



(M.U.S.I.C.)
“Emerging Risk Management Issues in
Student Affairs”
MARCH 18, 2009
Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant,

1:00 – 2:00 pm Service Learning Programs – Risk Management Issues

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Definition

Service-learning: is a method of teaching, learning and reflecting that combines academic classroom curriculum with meaningful service. More specifically, it integrates meaningful community service with instruction and [reflection](#) to enrich the learning experience, teach [civic responsibility](#), encourage lifelong [civic engagement](#), and strengthen communities for the common good. (Wikipedia)

Building Campus Partnerships for Best Practice in Service-Learning at BGSU

Background: The Office of Service-Learning at BGSU, reporting to the Division of Academic Affairs, was created in fall 2006. 2008-2009 is really only our second full operational year. BGSU has a strong commitment to community based learning, with a number of faculty engaged in service-learning, some strong internship programs, and forms of immersion and study away/study abroad trips. We also have a campus culture characterized by meaningful collaborations between academic affairs and student affairs. What we had not done was to grow an effective institutional infrastructure to support best practice in service-learning – which is why we invested in an organizational structure to move our program in this direction.

Context: Our focus for our service-learning program is to infuse community based learning across our curriculum. This means that we need to engage not just those already experienced with taking students out into the community, but train and support faculty who have no experience with things like field trips, internships, and community based projects.

What do we have?

- What policies already exist?
- What resources already exist?
- Who are our experts?
- What resources can we access?

What do we want?

- Update our waivers to more effectively address service-learning.
- Review our system for background checks.
- Review our travel and transportation guidelines and make them clearer and more accessible for faculty and students.
- Develop effective and accessible policies for the implementation of service-learning classes and projects.
- Develop standardized model for community partner agreements.
- Develop a system for service-learning course registration.
- Develop a system for assessing potential risks during the SL course registration process.

What have we learned?

- Develop partnerships internally and externally.
- Involve our colleagues in risk management from the beginning to ensure best practices.
- You do not have to re-invent the wheel – there are lots of good models out there.
- Be patient – it takes time to build effective infrastructures with limited resources.

Key Issues to Consider:

Develop strong partnerships
Tag Service-Learning Classes in the Course Catalog
Transportation
Criminal Background Check and Fingerprinting
Evaluate the Program
Waiver
What to do if something goes wrong

Resources:

Serving Safely: http://www.cacampuscompact.org/cacc_publications/serving_safely.html

Michigan Campus Compact: www.micampuscompact.org

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