and increasing responsibility.” Service-learning undoubtedly has the potential to apply classroom learning to real-world situations and to allow students to see the real-world applicability of classroom knowledge. As Butin (2005) writes, “Service-learning challenges our static notions of teaching and learning, decents our claim to the labels of ‘students’ and ‘teachers,’ and exposes and explores the linkages between power, knowledge, and identity” (p. vii). Complicating the teacher-student hierarchy could radically change and advance the style of teaching on college campuses.

In understanding the possibilities of service-learning, it is first imperative to understand its emergence in one aspect – that is, as a response to compartmentalized learning in higher education. As Eyler and Giles argue in their article, “Where’s the Service in Service-Learning,” Service-learning does not exist in a vacuum, and can be used as a way to advance and improve the current static teaching methods of many university courses. The article states, “The goals and practices of service-learning also address criticisms of the passive, compartmentalized nature of much of the instruction in higher education.” The article argues that, “Service, combined with
learning, adds value to each and transforms both.” Service-learning, as a type of experiential education, encourages learning through a “cycle of action and reflection, not simply through reading and lectures”. As evidenced in the data that will later be explored, this type of dynamic and accessible learning style tends to be much more effective for students compared to the lecture and reading format now in place. Service-learning is therefore capable of addressing the “inert knowledge problem: the tendency of students to acquire stores of knowledge that are quite useless to them when they are in new situations…students rarely transferred knowledge and principles learned in classroom instruction to new problems; even students with information directly analogous to a new problem often failed to apply it” (Eyler & Giles, 2000, p. 7). By putting students in real-world situations, whether that be measuring wood or talking to someone of a different ethnicity or socioeconomic status than themselves, service-learning in universities creates college learning that closely ties to the situation in which students will use their knowledge and continue to learn.

Additionally, service-learning addresses the matter that learning should not be done in isolation or a vacuum – service-learning links “personal and interpersonal development with academic and cognitive development.” Eyler and Giles articulate the “lack of connectedness in higher education and the related lack of application of what is learned,” and it is evident that service-learning is a way the connections between the application of gained knowledge in college can begin to be made. It is important to note that in service-learning materializing in a way to curb these static learning models of universities, many “service-learning programs sprang up without the benefit of a research base or systematic attempts at evaluation” (Eyler & Giles, 2000, p. 8). This is evident in the gaps in studies and measurements of impacts of service-learning programs, and why many service-learning programs in place are static in their growth and reach across campuses. Evaluation and research will be important pillars of the service-learning model I will propose for Penn State as it embraces a new service model.

**Pillars of Service-Learning Model**

Here I have selected the five main pillars of service-learning that after researching, I found to be most consistent across the many different fundamentals of service-learning explored by various literary works. Understanding these pillars will be crucial in visualizing the non-negotiable elements of any service-learning program, and I will link these pillars to my later proposal of a new service-learning model at Penn State. The reinforcement of these pillars and criteria of service-learning throughout this text will be imperative in guiding future actions, as Furco (1996) writes, “Research studies have shown that poorly implemented service-learning experiences can reinforce stereotypes, decrease participants’ motivation to engage in future service activities, and exacerbate power differentials between social and cultural groups” (p. 5).

**Education**

The educational component of service-learning is imperative in students understanding the history, background, and basics of where they are serving, and why. Students need information about the nature of the project they are about to undertake and the clients or populations served. At orientation sessions, agency representatives, community members, and experienced student leaders can also teach students how to act appropriately at a site and prepare them for the possible emotions they may feel during and after their service experiences (Jacoby, 1996). Educational components may range from videos, to statistics, websites, books, articles, personal anecdotes, presentations,
and much more. Furthermore, an understanding of the service-learning model should not only be attained by program leaders, but should also be achieved by students, institutions, and community members. Only in understanding the goals of service-learning will true reciprocity and learning outcomes be achieved, because students and community members will hold themselves accountable for the expectations of the model.

Another component to consider when linking education and service-learning is the necessity of scholarship and an academic perspective in relationship to understanding “community.” Service-learning should address all participants, whether it be students, an institution, or community members, and complicate their understanding of community and their relationship to it. In order for service-learning programs to adequately address this component of learning, participants and leaders should have an academic understanding of the inner workings of communities—this scholarship would include fields such as sociology, politics, economics, culture, environment, and much more.

Participants on all sides of service-learning are not only learning about the population they are serving or interacting with, but rather they should also actively learn and experience the processes of community engagement and apply theoretical knowledge to real-life situations. Education will be crucial in enabling all parties involved to make connections and think critically about the service experience.

Reciprocity

Jacoby (1996) writes that, “Reciprocity suggests that every individual, organization, and entity involved in service-learning functions as both a teacher and a learner. Participants are perceived as colleagues, not as servers and clients...for example, the tutored child or the homeless adult serves college students by allowing them to come into their lives and their communities, providing them with a larger view of the world as articulated through their own voices and insights” (p. 36). While important to be understood in the context of service-learning, reciprocity, when clarified and experienced by participants, has the ability to transform students’ understanding of the learning process and treat it as a dynamic practice. This may also help eliminate the stigma of volunteerism that the volunteer may be “smarter” or “better” than the recipient. Reciprocity equalizes the service participant and the recipient in recognizing that they are both learning throughout the process.

Reciprocity can also be directly linked to the intentions and motivation of volunteers. For example, if service-learning is functioning as part of a curriculum or class requirement, this complicates the learning outcomes of service-learning because volunteers may be required. Additionally, volunteer literature has shown that people sometimes volunteer because they care about the people and place they live in, and thus feel a sense of attachment and responsibility. These volunteers are not mentally calculating reciprocity or learning outcomes of service-learning, and they are more concerned with the actual service being provided. This lack of intention with respect to reciprocity may affect the learning on behalf of the student and the community member, and must be taken into consideration when encouraging reciprocity.
Meaningful Service

Though subjective to participants, some elements of the physical service being provided will make it a more or less impactful service. The first criteria is the necessity of the service being provided – are participants fulfilling a need that would not be provided otherwise? If participants are, for example, sorting mail as a receptionist watches, having handed off her usual duty to give the participants something to do, then this service is not needed and will negatively impact the reciprocity of the service. Additionally, the more direct the service is that is provided, the more reciprocal learning will occur. Direct service asserts that the participants interact and work with the community members who are personally receiving the service. A direct service example would be personally handing out coats to the homeless population, as opposed to the indirect service of organizing and collecting coats for a coat drive for the homeless, but then donating the coats to another organization that will hand them out. Direct service will provide for more substantial reflection because students have had the chance to interact with populations they either judged or had not previously engaged with. Service opportunities will vary and may not always be ideal – this is when reflection will be most crucial in making meaning and importance out of any type of service experience.

Reflection

Jaoby (1996) describes reflection as, “Carefully planned reflection should be included in pre-service, in-service, and post-service activities to raise students’ levels of awareness about service-learning, increase their potential for learning, and create positive experiences that lead to further involvement in service-learning” (p. 120). Reflection can and will be the most effective strategy in increasing learning outcomes and growth in participants, and can recognize meaning and significance in the service experience, no matter how big or small. This will be imperative in students feeling connected and positive about their service experience. I would argue that reflection is what sets service-learning apart from any other service format, and that without reflection, most learning outcomes from service-learning would not be achieved. It is rare that a college student is given the opportunity to slow down, share their excitements and frustrations, and to sort through those emotions with others; in this way reflection is not only effective, but also crucial.

Jaoby (1996) outlines what carefully planned reflection should look like before, during, and after service experiences (p. 120):

Preparation and Preservice Reflection

The use of simple written measures of interest and understanding of social issues can be useful tools in helping students to focus on the upcoming experience. Asking the same questions in a postservice measure can also provide information to the students about their learning and to the project organizers about changes in attitudes and knowledge among student participants. I will further explore the possibilities of preservice reflection in my program proposal.
In-Service Reflection

Mini-reflection can be guided by a series of questions that call on students to “get into the others’ shoes,” to “center” themselves in the present, and to put aside past and future issues that may take away from the experience they are about to share. I also believe that team leaders can facilitate in-service reflection by checking in on participants and asking them to reflect personally, and to engage in conversation with community members. This will also be explored in my later proposal.

Postservice Reflection

At the conclusion of a service experience, it is important to bring participants together to discuss their activities and to share reactions, emotions, ideas, and questions. Small-group discussions focusing on the questions – What actually happened? So what was the significance to me and others? and Now what do I [or we] do? – invite students to reflect on the meaning of service. This is referred to as the “What, So What, Now What” model. Postservice reflection should also promote future service-learning opportunities.

Evaluation

The effective design of any service-learning experience calls for evaluation of the impact of service from the perspectives of both the student volunteers and community agency or individuals served. Students’ new knowledge and understandings, changes in their perceptions, and shifts in attitudes about and behaviors toward others who differ from them can be assessed through focus group discussions prior to and after a service-learning experience. Tracking the numbers of students who engage in additional service through service-learning courses, student service organizations, and other campus volunteer outreach programs also helps to gauge the effectiveness of introductory service-learning experiences. Post-event discussions and feedback sessions with community agencies provide information about the activity from the community’s point of view and can help develop community partnerships for future service-learning activities (Jacoby, 1996).

