

**SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR THE  
INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION**  
*(revised 2002)*

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**BACKGROUND**

The *Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education* is designed to assist members of the higher education community in gauging the progress of their campus's service-learning institutionalization efforts.

The rubric is structured by five dimensions, which are considered by most service-learning experts to be key factors for higher education service-learning institutionalization. Each dimension is comprised of several components that characterize the dimension. For each component, a three-stage continuum of development has been established. Progression from *Stage One: Critical Mass Building* to *Stage Three: Sustained Institutionalization* suggests that a campus is moving closer to the full institutionalization of service-learning.

The conceptual framework for the rubric is based largely on a benchmark worksheet that was developed by Kevin Kecskes and Julie Muyliaert of the Western Region Campus Compact Consortium's *Continuums of Service* program. The three-stage developmental continuum and most of the self-assessment rubric's institutionalization dimensions were derived from the Kecskes/Muyliaert *Continuums of Service* benchmark worksheet.<sup>1</sup> The other dimensions of the rubric were derived from various literature sources that discuss the critical elements for institutionalizing service-learning in higher education. In particular, the work of the following individuals provided important foundational information for the development of the rubric: Edward Zlotkowski of Bentley College and the American Association for Higher Education; Rob Serow, Diane C. Calleson, and Lani Parker of North Carolina State University; Leigh Morgan of the North Carolina Commission on National and Community Service; Amy Driscoll of California State University, Monterey Bay; Donna Dengel and Roger Yerke of Portland, Oregon; and Gail Robinson of the American Association of Community Colleges.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The author expresses gratitude to Mr. Kevin Kecskes, Western Region Campus Compact Consortium Program Director and Ms. Julie Muyliaert, State Network Director for their permission to use and adapt the *Continuums of Service* Benchmark Worksheet to develop this self-assessment rubric.

<sup>2</sup> The author wishes to acknowledge Dr. Tanya Renner of Kapi'olani Community College and Ms. Nicole Konstantinakos Farrar of the California Campus Compact for their assistance in reviewing and refining the components of the self-assessment rubric.

## 2002 REVISIONS TO THE RUBRIC

The rubric presented here is based on an original version that was first published in 1998. The original version of the rubric was piloted on eight campuses and was subsequently revised in 1999. The 1999 version of the rubric became part of a series of regional Service-Learning Institutionalization Institutes, which were offered by Campus Compact. Since that time, more than 80 institutions have utilized the 1999 version of the rubric. In 2000, an accompanying planning guide was developed to provide a step by step process for campuses' use of the rubric. Feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the rubric and planning guide was and continued to be collected. This feedback has been incorporated into this new version of the rubric.

Overall, the 2002 version maintains the rubric's original five-dimension structure. This new version includes a new "departmental support" component. This component was added to the rubric to reflect new insights regarding the important role departments play in the advancement of service-learning in higher education (Holland, 2000). The others revisions were primarily slight changes in wording to more fully clarify the meaning and intention of various components.

## COMPONENTS OF THE RUBRIC

The self-assessment rubric contains five dimensions, each which includes a set of components that characterize the dimension. The five dimensions of the rubric and their respective components are listed below:

DIMENSION	COMPONENTS
<b>I. Philosophy and Mission of Service-Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Definition of Service-Learning</li> <li>•Strategic Planning</li> <li>•Alignment with Institutional Mission</li> <li>•Alignment with Educational Reform Efforts</li> </ul>
<b>II. Faculty Support for and Involvement in Service-Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Faculty Awareness</li> <li>•Faculty Involvement and Support</li> <li>•Faculty Leadership</li> <li>•Faculty Incentives and Rewards</li> </ul>
<b>III. Student Support for and Involvement in Service-Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Student Awareness</li> <li>•Student Opportunities</li> <li>•Student Leadership</li> <li>•Student Incentives and Rewards</li> </ul>
<b>IV. Community Participation and Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Community Partner Awareness</li> <li>•Mutual Understanding</li> <li>•Community Agency Leadership and Voice</li> </ul>
<b>V. Institutional Support for Service-Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Coordinating Entity</li> <li>•Policy-making Entity</li> <li>•Staffing</li> <li>•Funding</li> <li>•Administrative Support</li> <li>•Departmental Support</li> <li>•Evaluation and Assessment</li> </ul>

For each component, three stages of development are identified. Stage One is the *Critical Mass Building* stage. It is at this stage the campuses are beginning to recognize service-learning and are building a campus-wide constituency for the effort. Stage Two is the *Quality Building* stage. It is at this stage that campuses are focused on ensuring the development of “quality” service-learning activities; the quality of service-learning activities begins to supercede the quantity of service-learning activities. Stage Three is the *Sustained Institutionalization* stage. It is at this stage that a campus has fully institutionalized service-learning into the fabric of the institution.

