

**Faculty Policy Committee on Service-Learning
University of California at Berkeley**

Criteria for Service-Learning Course Review at UC Berkeley
(February 15, 2002)

The service-learning course review process was established to ensure that academic quality is maintained in all credit bearing activities that utilize service-learning as an instructional strategy. A goal of this process is to ensure that all activities identified as service-learning meet a set of minimum standards for academic rigor.

It is acknowledged that there are many different types of community-based learning opportunities, some of which are integrated with courses and offer students credit. Academic policies at UC Berkeley suggest that academic credit (units offered through departments) are given based on student learning. In this regard, service to the community, albeit an important experience, does not qualify for earning academic units unless the activity is connected to an organized curriculum with clear learning objectives for students.

Technically, students in community service-learning activities do not receive credit for tutoring; rather, they receive units based on what they have learned from their experience. However, there are many courses currently being offered in which students receive credit for service activities that contain no formalized course structure or curriculum. In some cases, these courses are called service-learning when in fact they are actually *credit-bearing community service* activities.

At a minimum, all *service-learning* courses must meet the following broad criteria:

- a) the course has a formal, academic curriculum that is rooted in the discipline in which the course is being offered;
- b) the course contains a set of organized community-based learning activities through which students directly serve a constituency as a means to address an identified community need; and
- c) the course provides structured opportunities for students to connect their service activities to the course curriculum.

What isn't service-learning?

A course that has students meet each week to reflect on what happened at the service site, for example, is not service-learning because the course does not meet the first criterion; "reflecting on what happened at the service site", albeit important, does not comprise academic curriculum. *This is a credit-bearing community service experience.*

A courses in which students go into the community to observe or conduct research, for example, would not be service-learning, since observing and conducting research do not constitute providing a *direct* service that addresses a community need. *This is a field studies course.*

A course that has students go into the community to do projects, but the projects are never discussed during the course, would also not be service-learning since these courses do not meet the last criterion. *This is a project-based learning course.*

Types of service-learning courses at UC Berkeley

In general, there are three types of service-learning courses prevalent at UC Berkeley:

1) Co-curricular service-learning: In co-curricular service-learning courses, all three minimum requirements of service-learning are met. These courses are usually elective courses that are not usually a central part of a students' degree program. Co-curricular service-learning courses tend to have a strong service component that has a strong influence on the nature and focus of the curriculum. These courses do not need to be part of a department's ongoing course offerings. These courses can be offered without approval from the department academic review committee or the campus committee on courses. The instructor of these courses need not hold a faculty appointment.

Typically, these courses have a 97/197 or 98/198 course designation.

2) Academic service-learning: In academic service-learning courses, all three minimum requirements of service-learning are met. These courses are usually ongoing, departmental courses that have a relationship to students' degree program. Academic service-learning courses tend to have a strong, academic content that could, without the service component, stand on its own as an individual, academic course. In academic service-learning courses, the academic content drives the types of community service activities in which students are engaged. These courses are typically offered only after receiving approval by the department's academic review committee or the campus committee on courses. The instructors of academic service-learning hold faculty appointments.

Typically these courses have a regular departmental course number.

3) Service-learning Internships: In service-learning internships, all three minimum requirements of service-learning are met. These courses are usually departmental courses that have a relationship to individual students' degree program. Service-learning internships tend to engage advanced students, who already have a strong academic background, in activities in which they apply their knowledge in professionally-based settings that serve the public good. In service-learning internships, a students' academic expertise is tapped and applied to an authentic setting. Oftentimes, a service-learning internship experience results in a culminating academic or professional product that is submitted formally for faculty review. Typically, service-learning internships are offered in graduate programs and professional schools and enroll students individually or in small groups. The instructors of academic service-learning hold faculty appointments.

Typically these courses have a regular departmental course number or use 299/399/499 course designations.