

Service-Learning Focus Group

Key Findings:

During this past winter, two focus groups were held of Service-Learning Scholar program participants to help assess the quality of the University of Utah's service-learning program. On the whole, the results verified that the University offers high quality service-learning opportunities for students. However there is room from improvement. Student comments in the focus group confirmed some concerns of program administrators and brought to light others. The comments confirmed the need for stronger partnerships between faculty and their community partners as well as the need for better training for faculty.

Actions Taken:

The Service-Learning Advisory Committee was presented with the results from the focus group and identified priority areas for improvement. At the beginning of fall semester 2009, the Bennion Center will co-host a "Faculty Institute" that includes in-depth training for faculty in the areas of syllabus development, initiating and sustaining community partnerships, and connecting service to coursework through critical reflection. The Bennion Center is also launching a Faculty Mentor Network for peers to interact and support each other's efforts. Faculty pairs will identify their goals and program administrators will assist them throughout the year to ensure progress. Additionally, program administrators have begun to develop procedures to evaluate faculty/community partnerships to provide support where needed.