SERVICE-LEARNING EVALUATION
2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT

THE CARLSON LEADERSHIP & PUBLIC SERVICE CENTER
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
Undergraduate Academic Affairs
OVERVIEW

The University of Washington’s Carlson Leadership & Public Service Center develops service-learning, community-based participatory research, and service opportunities for UW students that sustain reciprocal partnerships, deepen learning, advance civic leadership, and contribute to our greater community.

Service-Learning
Service-learning is a learning experience that combines service with the community with structured preparation and reflection opportunities. Service opportunities are tied to academic coursework and address concerns that are identified and articulated by the community. As students engage in service-learning, they learn about the context in which service is provided, the connection between their service and their academic coursework, and their roles as community members.

Over the course of the 2014-2015 academic year – including Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer quarters – Carlson Center staff worked to connect a combined total of 2,920 students (in 110 courses) to service-learning opportunities.

These students worked with 375 community partner organizations, helping to address a wide variety of non-profit and public sector interests and needs. Through these efforts, students completed over 58,400 hours\(^1\) of service through their service-learning courses. The estimated net worth of these student service hours totals $1,608,336.\(^2\)

The number of students that participated in service-learning during the 2014-2015 academic year was slightly lower than the year prior, but continues to represent a notable increase in the breadth of the UW’s service-learning program since 2008-2009.

\(^1\)Assuming each student completed 20 hours of service over the course of a quarter (the minimum requirement).
\(^2\)Independent Sector estimated an hour of volunteer service in Washington State to be worth $27.54 in 2014, as reported in March 2015 (https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time).
SERVICE-LEARNING ASSESSMENT

In order to continuously improve the experience of service-learning for our students and the community partners they engage with, the Carlson Center administers an online end-of-quarter survey to service-learners in all service-learning courses.

During the 2014-2015 academic year, 46.83% (n=1,368) of students who participated in service-learning responded to the survey. Of those respondents, **94% stated they would recommend service-learning to their fellow students!**

Questions are asked in yes/no, 1-to-5 rating scale, or qualitative commentary formats, and are designed to gather students’ feedback about: the integration of service and academic course content, experiences with their community partner organization “hosts,” reflections of the effectiveness of the Carlson Center’s coordination of service-learning opportunities and support of students throughout the quarter and qualitative considerations of their overall service-learning experiences.

Participating in Service-Learning Courses

Students participated in 110 service-learning classes over the course of the 2014-2015 academic year. Courses included all levels of undergraduate academics and a broad range of topic areas (see below). Prior to the start of each academic term, the Carlson Center curated lists of service-learning opportunities for students to choose from, to ensure thematic alignment between the ideas, questions and content that would be explored in the classroom--and the work students would engage in with partner organizations in the community throughout the quarter.

### Programs Supported by the Carlson Center in 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian-American Studies</th>
<th>Philosophy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Ethnic Studies</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>General Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of the Environment</td>
<td>Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community and Environmental Planning</td>
<td>Honors Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Childhood and Family Studies</td>
<td>Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program on the Environment</td>
<td>Comparative and Trans-regional History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Science and Resource Management</td>
<td>Jackson School of International Studies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Law, Society and Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Nursing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Social Welfare (BASW)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>School of Public Health</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Robinson Center Transition School</td>
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<td>International Studies Theories and Practices</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Students consistently indicated an appreciation for the opportunity to explore themes discussed in the classroom, in real-world settings:

“[Service-learning] is a unique opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge learned within a classroom to real-life situations in the outside world. It is a far more valuable experience than simply volunteering because of the critical thinking, evaluation and debrief that occurs throughout the experience, which allows students participating in service-learning to really solidify their understanding of the concepts within the course.”

- Student jointly enrolled in SPH 49A: Public Health Capstone and GEOG 331/ HONORS 231B: Global Poverty and Care serving with Noel House

“[Service-learning] can help translate what you’re learning about in class into real experiences. It raised new questions about the course material I was learning about and also made the material more interesting as I was consistently working with people to which some of those histories and conflicts affect”.

- Student in JSIS B 324: Immigration serving with Refugee Women’s Alliance

### Student Reflections on Service-Learning Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have learned more in this class than I would have if I had not participated in a service experience.</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My service experience helped me to understand the relevance of this course’s subject matter in my everyday life.</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was satisfied with the inclusion of service-learning in this course.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on my experience in this course, I believe more courses at the University of Washington should incorporate a service-learning component.</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My service-learning experience in this course will have an impact on my future academic and career choices.</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Serving with Community Partner Organizations

The 375 partner organizations that welcomed students as service-learners in 2014-2015 collectively represent--and address--an extremely broad range of community-defined interests and needs throughout Seattle. These organizations work with and support a wide variety of communities, and engage in a diverse array of service delivery methods.

Most students signed up for service opportunities with organizations the Carlson Center consistently partners with. A smaller number of students engaged in “self-placement” volunteer work, with organizations with which they had existing personal connections or service relationships.
My service-learning experience changed the way I viewed the social issue that my service-learning site addresses.