These five pillars: education, reciprocity, meaningful service, reflection, and evaluation, should all be integrated throughout a meaningful service-learning program. Having established these key components of a service-learning model, it is also important to keep in mind the critiques and challenges that surround service-learning. Kezar and Rhoads (2001) pose four questions that summarize the tensions surrounding the meaning and relevance of service-learning – here the questions will be addressed and examined in the context of this study:

1. **Learning Question**: What are the central learning outcomes we expect service-learning to yield…social responsibility, empathy, or critical thinking?

Love (1995) remarks that, “A common perspective stresses service-learning’s contribution to cognitive development, the sort of learning typically associated with a student’s academic field of study or discipline. But looking at educational goals tied to student development, this type of learning is described as affective development.” Affective development is associated with student affairs work, the focus of this study.
When it comes to affective dimension, learning outcomes include “self-confidence, social responsibility, civic-mindedness, self-esteem, and personal efficacy...also evidence exists that service-learning contributes to students developing more accepting attitudes toward cultural differences” (as cited in Kezar & Rhoads, 2001).

2. **Locational Question:** Is service-learning to be associated with the formal curriculum and fall under the domain of faculty, does it pertain more to the co-curriculum and the work of student affairs professionals, or is it seen as an outreach effort and within a separate unit such as continuing education?

In response to this question, Jacoby (1996) opined, “While service-learning that is embedded in the curriculum provides opportunities for faculty to enhance students’ learning by integrating course content with practical experience in a structured manner intended to meet course objectives, powerful opportunities also occur outside the classroom” (p. xviii). These non-credit bearing service-learning experiences that stem from student affairs emphasize student development concerns, including identity exploration and social responsibility. These inherent themes in student affairs service-learning opportunities of self-awareness and civic duty are why I chose to focus on the student affairs programming as opposed to course and academic service-learning. However, it is important to keep in mind, as Rhoads and Kezar (2001) remind, “Service-learning is not so much about who initiates it – faculty or student affairs professionals – as much as it is concerned with how and what is accomplished.”

3. **Organization-of-Work Question:** How does service-learning fit within the expectations that accompany faculty and student affairs work?

Rhoads and Kezar (2001) write, “There are opportunities for student affairs professionals to construct their own service-learning options; indeed it is hard to imagine an area of student affairs that could not in some way create or support service options” (p. 157). I ask the current student affairs staff to reconsider programs currently in place and to see potential for transformation when it comes to service-learning. Student Affairs has the capacity to re-evaluate and revamp current service programs in place if a critical approach is utilized, as will be outlined.

4. **Implementation Question:** What key features should we seek to include as part of constructing service-learning experiences?

Rhoads and Kezar (2001), assert that, “The successful implementation of service-learning across an institution’s academic mission must necessarily involve a commitment from formal leaders, the faculty, and support staff” (p. 160). Additionally, the respective community must have a central role and have representation in university service initiatives. This relates back to the pillar of reciprocity in that those being served should have a voice in the goals of the project, and that those being served should become “better able to serve and be served by their own actions...this sense of reciprocity creates a sense of mutual responsibility and respect between individuals in the service-learning exchange” (p. 161).
The key features that also address the implementation question can be condensed into the ten criteria that Jacoby’s *Service-Learning in Higher Education* (1996) highlights for an effective and sustained program that combines services and learning. These criteria outline specific steps and goals to keep in mind when planning a service-learning program. Again, these ten criteria will be the stimulus for the planning I propose for a new Penn State service-learning program in a later section.

1. **Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.**

   Participants should be challenged, whether through the service or the population they will interact with. If growth and open-mindedness are expected outcomes of the service-learning program, this will only be achieved through discomfort. Surrounded by people of a different race, working with hammers or a saw, or spending time with the elderly when participants are not accustomed to that can jolt college students, make them realize judgments, stereotypes, or hatred they may contain and ask them to face those beliefs and challenge them.

2. **Provides structured opportunities and challenging actions for the common good.**

   These structured opportunities should be present in three of the pillars: education, service, and reflection. The organizers of the event must provide structured education in materials for a well-rounded education on the agency, service, and population that will be engaged. Service should also be structured in that participants are prepared for the work they will be doing, and there is a starting and ending time. A volunteer-coordinator should also be working with the group of participants constructively. Lastly, while reflection should have informal components, there should also be an organized, intentional activity after the service.

3. **Articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved.**

   This will be instrumental in participants understanding the purpose of the project, and setting expectations for the day and for themselves. If participants are surprised by education or reflection, they may be turned off, confused, or reluctant to participate. Volunteers and community members should also understand what is expected of them at the service site, whether it be the physical service, or the values of the agency. Learning outcomes should be outlined in the application or sign-up for the service. Participants should be prepared not just to provide a service, but to also take something away personally from the day.

4. **Allows for those with needs to define those needs.**

   Avoid “defining” the population or agency that participants will be working alongside. Take descriptions for educational pieces from the agency themselves, or let volunteer-coordinators speak on their behalves. Especially considering the population, whether it be elderly, low-income, at-risk youth, sustainability professionals, etc.; it will be imperative not to box-in or categorize these populations. Definitions can be dangerous in stereotyping populations, thereby undermining their voice and the purpose of service-learning.
5. Clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved

Roles should be defined going into the service opportunity – leaders should act as participants and facilitators. Leaders should participate in service just the same as the rest of the group, but should also set the tone for the experience with energy, enthusiasm, strong work ethic, and an outgoing personality. Leaders should also be checking in on participants, making sure tasks are appropriate and safe. Participants should understand this dynamic, and their role in relationship to the service. The organization should provide education, safety, goals and act as a resource to the group throughout the service. These roles and responsibilities should be defined and communicated before the event.

6. Matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances

Agencies being served or the service provided should not remain static over the months or years – needs of the community and the agency will constantly change, and re-evaluation will be vital. In evaluating the service provided and the service needed, a service-learning program should constantly re-evaluate the cairos of the project and its ability to impact the providers and the recipients.

7. Expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment

The organization, whether it be a nonprofit agency, university, or club, should morally invest in the service-learning opportunity – this investment should be embedded in the reciprocity model as well. Both parties should be active and eager in communicating needs, wants, and capabilities when it comes to the day or week of service. Organizational commitment may take shape in many forms, including post-project evaluation, or even spreading knowledge or experiences gained from an organization.

8. Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.

These actions apply to both the leaders of the service-learning program, and to the nonprofit agency staff members. All should be prepared, over-seers, encouragers, and should thank others and recognize achievements – this will greatly contribute to the attainment of learning outcomes.

9. Insures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved.

While the agenda for the day should be set in advance, leaders must be flexible, as more often than not, things will not go as planned. Leaders should be realistic when requesting a time commitment from college students, and should be constantly evaluating the energy of the group when leading reflection – reflection that lasts more than an hour will be ineffective and can jeopardize the overall takeaways if participants feel bored or anxious. Nonprofit agencies as well cannot expect more service time than the group has committed, and should be flexible when complications arise.
10. Is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations [Porter Honnet and Poulsen, 1989].

When it comes to service, diversity can take many forms, and one of the purposes of service-learning will be to recognize these many outlets of diversity and catalyze conversations surrounding it and why it is important. Diversity I’ve witnessed, both within the participant group and within the population being served when it comes to service-learning includes socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, major, education, passion, and more. In making sure the program addresses different needs, and diversifies participants and populations being served, opportunities for growth will come to life in the interactions and tensions created by people from different backgrounds coming together. It is in this tension and questioning that participants will be able to challenge preconceived notions, or consider their relationship to privilege and how to negotiate that relationship (Jacoby, 1996, p. 30).

These criteria will be crucial in forming my proposed principles for a new service-learning model here at Penn State, and making sure these essentials of a sustainable and effective service-learning program are implemented. Now that the fundamentals of a service-learning program have been explained, it would be beneficial to understand Sigmon’s (1996) “A Service and Learning Typology,” in order to effectively evaluate the focus of current service programs, especially those that claim a service-learning formula (as cited in Eyler & Giles, 2000, p. 5). As the below table exhibits, there are four different possible balances of service and learning, but only one constitutes effective service-learning programming, as seen in the SERVICE-LEARNING row. In many service programs, both service and learning will be present and an integral part of the experience; however, only when service and learning goals are “of equal weight” and “each enhances the other,” will a true service-learning model be achieved. Service goals and learning goals for the project should be integrated into one another, and one cannot be achieved without the other – in this way service-learning is unique from other immersive service projects. Service outcomes and learning outcomes are symbiotic, and neither could be achieved without an intensive and active reflection component.

### Table 1: A Service and Learning Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service and Learning Typology</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service-LEARNING</td>
<td>Learning goals primary; service outcomes secondary</td>
</tr>
<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>

Source: Sigmon (1996)

**What’s in a Name: When Service-Learning isn’t what it should be**

Nationally, “young adults (age between 16 and 24) at colleges are one of the most active groups of volunteers in the United States… Having such a large amount of time directed to volunteer work and the continuous increase of service-learning programs, however, does not automatically lead to desirable results for host organizations, students, or the targets of their well-
intentioned efforts (Lee & Won, 2011). Some service-learning programs are called service-learning, but do not follow the model as it is intended – this impedes the institution’s ability to create new programs and to make current ones more meaningful, as a wall is put up when colleges can say “we already do service-learning,” although they are not executing meaningful programs. For these reasons, existing service initiatives must be approached critically, and opportunities for change toward more desirable results for everyone must be explored.

