



# Service/Civic Learning Plan

A Tool for Achieving Student Learning Outcomes



Office of Civic Engagement

Faculty (course instructor) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Title and Number \_\_\_\_\_

**(Note: Only *one* Service/Civic Learning Plan need be completed for *all* students enrolled in a given course, provided essential information is included in the course syllabus.)**

## I. Academic Learning Goals

Academic learning goals relate to the *factual knowledge* and *academic skills* that you, the student, should aim to acquire concerning the group, organization, or agency you work with; their interactions and relationships; the larger community of which they're a part; and so forth.

Here are some questions you should try to answer as you proceed through your community-based learning experience:

1. What are the (social, economic, political, cultural, historical, etc.) circumstances I'm working in? What needs, problems, issues, and challenges confront members of the group, organization, agency, clientele, community, or population served?
2. When, why, and how do members of the group, organization, agency, clientele, community, or population served interact with each other? What are they able to accomplish together? What "assets" (resources, strengths) do they bring to bear as they try to work together? What do they find difficult to accomplish? What resources, knowledge, skills, etc. do they need that they don't have? How do they view their personal responsibility for the conditions they are trying to create, build, sustain, mitigate, or improve? How do they see their obligations to others? In their view, who is responsible for what, and why?
3. What is the group, organization, agency, clientele, community, or population served like? *What answers do its members give to questions 1 and 2, above?* What brings these people together? What purposes, goals, values, priorities, concerns etc. do they share? How well or effectively do they work together? Who defines the mission or purpose of the group? Who sets the agenda? Who are the leaders? The "followers"? The decision-makers? The "talkers"? The "do-ers"? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
4. What does the neighborhood group expect from you? How do they think you can and should assist them? How do they see your role? How do they interact with you? Do they ask for your opinion? How do they respond to your suggestions and recommendations? Are you able to help them? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

## II. Civic Learning Goals

Your service or civic learning goals relate to the practical knowledge, values, skills, attitudes, habits, etc. you should aim to acquire. These are the personal qualities you will need in order to work ethically, democratically, and effectively with *any* group, organization, agency, clientele, community, or population served. Service and civic learning goals also relate to your identity, self-conception, role,

etc. as a participating, contributing member of a community and society. Here are some learning goals that you, the student, should aim to as you proceed through your service or civic learning experience:

1. Understand the consequences, for myself and for all members of a neighborhood, community, and society, of individuals failing to accept personal responsibility for the quality of public life, and of their failing to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and motivation needed to build strong working relationships that enable and encourage people to cooperate for mutual benefit.
2. Understand and assess the personal beliefs, attitudes, values, priorities, needs, concerns, aspirations, dispositions, assumptions and preconceptions, strengths and potential, weaknesses and limitations that I bring to the task of living and working with others in a self-governing community and society.
3. Develop my *civic capacity*—the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and skills I need in order to form working relationships with my fellow citizens so that together we can accomplish things we couldn't accomplish by acting alone. In particular, I want to work on the following skills:

**Organization.** The skills necessary for accomplishing tasks, for knowing how to work effectively in a group setting. They include organizing individuals to take action, planning and running meetings, and planning for action.

**Communication.** The skills needed to facilitate mutual comprehension, collective inquiry, and deliberation within a group. They include knowing how to write and speak articulately and persuasively.

**Collective decision-making.** The skills needed for producing agreement within a group that will motivate and sustain action. They include knowing, discussing, and proposing different decision rules; listening in order to comprehend, and to form useful questions; imaginatively entering into alternate perspectives based on different experiences, concerns, and needs; framing problems and issues; identifying/ generating options for action; weighing advantages and disadvantages; moving toward a collective judgment.

**Critical thinking.** The skills required to construct sound, persuasive arguments; to assess factual assertions and the consequences of proposed actions; to identify weaknesses in inductive and deductive reasoning; to surface underlying assumptions; to differentiate between facts and value; to elicit sound judgment in choosing between values.

**Judgment.** The type of knowledge that is appropriate for ethics and politics is not validity, correctness, or “predictive power”—it is the *coherence* of our reasons. For a public decision to be coherent, it must be constructed of considerations that “stick together” well enough for people to support it. Judgment is the ability to ascertain when there is enough coherence of reasons to warrant taking action. Forming a judgment proceeds by *dialogue and deliberation* with other members of my community and society—by the offering, assessing, and weighing of reasons. After all reasons have been exhausted and further rational deliberation is not feasible, we must draw on a combination of factual knowledge, experience, and intuition to “fill in the gap” that remains. The result is our judgment.

