Service-Learning

Service-Learning at Boise State University exists to foster citizenship through active involvement in academically-based community service. This new program, known as the Fourth Credit Option, was introduced to the campus as the result of a student-initiated fee proposal developed by students and staff involved with the Volunteer Services Board.

Fourth Credit Option

Outreach and development throughout the Fall 1997 semester led to the Spring 1998 piloting of the first three courses (Customer Behavior, Learning and Health Promotion) to offer the Fourth Credit Option. To stimulate interest in this new program, a direct mailer was sent to 82 students enrolled in the courses offering a service-learning component and in-class presentations were made to promote the program. Twenty-one students registered for these one-credit “Special Topics” courses which are being offered by faculty in the Colleges of Business, Social Sciences and Public Affairs, and Education.

To fulfill the volunteer component of the service-learning courses, outreach to the community was initiated with various organizations such the Boise School District’s Partners in Education, Boise’s Promise, Treasure Valley United Way, South West Idaho Directors of Volunteer Services, Idaho Commission for National and Community Service, and various non-profit agencies. Partnerships have been developed with local non-profit agencies such as the following:

- Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Idaho
- Garden City Library
- Silver Sage Girl Scout Council
- Neighborhood Housing Services
- Better Business Bureau
- Child Care Connections
- Immunize by Two Coalition
- Central District Health-Immunization Program
- Central District Health-WIC Program

The service that the students provide within these agencies is directly relevant to their course work. Examples of service projects include: working with an after-school tutoring program to serve as tutors and develop the marketing strategy necessary to attract much-needed volunteers; creating questionnaires for consumer groups, such as teenagers and seniors, to understand their needs and design programs to address those needs; developing a Community Outreach Civic Program to increase computer access and knowledge for low-income individuals; presenting a program designed to address issues relevant to young teens to at-risk sixth-grade girls and develop a marketing plan to attract participants and volunteers; addressing the potential causes behind low immunization rates in the state of Idaho, and; determining the attitudes or perceptions behind the low utilization rates of the WIC program.

The students taking the Fourth Credit Option all participated in program and agency orientations addressing the necessary policies and guidelines and introducing them to the agency’s unique mission and student volunteer projects. They also participated in reflection sessions designed to help them understand the strategies and techniques involved in reflecting through a personal journal or as a group.

Volunteer Advisory Board
The Volunteer Advisory Board was expanded to include two student representatives; a community representative; a Dean; six faculty representing different colleges; a former and present Volunteer Services Board Directors; staff representing the President’s Office, the Student Support Program, the Student Union and Activities, and University Relations; the Volunteer Services Board Advisor, and; the Service-Learning Coordinator (see Appendix) in order to provide oversight and guidance for the Service-Learning and Volunteer Services programs. During the Fall semester, interested Volunteer Advisory Board members were provided with an orientation to volunteer services, service-learning and the Fourth Credit Option. This orientation was then used as the basis for presentations to various faculty and colleges. The Board as a whole helped to create or give direction on much of the information produced for the Service-Learning Program including:

- program timeline;
- program logistics defined in a faculty handout;
- Service-Learning Mission Statement (see Appendix);
- budget delineation between the student-run Volunteer Services Board and the Service-Learning Program, and;
- the awarding of planning grants to faculty offering the Fourth Credit Option.

The Board’s guidance and support as well as awareness of the campus and how to introduce a new program has helped to make this new program a success.

Program Development

Research of pertinent service-learning related literature and programs has been ongoing to create many of the materials listed below and develop a timeline. Some of the sources include Campus Compact publications; literature from successful programs such as those at the University of Utah, Portland State University, and Georgetown University, and; information posted on national service-learning internet sites. Materials that have been created specifically for our program or adapted from other programs, with input from the service-learning faculty members, include:

- student, faculty, and agency guidelines and contracts;
- course design criteria;
- reflection strategies;
- assessment and evaluation tools;
- promotional material, (i.e. program information in the undergraduate catalog, a student promotional flyer and responses to inquiries about the program), and; course orientation.

In December, a fact-finding trip to the University of Utah’s Volunteer Program was conducted to discuss and observe their program and participate in a faculty training session that will be utilized with our service-learning faculty.

Fourth Credit Option Goals for Spring Semester

- To complete outreach to deans, associate deans, and department chairs in the academic colleges
- To conduct research with the participating students, faculty and agencies
- To facilitate the reflection components
- To coordinate the ongoing interaction of all the partners
- To identify and train seven to ten service-learning faculty
- To complete and distribute assessment results
• To design and facilitate a faculty workshop on the Fourth Credit Option
• To receive approval from Faculty Senate to create a consistent course number for the Fourth Credit Option

Volunteer Advisory Board Members

Dr. Linda Anooshian  Professor, Psychology
Dr. Bruce Ballenger  Assistant Professor, English
Greg Blaesing  Director of auxiliary Services, Student Union & Activities
Dr. Joie Burns  Assistant Professor, Radiological Sciences
Toni Lawson  Director, Volunteer Services Board
Dr. Christine Loucks  Professor, Economics
Dr. Lamont Lyons  Professor, Teacher Education
Gregory Martinez  Director, Student Support Program
Dr. Jane Ollenburger  Dean, College of Social Science and Public Affairs
Rose Olson  Coordinator, Service-Learning Program
Mike Quinn  Student, Senate Appointee
Maureen Sigler  Associate Director,
Marianne Snodgrass
Amy Stahl
Theresa TenEyck