Based on this exploration of the possibilities and goals of service-learning, I will return to a review of existing literature to explain the importance of service-learning within the context of the university campus, and to delve into what the Penn State service culture currently looks like, and its potential for growth.
Chapter 3

SERVICE-LEARNING UNPACKED

As was mentioned in the “Key Terms” section, it must be recognized that the consistency and focus of the vocabulary associated with service is constantly debated. These programs and terms that are complicated include: “service-learning,” “volunteerism,” “experiential learning,” “student engagement,” and “applied student research.” Often these terms are used interchangeably, thwarting the power of the terms and ignoring the significant differences between each. Despite their overlap in use, these terms are conceptually and in practice vastly distinct. It is important to understand the definitions of all terms, but specifically for this study I will be exploring and explaining the significance in differentiating service-learning from volunteerism.

Distinguishing Service-Learning from Volunteerism

When looking at the service programs in place on college campuses currently, in my attempts of transforming the models to more meaningful and impactful initiatives, it will be imperative to distinguish between volunteer and service-learning programs. The most visible difference between the two would be that volunteering entails only providing a service—an example could be driving to a homeless shelter, serving dinner for a few hours, and driving home. There is no educational or reflective aspect of volunteering, and learning is not reciprocal. This is not to negate the importance of the service being provided, as well as the necessity of the notion of volunteering—of offering a service for nothing in return. However, it must be noted that an opportunity for significant learning and growth, and social impact, has been missed when a stagnant, surface-level model is followed. On the contrary, service-learning requires a dynamic process of constant education, which may take form in different ways, providing a service (this stays the same), and informal as well as formal reflection in which participants are asked to think about what they are doing, why it is significant, and what they will do with this knowledge and how they have changed. Themes of reflection may include considering the systems that the population they are serving exist within and how these systems impact the community. Additionally, reflection may include discussions on difference, privilege, social-justice, prejudice, poverty cycles, stereotypes, civic engagement, service, as well as personal reflection. Lastly, learning is reciprocal between participants and community members working together—I will further explore reciprocity in a later section. The main difference between volunteering and service-learning is that service-learning asks the participant to actively think about what they are experiencing and why, and to challenge their belief system and ask them to grow through thinking about the experience—the model should ask participants to share thoughts with each other, so that participants have the opportunity to hear opposing or new conclusions from cohorts that they may have arrived to on their own. Learning can be communal and dynamic in this way.

In service-learning, the physical service being provided is not isolated, and participants understand why they are needed, what they are doing, and try to negotiate their relationship to the project. Instead of just serving dinner at a shelter, a service-learning event may have a team leader, a peer possibly, who educates participants on the shelter by sending them the link to the shelter’s website in advance, along with statistics on the homeless population in the area, and articles on what homelessness looks like on the national spectrum. Perhaps participants are also provided with a documentary on challenges that shelters face in gaining support. The morning of
a day of service-learning, the participants may meet together in a central location, and spend time getting to know one another with a name game, and an icebreaker. The leader may have participants spend a few minutes sharing their experiences with the homeless population or with shelters: what are their impressions, what do they think of immediately when they hear the word “homeless” or “shelter?” Upon arrival at the site, the group is greeted by the volunteer-coordinator, who takes the group on a tour of the facility, explaining the history of the shelter, challenges it faces, its need for volunteers, and what the group will be doing that day. During service, volunteers work side-by-side with agency employees or volunteers, learning about how they ended up at the shelter, their experiences with the homeless and issues of hunger. Participants have the opportunity to serve the homeless population, and engage in conversation, never forcing information from service recipients, but lending an ear if the attendees feel comfortable sharing about their lives and their background. Even surface-level, simple conversation between a volunteer and a recipient can provide for growth and reflection on both ends. Throughout the service, leaders will circulate, checking on participants, and asking them questions that will encourage self-reflection and critical thinking. Post-reflection may include gathering in a separate location and sharing, in a group, interactions with volunteer coordinators or dinner attendees – here is the opportunity to delve into what participants previously thought about the homeless and shelters, how that may or may not have changed, their relationship to homelessness, and to explore opportunities for growth and self-reflection. Learning outcomes will differ immensely through this service-learning model, as opposed to the one-dimensional volunteer model.

Service and the University Campus

“Service-learning is increasingly recognized as a valuable strategy for strengthening both civil society and higher education in the United States and in other parts of the world” (Thomson, Tolken, Naidoo & Bringle, 2011, p. 214). In understanding the necessity and push for service-learning in a university setting, the inert knowledge problem must be explored. The inert knowledge problem is, “The teaching of students to acquire stores of knowledge that are quite useless to them when they are in new situations” (Whitehead, 8). Service-learning is a response to this problem in that it asks students to apply knowledge to real-world situations, increasing retention and growth, and applicability of learned values. Service-learning can result in social and psychological nuances – these may be maximized when the place of service-learning within the university is determined. Here we will consider the relationship of service-learning within Student Affairs, and ways that the institution engages the local community. Astin and Sax (1998) observe that, “The emergence of the field of service-learning…has heightened attention to the nuances of the civic domain, social responsibility, and the rules of engagement between institutions of higher education and society” (as cited in Kronick, 2007).

In order to learn more about the current status and impact of service at universities across the U.S., I utilized the National Survey of Student Engagement, looking at the annual results from 2013 - taking into consideration all universities nationally, and not just Penn State. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) “documents dimensions of quality in undergraduate education and provides information and assistance to colleges, universities, and other organizations to improve student learning. Its primary activity is annually surveying college students to assess the extent to which they engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development” (NSSE, 2013).
The sample for the study was based on responses from 136,397 first-year and 199,346 senior students who were randomly sampled or census-administered from 568 bachelor’s-granting colleges and universities in the U.S.

I took a closer look at the High-Impact Practices results, seeing as the High-Impact category included “Learning Community,” “Service-Learning,” and “Research with Faculty.” Experiences categorized as “High-impact practices” share several traits: “They demand considerable time and effort, provide learning opportunities outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage interaction with diverse others, and provide frequent and meaningful feedback.”

In the context of a 4-year college setting, these high-impact practices include undergraduate opportunities such as, “learning communities, service-learning, research with a faculty member, study abroad, internships and culminating senior experiences are called high-impact practices.” While these activities greatly vary, the high-impact model is applicable to the study of the effects of service-learning because the traits of “High-impact practices” are all closely related to the main components of a service-learning model, although the “interactions with faculty” aspect would relate more so to the academic course service-learning model, and not so much the university-wide student affairs opportunities (NSSE, 2013, p. 20).

Looking at the “Selected Results: Participation in High-Impact Practices,” it is evident that a small percentage of first-year students; only 12%, participated in two or more high-impact practices, which when looking at the range of activities seems to portray that very few students would probably have experienced service-learning in this first year. Totaling the poll, only 58% of all first-year students participated in at least one high-impact process. This means that these important, potentially life-changing opportunities that universities provide, are not being experienced by 42% of the first-year population. Looking at the participation in high-impact processes of seniors, the numbers did go up as 60% participated in two or more high-impact processes, which may be because these numbers also include internships, study abroad, and culminating senior experiences (NSSE, 2013, p. 19). While senior year numbers are more promising than first-year statistics, I worry that these imperative experiences that are said to have positive effects on student learning and retention, are being accessed and experienced too late in students’ careers. Higher numbers need to be achieved earlier on in students’ careers, with more visible, impactful experiences that will attract students year after year. If service-learning programs are implemented and executed in a sustainable, consistent matter, I believe students will want to access more of these opportunities, as well as engage peers in activities with them.

The significance and impact of high-impact practices is evident in the conclusions of the study. When considering learning outcomes, NSSE concluded that, “Participation in High-Impact Practices was associated with desirable learning gains and overall educational satisfaction…First-year students who participated in at least one High-Impact Practice and seniors who participated in at least two reported greater gains in their knowledge, skills, and personal development, were more satisfied with their entire educational experience, and were more likely to return to the same institution if they were to start over again” (NSSE, 2013, p. 21). Clearly, high-impact practices are not isolated in their effects – these experiential learning opportunities do not only transform students’ ways of thinking and interacting with the world, but also shape their overall college experience and their happiness with their choice of institution.

“Participation in high-impact practices was also positively associated with other key forms of engagement (see Table 2). For example, first-year students who participated in learning communities, service-learning experiences, or research with faculty members were generally more engaged in NSSE’s ten key indicators than their non-participating peers” (NSSE, 2013, p. 21).
Table 2: Effect of Participation in High-Impact Practices in the First Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Indicator</th>
<th>Learning Community</th>
<th>Service-Learning</th>
<th>Research with Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher-Order Learning</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective &amp; Integrative Learning</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Strategies</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions with Diverse Others</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Teaching Practices</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Environment</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Symbols represent Cohen’s d effect size (ES) of the difference on each Engagement Indicator between participants and non-participants according to the following key: + ES > 1, ++ ES > 3, +++ ES > 5. All differences were positive for participants.

Looking at the Engagement Indicators, some may be surprising and not seem to have a connection to the service-learning model. However, when looking at the Service-Learning column, all students engaged in such had differences that were positive – even including “Quantitative Reasoning” and “Learning Strategies.” The table conveys the unexpected and often unmeasured potential outcomes of service-learning. As far as quantitative reasoning, I’ve seen students who are not studying math, get to spend the day or week working with numbers as they measure and cut ceiling tiles or wooden frames if they are doing basic construction. The learning strategies can also vary on such projects – students have time to try to problem-solve and figure out strategies themselves, but they also have to chance to ask site-volunteers or coordinators who are experienced in construction, and have them teach them side-by-side how to practically work with numbers. These small interactions also spark opportunity for conversations with community members, and can be the catalyst for the students to learn about the population they are serving and why they are repairing the site. The hard skills that are often involved in volunteering result in unexpected but positive learning outcomes that are not just social, but also tangible skills that will suit students well in all aspects of their lives.