4. Develop a well-founded confidence in my ability to contribute substantially, constructively, and productively to the improvement of life in a neighborhood or community by drawing on my personal experience, ability, knowledge, character, ethical and democratic political principles, and skills.

### III. Service/Civic Activities and Work Products

1. Here is a partial list of the kinds of activities (forms of assistance) you may undertake in collaboration with the group, organization, agency, clientele, community, or population with which you work. You might help:

- interview people
- undertake research

- analyze or synthesize research results
- write for internal or external audiences
- prepare meeting agendas and run meetings
- facilitate discussions
- “frame” issues for deliberation and decision-making
- conduct neighborhood surveys or assessments
- devise and carry out a strategic planning process
- locate and interview campus experts or obtain their assistance
- find, recruit, and “hire” students who have special skills or abilities (e.g., setting up websites, composing newsletters, doing marketing, etc.)

2. In order to note and assess the progress you are making toward your academic and civic learning goals, please keep an electronic journal (i.e., a summary description of and reflection on) your activities for the week. Include brief daily entries and a longer weekly entry. Turn this in every two weeks.

3. At the end of the internship

A. Write a paper (due May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the last day of the Spring 2012 semester) of moderate length (5 – 10 typed, double-spaced pages) summarizing the internship:

- What were your chief responsibilities?
- What activities engage in? What tasks did you perform?
- What did you accomplish?
- What did you learn? (See your academic and civic learning goals, above.)
- How did your experience connect with or relate to the other learning you have done in college so far?
- How does your experience affect your plans for the future?

B. Turn in a signed, written statement from your approved neighborhood contact person indicating

- The number of hours you worked.
- The type of work you did.
- A general summary of how well you performed.

**Remember:** A service/civic learning experience is not just unpaid work. It should have an *academic component*. The reflection and writing in your journal and in your final paper are an important part of that learning.

#### **IV. Learning-related Responsibilities of the Group, Organization, or Agency**

The group, organization, or agency accepting a student for a service/civic placement agrees to:

A. provide the Student with an introduction or orientation to the group, organization, agency, clientele, community, or population, and the nature of its service, mission, or activities.

B. ensure that the Student is familiar with all rules, procedures, and norms and is able to act in accordance with them as needed.

C. ensure that the Student understands the unique characteristics of the group, organization, agency, clientele, community, population, or clients.

- D. authorize and enable the Student to work, perform tasks, carry out assignments, and participate in meetings and activities at the discretion of the Student's contact person in the group, organization, agency, clientele, community, or population.
- E. ensure that the Student's contact person assists the Student in determining how to carry out his or her responsibilities.

## **V. Learning-related Responsibilities of the CSU, Chico Office of Civic Engagement**

- A. Training and reflection. Either alone or jointly with the group, organization, or agency, the Office of Civic Engagement, will provide the Student with one to three training sessions to prepare the Student to carry out his or her responsibilities as described in this Learning Plan. Through the involvement of Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE), the OCE also agrees to assist the Student in reflecting on his or her experience while working with the group, organization, or agency.
- B. Supervision. Through the involvement of CAVE, the OCE will ensure that the Student's participation in the work of the group, organization, or agency is carried out in a manner that contributes to the mission, goals, and objectives of the group, organization, or agency.
- C. Accountability. The OCE acknowledges that the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, as represented by the Dean of Undergraduate Education, retains the authority to establish policy and to make decisions concerning the academic appropriateness and adequacy of the civic studentship experience.

## **VI. Learning-related Responsibilities of the Faculty**

- A. Training and reflection. Either alone or jointly with the Community Organization, the Faculty will provide the Student with a training session to prepare the Student to carry out his or her responsibilities as described in this Service/Civic Learning Plan. The Faculty also agrees to assist the Student in reflecting on his or her experience while serving at the Community Organization.
- B. Supervision. Through cooperation and consultation with CAVE, the Faculty will ensure that the Student's participation in the work of the Community Organization is carried out in a manner that contributes to the mission, goals, and objectives of the Community Organization.
- C. Accountability. The Faculty acknowledges that the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs retains the authority to establish policy and to make decisions concerning the academic appropriateness and adequacy of the proposed service/civic learning experience.
- D. Relations with the Office of Civic Engagement and with CAVE. The Faculty recognizes that the University, through the Office of Civic Engagement (OCE), has contracted with Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE), a division of Associated Students of California State University, Chico, to arrange and administer the placement of students in community settings for the purpose of enabling Faculty to require or offer a service/civic learning component in courses they teach.