It should be noted that some components might take many years to develop. According to Edward Zlotkowski institutionalizing service-learning (or any other reform effort) in higher education takes time, commitment, and persistence (Zlotkowski, 1999). It is only through the sustained commitment of the campus over time that true a sustained institutionalization of service-learning can be realized.

### USING THE RUBRIC

As a tool to measure development of service-learning institutionalization, the rubric is designed to establish a set of criteria upon which the progress of service-learning institutionalization can be measured. Thus, the rubric is designed to measure the status of a campus’ level of institutionalization at a particular point in time. The results of this status assessment can provide useful information for the development of an action plan to advance service-learning on the campus. It can help identify which institutionalization components or dimensions are progressing well and which need some additional attention. In addition, by using the tool at another point in time to reassess the status of service-learning institutionalization on a campus, the actual growth of each component and dimension over time can be measured.

As a self-assessment tool, the rubric is designed to facilitate discussion among colleagues regarding the state of service-learning institutionalization on a campus. Therefore, there is no one right way to use the rubric. Since a campus’ unique culture and character will determine which of the rubric’s dimensions are focused on most intensively, the dimensions and components of the rubric should be adapted to meet the needs of the campus. What is most important is the overall status of the campus’ institutionalization progress rather than the progress of individual components. In some cases, individual components of the rubric may not be applicable to certain campus situations. In other cases, the rubric may not include some components that may be key to a campus’ institutionalization efforts; campuses may wish to add components or dimensions to the rubric.

Some institutions may wish to have key individuals on a campus use the rubric individually to conduct a self-assessment of the campus’ service-learning institutionalization efforts. The individual assessments are then compared with one another; discussions regarding the similarities and differences between individual members’ impressions may be discussed. Other institutions may wish to discuss the dimension or component in detail and then come to a consensus regarding which development stage best characterizes the campus’ development for each component of the rubric. While some institutions will give an overall score for each “dimension,” other institutions will look at each component individually. What is most important is that the results of the self-assessment are used to guide the development of a strategic action plan for institutionalizing service-learning on the campus.

Generally, it is not recommended that partial stage scores be given. In other words, a campus group should not state that for a particular component (or dimension), the campus is “between” stage one and stage two. If the campus has not fully reached stage two, then the campus is not at stage two. Each dimension includes a “Notes” column, which allows for the inclusion of any statements,

questions, or conclusions that might explain the particular assessment decisions that have been made or might suggest that further information be gathered before a final stage score is assigned.

Finally, this rubric should be viewed as only one assessment tool for determining the status of service-learning institutionalization on a campus. Other indicators should also be observed and documented to ensure that an institution's effort to advance service-learning on campus is conducted systematically and comprehensively.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION *(Revised 2002)***

### **DIMENSION I: PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION OF SERVICE-LEARNING**

A primary component of service-learning institutionalization is the development of a campus-wide definition for service-learning that provides meaning, focus, and emphasis for the service-learning effort. How narrowly or broadly service-learning is defined on your campus will effect which campus constituents participate/do not participate, which campus units will provide financial resources and other support, and the degree to which service-learning will become part of the campus' institutional fabric.

***DIRECTIONS:** For each of the four categories (rows), place a circle around the cell that best represents the CURRENT status of the development of a definition, philosophy, and mission of service-learning.*

	<b>STAGE ONE</b> <i>Critical Mass Building</i>	<b>STAGE TWO</b> <i>Quality Building</i>	<b>STAGE THREE</b> <i>Sustained Institutionalization</i>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>DEFINITION OF SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	There is no campus-wide definition for service-learning. The term "service-learning" is used inconsistently to describe a variety of experiential and service activities.	There is an operationalized definition for service-learning on the campus, but there is some variance and inconsistency in the application of the term.	The institution has a formal, universally accepted definition for high quality service-learning that is used consistently to operationalize many or most aspects of service-learning on campus.	
<b>STRATEGIC PLANNING</b>	The campus does not have an official strategic plan for advancing service-learning on campus.	Although certain short-range and long-range goals for service-learning have been defined for the campus, these goals have not been formalized into an official strategic plan that will guide the implementation of these goals.	The campus has developed an official strategic plan for advancing service-learning on campus, which includes viable short-range and long-range institutionalization goals.	
<b>ALIGNMENT WITH INSTITUTIONAL MISSION</b>	While service-learning complements many aspects of the institution's mission, it remains on the periphery of the campus. Service-learning is rarely included in larger efforts that focus on the core mission of the institution.	Service-learning is often mentioned as a primary or important part of the institution's mission, but service-learning is not included in the campus' official mission or strategic plan.	Service-learning is part of the primary concern of the institution. Service-learning is included in the campus' official mission and/or strategic plan.	