As a result of the clear positive effects on student learning and retention of high-impact practices, and their potential to be life changing, NSSE founding director George Kuh recommended that, “institutions aspire for all students to participate in at least two High Impact Practices over the course of their undergraduate experience.” According to NSSE, three in five first-year students and four in five seniors met this goal.

I was also interested to see the demographics of the “Percentage of Students who Participated in High-Impact Practices by Institution and Student Characteristics” (see table 7). Looking at service-learning, the percentage numbers were much higher than other college experiences that are considered high-impact practices. Looking at the difference between service-learning percentages in a student’s first year and the student’s senior year, it is telling that in 37 of the 40 institutional and student characteristics that were categories, percentages rose from first-year to senior year experiences. I would conclude that positive and impactful experiences with service-learning the first time will lead students to continue involvement with service-learning, and to seek more similar activities that also provide them with service-learning outcomes. It is evident in the table that service-learning is on the rise and beginning to be pursued by students, ahead of research, internships, and even study abroad.
Service Culture at Penn State, University Park

Pennsylvania State University’s University Park campus is located within the Borough of State College and College Township. State College is a home rule municipality in Centre County. The population of the six municipalities that make up greater State College is 96,000 residents – half of whom are Penn State students. Seventy-five percent of Borough residents are Penn State students. Home to thirty-eight nonprofit organizations, Centre County lacks no opportunities for engaging in the community and finding ways to serve (Goreham).

At Penn State, University Park campus, there are currently 46 service organizations. Service opportunities on the weekends include volunteer opportunities posted on www.volunteer.psu.edu. Service trips stem from clubs and classes, and the Office of Student Activities at Penn State sends two alternative spring break trips every year, with 18 students on each trip. However, none of these initiatives compare to the press, planning efforts, student involvement, or volunteer numbers that commit to a Penn State “Day of Service.” For the one-time and massive service opportunities such as the Days of Service, I question the ability of the program to execute a true service-learning model, and believe that despite their best efforts, the experience for volunteers and nonprofits follows a “volunteering” format, and not “service-learning.”

It is important before delving into the learning outcomes of service-learning, to first understand the presence of volunteerism at Penn State and the numbers concerning student volunteers going into the community. To get a better picture of the current culture of student engagement at Penn State, conclusions can be found from the survey “Civic Engagement Spring 2012,” conducted by Penn State Student Affairs Research and Assessment. The survey, administered by phone and email to full-time, degree-seeking, undergraduate students at University Park, aimed to gather student feedback on civic engagement. For this study, “civic engagement” is defined as “actions students may take to address public or social issues, including political participation or community service and students’ civic knowledge and values.” In total, 672 students completed the survey; of the respondents, 54% were female and 46% were male. Fifty percent were 18 to 20 years old, Seventy-four percent were White domestic students, 17% were domestic Students of Color, and 8% were international students (2% were of unknown race) (Student Affairs, 2012).

According to the survey, nearly two-thirds of students (65%) participated in community service activities during the academic year, a volunteering rate considerably higher than the Pennsylvania volunteerism rate overall. According to the 2011 Pennsylvania Civic Health Index, the Pennsylvania state volunteerism rate for 2010 was 27%. Women and on-campus residents were significantly more likely to have volunteered than men and off-campus residents. Concerning time commitments made by students (see Figure 1), 43% of students spent 1-5 hours doing community service per month, and 22% of students spent 6-10 hours per month. Seventy-nine percent reported spending 10 hours per month or less on community service activities. This is important in framing realistic expectations of time commitments that students would be willing to commit to service-learning.

Significantly, of those students who volunteered in community service, only 9% said their service was part of a credit-bearing course. The majority (66%) of volunteers said their community service activities were “entirely” or “mostly” through Penn State-sponsored activities. This will speak to our study of Penn State-sponsored activities including the Days of Service and ways they could follow a service-learning model in that these are the kinds of volunteer activities that most students are already engaged in. It would not be a matter of bringing students to an
entirely new program, but rather improving on an existing and accepted program that students are already familiar with, which increases the feasibility of the service-learning program reaching and affecting many Penn State students. The most common service activities/organizations that students reported participating in were service-oriented student organizations (e.g. Red Cross Club, Habitat for Humanity, Circle K, etc.) and Fresh START Day of Service.

**Figure 1: Hours per Month Students Spent in Community Service**

![Bar chart showing hours per month students spent in community service]

The study concluded that as far as experiential learning, Penn State places a high value on encouraging students to apply their skills outside the classroom, an experiential learning approach that provides benefits to students and often to the larger community. Approximately two-thirds of Penn State seniors reported having participated in a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment and approximately the same proportion reported having participated in community service or volunteer work (see Figure 2). The concept of students applying their skills outside of the classroom and benefiting the larger community directly connects to the possibilities in the service-learning approach, which would maximize such opportunities, and provide greater impact than the current volunteer and community service programs that exist.
Figure 2: Percentage of Seniors Engaging in Active Learning Outside of the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practicum, internship, field</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community service or volunteer</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate research</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NSSE 11 Exec summary

Additionally, the study asserts that Penn State seeks to produce students who will actively contribute to the welfare of their communities, large and small. Almost half of students (44% of first-years and 45% of seniors) indicated that they had participated in a community-based project, such as service learning, as part of a regular course. However, I would question and challenge how closely and accurately these service-learning programs follow the accepted service-learning criteria. When asked to what extent their Penn State experience contributed to development of a personal code of ethics, 60% of seniors indicated — quite a bit, or — very much (see Figure 3). Similarly, 46% of seniors reported the same for contributing to the welfare of their community. These out of the classroom experiences are instrumental in shaping the character of Penn State graduates and their ability to succeed in an environment that is not the university or academic world.

Figure 3: Percentage of Seniors Who Say Their Penn State Experience Contributed Quite a Bit or Very Much to their Development as Citizens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing a personal code of ethics</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to the welfare of your community**</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service-learning combines community service with instruction and reflection, and can positively influence new students’ civic and community engagement and their interaction with faculty and peers (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009). At University Park, 40% of first-year students participated in a community-based project (e.g., service-learning) as part of a regular course...
First-year service-learning participants were more often male (43%) than female (36%) and members of a racial/ethnic minority (43-44%) than White (35%). Compared to first-years who did not, first-years who participated in service-learning reported higher average levels of learning and development (Table 3). The differences were small to moderate in size, with the largest being in developing a deepened sense of spirituality. Unquestionably, all of the “Perceived Gains” listed are desires of institutions of developing graduates to be integral and successful members of society, and if service-learning will increase the impact of these gains, it should become more of a focus of the institution in furthering these gains.

Table 3: Comparison of Service-Learning Participants to Non-Participants (First-Year Students Only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Contribution to Perceived Gains</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking clearly and effectively</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting in local, state, or national elections</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving complex real-world problems</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a personal code of values and ethics</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to the welfare of your community</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a deepened sense of spirituality</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 t-tests comparing mean score differences; * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001
2 ES (effect size) = mean difference divided by the pooled standard deviation. Generally an effect size of .20 is considered small, .50 medium, and .80 and higher large.
Penn State will need to meet or surpass the national averages of service graduates and their loyalty to the institution, as we learning is not as prevalent or prioritized as highly as it is at other universities average was 40%. It is evident when looking at the two sets of data that Penn State service

Table 4: Percentage of Students Who Participated in High-Impact Practices by Student Characteristics – Penn State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First-Year Students (%)</th>
<th>Seniors (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Community</td>
<td>Service Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity°</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Hispanic</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial/ethnic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than full-time</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Generation°</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started here</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started elsewhere</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College°</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Architecture</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Sciences</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Studies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth &amp; Mineral Sciences</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Human Development</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Science Technology</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

° Students reported having “done” the activity for all high-impact practices except service learning, where they reported participating at least “sometimes” during the current school year.

Data not presented where n ≤ 30 for a particular group (American Indian/Alaskan Native FY/FR, School of Nursing FY/SR, DUS SR, and IST FY).

Neither parent holds a bachelor’s degree.

