

Ad Hoc Service-Learning Committee

Final Report

Service-learning is an integral component of the 2002- 2012 MTSU Academic Master Plan. *Service-learning* as pedagogy unites the three goals of the MTSU Academic Master Plan: enhancement of academic quality, enhancement of student-centered learning, and development of community partnerships. Specifically we find in the MTSU Academic Master Plan (page 16) this statement: “Middle Tennessee State University will pursue *service-learning* activities with community partners to promote student-centered education and faculty development.” In response to this strategic direction, the Ad Hoc *Service-Learning* Committee was established in January 2004 and charged to “explore *service-learning* as pedagogy to enhance student centered learning at MTSU.” The committee was asked to:

1. Determine the current use of *service-learning* as pedagogy on campus.
2. Identify faculty who are currently using or might be interested in incorporating *service-learning* into their teaching.
3. Identify strategies for the professional development of faculty in the pedagogy.
4. Identify strategies for the development of additional *service-learning* courses and how these courses coalesce with the greater array of curricular opportunities at MTSU.
5. Develop and continually support community partnerships.*

*The committee strongly feels that we need to add community partnership development and support to our charge.

The Ad Hoc *Service-Learning* Committee deliberated about its charge for several weeks and suggested that a definition of *service-learning* for the MTSU community was needed before any recommendations were made. The Committee proposed the following definition for *service-learning* at MTSU:

“*Service-learning* is a student centered teaching method that involves academic instruction in partnership with MTSU and the larger community. The primary focus of *service-learning* is to enhance critical and reflective thinking and civic responsibility. *Service-learning* programs involve students in organized community partnerships that address local needs while developing their academic skills and sense of civic responsibility and community.”

The primary goal of the MTSU *service-learning* program is to attain the status of national role model for such programs. To achieve this goal, it is imperative that the administrative support structure be put in place at the earliest possible time. The common denominator of the most successful *service learning* programs around the country is that they have support from the highest levels of academic administration. This reconfirms the strategies presented in the Academic Master Plan under Goal III (page 19) dealing with Partnerships. The second short term strategy (page 20) of Goal III in the Academic Master Plan is: "Middle Tennessee State University will provide an administrative structure to coordinate all University partnerships.

Middle Tennessee State University will promote collaboration across departments and programs to focus on student-centered initiatives and **service-learning** opportunities. As the University expands its partnership arrangements, there will be an evident need for administrative oversight in order to ensure coordination, facilitate communication, and monitor progress." We recommend the establishment of a Vice-Provost for University/Community Partnerships. Administration and coordination of **service-learning** would be a major function of this position along with QEP and other university/community partnerships. A Director for **service-learning** would be a natural evolution in the chain of command of the experience-based learning support structure. **Service-learning** coordinators would be located in each of the five academic colleges.

The Ad Hoc **Service-Learning** Committee has investigated the current use of **service-learning** as pedagogy on campus and has identified faculty who are currently using or might be interested in incorporating **service-learning** in their teaching. The following are representative examples of **service-learning** on the MTSU campus:

- *In English 3520 (Professional Writing) students practice writing and designing skills for professional and technical genres by working with a variety of organizations with ties to the MTSU campus and community. Students have created flyers to advertise a Greenway cleanup with the Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation Department, as well as creating brochures for their community centers. They have produced informational labels for Recycle Rutherford and have helped develop information packets for the New Modern Public School program, a non-profit organization that builds schools in rural India. Other partners for brochure and web-design projects have included the Center for Economic Education, the Tennessee Environmental Educator's Association, the Solar Bike Rayce Team, and the Tennessee Amphibian Monitoring Program, as well as the departments of Nursing, Communication Studies, Aerospace, English, and Biology.*
- *In the Community Health and Obstetrics courses, students meet course objectives for caring for the 'community' through several venues. They have participated in organized health screenings and preventative health measures with underserved populations such as elders and indigent pregnant females.*
- *Often our nursing students partner with students in medicine programs (Meharry), student health service for our university community, and MTSU Human Science students, to care for the underserved, non-insured in our society. Here are examples of places where students have practiced nursing and health care and the types of projects and services that they have provided:*
 - *Diabetes education, screening for depression and other health-related events – elder residential facilities in Rutherford and Davidson counties*
 - *Blood pressure screenings in many places in the community, including the homeless under bridges in Nashville (students work in pairs)*
 - *"Healthy Eating – Healthy Snacks" at the Boys and Girls Club*
 - *Blood pressure screenings, smoking cessation programs, safety in the home setting – Salvation Army, Homeless Shelters, Room at the Inn*
 - *Partner with MTMC for Parent/Child Festival each fall – health promotion and disease prevention*