The Carlson Center should continue to partner with this organization.

I was satisfied with the volunteer portion of my service-learning experience.

There were ample opportunities to contribute significantly to the mission of the organization.

The supervision from the organization was adequate.

There was strong communication from the organization supervisor/staff while on and off the site.

The orientation/training at my service-learning site from the supervisor was useful.

My service-learning experience changed the way I viewed the social issue that my service-learning site addresses.
Students also shared excitement about, and gratitude for their experiences with partner organizations:

“Service-learning was the highlight of my week each week. I volunteered my time with the UW Dream Project this quarter. I worked at Foster High School in Tukwila. I enjoyed working with my three mentees at Foster so much because I learned just as much from them as they learned from me.”

- Student in Sociology 292: Public Schools in America serving with the UW Dream Project

“The service-learning was a great way for me to get involved in the community. It also taught me a lot about the area and other people who are different from me. It really helped me to understand others.”

- Student in Anthropology 101: Exploring Social Anthropology serving with ROOTS Young Adult Shelter

“It takes a lot of commitment but there is a sense of fulfillment from participating in this. To know that I might have impacted someone’s life, no matter how much or how little, is empowering.”

- Student in English 121: Composition Social Issues (Literacy as Social Action) serving with Chinese Information and Service Center

“Having a volunteer component of a class is a very unique and special experience to have. Serving the world around us and then reflecting on how your work is connected to what you’re learning is so powerful. One thing to keep in mind is that unless you’ve done the same specific volunteer work, serving at a new place will be nothing like you expect it to be. You may be well informed of the tasks you will perform, but the actual experience you go through will be something that you really just can’t prepare; and that’s a great thing. Especially for a university class because college is about trying new things, learning more about who you are and what you like. Service learning is a way to explore different types of lives out in the “real world”, but also a way to explore yourself and acquire great new skills and life lessons.”

- Student in Sociology 110: Survey Sociology serving with Full Life Care

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- Student in Sociology 110: Survey Sociology serving with Full Life Care
Working with the Carlson Center

The Carlson Center works with community partners, faculty, and course instructors and students to coordinate all logistical aspects of the service-learning experience.

Of the 1,368 respondents to end-of-quarter surveys in the 2014-2015 academic year, 31.51% had contacted the Carlson Center by phone, email, or in person (n=431) at some point during their term of service-learning. Students who actively contacted the Carlson Center notably had a more positive experience with the Carlson Center, and found its communications about service-learning logistics and considerations more useful.

**Student Feedback about Working with the Carlson Center**

- **Contacted the Carlson Center**
- **Did not contact the Carlson Center**

The presentation by the Carlson Center during the first week of class was valuable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>The presentation by the Carlson Center during the first week of class was valuable.</td>
<td>4.15</td>
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Emails sent throughout the quarter from the Carlson Center were informative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Emails sent throughout the quarter from the Carlson Center were informative.</td>
<td>3.89</td>
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I was satisfied with the overall support I received from the Carlson Center throughout the quarter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was satisfied with the overall support I received from the Carlson Center throughout the quarter.</td>
<td>4.42</td>
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**“I would say that there is nothing that could have been improved because my experience went very well. From the initial orientation form the Carlson Center, to the very easily accessible website and registration, to the amazing experience at the actual service-learning site!”**

- Student in Early Childhood and Family Studies 303A: Service-Learning and Research serving with the UW Pipeline Project

**“Service-learning is a great opportunity to receive very hands-on experience. Through the Carlson Center and the course you take, they find great service-learning organizations that you may not be able to find on your own, or have an internship-like experience if you applied to volunteer on your own.”**

- Student in Social Welfare 315A: Community Service Learning serving with the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority
Room for Growth

In addition to serving as a platform for students to share the valuable and meaningful aspects of service-learning, the surveys also offer an avenue for collecting feedback about opportunities for growth in the UW’s service-learning program. The surveys invite students to share suggestions related to the three stakeholder groups discussed above - faculty and course instructors, community partner organizations and the Carlson Center staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty and Course Instructors</th>
<th>Community Partners</th>
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<tr>
<td>• More explicit integration of their service-learning experiences with course content and activities/discussions.</td>
<td>• Position descriptions in EXPO accurately reflecting the work students will take on and more flexible shift times that align with student schedules, when possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Carlson Center</td>
<td>• Learning about the context surrounding the organizations’ work, and background about the community members they serve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More choices to select from, when registering for service-learning positions.</td>
<td>• More organized support around volunteer responsibilities, including clear expectations and relevant training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased communication with partner organizations, to ensure alignment about service-learning expectations.</td>
<td>• To feel well-utilized while engaged in service work, and to understand how their efforts are relevant to the organizations’ success.</td>
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</table>
FINAL THOUGHTS

The student feedback above offers helpful guidance as the Carlson Center continues to steward partnerships with community-based organizations and collaborates with course instructors. As this work moves forward, the numeric and narrative data that students provided in the 2014-2015 surveys reflect the overall strength of the UW’s service-learning program.

