Faculty Development for Service-Learning:
Once Size Does Not Fit All

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VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
STRATEGIC PLAN: QUEST FOR DISTINCTION

Theme I

Become a leader among national research universities in providing all students with high-quality learning/living experiences focused on inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global environment.

Theme II

Attain distinction as a fully integrated urban, public research university through contributions in human health, research, scholarship and creative expression that advance knowledge and enhance the quality of life.

Theme III

Become a national model for community engagement and regional impact.

- **Mission –** To mobilize university-community partnerships that generate innovative solutions to societal challenges and prepare the engaged citizens of tomorrow.

- **Vision –** VCU is a community of engaged citizens, working together, changing lives.

- **Structure/Organization –**
  - Housed within the academic affairs arm of the university, in the Provost's Office.
  - Led by a vice provost who reports directly to the university provost.
  - Employs 24 full-time staff members who are experts in community engagement.
  - Organized into program areas that work to improve both the quality and quantity of community-engaged research, community-engaged teaching/learning, and community-engaged service/outreach.
  - Community-engaged teaching/learning includes the Service-Learning Office and the VCU ASPiRE Living-Learning Program

VCU DIVISION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT STRATEGIES

EXPOSURE

Strategies designed to introduce engagement concepts to individuals who are primarily involved in traditional research, teaching and service practices

EXPERIENCE

Strategies designed to support individuals and collaborations that are in the early stages of university-community partnership work

EXPERT

Strategies designed to deepen the work of individuals and collaborations that are experienced in university-community partnership work

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Not Your Grandfather's Professoriate!

Traditionalists: (born 1900 – 1945) >70 yrs old; ≈5% of work force; respect authority, hard work, company first, pay your dues, values family/community.

Boomers: (born 1946-1960) 55-69 yrs old; ≈45% of work force; workaholic; idealistic, competitive, multi-taskers, optimistic; values success.

Gen Xers (born 1961-1979) 36-54 yrs old; ≈40% of work force; strives for work-life balance, work smarter/not longer, skeptical, self-reliant, pragmatic, flexible, values time.

Millenials (born 1977-1998) 17-38 yrs old, ≈10% of work force; ambitious, tenacious, entrepreneurial, optimistic, sociable, want immediate results, values individuality.

A sea change in the workplace is underway!
For the next 15 years, Boomers will be turning 65 at a rate of 10,000/day.

http://www.wmfc.org/uploads/GenerationalDifferencesChart.pdf

Develop a continuum of professional development activities that...

❖ Take into account the faculty members' motivations & previous **experiences**.

❖ Emphasize the **'why'** of training at the outset, not just the 'what' and 'how'.

❖ Encourage faculty members to **support** each other. Create allies not pupils!

❖ Include topics of immediate **relevance** to faculty members' professional lives.

❖ Incorporate active and **varied** learning activities (e.g., group work, discussions)

❖ Are **flexible** in time and level of commitment (i.e., allow self-direction).

❖ Provide immediate **feedback**.

❖ Involve **laughter** and fun!

http://www.visionrealization.com/Resources/Organizational/Adult_Learning_Theory.pdf

VCU SERVICE-LEARNING OFFICE

LEVEL ONE: EXPOSURE - ACTIVITIES THAT INTRODUCE

❖ **Website and Social Media Presence**
  ❖ VCU has create engaging and informative websites that describe all service-learning funding and training programs; we collect high quality photos and tell our success stories on multiple formats (Facebook, Twitter)

❖ **Two-Day Service-Learning Institute**
  ❖ The VCU Service-Learning Office initially offered its 2-day institute twice a year, now only in May; open to administrators, faculty and graduate students; no requirement to teach with SL.

❖ **New Partnerships Awards Program**
  ❖ Funding to help new SL instructors build a sustained and deep relationship with one or more community partners; instructor and partner work together throughout the year with facilitation from SL Office staff.

❖ **Monthly Conversation Cafes**
  ❖ Small gatherings of interested individuals; open to all; DCE staff lead a discussion of videos, magazine and journal articles of current interest (e.g., student advocacy).

❖ **Consultation with Service-Learning Office Staff**
  ❖ Faculty and administrators may contact Service-Learning Office staff to meet face-to-face or receive advice by email anytime.

❖ **Service-Learning Lending Library**
  ❖ Books, videos, and journals available for loan

❖ **Service-Learning Class T-Shirt Give Away Contest**
  ❖ Free t-shirts, which show the SL tagline and website URL, are given to SL classes that are active during that semester; photo of class working in t-shirts required; used as a campus public awareness strategy.

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VCU SERVICE-LEARNING OFFICE

LEVEL TWO: EXPERIENCE - ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT

❖ **Adjunct Faculty Support**
  - ❖ Financial support for VCU adjunct instructors to attend training activities such as the Institute and Spring Workshop.

❖ **Spring Service-Learning Workshop**
  - ❖ Free half-day training workshop for service-learning instructors on a service-learning related topic.

❖ **Project Small Grants**
  - ❖ Mini-grants to instructors of service-learning courses to support the implementation of the class; may be used for materials, equipment, etc.

❖ **New Service-Learning Instructor Mentoring**
  - ❖ All Institute participants are matched with an experienced SL instructor or SL Office staff member who checks in with them once a month for the next two semesters.

❖ **Orientation Videos for Students**
  - ❖ Series of four short videos that introduce VCU students to best practices for volunteering in the community; SL Office operates a Bb site to administer and quiz students if instructor wants to add these videos as a class requirement.

❖ **Service-Learning Teaching Assistant Program**
  - ❖ SL instructors may nominate a student to serve as their TA; student TAs receive course credit (no pay) to provide 5 hours/week TA assistance and receive monthly group supervision from the SL Office staff.

