



SERVICE-LEARNING

About Service-Learning Service-Learning is a high-impact educational practice that engages students in organized service activities and guided reflection. The service activities benefit the community and enhance the academic curriculum of the participating students.

Vision To become a leader in the development of mindful and engaged citizens who contribute to a more just and humane world.

Mission To deepen our understanding of civic responsibility and enhance our capacity to act as locally responsive and globally aware citizens.

Message from the Director



Lynn Pelco, Ph.D.

Associate vice provost, Division of Community Engagement

The Division of Community Engagement's 10-year anniversary provides a wonderful moment to reflect on the impact of service-learning on VCU students, faculty and our surrounding communities. At heart, service-learning is about reciprocity; innovative, community-engaged pedagogy deepens student learning and civic engagement and leverages students' skills to address community-identified needs. Research demonstrates this: VCU undergraduates exposed to service-learning in their first two years are retained and graduate at higher rates.

Service-learning also engages faculty members in meaningful partnerships with community organizations, and the increase in faculty members who teach service-learning classes - from 35 instructors in 2008 to 132 this year - indicates the value they find in their service-learning work. Many of these partnerships develop into lasting, long-term relationships. Art Education Department faculty members, for instance, have partnered with Carver Promise for the past six years, and the School of Dentistry has maintained a service-learning partnership with the Free Clinic of Central Virginia for more than 10 years.

It's important to note what hasn't changed in 10 years: service-learning remains a high-impact educational practice that maximizes student learning and success, enhances student and faculty engagement with Richmond and the region and directly benefits our community.

BY THE NUMBERS

4,091 students enrolled in service-learning courses.

251 service-learning class sections offered students engaged learning opportunities.

Service-learning students provided **81,820** hours of service.

\$23,650 in grants supported innovative, community-engaged teaching.

132 faculty taught designated service-learning courses.



SERVICE-LEARNING NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

SERVICE-LEARNING FACULTY FELLOW

Lindsay Chudzik, assistant professor in the University College Department of Focused Inquiry, was recognized as the 2017 Outstanding Faculty Member by the Gulf-South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement.

THE CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY FARM

(formerly Community Food Collaborative, CCF) was awarded a \$50,000 grant by the National Association of Conservation Districts. CCF received the Council for Community Engagement's Award for Exemplary University-Community Partnership, Student-Initiated, in 2015 and is a longtime community partner for [Professor Joseph Cates' UNIV 211 "Food for Thought" service-learning course.](#)

THREE SERVICE-LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

were supported by Service-Learning Partnership Grants in 2016-17:

- Bee Coston, Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, "Improving the Lives of LGBTQ+ Young Richmonders of Color: Post Traumatic Healing and Wellness through Community-Based Participatory Research," in partnership with the [Virginia Anti-Violence Project.](#)
- Michelle Peace, Department of Forensic Science, "STEM in Out of School Time and Extracurricular Activities," in partnership with Communities in Schools-Richmond and NextUp.
- Marcia Winter, Department of Psychology, "[Developing and Extending the Scope of Seymour's Living Lab at Children's Museum of Richmond,](#)" in partnership with the Children's Museum of Richmond.

SERVICE-LEARNING STUDENT ENROLLMENT

in 2016-17 exceeded 4,000 – surpassing the University's 2018 strategic goal a year early. Since 2012, student enrollment has increased by 58%.

Chelsea Ortiz Gains Skills for Medical Career through Service-Learning



FOR CHELSEA ORTIZ, a rising senior majoring in chemistry with a minor in psychology, the “big picture” has always been going to medical school.

But during her first year at VCU, she enrolled in a section of Focused Inquiry that was taught by Assistant Professor Jamie Fueglein. The course was a service-learning course.


“I had no clue what service-learning was or how it would impact my life,” she said. “Little did I know that service-learning would eventually teach me the skills that I will need as a doctor - empathy, passion, patience - skills I would have never developed solely in the classroom.”

Since taking the service-learning course her first year, Ortiz has continued to develop her community engagement, serving for four semesters as a Service-Learning Teaching Assistant (SLTA) for Fueglein’s service-learning courses.

“The class works in Carver Elementary School with a program called Carver Promise, which provides mentoring so each student gets one-on-one interaction to work on math, reading, problem solving skills and to just have someone to talk to,” Ortiz said. “When I hear a student ask me if I can come extra days, I can’t help but smile, because I know that I am making a difference in the children’s lives and that they look forward to our time together.”

For more information on Ortiz’s work with Carver Promise, watch the video her service-learning class created at <http://bit.ly/2urvx2t>.



A young woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a dark polo shirt with a logo, is drawing on a large sheet of paper. She is holding a purple marker and looking at her work. In the background, other people are visible, including a woman in a red and black plaid shirt and another woman in a black floral top. The setting appears to be a community center or a classroom.

VCU sociology students collaborate with middle schoolers at the Bellemeade Community Center as part of Susan Bodnar-Deren and Molly B. Ransone's SOCY 391 course: "Forging Cultures of Resilience."