- *Partner with Human Science students for physical exams, scoliosis screenings in middle schools, nutrition tips in local high schools*
 - *Health Education Updates – partner with MTSU health services to keep their bulletin board filled with current health information specific to the college age population*
 - *High Schools – Teacher Education on fetal alcohol syndrome, CPR; student hygiene, hand washing, bicycle safety, Halloween safety.*
- *In Women's Studies 2100, students were assigned as tutors in the mentoring program for women pursuing their GED at the Family Resource Centers. Not only did they provide tutoring, but they were also tasked with finding out the kinds of problems the women faced day to day so that we could develop an advocacy project based on those findings. From that experience, they learned that many of those women became pregnant as teenagers and subsequently had been in poverty, dropped out of school, etc. The students decided to advocate for better programs to prevent teen pregnancy, researched state programs from around the country, and ultimately proposed to Representative Bart Gordon their ideas for federal teen pregnancy prevention programs.*
 - *In Social Work Practice II, students partnered with the South Maney Avenue Community Development Coalition to develop an organizational assessment, a strategic plan for the organization, and a strategic plan for dealing with the various changes being implemented by the city. These assignments reflect the course goals of understanding and applying organizational theories and management techniques, conducting community needs assessments and planning on a community level, etc.*
 - *In Child Development and Family Studies 4391, (Aging, Health and Development, AHeAD is a fully integrated **service-learning** course. The purpose of the program is to affect positively the sense of well-being, physical fitness, and health status of older individuals. It also allows students to learn about aging, old age, history, and the different cultures present in our particular environment. AHeAD serves as a catalyst for the integration of various age, racial, and ethnic groups, the University, and the community. Community partners include local senior centers and long-term care facilities. Students may earn three credits per semester as they devote hours to activities and workshops for active and institutionalized elders.*
 - *CDFS 4310 (Adolescent Development) is a fully integrated **service-learning** course. CDFS 4310 students serve as mentors to adolescents participating in the Gear Up College Preparatory Institute for inner city adolescents. Students have one week of intensive lectures and training in adolescent development, cultural diversity, and mentoring skills. They then spend three weeks in one- to- one interaction with the Gear Up participants. During this time they keep guided journals to encourage reflection and critical thinking. Their final project is an analytical paper in which they integrate the lectures with their individual experiences.*
 - *HSC 4060/SOC 4150 (Family Centered Community Building) is a two semester sequential class. The first semester is an on-line course covering a variety of topics that*

*demonstrate the relationship of individuals, families, and communities. The second semester students are involved in a **service-learning** experience in which they apply the concepts covered in the first semester. The projects are identified by community members as meeting a need of the community. Students plan and implement the project along with reflective journaling.*

- *In selected sections of Experimental Physical Science, PSCI 4030, 15% of the course requirement is to spend 6 hours in a classroom with a mentoring teacher. The students are required to keep a reflective journal of the experience, which includes interviewing the teacher on his/her educational background, teaching philosophy, teaching career, resources used to teach science, and what content they will teach. Two hours of classroom observation of science or science integration is required. Three hours of teaching, preferably, two hours team-teaching and one hour solo. They must teach at least one science lesson. It must be student-centered, with hands-on/minds-on activities. The final field experience journal must provide a reflection section on what they learned about teaching and what they learned about themselves. The mentoring teacher must fill out an evaluation form, which is one third of the grade. Since this was tested in Spring 2000, more than 500 students have worked in over 20 counties in Tennessee and in several other states. During the summer of 2000 and 2001, some of the students were required to work with the Boys & Girls Club to fulfill this requirement.*
- *In selected UH 3500 (Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar), students participate in a variety of **service-learning** initiatives designed to augment their classroom experience. Some students taking UH 3500, "Revisiting and Re-visioning the Hometown" this coming semester will partner with selected students from Central Middle School and Oakland High School to help the Bradley Academy Museum begin a large-scale community oral history project. Other UH 3500 students will help to develop a community artistic exchange between Oakland and a Metro high school that will culminate in the high school students collaborating on mural projects in Murfreesboro and in Nashville. Still other UH 3500 students will create and implement **service-learning** initiatives specifically related to their classroom and overall academic and intellectual experiences. **Service-learning** has also played a role in other previous Honors Interdisciplinary Seminars. Last year, students taking the "Hometown" class assisted a group of LaVergne High School AP students in creating a guide-book for the City of LaVergne, and also worked with selected Campus School classes to help create and implement the school's 75th anniversary celebration. In 2000, students taking UH 4600, "The Jefferson Springs Project" participated in a variety of **service-learning** activities as they worked on a community-based collaborative project: a novella depicting life in 1920s Jefferson Springs and Rutherford County. In Fall 2004, UH3500 students enrolled in "Revisiting and Re-visioning the Hometown" will also take UH3001, the Honors **Service-Learning Practicum**, a one-credit course designed to promote **service-learning** initiatives as learning laboratories.*
- *UNIV 3001 (**Service-Learning Practicum**) will provide students an opportunity to enrich their classroom experience by taking part in projects designed to promote community service and self-discovery. Students will participate in a project-based, interactive*

