

## Service-learning

What student learning outcomes or attributes can be uniquely facilitated by incorporating service learning in BU's general education program?

- students gain appreciation for interdisciplinary learning
- students become aware of complexities involved in providing service to the community
- students gain an awareness of civic responsibility
- students gain an understanding how to apply their own discipline to community service

## General discussion

- Much is already being done across campus, but we do not have a central office to compile or facilitate service-learning activities.
- How do we measure students learning outcomes? How do we measure the effect of service-learning on student attributes?
- What are liability issues involved in service-learning?
- What are the financial issues?
- What kind of infrastructure needs to be in place? (for financial support, to address liability issues)
- What are the cultural issues that students/faculty may face?
- What is the distinction between service learning and volunteerism? One answer involves the degree to which specific learning objectives are integrated into the experience. Another involves the degree to which the experience links the students' discipline to community service.
- How can faculty ensure that demands on students' time is not excessive?
- Are all classes equally geared towards incorporating service-learning?
- Is service-learning something that should be incorporated into all classes? Into all curricula (e.g., in every major)? Into the general education program? Or should BU simply facilitate good service-learning whenever appropriate?
- Do we as an institution have, or want to have, as a core function to engage in the community, or to develop civic responsibility in our students? If so, we want to include service-learning as a core experience, even if the experience is integrated into students' major program.
- Do we want to train students to be more than a professional? Do we want to train students to contribute to their community or to society in general? Do we want this training to include how they apply their professional knowledge and experiences to community service or promoting the social good?
- Can we address some or all of our goals (with regard to developing citizen skills/attributes) by facilitating/encouraging/requiring volunteerism? Or are there specific or additional gains that can only be met via service-learning?

## **Freshman Experiences**

What student learning outcomes or attributes can be uniquely facilitated by incorporating freshman experiences in BU's general education program?

- Students can be provided with a common identity; with a vision of what it means to be a Bradley student.
- Students engage in guided-learning experience that promotes the development of the habits of mind that promote success in college
- Students get acculturated to the institution early on

### General discussion

- Freshman experiences (FE) can range from seminar designed to orient freshman to campus life to a format that incorporates other objectives (e.g., content, skills development).
- Can we identify elements of a FE that can benefit students throughout their career at BU and even beyond?
- Sustainability of any FE will require commitment from institution and faculty, and should be supported via resources and infrastructure.
- FEs need to be student-centered.
- FEs should have a high level of student engagement
- FEs can lead to increased student retention if done correctly.
- Could facilitate students supporting each other, via learning communities or other models
- Faculty driven seminars might not be the best model; they may not be student centered
- FE are very resource intensive, and will only work if the campus and administration are really behind it.
- Bradley's current Gen Ed is largely ignored by campus and administration, and any changes in current program may not have more real, tangible support. One example of poor support for Gen Ed is the size of general education classes, and the number of part-time or other non-tenure track instructors.

## Capstone Experiences

What student learning outcomes or attributes can be uniquely facilitated by incorporating capstone experiences in BU's general education program?

- Students can gain critical thinking and communication skills.

### General discussion

- Capstone experiences (CEs) are good for students, but is it better to have the capstone experience within a disciplinary context or within a general education context.
- CEs within disciplines vs. within a gen ed context probably facilitate very differing learning outcomes. What outcomes do we want?
- CE that relate to students' disciplines are more likely to engage students and to provide a meaningful experience for their professional growth.
- If we add CE (and broaden FE, and/or add service-learning) to gen ed, will we be eliminating other gen ed requirements, or will the gen ed program simply continue to grow?
- Is the CE formative? Are there specific learning objectives? Or is it primarily an evaluative tool?
- CE does not have to be viewed solely as a year-long experience in senior year. There may be other models that are effective.
- CE can integrate other aspects of gen ed, (e.g., service-learning activities).
- CE can be guided review of student professional or learning portfolios. It could include a reflective piece wherein student examines progress towards personal and professional goals.
- What infrastructure needs to be in place to facilitate FE? This will be of particular importance if the CE will be one that truly integrates learning or experiences across multiple years (e.g., students build portfolios as part of CE)