I believe it is important here to compare the findings of the national NSSE study on “Percentage of Students Who Participated in High-Impact Practices” with the same study done with Penn State University Park students, and to see the differences in percentages. As can be seen in Table 5, when it comes to service-learning experiences of first-year students, the percentiles ranged from 41-68% having participated in service-learning in their first-year at university. The overall average of the percentage of students with service-learning experience in their first year was 52%. Looking at the same study done with first-year Penn State students (Table 4), the population with service-learning experiences ranged from 27-50%, and the overall average was 40%. It is evident when looking at the two sets of data that Penn State service-learning is not as prevalent or prioritized as highly as it is at other universities, seeing as the average percentage of first-year students with service-learning experiences nationally is 12% higher than that of Penn State students. If Penn State wants to maximize the success of its graduates and their loyalty to the institution, as well as its competitiveness and ability to keep up with advances of other universities, service-learning will need to become more of a priority, and Penn State will need to meet or surpass the national averages of service-learning numbers.
Table 5: Percentage of Students Who Participated in High-Impact Practices by Institution and Student Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Characteristics</th>
<th>First-Year</th>
<th></th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Internship/Field Exp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commodity</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>with Faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gendera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity or internationalb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign or nonresident alien</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races/ethnicities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (First-Year &lt; 21, Senior &lt; 25)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nontraditional (First-Year 21+, Senior 25+)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-generationc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not first-generation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-generation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment statusd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living off campus</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living on campus</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major categorye</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; humanities</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological sciences, agriculture, natural resources</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical sciences, math, computer science</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications, media, public relations</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health professions</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social service professions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeclared/undeclared</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages are weighted by gender, enrollment, and institution size.

a. Percentage of students who responded “Some in progress” for all HIs except service-learning, for which they reported at least “Some” of their courses included a community-based project.

b. Gender, enrollment status, and race/ethnicity are institution-reported variables.

c. Neither parent holds a bachelor’s degree.

d. These are NSSE’s default related-major categories, based on students’ first reported majors. Excludes majors categorized as “all others.”
**Chapter 4**

**CASE STUDY: DAYS OF SERVICE**

**Purpose of Case Study**

In Edith Balbach’s article, “Using Case Studies to do Program Evaluation,” Balbach writes that evaluation is designed to document what happened in a program. The three elements of evaluation should show:

1) What actually occurred
2) Whether it had an impact, expected or unexpected
3) What links exist between a program and its observed impacts

Specifically looking at the format of the case study, a case study is meant to “study intensely one set (or unit) of something – programs, cities, worksites – as a distinct whole…a case study design focuses on a hand picked set.” This applied to my methods in choosing to study two mega “Days of Service” at Penn State – both were hand-picked using my personal observations and knowledge of the similar format of both programs, and their potential for change.

Additionally, Balbach writes that “the overall goal of a case study is to understand a select subset as a distinct whole in its particular context” (1999). In this context, State Day of Service and MLK Day of Service will serve as samples of the format and goals of Days of Service. However, it must be taken into account that Days of Service vary from university to university, and the conclusions gathered from these two case studies may not apply to all Days of Service as they may look different at multiple universities. Similarly, “A case study reveals a lot about the process and outcome…but it reveals less about a program’s overall impact.” This remains true looking at my case studies in that they are mainly qualitative studies, including my personal observations. It must be noted that the lack of empirical data in a case study and in my research will affect conclusions that are drawn, and that my conclusions will be subjective.

I saw the potential in utilizing case study evaluation because Balbach highlights the strengths of using case studies in the instance that, “it is premature to establish impact methods” and “projected program impacts are difficult to measure.” Because these Days of Service have only existed for a few years, measuring long-term impact would be difficult and could possibly lead to inaccuracies. Lastly, Balbach suggests utilizing case study evaluation if “understanding the program implementation in detail will help design future programs.” I will be employing these case studies because of their importance in using as base structures to see potential for change as growth as I propose future service-learning programs. In the studies I will use observation and document reviews. “Observation allows for more direct experience than an interview does, and can help clarify the context in which the program is implemented” and “document reviews can shed additional light on the outcome of an event.” The final step of my evaluation will be to “make responsible judgments about the links between the program as it was delivered and its observed impacts, or lack of observed impacts” (Balbach, 1999). It is in making these connections that I will apply knowledge gained from the case studies to future program possibilities.
Sources of Error

Undoubtedly it would be beneficial to have an inclusion of quantitative analyses, use evaluations filled out by participants, and interviews of event coordinators and participants, however due to time and IRB constraints, these methods could not be utilized. Four primary sources of error in case study evaluation include: Inaccuracies, bias, competing explanations, and selection mistakes.

Methods

I will first explore existing literature on Days of Service, or one-time mega-service opportunities, and also the proposed problems and benefits of such models.

Looking at State Day of Service and MLK Day of Service, in this order I will explore the case studies of each day:

1) History of the program
2) Format of the day
3) Logistics of the programs
4) Role of leaders
5) Role of volunteers
6) Goals of the program
7) Relationship to service-learning
   a. Look at 5 pillars of service-learning:
      i. Education
      ii. Meaningful Service
      iii. Reciprocity
      iv. Reflection
      v. Evaluation

Day of Service

A Day of Service is a one-time, daylong volunteer opportunity in which volunteers go to one local community nonprofit agency (although different groups of volunteers will go to different agencies) and volunteer for multiple hours, which may end with a reflection component, or may not. Each year, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) spearheads the effort to encourage Americans to volunteer in their communities during the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service and the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance. Campus-wide day-long or weekend service-learning activities are popular at many institutions because they involve hundreds of students with many community member and organizations, attract media attention, result in tangible and visible changes, offer students opportunities to explore social issues, and celebrate campus-community collaboration (Jacoby, 1996, p. 123).

There are existing critiques of the one-time, day of service model: “Learning is easily lost in massive one-day service events. The organizers of Chandler-Gilbert Community College’s Into the Streets day takes pains to keep reflection in for the 400 to 500 students involved.” Other critiques of one-day events include: “One-day projects are often seen as feel-good experiences that do little to effect real change…One-day projects provide a fusillade of service designed more to look good for pictures than to help the community…and one-day projects…ignore evaluation,
disregard learning, and run roughshod over community relationships.” However, there is undoubtedly still value in many aspects of the Days of Service. For example, “One-day events can be an effective method for introducing service to students. Minimum time commitment and maximum choice of site...while reflection and community building activities help them feel a part of a group” (Jacoby, 1996, p. 120).

Effective one-time and short-term service-learning experiences provide a balance of challenge (exposure to different people, environments, and issues) and support (thoughtful planning, group activities, student leadership). Although the depth, intensity, and purpose of these experiences are necessarily limited, nevertheless they can result in perceptual and attitudinal changes among participants and inspire their commitment to further service (Jacoby, 1996).

Basis for Case Selection

I have chosen to take a closer look at two of Penn State’s Days of Service: “State Day of Service” and “MLK Day of Service.” The criteria set for selecting these are based on proximity of time, duration, student participation, and longevity of program. Both days of service occur during the spring semester, and are open to any Penn State student to sign up and volunteer. Volunteers sign up via volunteer.psu.edu. The service days assume a mega-service day model in that they prepare for and recruit for volunteer numbers in the hundreds. On the service day, the student volunteers congregate in the morning to be split into smaller groups that will stay together for the day, each led by Penn State students. Groups are sent out to their respective local nonprofit agencies where they will volunteer for 3-5 hours that day. Nonprofit agencies chosen for both days of service overlap immensely, including animal shelters, assisted living homes, nature centers, and outdoor trash cleanup. Both events are annual.

State Day of Service:

1) History of the program

State Day of Service was officially created two years ago as a response to State Patty’s Day, a pseudo-holiday meant for excessive drinking created by a Penn State student in 2007 when Saint Patrick’s Day fell over spring break. The holiday does not paint Penn State students in a positive light, as hundreds of students and friends are arrested and sent to the hospital for alcohol poisoning every year, although these numbers are beginning to decrease every year. State Day of Service emerged in efforts to combat excessive drinking on the day of, and encouraged students to volunteer as an alternative to drinking.

2) Format of the day

For the format of State Day of Service, the day was broken into two shifts with volunteers serving from 10:00am – 1:00pm, and from 2:00pm-5:00pm. Volunteers met in Heritage Hall in the HUB Robeson Center and were sent to their service site with a team leader and a staff driver.
3) Logistics of the programs

This year for 2014, State Day of Service brought out 419 volunteers. I was hoping to compare these numbers to past years, however numbers for the day were not recorded in a central location in the database – this may be a result of the recently high turnover rate for the Director of Service position in Student Affairs.

This day of service was coordinated by the Service Program Director of Penn State and a student committee, and was sponsored by the Council of LionHearts, which is composed of one representative from each Penn State service organization. The Council of LionHearts’ mission is “To advance service throughout Penn State.” This year, State Day of Service brought out 419 student volunteers who clocked in more than 1,000 hours with 31 agencies in Centre County (Thomasson, 2014).

4) Role of leaders

Team leaders were recruited among Interfraternity Council leaders, including chapter presidents and board members, as well as members of the service board the Council of Lionhearts. Team leaders were asked to attend a meeting to learn about day-of event logistics and to be given resources on facilitating reflection conversations.

5) Role of volunteers

In a Daily Collegian article, a volunteer coordinator explains to volunteers their role on the Day of Service. She described that besides cleaning up the minimal trash present downtown, volunteers “walking around in orange vests and being sober in the neighborhood goes a long way in terms of showing that some students really do care.” A video recording was taken of the volunteer coordinator explaining this, and most telling were the reactions of the volunteers next to her. Volunteers rolled their eyes, snickered, gave thumbs up to the camera, and one yawned loudly while the volunteer coordinator spoke of the importance of the day. Undoubtedly, the volunteers, whether they were forced to be there or not, did not appreciate their role for the day as sending an anti-drinking message, with little actual service to complete. For this reason, the role of the volunteers was surface-level as far as actual service, and seemed to frustrate volunteers.