<b>ALIGNMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL REFORM EFFORTS</b>	Service-learning stands alone and is not tied to other important, high profile efforts on campus (e.g., campus/community partnership efforts, establishment of learning communities, improvement of undergraduate teaching, writing excellence emphasis, etc.)	Service-learning is tied loosely or informally to other important, high profile efforts on campus (e.g., campus/community partnership efforts, establishment of learning communities, improvement of undergraduate teaching, writing excellence emphasis, etc.)	Service-learning is tied formally and purposefully to other important, high profile efforts on campus (e.g., campus/community partnership efforts, establishment of learning communities, improvement of undergraduate teaching, writing excellence emphasis, etc.)	
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*Developed by Andrew Furco, University of California, Berkeley, 1999. Based on the Kecskes/Muyllaert Continuums of Service Benchmark Worksheet.*

## **DIMENSION II: FACULTY SUPPORT FOR AND INVOLVEMENT IN SERVICE-LEARNING**

One of the essential factors for institutionalizing service-learning in higher education is the degree to which faculty members are involved in implementation and advancement of service-learning on a campus (Bell, Furco, Ammon, Sorgen, & Muller, 2000).

***DIRECTIONS:** For each of the four categories (rows), place a circle around the cell that best represents the CURRENT status of faculty involvement in and support for service-learning on your campus.*

	<b>STAGE ONE</b> <i>Critical Mass Building</i>	<b>STAGE TWO</b> <i>Quality Building</i>	<b>STAGE THREE</b> <i>Sustained Institutionalization</i>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>FACULTY KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS</b>	Very few members know what service-learning is or understand how service-learning is different from community service, internships, or other experiential learning activities.	An adequate number of faculty members know what service-learning is and understand how service-learning is different from community service, internships, or other experiential learning activities.	A substantial number of faculty members know what service-learning is and can articulate how service-learning is different from community service, internships, or other experiential learning activities.	
<b>FACULTY INVOLVEMENT &amp; SUPPORT</b>	Very few faculty members are instructors, supporters, or advocates of service-learning. Few support the strong infusion of service-learning into the academy or into their own professional work. Service-learning activities are sustained by a few faculty members on campus.	While a satisfactory number of faculty members is supportive of service-learning, few of them are advocates for infusing service-learning in the overall mission and/or their own professional work. An inadequate or unsatisfactory number of KEY faculty members are engaged in service-learning.	A substantial number of influential faculty members participates as instructors, supporters, and advocates of service-learning and support the infusion of service-learning both into the institution's overall mission AND the faculty members' individual professional work.	
<b>FACULTY LEADERSHIP</b>	None of the most influential faculty members on campus serve as leaders for advancing service-learning on the campus.	There are only one or two influential faculty members who provide leadership to the campus' service-learning effort.	A highly respected, influential group of faculty members serves as the campus' service-learning leaders and/or advocates.	

<p><b>FACULTY INCENTIVES &amp; REWARDS</b></p>	<p>In general, faculty members are not encouraged to engage in service-learning; few if any incentives are provided (e.g., minigrants, sabbaticals, funds for conferences, etc.) to pursue service-learning activities; faculty members' work in service-learning is not usually recognized during their review, tenure, and promotion process.</p>	<p>Although faculty members are encouraged and are provided various incentives (minigrants, sabbaticals, funds for service-learning conferences, etc.) to pursue service-learning activities, their work in service-learning is not always recognized during their review, tenure, and promotion process.</p>	<p>Faculty who are involved in service-learning receive recognition for it during the campus' review, tenure, and promotion process; faculty are encouraged and are provided various incentives (minigrants, sabbaticals, funds for service-learning conferences, etc.) to pursue service-learning activities.</p>	
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### **DIMENSION III: STUDENT SUPPORT FOR AND INVOLVEMENT IN SERVICE-LEARNING**

An important element of service-learning institutionalization is the degree to which students are aware of service-learning opportunities on campus and are provided opportunities to play a leadership role in the development of service-learning on campus.