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- **Service-Learning Faculty Fellows Program**
  - One- to two-year paid fellowship for experienced service-learning instructors; aims to support fellow's scholarship; fellows assist with Institute and with expanding service-learning in their own or related academic units.
- **Conference Travel Grants**
  - Funding to support service-learning instructors' attendance at professional conferences to present their research/scholarship related to service-learning.
- **Service-Learning Advisory Council**
  - Advisory group of faculty members, administrators, students and community partners; meets twice a year to provide advise to SL Office staff and to receive updates from the SL Office staff; members are required to provide at least one informational presentation about VCU service-learning to key audiences; SL Office staff provide a variety of 'plug & play' Powerpoint slide presentations to be used for these presentations.
- **Established Partnerships Awards Program**
  - Funding to help service-learning class instructors deepen their relationship with one or more community partners (e.g., community-engaged research); instructor and partner work together throughout the year with facilitation from SL Office staff.

Key Principles for Service-Learning Professional Development Success

Adult Learners are Active Learners – no 'talking heads' trainings!

Evaluate and Assess What You Do – collect actionable data every year on what's working and what's not working. Take time to link your findings to next year's offerings!

Read and Flex to Changing Circumstances – be willing to increase/decrease the size of the budgets for each activity based on your assessment data and the level of service-learning institutionalization. Use your funding to incentivize faculty to move along the continuum (e.g., Project Grants available only once/course, Travel Grants available for scholarship)

Partner and Collaborate with Others – with campus administrative offices (social media/website, evaluation), with nearby Universities (institutes, workshops)

Train and Retain Competent Student Workers – good student workers can manage the administration of basic initiatives (e.g., T-shirt Give Away Contest, Lending Library, logistics for gatherings)

All of these activities are described on our websites
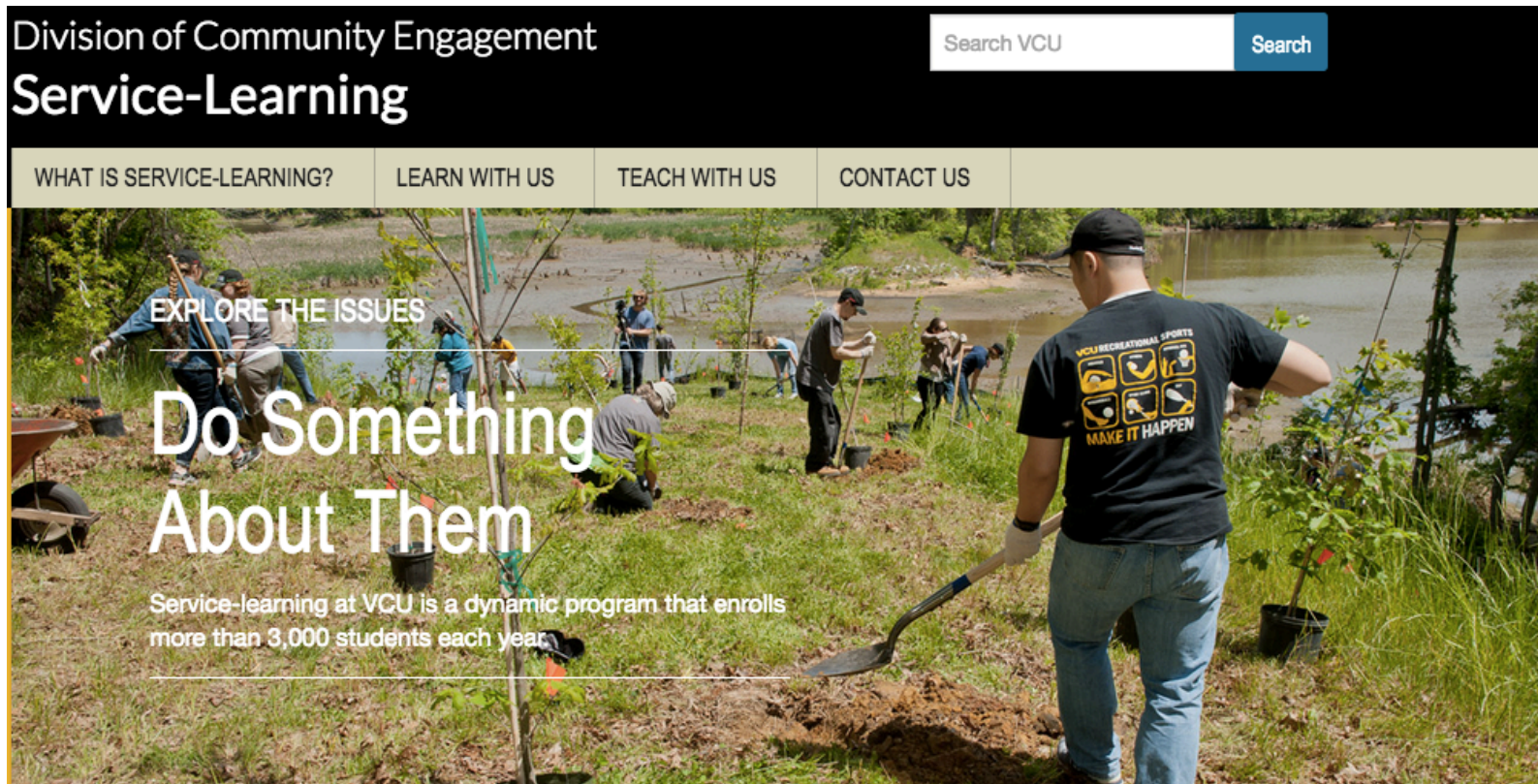
www.servicelearning.vcu.edu
www.community.vcu.edu