6) Goals of the program

The goals of the event: State Day of Service was initiated as a way to combat the negative effects of State Patty's Day by offering students a way to serve the local community and make a positive impact at agencies. In past years, the event has included individually organized service projects by the Council of Lionhearts service organizations. However, this year IFC and Panhellenic pledged support by involving their members, so the event grew significantly. As of this year, the Penn State Interfraternity Council has provided the most volunteers and significant funding for the event. In total, 463 men in fraternities volunteered this year, according to IFC President Dan Combs. However, in an online newspaper article, five male volunteers reported that they are in the process of pledging a fraternity, and were thus required to volunteer for community service on the drinking day. There were reports that all sanctioned fraternities were required to send members to participate in State Day of Service (Thomasson, 2014).
I take issue with the goal of the program to simply curb binge drinking in keeping students busy for a few hours volunteering as opposed to drinking. First, this sends the message of service being the antithesis of drinking, and that service may be seen as a “punishment” for condemned behavior such as binge drinking. As has been mentioned, it is so important to shape the culture of service at an institution in order to foster enthusiasm for service-learning. The purpose and stigma surrounding State Day of Service does exactly the opposite in demanding service not as an alternative to drinking, but as a distraction from drinking. In response to the bad press Penn State has received as a result of State Patty’s Day, and the party culture of Penn State being highlighted, the institution has pushed for high volunteer numbers as a press opportunity to display the many students that are serving, and not drinking. This push for as many volunteers and agencies as possible has undoubtedly monopolized energy that would otherwise be put into learning outcomes for students.

7) Relationship to service-learning
   a. Five pillars of service-learning:
      i. Education
         1. Education was not a planned part of the formal programming of the day – if students learned about the agency or purpose of the service, it was by chance that the volunteer coordinator offered information. In some cases, students may not have been aware of who or what they were serving.
      ii. Meaningful Service
         1. Service tasks included placing recycling and composting bins downtown, handing out water bottles, weeding, and painting walls. The needs of the community were not considered when choosing service agencies, but rather the most convenient, popular, and agencies who could handle the most students were elected. It appeared that agencies looked for work for volunteers to help with, resulting in fulfillment of superficial or artificial needs.
      iii. Reciprocity
         1. As a result of the lack of assessment of community needs, as well as little expectation of the agency aside from providing space for service, there was no evident reciprocity in these projects. The goal was to keep students occupied, and the effect on the community was not a priority.
      iv. Reflection
         1. Despite the presence of group leaders, reflection was not a component of the trips. Leaders were not trained in how to lead reflection, and the day looked most like a volunteer model in participants only being expected to serve for a few hours and then go home without discussion.
   v. Evaluation
      1. The lack of records concerning past years of the program, including absence of numbers, is one example of the lack of evaluation of the program, and one reason the day has remained static and uncritical in its purpose.
Table 6: State Day of Service 2014 - Participating Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adopt-A-Highway: SR 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Help Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Paul Lutheran Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Fire Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmcroft Senior Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCASD- Community Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Philatelic Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Lutheran Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCASD: Delta Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arboretum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhills Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlow Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arc of Centre County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartman Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaver's Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boalsburg Heritage Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart for Homeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills- Brittany House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre County Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills of Central PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre County Women's Resource Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krislund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Sweep (Borough of State College)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre Furnace Mansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nittany Greyhounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YSB- Bellefonte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre Region Senior Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oaks at Pleasant Gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus Chapel/Boal Mansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ReStore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required Volunteers

In studying the nature of State Day of Service, it raised concern of what happens when volunteers may be “required” to do service. While the exact nature of the day is not known exactly, the quote of fraternity pledges being forced to serve raises questions about the nature and direction of the program. By definition, volunteerism is usually nonobligatory helping (e.g., Penner, 2004). When universities or organizations actively encourage their students to volunteer in the community, however, the nature of volunteerism can become altered. There is a continuum of how much volunteering is “encouraged,” and at the extreme, the oxymoron of “required volunteerism” makes sense (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 1999).

Beehr writes of a study examined about required versus non-required volunteerism, internal and external motivation for volunteering, and attitudes of student volunteers toward their university. The sample was 273 college student non-volunteers, required volunteers, and non-required volunteers. Results found that non-required volunteers reported stronger commitment to and satisfaction with their university as well as stronger internal and weaker external motivation to volunteer than did required volunteers. As a result, it might be important to manage service-learning programs to enhance students’ experience of freedom in their choice to volunteer. “Students required to volunteer might be more likely to believe that volunteering is an imposition that takes away a valuable resource: time. Their external motivation is associated with resentment regarding the amount of time given to volunteering, an activity they would be less likely to freely choose than would the non-required volunteers. Universities requiring students to volunteer might receive fewer benefits than they would otherwise expect in the form of favorable student attitudes.” It also must be taken into consideration the impact required volunteers might have on community partnerships and relationships between institutions and community members, if negative service results from reluctant volunteers. State Day of Service raises concerns that “service” may come to be seen as “punishment” if participants are forced into the program. I propose that along with adopting service-learning models, universities stay away from required
volunteer hours and forced civic engagement. Even if a service-learning model is implemented, the negative effects of required volunteers will negate the impact of service-learning, and turn students away from service instead of pulling them towards it (Beehr et al., 2010).

**MLK Day of Service**

1) History of the program

Every year on national Martin Luther King Day, a national day of service is held to commemorate Martin Luther King Jr., and to promote his vision of peace and civic engagement. At Penn State, the service event is held while students have the holiday off from classes.

MLK Day of Service as part of the weeklong MLK Commemoration week began in 2009 – see the graphic below illustrating the progression of involvement. As is evident in the graph, this year had the least number of participants. This may be a result of surface-level, low-impact service opportunities and formatting of the day. Without changing this model, participant numbers may continue to decline until the program becomes obsolete.

**Figure 4: Penn State's MLK Day of Service - Participant Numbers**

![Figure 4: Penn State's MLK Day of Service - Participant Numbers](image)

2) Format of the day

On the actual day of service, volunteers will arrive to a central location in the HUB by 8:30 a.m., and will receive a free t-shirt, meet their team leader, and participate in an icebreaker with their group. The groups then leave for their respective service sites (Figure 4).
Participants will serve from 10:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m., and will return to campus by 4:00 p.m. where they will be served lunch. A wrap-up activity then ends the day – this past year participants made cards for Meals on Wheels, after which the day concluded (Rosenblum, 2014).

3) Logistics of the programs

The MLK Day of Service is traditionally coordinated by a student leader who is part of the MLK Commemoration Week executive board. Student leaders work with the director of service out of the Office of Student Activities when planning the day.

4) Role of leaders

At Penn State, team leaders submit applications to lead the MLK Day of Service during the fall semester, and after they are accepted, attend three training sessions before the actual day of service. At training #1, leader roles and expectations are reviewed using a PowerPoint presentation. Training #2 reviews the importance of icebreakers, reflection, and group cohesiveness. At training #3, the logistics of the day are broken down, and leaders are reminded of expectations of the day.

5) Role of volunteers

Volunteers for MLK Day of Service are expected to fill whatever needs the non-profit agency may have for that day. Many students from this year’s day of service were washing windows, cleaning dog cages, and taking down decorations. Most

6) Goals of the program

In the description of the national MLK Day of Service, the federal holiday should be observed as a national day of service – a “day on, not a day off.” The description continues, encouraging all types of service on the day, particularly “projects that connect participants to ongoing service throughout the year, have a lasting impact and build the capacity of an organization to launch new projects connect to the life and teaching of Dr. King and include time to reflect on his teachings.” (Corporation for National and Community Service).

7) Relationship to service-learning
   a. Five pillars of service-learning:
      i. Education
         1. Educating participants on the agencies or populations was not part of the planning process of the day, or the preparation of the team leaders. If participants received any education on the day of service, it was by chance that the agency employees spoke with them.
      ii. Meaningful Service
         1. Many of the service opportunities provided were again at popular agencies, with service opportunities not fulfilling needs that otherwise could not be met.
      iii. Reciprocity
         1. In reciprocity, ideally participants are perceived as colleagues, not as servers and clients – in this case, however, it would have seemed that
agencies had contracted or hired the participants for the kind of work they performed, including cleaning and office work. Learning was not reciprocal in that participants in some cases just performed a service, and did not communicate or come in contact with members of the community or the agency. Recipients were not empowered, they were simply assisted for a short time.

iv. Reflection
   1. Concerning reflection, team leaders are allowed to come up with their own activity, which often consists of an informal dialogue. The purpose of the reflection is to show students that their service means something, no matter how small it is. The time allotted for reflection is 15 minutes, usually executed at the service site or back at campus while eating.

v. Evaluation
   1. Short evaluations were completed by participants concerning their satisfaction of the day, but no comprehensive evaluation of the entire event was conducted.

Table 7: MLK Day of Service 2014 - Participating Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Red Cross Blood Drive</th>
<th>Nittany Greyhounds</th>
<th>St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSU Recycling/OPP</td>
<td>Child Development and Family Council</td>
<td>Hartman Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets come First</td>
<td>Elmcroft Senior Care</td>
<td>Camp Krislund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn State Learning</td>
<td>Zerby Gap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills of Central PA</td>
<td>FaithCentre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberry Fields A</td>
<td>Centre Peace, Inc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberry Fields B</td>
<td>Foxdale Village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberry Fields C</td>
<td>Boal Mansion Museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberry Fields D</td>
<td>Shavers Creek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberry Fields E</td>
<td>Schlow Centre Region Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problematizing Days of Service

Drawing on these case studies, I would argue that both State Day of Service and MLK Day of Service do not contain service-learning, and provide opportunities for improvement. I also believe that in these programs being tied to the institution of Penn State through the Office of Student Activities, the university sustains and promotes such programs simply for the number of students who get involved, and the opportunities for press that they provide. It appears that getting as many students volunteering as possible has taken priority over the learning-outcomes and impact of the service on agencies and students.