***DIRECTIONS:** For each of the four categories (rows), place a circle around the cell that best represents the CURRENT status of student support for and involvement in service-learning on your campus.*

	<b>STAGE ONE</b> <i>Critical Mass Building</i>	<b>STAGE TWO</b> <i>Quality Building</i>	<b>STAGE THREE</b> <i>Sustained Institutionalization</i>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>STUDENT AWARENESS</b>	There is no campus-wide mechanism for informing students about service-learning courses, resources, and opportunities that are available to them.	While there are some mechanisms for informing students about service-learning courses, resources, and opportunities that are available to them, the mechanisms are sporadic and concentrated in only a few departments or programs (e.g., course flyers).	There are campus-wide, coordinated mechanisms (e.g., service-learning listings in the schedule of classes, course catalogs, etc.) that help students become aware of the various service-learning courses, resources, and opportunities that are available to them.	
<b>STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Few service-learning opportunities exist for students; only a handful of service-learning courses are available.	Service-learning options (in which service is integrated in core academic courses) are limited to only a certain groups of students in the academy (e.g., students in certain majors, honors students, seniors, etc.).	Service-learning options and opportunities (in which service is integrated in core academic courses) are available to students in many areas throughout the academy, regardless of students' major, year in school, or academic and social interests.	
<b>STUDENT LEADERSHIP</b>	Few, if any, opportunities on campus exist for students to take on leadership roles in advancing service-learning in their departments or throughout the campus.	There is a limited number of opportunities available for students to take on leadership roles in advancing service-learning in their departments or throughout the campus.	Students are welcomed and encouraged to serve as advocates and ambassadors for institutionalizing service-learning in their departments or throughout the campus.	

<p><b>STUDENT INCENTIVES AND REWARDS</b></p>	<p>The campus has neither <u>formal</u> mechanisms (e.g., catalogued list of service-learning courses, service-learning notation on students' transcripts, etc.) or <u>informal</u> mechanisms (news stories in paper, unofficial student certificates of achievement) that encourage students to participate in service-learning or reward students for their participation in service-learning.</p>	<p>While the campus offers some <u>informal</u> incentives and rewards (news stories in paper, unofficial student certificates of achievement) that encourage students to participate in service-learning and/or reward students for their participation in service-learning, the campus offers few or no <u>formal</u> incentives and rewards (catalogued list of service-learning courses, service-learning notation on students' transcripts, etc.)</p>	<p>The campus has one or more <u>formal</u> mechanisms in place (e.g., catalogued list of service-learning courses, service-learning notation on students' transcripts, etc.) that encourage students to participate in service-learning and reward students for their participation in service-learning.</p>
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## DIMENSION IV: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

An important element for service-learning institutionalization is the degree to which the campus nurtures community partnerships and encourages community agency representatives to play a role in implementing and advancing service-learning on campus.

*DIRECTIONS: For each of the three categories (rows), place a circle around the cell that best represents the CURRENT status of community participation and partnership on your campus.*

	<b>STAGE ONE</b> <i>Critical Mass Building</i>	<b>STAGE TWO</b> <i>Quality Building</i>	<b>STAGE THREE</b> <i>Sustained Institutionalization</i>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARENESS</b>	Few, if any, community agencies that partner with the college or university are aware of the campus' goals for service-learning and the full range of service-learning opportunities that are available to students.	Some, but not the majority of community agencies that partner with the college or university are aware of the campus' goals for service-learning and the full range of service-learning opportunities that are available to students.	Most community agencies that partner with the college or university are aware of the campus' goals for service-learning and the full range of service-learning opportunities that are available to students.	
<b>MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING</b>	There is little or no understanding between the campus and community representatives regarding each other's needs, timelines, goals, resources, and capacity for developing and implementing service-learning activities.	There is some understanding between the campus and community representatives regarding each other's needs, timelines, goals, resources, and capacity for developing and implementing service-learning activities, but there are some disparities between community and campus goals for service-learning.	Both the campus and community representatives are aware of and sensitive to each other's needs, timelines, goals, resources, and capacity for developing and implementing service-learning activities. There is generally broad agreement between the campus and community on the goals for service-learning.	