Students highlighted the value of service-learning for a variety of reasons, including: exploring, building relationships in and making contributions to the community beyond campus; examining the themes and ideas being discussed in class out in the “real world” in nuanced ways; developing “hands-on” professional experience and practicing hard and soft skills; and learning about future job and community engagement opportunities.

While the survey data reflects slightly deeper personal impact and fulfillment through service-learning amongst students enrolled in higher-level courses than those who participated in lower-level classes, students across all course levels agreed upon their satisfaction with the volunteer portion of their experiences – and their willingness to recommend service-learning to other students. An overwhelming average of 94% of survey respondents indicated they would suggest service-learning to others!

As in past years, students reported that the service-learning program administered by the Carlson Center offers a meaningful entry point into community involvement for a large majority of its participants. They conveyed that service-learning provided them with valuable context and experience that correlated well with their course material. Student comments largely reflect that their experiences were both personally rewarding, and enhanced their grasp of course material.

“Service learning is a way for you to navigate and experience a volunteer opportunity. Depending on what you do, you will learn how to communicate, how to be responsible, and how to be committed.”

- Student in Program on the Environment 100 Environmental Foundations serving with Solid Ground

“[Service-learning] causes you to reflect over the implications and actualities of what “service” truly is. Service-learning enables you to connect academic and course material with the real world and experiential knowledge.”

- Student jointly enrolled in English 121: Composition Social Issues (Writing as Change) and Sociology 270: Social Problems serving with El Centro de la Raza
APPENDIX:
2014–2015 STUDENT SERVICE-LEARNING SURVEY QUESTIONS

The following questions are posed to service-learners via an optional online survey distributed 1-2 weeks prior to the last week of classes.

Carlson Center Questions

- After the initial class presentation by Carlson Center staff, did you contact the Carlson Center or come into the Carlson Center's office? (Yes or No)
- Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
  (1-Strongly Disagree; 5-Strongly Agree)
  o Communication from the Carlson Center staff (via email, phone, in person) was helpful.
  o The presentation by the Carlson Center during the first week of class was valuable.
  o The Carlson Center was effective in problem solving my service-learning situation.
  o Emails sent throughout the quarter from the Carlson Center were informative.
  o I was satisfied with the overall support I received from the Carlson Center throughout the quarter.

Community Partner Organization Questions

- What was the name of your service-learning organization?
  (Select from a drop-down menu with names of all of the organizations in EXPO, the Carlson Center’s online database.)
- Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
  (1-Strongly Disagree; 5-Strongly Agree)
  o When viewing service-learning opportunities matched with the course, there was a wide variety of organizations to choose from.
  o The organization descriptions on the registration website were informative.
  o Your position description on the registration website accurately depicted the work you did at your service-learning site.
- From the following eight factors, please select which factors were most important to you when choosing a service-learning position. (Please choose at least one.)
  o Population the organization serves
  o Mission of the organization
  o Description of the position
  o Career exploration
  o Skill-building
  o Position time or schedule
  o Location or ease of access
  o Desire to volunteer with friends
- Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
  (1-Strongly Disagree; 5-Strongly Agree)
  o The orientation/training at my service-learning site from the supervisor was useful.
  o There were ample opportunities to contribute significantly to the mission of the organization.
  o The supervision from the organization while on site was adequate.
There was strong communication from the organization supervisor/staff while on and off the site.
I believe that the Carlson Center should continue to partner with this organization.
I was satisfied with the volunteer portion of my service-learning experience.
My service-learning experience changed the way I viewed the social issue that my service-learning site addresses.

Service-Learning Course Questions

• For how many classes did you participate in service-learning this quarter?
• In which service-learning course were you enrolled?
  (Choose one and answer the question below. If you were registered for more than one service-learning course, you will have the opportunity to select a second course on a later screen and answer the same set of questions.)
• Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
  (1-Strongly Disagree; 5-Strongly Agree)
  o I have learned more in this class than I would have if I had not participated in a service experience.
  o My service experience helped me to understand the relevance of this course's subject matter in everyday life.
  o I was satisfied with the inclusion of service-learning in this course.
  o Based on my experience in this course, I believe more courses at the University of Washington should include a service-learning component.
  o My service-learning experience in this course will have an impact on my future academic and career choices.
• Please answer yes or no to the following questions, (Yes or No)
  o Prior to your service-learning class this quarter, have you previously participated in a volunteer experience?
  o Prior to your service-learning class this quarter, have you previously taken a service-learning class in a college setting (UW or other)?
  o Would you recommend service-learning to another student?

Reflective Questions

• ...Why or why not? What would you tell them about service-learning?
• How could your service-learning experience have been improved?
• Do you have any additional comments regarding your experience working with the Carlson Center, your service-learning organization, or your service-learning course?

Student Information Questions

• Are you an international student?
• In what year of college are you?
• Can Carlson Center staff contact you to further discuss your service-learning experience?
• What is your UW email address?