**Wilbur Wright College**

**ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE LEARNING IN THE SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

**REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FALL 2013 SEMESTER**

June 2014

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**Using the findings from Service Learning surveys in the fall semester 2013, the following twelve recommendations were developed to enhance Service Learning in the Social Services Department. The following information details the status of the recommendations.**

**Recommendation 1: Continue Service Learning in the spring 2014 semester.**

* Status: Accomplished
* Service Learning began in the spring semester on January 27, 2014, with a presentation by the Program Coordinator to five classes.
* Prior to the semester beginning, Community Partners from the fall semester 2013 were contacted to see if they would continue as Service Learning sites. One- hundred percent (100%) of the agencies agreed to continue being Community Partners.

**Recommendation 2: Share the findings from the pilot project with students, faculty, community partners, college administrators, and members of the college’s Service Learning Committee.**

* Status: Accomplished
* In February 2014, a report on the findings was sent to students who participated in Service Learning, faculty and community partners. Each report was individualized for the target group.
* The report was shared with the Dean of Instruction and the Associate Dean of Instruction.
* The report was shared with the Chairperson on the Assessment Committee.
* The report was shared with the Co-Chairs of the Service Learning Committee.

**Recommendation 3: Present findings from the pilot project to the Social Services Advisory Committee at their spring 2014 meeting.**

* Status: To be accomplished June 17, 2014
* A presentation will be given at the Advisory Committee’s June 17th meeting. The presentation will include findings from both the fall 2013 pilot project and the spring 2014 implementation.

**Recommendation 4: In the spring 2014 semester, increase the number of courses which offer Service Learning from four to five.**

* Status: Accomplished
* Service Learning was implemented in five courses in the spring semester; Soc Ser 102- Introduction to Gerontology, Soc Ser 105- Physiology of Aging, Soc Ser 106- Aging and the Family, Soc Ser 252- Nursing Home Administration, and Psych 222- Adult Development and Aging.

**Recommendation 5: In the spring 2014 semester, increase the number of students who respond to the post- survey from 74% to 85%.**

* Status: Exceeded
* Ninety-four percent (94%) of students completed the post survey.
* This was accomplished because the Program Coordinator visited the classes where surveys were missing. The Program Coordinator requested that students who had not turned in their survey fill it out while he waited. Without this follow-up the return rate would have been lower. This procedure should be continued in future semesters.

**Recommendation 6: In the spring 2014 semester, present Service Learning to students in the third week of class.**

* Status: Accomplished
* The Program Coordinator presented a forty-five minute Power Point on Service Learning followed by class discussion, in each of the five classes, the week of January 26, 2014.
* The presentation included the following slides.
* What is Service Learning?
* Why is Service Learning Important to the Study of Older Adults and the Elderly?
* Key Components of Service Learning
* Preparation – Course Objectives
* Action – Implementation
* Community Partner Agencies
* Reflection
* Assessment

**Recommendation 7: In the spring 2014 semester, send a letter to all community partners early in the semester, thanking them for agreeing to accept Service Learning students and asking them to contact the Program Coordinator if they experience any issues.**

* Status: Accomplished
* On February 24,2014 a personalized letter was sent to each person who supervises Service Learning students. The letter included a list of students who requested to do Service Learning at their site.
* It takes three to four weeks between the time of the initial presentation to students and sending the letter to community partners. The process involves; a) providing students with a description of each community partner and their services, b) receiving each student’s selection of an agency, c) ensuring that there is a distribution of students across agencies (most agencies will accept up to three students), d) providing the students with contact information for their site supervisor and e) providing each faculty with a list of their student placements.

**Recommendation 8: In the spring 2014 semester, telephone each community partner at mid-term to discuss how Service Learning is progressing and find out if there are any issues.**

* Status: Accomplished

This was the most time consuming recommendation to implement. All community partner supervisors were called. In most instances the Program Coordinator’s call went to voice mail. The Coordinator explained the purpose of the call and asked the supervisor to call back if there was anything he or she wanted to discuss or if there were any issues which needed resolving. The Program Coordinator also gave the supervisors the option to communicate using email to avoid phone-tag.

