Service Learning

Policy/Procedure

Faculty Information

In May 2005, Dickinson College instituted a faculty stipend initiative to stimulate and support development of service-learning courses. This stipend applied to the development of service-learning components of existing courses or the development of new courses. Six stipends were awarded for the current year.

“Service-learning” is a method of providing students with community-based experience that benefits, whether through direct service or applied research, community partners and enhances the students’ academic experience. The community experience is integrated into the course’s readings, lectures, discussion, and writing assignments. Students are evaluated in terms of regular academic standards, not for the services provided.

At Dickinson, support for service-learning course development is part of our broader interest in supporting innovative and active pedagogies, and specifically community-based learning experiences.

Faculty may use these stipends to develop a service-learning component to an existing course, to add significant new dimensions to an existing service-learning course, or to develop a new service-learning course. Faculty receiving these stipends will be asked to participate in a "service-learning study group." This informal study group will allow participating faculty to benefit from each others’ experiences, build upon existing models and resources, and create a distinctively Dickinson service-learning knowledge base that can be shared with the faculty at-large.

Specifically, participating faculty will be asked to:

1. Teach a service-learning course during the upcoming academic year.

2. Participate in a day-long session in May-June to explore the conceptual issues in service-learning course development and to refine their own early planning for course development.

3. Participate in a ½ day session in late summer: Faculty will present their preliminary course designs and plans for community partnerships for informal peer feedback.

4. Participate in four lunch meetings during the academic year (October, November, March, April) while the group of courses are running to share experiences

5. Prepare an evaluative report of their service-learning teaching experience.
6. Participating faculty will be supported in the development and implementation of their service-learning course. Upon request, Shalom Staub, Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs, will assist in identifying appropriate community partnerships or appropriate resource materials, such as discipline-specific service-learning models, service-learning based assignments, or student or course evaluation tools.

Faculty interested in applying for this course development stipend should contact Shalom Staub for the application form. The application asks faculty members to briefly address the following questions:

- What are the academic/intellectual issues which you plan to address through the service-learning experience?

- With which community contacts or community partners do you think you will develop this service-learning experience?

- What, if known, might be the nature of the community experience? (For example, community service, or community-based research that creates some value for the community partner.) How do you anticipate that the community will benefit from the service/research?

- If the proposal is to modify an existing course, you will be asked to submit a syllabus and indicate how you think the service-learning experience will impact the existing course. If the proposal is to develop a new course, you will be asked to provide information about the course and how service-learning will be integrated into its design. Any new course proposal will have to be reviewed by APSC.

*Proposals will be reviewed by the Service-Learning Subcommittee to the APSC, composed of Kirsten Guss (liaison to APSC) Susan Rose (Community Studies Center Director), Sarah Bair and Wendell Smith.*

**Student Information**

Any student looking to practically apply their classroom education in the real world should consider service-learning. Until recently the only way to get this kind of experience was to arrange for an internship; now, more and more departments are integrating service-service learning courses into the curriculum. The "Courses" button on the Service Learning website (www.dickinson.edu/departments/servicelearning/) will lead you to currently designated "SL" classes, as well as examples of other service-learning courses taught at Dickinson.

Dickinson College faculty members are constantly developing new service-learning course offerings. If there is a topic that you would like to see incorporated into the service-learning offerings, we encourage you to speak to the specific faculty who teach in that area, and of course, we encourage you to contact Assistant Provost Shalom Staub (staubs@dickinson.edu), who is responsible for developing service-learning at Dickinson.

There are a few core requirements that you should expect:
• An academic class with course readings, lectures and discussions that will directly link to issues and topics that will arise during your community-based experience.

• Journaling or other writing assignments that will help you document what you are experiencing and how you are progressing.

• Grading based in terms of regular academic standards, not based on service-provided. Time spent working with a community partner, either in direct service to community members or engaging in research that addresses a community issue.

• Faculty closely coordinating with the community partner in order to ensure the highest level of integration between community work and course content.

• A sense of responsibility to your work. This course takes you beyond the classroom to address a community need, where your work will be influencing people's lives. As a result, punctuality and an appropriate sense of respect need to be practiced.

Related Information

History/Revision Information

Responsible Office/Division:

Effective Date:

Last Amended Date:

Next Review Date:

Also Found In: Service Learning Web Site (www.dickinson.edu/departments/servicelearning/)