At the other end of the spectrum, Giles and Eyler (1994) make the valid point that “service experiences of limited duration may help to reshape the way students think about obligations and opportunities for service and about the people who need social services,” and as
was mentioned earlier, time obligation is the most often given reason for not volunteering. This stresses the promise that shorter service-learning programs may provide, and provoked me to not write-off one-time service programs, but rather explore their potential for growth.

Additionally, in *Service-learning in Higher Education*, Jacoby asserts that one-time and short-term service-learning experiences, similar to a “Day of Service,” still provide much opportunity for achieving service-learning goals if executed with such a model. But in order to achieve these outcomes, the simple and comfortable service opportunities that currently make up “Days of Service” will not suffice. “Sufficient challenge must also be presented to encourage students to question their preconceptions about the causes of personal hardship and the individuals they may encounter.” Taking into consideration the goals for each program, drastic changes would need to be taken in order to transform the model of the “Days of Service.” “Goals for introductory service-learning experiences include establishing a target number of participants, providing information to assist students to understand a social issue or community concern better, introducing students to the city or rural area in which the campus is located, and building a commitment among participants to engage further in service-learning (Jacoby, 1996). In my recommendations, I will outline the details and means to realize this type of effective introductory service-learning program.
Chapter 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Recognizing that empirical data is missing from the case studies, and only looking at the contents of the days in the context of the pillars of service-learning, I assert that these Days of Service lack substance and impact on the sides of the community, and Penn State student participants. In this section I will further my analysis of the Days of Service, outline my recommendations for future action, and draw final conclusions about the promise of service-learning.

While data is limited, looking at the five pillars of service-learning, as were defined earlier, below is a chart of my interpretation of the data, evaluating the service-learning components of each Day of Service.

Table 8: Days of Service Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillars of Service-Learning</th>
<th>MLK Day of Service</th>
<th>State Day of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful Service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0 = Not present
1 = Minimally present
2 = Moderately present
3 = Strong component

While the Days of Service do not assert to follow service-learning models, in comparing the experiences with the elements of service-learning, it is evident that the learning outcomes of the Days of Service are minimal, and that students are not benefiting to their fullest potential. For the large amount of energy and logistics that go into planning the days of service, and the minimal resulting learning and impact on the students, I believe the current model should be restructured and questioned in order to put the same amount of time and energy into a much more impactful and sustainable model, that is, one that accurately executes the service-learning model.

Looking at the current service day models that are in place, and thinking about what is missing from the outcomes of such programs, I assert that both programs lack education about the populations and agencies they are serving, defined and thoughtful learning goals, reciprocity in the learning process, fulfilling a community need in the service provided, and integrated and meaningful reflection. Additionally, “Developing goals for one-time or short-term service-learning experiences begins by assessing the motivations and the needs of the students, as well as the need expressed by the community” (Jacoby, 1996). These Days of Service appear to assume the needs of students in simply completing service hours, and of the community agency to have anyone come out to do any service they can think of for the number of people attending.
Typically goals for introductory service-learning experiences include establishing a target number of participants, providing information to assist students to understand a social issue or community concern better, introducing students to the city or rural area in which the campus is located, and building a commitment among participants to further engage in service-learning. This is where these days of service could come to, with intention, if transformed to a service-learning model.

Campus organizers of introductory service-learning projects need to collaborate with community representatives to establish shared expectations for students and community participants that are focused and short term in nature. Developing a plan of action that takes into consideration the interests of the student participants, the amount of time they have available, and the scope and difficulty of the service to be performed, as well as reaching agreement on the ways in which preparation for and reflection on the service experience will be included, are necessary to achieve meaningful, mutually beneficial, and well-designed service-learning experiences (Jacoby, 1996, p. 116).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PENN STATE

Create a service-learning model handbook for Penn State University:

I propose constructing a set of instructions and criteria that every service opportunity out of the Office of Student Activities of Penn State will have to abide by. This will create uniformity and expectations of Penn State run service opportunities – learning outcomes will always be maximized, and service will not be an isolated experience. As a university affiliated program, the service-learning model will ask students to do more than surface-level service, and will take these opportunities to ask students to employ critical thinking skills, and to foster innovative relationships with the surrounding community and nonprofits.

However, as has been warned earlier, there are many dangers that exist in “jumping into program development without putting in the time and effort to lay the groundwork for a program that is sustainable over time.” For this reason, I have chosen to keep Busch and Bucco’s recommendations for how to start a program with the “intention and capacity to grow and become institutionalized” in mind as I propose the exact criteria for Penn State service-learning programs.

Drawing on the existing literature and personal experience, I would assert that every program include these imperative service-learning elements:

1) Service-Learning Mission Statement:

i. Clear objectives for the service program that include goals for the students and the community. To make the program mutually beneficial, it must clearly benefit all parties, not just one or the other. These objectives should include learning outcomes, and should not be quantitatively based, as this will affect the entirety of the program planning and implementation. Busch and Bucco note the importance of “taking a close look at the institution’s mission statement and to craft a service-learning mission statement that links the program’s focus to the institutional mission.” Forming a mission statement for service-learning at Penn State will unify the programs and make sure
programs keep to the original mission of service-learning. This would respond to the abstract and unclear goals that are currently associated with State Day of Service and MLK State Day of Service.

ii. My mission statement for Penn State’s Service-Learning Programs:

1. To foster growth, both in the open-mindedness and empathy of students and community members, as well as awareness and advancement of local community needs. To educate students and agencies on the service-learning model so they will be best-prepared to actively learn and reflect in order to maximize learning-outcomes. To bring community engagement to the forefront, with learning grounded in academia and scholarship with respect to community development.

2) Program Leader Education:

i. The students (and faculty if applicable) must complete educational training on what service-learning is and the purpose of it. An effective way of instilling this knowledge would be an interactive online-module that asks leaders to understand the fundamental principles of service-learning, and how these principles should guide the planning process.

ii. According to Service-Learning in Higher Education, faculty must also be involved from the start...Top-level administrative support is crucial to building a sustainable program, garnering financial and public support, and encouraging the involvement of all members of the campus community (Jacoby, 1996).

3) Agency Selection:

i. Depending on the possibilities of the program, this is where a major shift would take place. Instead of contacting the most popular, convenient nonprofit agencies in Centre County, organizers would first go to local government or borough officials, and learn of the needs of the community at that time. After sorting through the feasibility of agencies connected to the need, and the services students could provide for them, only then will agencies be chosen. Jacoby writes that potential community partners should be consulted in the earliest phase of program development including residents, city management, community-based organization staff, etc (Jacoby, 1996).

4) Reciprocity

i. When contacted, nonprofit agencies will be asked about their needs and services students can provide. Additionally, organizers will partner with community agencies in creating educational materials for participants. Education will include the history and background of the agency, needs of the community that the agency addresses and the history of that need, the service that students will be providing and why it is necessary.
5) **Meaningful Service**  
   i. The service that students will provide should be one that could not be fulfilled without their help. Whether this includes physical tasks, time commitment, or knowledge set – meaningful service means that the participants are provided a service that the staff at the nonprofit could not execute themselves. The volunteers are needed in this capacity, and this assures reciprocity in the process. Ideally, students will be working alongside community members at the service site.

6) **Marketing**  
   i. Projects will be advertised as service-learning, and when students sign up online for the projects, they will be taken to a five-minute video/module on what service-learning. While participants are not required to fully understand the service-learning model, they should grasp that the expectations of these projects differ from just volunteering, and they should be prepared to expect education, reciprocity, service, and reflection in the program.

7) **Education**  
   i. Participants will receive education before and during service – this may be in the form of emails, orientations, or presentations. During service it may constitute of a tour of the non-profit agency, speaking with the volunteer coordinator or staff at the nonprofit, or community members connected to the service.

8) **Reflection**  
   i. Reflection will be constant and dynamic. Part of team leading will be receiving training in how to lead effective reflection and how to facilitate challenging conversations. Reflection should be both informal and formal. A space and time for reflection when the service is over should be available, and always connected to a service opportunity.

9) **Reorientation**  
   i. Participants should be notified of future opportunities to serve and stay engaged, or other service organizations or clubs related to the service they did that they may want to consider. The program should not exist in isolation and connection to related opportunities should be offered.

10) **Evaluation**  
   i. As is stated in Service-Learning in Higher Education, evaluation should be formal or informal, qualitative or quantitative. “The program should create an annual report that highlights accomplishments, strengths, areas of concerns, partnerships, placements, course offerings, results of program evaluations, and long-term goals” (Jacoby, 1996).
Utilizing these ten necessary components of service-learning and the pillars of service-learning, I will outline the explicit possibilities of these guidelines I’ve provided in my proposed new service program to replace days of service. My hopes are that the Office of Student Activities and Student Affairs may draw on or use inspiration from this program to revamp State Day of Service and MLK Day of Service to more substantive, effective, and meaningful programs.

