

Executive Summary

Q: A brief recap or highlights of the entire program review document. (500 words or less)

- Highlight major strengths and weakness.
- Highlight areas for improvement over the next 3-6 years.

Response:

The strengths of the Service Learning program relate to relations with its community, faculty, and students. Community building and the spirit of creating partnerships in the community are essential in developing a successful program. Currently the Program has contracted with over 200 public and private non-profit community agencies and programs. The range of opportunities covers youth, seniors, education, health services, political affairs, homelessness, environmental, and animal services. Over the years, the Program has sponsored a yearly Volunteer Fair in which agencies recruit volunteers. Following the Fair the Program organized an Agency Network Meeting where LAVC faculty, students and community agencies networked and discussed common issues of concern. In addition, the Program was partnered with the LAVC's "LA Fellows Program" for dislocated workers and shared its community agencies connections. Also, the program was named to the 2009 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll by the Corporation for National and Community Service. This selection to the Honor Roll is recognition from the highest levels of the federal government of LAVC's commitment to service and civic engagement on its campus and in its community.

Another strength is its relations with faculty and the extent to which the Program has been able to engage with over 100 instructors. The Program offers a new teaching modality to faculty which encourages students to engage in leadership and civic activities, and engage more with their class. Faculty relations is further strengthened through the creation of a Faculty Advisory Committee where discussions center on faculty and student recruitment, Professional Development and STARS activities and providing faculty workshops during the year and at Opening Day.

The Program's success is also built on students' volunteer experiences. When LAVC students help to strengthen their community by meeting social and human needs, they will perform better in their academic work and feel more connected to the college. Every year the success rate of Service Learning students compared to non-service learning students is higher than the success rate of non-Service Learning students in the same class. Similarly, the retention rate of Service Learning students is always higher as compared to the retention rate of non-Service Learning students in the same class. Also, career decision-making becomes more meaningful when learning is applied in the "real world." Students apply critical thinking and writing skills by keeping journals and preparing analyses of their volunteer work, further developing their sense of civic responsibility. The Program coordinates activities throughout the campus community and participates in all campus programs such as Welcome Day, Club Days and joint sponsored programs with Tau Alpha Epsilon such as annual Beach Clean Up Day, Arbor Day and STARS workshops.

A long term weakness is addressing the lack of funding and staff for the Program. The Program began with a 3-year FSS grant from the Chancellor's Office. Afterwards, there were no additional financial means to support the program. Currently, I am volunteering my own time to direct the program with no funding from the college. I am granted a work study student to help announce the program to students in their classes as well as maintain a database of students completing the program.

Participants

Q: Please indicate the individuals that participated in the completion of this program review.

Response:

Validation & Feedback

Validation Comments for Program

Q:

Response:

Service Learning provides a valuable experience for students resulting in higher success rates for participating students.

Comments for Review Committees

Q:

Response: