

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE: RECRUITING AND RETAINING MICHIGAN SERVICE SCHOLARS

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Issue(s) Being Addressed:

The Michigan Service Scholars Program is a wonderful opportunity for students who are involved in service during their time in college. This AmeriCorps program rewards students who are dedicating a significant amount of their free time to service activities including tutoring or mentoring children or volunteering with a non-profit organization. There are many students who can greatly benefit from this program once they become aware of it.

Actions to Consider:

Identify potential Michigan Service Scholars Members: There are many different populations of students to target when recruiting for Michigan Service Scholars. Some of these include:

- Students working or volunteering regularly within the Community Service Office.
- Students involved in programs offered through the Community Service Office including America Reads, Alternative Breaks, mentoring programs, and service learning projects.
- Student teachers placed in K12 schools that are not making Adequate Yearly Progress.
- Students involved in service-related student organizations or Greek organizations that make volunteering a priority.
- Students who regularly volunteer with or work for non-profit organizations.
- Teacher Education, Child Development, and Recreation majors who often volunteer with educational programs for children either through a class requirement or for experience.

Methods for Recruiting Michigan Service Scholars: Once the potential members have been identified there are quite a few options for informing them about the program and signing them up to become a member.

- Develop and distribute fliers and brochures, create bulletin board displays, and distribute informational e-mails to various student listserves. Make sure to tell people up front about what kinds of service qualify, how to apply, and direct them to MCC's website.
- Find out who is volunteering through your office and ask them to join directly.
- Present to or meet with leaders of student organizations, non-profit organizations, program trainings, or orientations.
- Establish a partnership with your school's Student Teaching Coordinator or Office to best connect with student teachers about the program. This could be through presenting in classes or e-mailing student teachers directly.
- Encourage current members to recruit others or offer small rewards or prizes if they recruit someone new for the program.

Retaining Michigan Service Scholars and Facilitating Completion of the Program: Once students are recruited and have attended training, it is very important to make sure they have the resources and encouragement needed to complete their 300 hours. Some options for retaining members include:

- Maintain regular contact with members through e-mail.
- Create a listserv for members to share volunteer opportunities in the community.
- Send each member a regular update about the number of hours they have completed.
- Encourage members to complete their service hours often, and regularly thank them for their efforts.
- Highlight individual members' successes, stories, and completion of the program to all members.
- Recognize members' efforts through service awards on campus or through MCC.