

Service Learning Overview

What is service-learning?

“Service-learning is fundamentally an academic endeavor in which service is an integrated component of a course. It is a credit-bearing, experiential education approach that involves an established community partnership guided by the expertise of professors and community-based practitioners, working together with students to address community needs.” (Elon University)

Service-learning seeks to:

- Advance student learning
- Provide a holistic educational experience
- Prepare leaders for active engagement within the city of Portland and the greater world

One of the most valuable aspects of service-learning is its ability to teach engagement to college students. Service-learning, by its dual nature of mutual exchange, provides avenues for students to interact with external nonprofits and small businesses, learn through experience, and bring those experiences back into the classroom for further academic enrichment, all the while fulfilling a need in the community.

A brief history

- Recognized as a pedagogy in 1969
- Continued to develop as an educational field within higher education
- National service efforts launched nationwide in the mid 1980s
- At present over 1,100 colleges and universities—representing six million students—integrate service-learning into academic courses and co-curricular programming

Further References

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