<p><b>COMMUNITY PARTNER VOICE &amp; LEADERSHIP</b></p>	<p>Few, if any, opportunities exist for community agency representatives to take on leadership roles in advancing service-learning on campus; community agency representatives are not usually invited or encouraged to express their particular agency needs or recruit student and faculty participation in service-learning.</p>	<p>There are a limited number of opportunities available for community agency representatives to take on leadership roles in advancing service-learning on campus; community agency representatives are provided limited opportunities to express their particular agency needs or recruit student and faculty participation in service-learning.</p>	<p>Appropriate community agency representatives are formally welcomed and encouraged to serve as advocates and ambassadors for institutionalizing service-learning on the campus; community agency representatives are provided substantial opportunities to express their particular agency needs or recruit student and faculty participation in service-learning.</p>
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### **DIMENSION V: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR SERVICE-LEARNING**

In order for service-learning to become institutionalized on college and university campuses, the institution must provide substantial resources, support, and muscle toward the effort.

**DIRECTIONS:** For each of the six categories (rows), place a circle around the cell that best represents the *CURRENT* status of your campus' institutional support for service-learning.

	<b>STAGE ONE</b> <i>Critical Mass Building</i>	<b>STAGE TWO</b> <i>Quality Building</i>	<b>STAGE THREE</b> <i>Sustained Institutionalization</i>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>COORDINATING ENTITY</b>	There is no campus-wide coordinating entity (e.g., committee, center, or clearinghouse) that is devoted to assisting the various campus constituencies in the implementation, advancement, and institutionalization of service-learning.	There is a coordinating entity (e.g., committee, center, or clearinghouse) on campus, but the entity either does not coordinate service-learning activities exclusively or provides services only to a certain constituency (e.g., students, faculty) or limited part of the campus (e.g., certain majors).	The institution maintains coordinating entity (e.g., committee, center, or clearinghouse) that is devoted primarily to assisting the various campus constituencies in the implementation, advancement, and institutionalization of service-learning.	
<b>POLICY-MAKING ENTITY</b>	The institution's official and influential policy-making board(s)/committee(s) do not recognize service-learning as an essential educational goal for the campus	The institution's official and influential policy-making board(s)/committee(s) recognize service-learning as an essential educational goal for the campus, but no formal policies have been developed.	The institution's policy-making board(s)/committee(s) recognize service-learning as an essential educational goal for the campus and formal policies have been developed or implemented.	
<b>STAFFING</b>	There are no staff/faculty members on campus whose primary paid responsibility is to advance and institutionalize service-learning on the campus.	There is an appropriate number of staff members on campus who understand service-learning fully and/or who hold appropriate titles that can influence the advancement and institutionalization of service-learning throughout the campus; however their appointments are temporary or paid from soft money or external grant funds.	The campus houses and funds an appropriate number of permanent staff members who understand service-learning and who hold appropriate titles that can influence the advancement and institutionalization of service-learning on campus.	

**DIMENSION V: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR SERVICE-LEARNING, cont.**

In order for service-learning to become institutionalized on college and university campuses, the institution must provide substantial resources, support, and muscle toward the effort.

DIRECTIONS: For each of the six categories (rows), place a circle around the cell that best represents the CURRENT status of your campus' institutional support for service-learning.

	<b>STAGE ONE</b> <i>Critical Mass Building</i>	<b>STAGE TWO</b> <i>Quality Building</i>	<b>STAGE THREE</b> <i>Sustained Institutionalization</i>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>	The campus' service-learning activities are supported primarily by soft money (short-term grants) from sources outside the institution.	The campus' service-learning activities are supported by both soft money (short-term grants) from sources outside the institution as well as hard money from the institution.	The campus' service-learning activities are supported primarily by hard funding from the campus.	
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT</b>	The campus' administrative leaders have little or no understanding of service-learning, often confusing it with other campus outreach efforts, such as community service or internship programs.	The campus' administrative leaders have a clear understanding of service-learning, but they do little to make service-learning a visible and important part of the campus' work.	The campus' administrative leaders understand and support service-learning, and actively cooperate to make service-learning a visible and important part of the campus' work.	
<b>DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT</b>	Few, if any, departments recognize service-learning a formal part of their formal academic programs..	Several departments offer service-learning opportunities and courses, but these opportunities typically are not a part of the formal academic program of the department and/or are not primarily supported by departmental funds.	A fair to large number of departments provide service-learning opportunities that are a part of the formal academic program and/or are primarily supported by departmental funds.	
<b>EVALUATION &amp; ASSESSMENT</b>	There is no organized, campus-wide effort underway to account for the number and quality of service-learning activities taking place.	An initiative to account for the number and quality of service-learning activities taking place throughout the campus has been proposed.	An ongoing, systematic effort is in place to account for the number and quality of service-learning activities that are taking place throughout the campus.	

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