*partnership with a community entity and gain valuable experience as mentors and leaders in an atmosphere where their presence and efforts can fill a community need. Such enrichment ultimately will enable participating students to function as leaders and citizens with experience in how to integrate civic awareness and engagement into their academic and professional pursuits. In addition to offering students the opportunity to reflect on themselves as thinkers, learners, and citizens, **Service-Learning** practicum will emphasize the importance of synthesizing academic and community worlds. The subject of the course will vary according to the instructor, but all projects will promote community service and discovery learning. As a multi-discipline endeavor, faculty from all colleges and departments will be encouraged to develop both discipline-specific and broad-based initiatives.*

Having defined **service-learning** at MTSU and after careful thought and discussion, the Committee proposed short-term (18 months) and long-term (5 years) goals and recommendations for a **service-learning** initiative based on the MTSU campus. The charges (listed on page 1 of this report) that these goals and recommendations address are listed in parentheses.

Short Term Goals and Recommendations

- Establish a Vice-Provost for University/Community Partnerships. (2, 3, 54, 5)
- Incorporate **service-learning** in the process for promotion and tenure and annual appraisal for faculty. This would allow new faculty to feel comfortable expending their time in this critical pedagogy. (2, 3, 4, 5)
- Allow faculty to integrate the one-hour **service-learning** practicum into their faculty workload. (2, 3, 4, 5)
- Develop and maintain a **service-learning** website (1 – 5)
 - Initial work has been completed on this website by Dr. Trixie Smith and her students.
 - Dr. Trixie Smith and Dr. Judith Iriarte-Gross have met with Ms. Sylvia Brace about designing the **service-learning** website.
 - Funds have been allocated from Academic Affairs for the development and maintenance of this website.
- Establish a **service-learning** course description in the catalog (2, 4)
- Establish and fund an annual **service-learning** budget (2, 3, 4, 5)
- Appoint a **Service-learning** Program Administrator (a faculty member with six hours reassigned time and extensive experience in **service-learning**) and support staff (1 – 5)
 - Appoint a graduate assistant who has an interest in **service-learning**, to be involved with **Service-learning** Advisory Board activities and with a goal of **service-learning** research publications
 - Fund a staff position (1/2 secretary)
- Appoint a **service-learning** faculty member from each college to serve on a **Service-learning** Advisory Board (1-5)
 - The **service-learning** faculty will receive reassigned time (minimum three hours, estimated costs = \$2100.00 per faculty, \$700.00 per credit hour adjunct pay)

- The **service-learning** faculty will be expected to teach one S-L class each academic year
- Create a **Service-learning** Advisory Board with the Program Administrator serving as the chair. The **Service-learning** Advisory Board will consist of representation from each college, Student Affairs, Development, and community partners (3, 4, 5)
- Establish a **Service-learning** Award (possibly through the Foundation) for a faculty member, a student, and a community partner (3, 4, 5)
- Hold an annual **service-learning** workshop for faculty development with estimated costs of \$3000 (2, 3, 4, 5)
- Present **service-learning** activities/programs at the annual Faculty Showcase of research, scholarship, and creative activity (3, 4)
- Design and publish a tri-fold, two color brochure to introduce and publicize **service-learning** to new and current students (2, 3, 4, 5)
 - Funds are allocated from the **service-learning** account in Academic Affairs for the student tri-fold informational flyer.
- Allocate funds to travel to local, regional, national and international **service-learning** conferences and to attend **service-learning** conferences that are more program applied so that we may study models for program development in Tennessee (3, 4, 5)
 - Three members of this committee attended the ACHEP COPC Grant Writing Workshop on March 31, 2004, followed by the tenth anniversary conference of the Office of University Partnerships (OUP), a unit of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in New Orleans from April 1-3, 2004.
- Continue university membership in and support of Campus Compact (3, 4, 5)
 - The university's contact for Campus Compact is Faye Johnson. It is expected that the proposed **Service-learning** Program Administrator will assume the role of contact for Campus Compact.
- Continue membership in and support of The American Democracy Project (3, 4, 5)
 - Fund the attendance of one member of the Ad Hoc Service-Learning committee who will use both the American Democracy Project and **service-learning** in a course.

Long Term Goals and Recommendations

- Develop a **service-learning** brochure to encourage community partnerships (5)
- Develop a **service-learning** brochure for development (3, 4, 5)
- Create a **service-learning** learning community on campus (3, 4, 5)
- Establish permanent **service-learning** Center on campus (3, 4, 5)
- Fund an Endowed Chair for **service-learning** on campus (3, 4, 5)
- Become a state and national model for **service-learning** (2, 3, 4, 5)