The Program Coordinator needed to become involved in resolving several issues. The following provides examples of a few of the issues uncovered through the mid-term follow-up.

* A supervisor had to leave town for several weeks due to a family emergency. She was only able to interview one of three students before she left. By the time she returned the next agency orientation, which the students needed to take before starting Service Learning, was not being offered for another three-weeks. As soon as the Program Coordinator was told about the situation, new placements were found for the students. Unfortunately, the students were, by then, several weeks behind on their volunteer hours. It was also generous of an agency which already had three students to accept three more who needed to be on an accelerated volunteer schedule to complete their hours.
* In three separate instances the Program Coordinator found that students had not begun their Service Learning hours and had not contacted the site supervisor. Students were instructed to contact the site supervisor no later than February 28, 2014. The Program Coordinator had to contact the students, find out why they had not contacted the supervisor or begun their volunteer hours. The students had various explanations. The students were told that even if they could not begin their volunteer hours as planned it was only courteous to have contacted the supervisor and discussed it. The Program Coordinator asked the students to contact the site supervisor immediately to set up their hours. The Program Coordinator followed up with the three supervisors to make sure they received a call from the students.
* Another student, who had not called the supervisor, said she planned on doing her full twenty-hours over spring break. The student knew from the onset that the hours were to be spread over the course of the semester not completed in one week. The student called the supervisor and developed a schedule to complete the volunteer hours.
* A supervisor told the Program Coordinator that the student had not contacted her and had not been to the agency. The Program Coordinator communicated with the student who said she had started at the agency. With further investigation, it was found that the student was doing her volunteer hours at the agency. However, when she initially went to the agency, without making an appointment (again not following instructions) the supervisor was not in. The student spoke with another employee who arranged the student’s schedule. Neither the student nor the employee conveyed this information to the supervisor. Hence the supervisor was unaware the student was at the agency. The Program Coordinator explained to the student that the designated supervisor was the only person who was to supervise her and sign off on her hours. The student met with the supervisor and completed her volunteer hours.

As contacting the supervisors and students progressed, the Program Coordinator recognized that there were issues with far more students than anticipated and that it was taking significant time to resolve issues. For accountability, records were kept on the number of students and supervisors involved and the number of email contacts made.

* Number of students: 18 (51% of total students in Service Learning)
* Number of email contacts to and from the Program Coordinator and students: 74
* Number of supervisors: 10 (66%)
* Number of email contacts to and from the Program Coordinator and supervisors: 35

It is evident that many students did not follow instructions provided them through presentations and in writing. Agency supervisors generously give of their time and knowledge to mentor students in Service Learning. They should not have to spend this amount of time dealing with issues of students not following instructions. This will be discussed with faculty and ideas will be generated to resolve the issue.

Fortunately, the mid-term contacts did not affect either the students’ or the community partners’ opinions regarding Service Learning as both groups rated it very highly. One result of the increased contact between the Program Coordinator and community partners is evident when community partners were asked to respond to the statement, *“Communication between the college and our organization was sufficient.”* While 82% of respondents “Agreed” with the statement in the fall 2013 survey, 100% “Agreed” in the spring 2014 survey.

**Recommendation 9: At the conclusion of Service Learning in the spring 2014 semester, send a letter to each community partner, thanking them for their support.**

* Accomplished
* A personalized letter and a Thank You card was sent to each community partner.

**Recommendation 10: Investigate the possibility of bringing public awareness to Service Learning and community partners through the college’s publications and local media.**

* Accomplished
* A description of how Service Learning was implemented in the Social Service Department was submitted for publication in the spring Assessment Committee newsletter.

**Recommendation 11: The program coordinator should continue to serve on the college’s Service Learning Committee.**

* Accomplished
* The Program Coordinator attended four Service Learning Committee meetings.

**Recommendation 12: The program coordinator should attend a minimum of one external training event regarding Service Learning.**

* Not Accomplished
* So much time was devoted to resolving issues from the mid-term follow-up with supervisors and students, that the Program Coordinator did not pursue external training in the spring 2014 semester.