New Penn State Service-Learning Program: *Serve and Submerge*

**Format:**

- Service would only take place on one day for a few hours, but the process and focus would last one week – instead of a “day of service” it would be considered a “service program.”
- Twice a month – three groups of 15 students on each day sent out. On special occasions (MLK day and State Patty’s Day) numbers can be amplified, but service-learning model would still have to be followed.
- Students will sign up online two weeks in advance. The trips will still be available to any Penn State student, and its description will mention service-learning, but since students may not know what this is before the trip, will more so describe the program as immersive in which students will not only serve, but they will also learn and reflect as part of the process.
- Every trip will have two leaders who are part of a planning team, were integral in the planning process, have completed service-learning training, and have an established relationship with the nonprofit agency.
- The leaders will email the participants three days before the trip with educational information, including a link to the agency’s website, personal information they have gathered, how to prepare physically and mentally for the trip that day – is there anything they should be aware of before arriving there? Participants will also be given the service-learning video/presentation in this email, which they will be asked to watch/read. The leader will also ask participants to email them any questions they may have about the service, the population, or about service-learning.
- On the day of the service, each group of 15 (and two leaders) will gather in separate locations on campus, and do a short pre-reflection. Here they will do icebreakers to get to know one another, and will discuss their preconceived notions going into the trip. What do they think about the population they will be serving? Are there stereotypes/prejudices that they believe? Do they have previous experience with this kind of work? What do they know about Centre County and the community outside of the university? These can be informal conversations, or questions noted on chart paper if this helps engage the group. The goals of this short session will be to get participants to think critically before the service begins.
- At the service site: Ideally each group of 15 would attend a different agency, and do service for at least four hours. Upon arrival, on-site coordinators would give the group a tour of the facility, and explain the history and purpose of the agency in more detail. They would also explain the need for their service that day. The on-site coordinator should be prepared to provide this information and immersion because of previous communication and clarification from the student leaders of the trip.
• Students and leaders should then engage in service, hopefully alongside agency workers or community members. This is a special opportunity for students to learn from people outside of the university community, and hear personal anecdotes if others may be affected by the service provided. This opportunity for service and engagement through conversation will give participants a more well-rounded understanding of the problems affecting the community and get students to think communally and see themselves as part of a bigger whole.

• Throughout the service, leaders should prompt reflection and engagement while serving, if possible. This may include walking around to check on participants, asking how they are doing, if this is what they expected, are they surprised by anything, have they gotten a chance to talk to members of the community/agency volunteers? This is an opportunity for participants to be active in their service, not only in the physical sense but also in the reciprocal learning process.

• When the service is over and groups return to campus, they will again meet at their respective spaces where they met in the morning. This reflection portion will serve as a debrief, but not a conclusive one – this is hopefully where critical thinking and discussions of prejudice, difference, and social justice will come into play. There are many different formats this reflection may take shape in – whichever is chosen should be thoroughly planned and practiced based on the service-learning training the leaders have undergone. Effective examples I have seen include: After volunteering at a thrift store part of a restorative justice program, working next to inmates for the day. Post-reflection may include – Three finger check-in – participants answer three questions, one assigned to each finger. Questions may include: What was something that surprised you today? What do you know now about restorative justice that you didn’t know before? What do you think of when you hear the word inmate – why, does that matter? How are you affected by the restorative justice system/ are you? What systems/institutions working in our society did you see in action today? Can we isolate the restorative justice system from racism, prejudice, sexism, hatred, etc.? If not, what connections did you see? This can also be done using a ball of yarn and connecting comments from one to another, passing the yarn as participants share and hold their end, creating a web. Activities should not distract from discussions, but rather lend structure and intention to the discussion. A more formal setting with obvious preparation may foster more thoughtful and serious conversation.

• This is an opportunity for participants to transform the “What” of their day (the surface-level details of what they did) to the “So What” – why did it matter; what was the significance of what they learned. Lessons, concerns, and challenges should be shared so that the learning experience is a shared one, and that students have the opportunity to hear opposing views and to still engage in conversation with those. Leaders will be trained in how to facilitate these discussions, including asking open-ended questions, encouraging participants not to generalize and to speak for themselves using “I” statements, giving quieter participants the opportunity to share and managing talkative participants, and asking participants to push their thoughts in simply asking “why?” after they share, getting them to challenge themselves to dig deeper. Reflection should not last more than 1 hour. If the service/agency did not provide an opportunity for discussion of prejudice, difference, or social justice, then look to the topic of civic engagement.

• Evaluation: Participants should take their time to fill out evaluations of the day, changes they would propose, and if/how their mindsets were changed at all. The evaluation should be structured in a way that it could be used to re-evaluate the programs/service
sites if need be, as re-evaluation should be a constant as the service-learning model is beginning to be implemented. Evaluations should also be given to and collected from community agencies – were their needs met, did they have any concerns/challenges with participants, what would they change about the service provided, etc. Additionally, the evaluation should serve as a tool for measuring impact of the trip, including learning outcomes, shifts in mindset, likeliness to serve in the future, etc.

• After the trip: Participants should be provided with opportunities to continue to serve or to learn more about the population they engaged. Or, if a students’ interest was sparked in something other than service but related to learning outcomes, perhaps attending multicultural events or becoming a trip leader, there will be a space to indicate new interests on the evaluation, which the leaders will then use to recommend specific organizations or events to participants, all done via email. Leaders will encourage future engagement in various capacities, and will hopefully remind participants of what they learned when they attended the trip a few days earlier, and encourage continuous learning.

• Whatever the service may be, there is always room for discussing the “Active Citizen” model – why they serve, why they don’t, where they want to be, etc (see Figure 5). “The Active Citizen Continuum” addresses the process by which students become engaged, and how experiences may lead to sustained engagement. Looking at the continuum, Service-learning can address the critique of some that view service-learning as a one-time, temporary investment by well-intentioned students. “The Active Citizen Continuum” displays the process of students and community members learning about engagement, and the process by which they become engaged at a significant level, and possibly become long-term contributors to society. I see service-learning as the catalyst in transforming the “volunteer” into the “conscientious citizen” in that service-learning challenges participants to ask why, and to understand the root causes of community needs. This model will enable participants to see their potential in becoming a truly engaged citizen.

Figure 5: The Active Citizen Continuum

![The Active Citizen Continuum](source: alternativebreaks.org)
Conclusions

Unquestionably, service-learning has incredible potential in creating more socially aware, civically engaged citizens through academia and hands-on service experiences. The Penn State service programs currently in place, especially Days of Service, provide a space for service-learning programming to be implemented and to transform the relationship between students and the local community. Having seen the impact of service-learning, I end with a call to action: for institutions to re-evaluate their current service programs in place, and consider the potential for revamping such programs and incorporating service-learning in order to address the true meaning of “service” that is part of so many institutions’ mission statements. Issues that I would argue for further exploration of that were not fully expanded in this study include:

- Community agencies and community members’ opinions of university service programs
- Debates and complexities surrounding community engagement
- Critiques of the service-learning model
- Challenges large universities may face in engaging local communities
- Challenges of implementing new programming that replaces existing programs
- Academic grounding in systems that make up communities, and how understandings of politics, economy, the environment, culture, and more can impact service-learning experiences

Service-learning programs should not emerge in a rushed or impulsive fashion – for service-learning to have life-changing, community-shaping impacts, time must be taken to fully understand the complexities and inner workings of what makes service-learning tick. Just categorizing a program as “service-learning” is not enough – it must reflect thoughtful, transformative planning that aims more than anything to maximize both service and learning, and the mutual benefits of all persons and communities involved.

Final Thoughts

While I recognize that not all these changes will be able to take place at once, my hope is to invoke a discussion that will critically look at programs in place, and see who they are benefitting and the goals of the program. I believe the limited data available about State Day of Service and MLK Day of Service is substantial enough to justify a need for change – and the change should be a shift to a service-learning program. Definitions and criteria for these programs will be a necessity in creating viable and impactful programs, as well as constant evaluation of the programs in place. Beyond just the Penn State campus, service-learning has the potential to accomplish even more than what universities and institutions set out to do. The ability of service-learning to bring diversity, critical-thinking, and a global perspective to both participants and community members, could address critiques of higher-education and produce civically engaged, empathetic citizens. The consequences of enabling our future leaders to truly understand and act on empathy could eliminate hatred and judgment that riddles the world. Higher education is weighted with the ability to bring peace and wisdom to every generation, and in making true service-learning opportunities a priority at institutions across the globe, this could become a reality.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY PARK
• B.A. in English, minors in International Studies, Film, and Spanish  Expected May 2014
• Schreyer Honors College; Paterno Fellow
• IES Study Abroad Spring 2013 – Granada, Spain

Leadership

STUDENTS ENGAGING STUDENTS
Penn State Leadership and Service Organization – Outreach Director
• Manages 12 committee members in planning and leading service projects
• Facilitates workshops for Penn State clubs in leadership and communication skills

“INTO THE STREETS”
Service trips in State College led by students
• Trains 45 club members in leading service-learning trips to community agencies
• Promotes service-learning education and reflection for volunteers during and after service

SERVICE TRIPS PLANNING TEAM
Alternative Spring Break and Urban Service Experience – Coordinator
• Plans for weeklong service and volunteer projects in W.V. and D.C.
• Leads 20 students in volunteering and discussing diversity, poverty, and social justice

Professional Experience

THE SYNERGOS INSTITUTE – New York, NY  
Global Nonprofit that partners with global corporations to create social impact Consulting Services – Intern
• Researched and brainstormed corporate social responsibility ideas for companies
• Updated prospecting timeline, maintained donor contact information, and designed new website

Awards and Honors

• Mary Lee Hobbs Steel Emerging Leader Award - 2013
• Smile for Sam Scholarship - 2014
• 2nd Place in Paterno Fellows Collegiate Laws of Life Essay Contest - 2013
• Student Leader Scholarship - 2013
• Benjamin Cantwell Memorial Scholarship in the College of the Liberal Arts - 2012
• 3rd place for Mathew Mihelcic Poetry Award – 2011
• Milton B. Dolinger Endowed Scholarship in the College of the Liberal Arts – 2012