**Accordingly, the Faculty agrees to:**

1. Make *all* arrangements for placing students in service/civic learning settings through the OCE and CAVE.
2. Consult with the CAVE Program Administrator at least one (1) week before the beginning of the semester in order to:
  - (a) confirm that the community organization proposed for placement of the Student has entered into a current *Student Placement Agreement* authorizing it to accept students for placement;
  - (b) if no current *Agreement* is in place, request that the OCE seek such an *Agreement* or, if obtaining such an *Agreement* is not practicable, select an alternative organization.
  - (c) discuss the scope of the support CAVE will provide for the course (see IV, above).
  - (e) obtain instructions for (i) communicating with CAVE, (ii) distributing information about CAVE and/or service/civic learning, and (iii) ensuring that students receive, complete, sign, and submit the **CAVE Clearance Packet** on time.
3. attend a brief information session scheduled and conducted by the OCE and CAVE before the beginning of the semester.
4. direct the Student to read this Service/Civic Learning Plan and discuss any questions or concerns with the Faculty.
5. provide CAVE with a class roster and a copy of the course syllabus, in which the purpose and goals of the service/civic learning component are addressed.
6. make alternative arrangements for students who cannot be cleared by CAVE for work in a community setting.
7. complete an end-of-semester assessment that will provide feedback to CAVE.
8. work with the student to construct and carry out the academic and service/civic learning goals listed above.
9. alert the Student to his or her obligations, as indicated in Section VII, below, especially the inherent risks of off-campus service/civic learning work such as those listed in Section VII, point number 10.

**VII. Learning-related Responsibilities of the Student**

The student agrees to abide by the following guidelines and restrictions:

A. Guidelines

1. **Ask for help when you're not sure what to do.** Your Community Organization/work site supervisor understands the situations that exist or that can arise where you'll be working. Don't hesitate to take questions or concerns to him/her. He/she will help you determine the best way to respond to any unclear, confusing, difficult, or uncomfortable situation. Likewise, don't hesitate to contact your Faculty (course instructor) and the service/civic learning office with any questions or concerns.

2. **Be punctual and reliable.** Although you are volunteering your time, you are *working* at the Community Organization/work site as a contributing member of the Organization’s team. The Community Organization/work site staff and the population or clients it serves must be able to rely on you to “act like a professional.” This means showing up when you’re expected to be present, arriving on time, putting in the hours to which you’ve committed, being present on the dates and at the times specified, and completing your tasks or activities to the best of your ability. *Call* (don’t e-mail) if you expect to be late or absent. Call the site supervisor if you are unable to come in or if you expect to be late. Be mindful of your commitment; people are relying on you.

3. **Guard the privacy of the population/clients the Community Organization serves.** If you are given access to or otherwise obtain confidential information concerning the persons with whom you are working—files, evaluations, diagnostic results, personal histories, contact information, etc. — *it is imperative* that you treat such information as “privileged” (which means that only certain qualified persons have the authority to view it). You should use pseudonyms (i.e., names you make up) for your course assignments whenever you refer to clients or to the people you work with at the service site.

4. **Respect the community-based organization and its work.** The Community Organization that accepts you as a service/civic learning student plays an important role in your education. Working for professionals in a community setting is a gift, not a right. By undertaking service/civic learning work, you are serving the community. But the community is serving you by investing resources—time, energy, and sometimes even money—in your education.

5. **Act appropriately.** You will be in a work situation and will be expected by everyone to treat others with courtesy and consideration. Dress comfortably, but also neatly and in a manner suitable for the type of work you’ll be doing at the site. Use formal names (Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.) *unless* you are given express permission to use first names. Set a high standard for other students to follow when they participate in CSUC’s service/civic learning program.

6. **Be flexible.** The level or intensity of activity at a service site isn’t always the same. Be alert to changing situations or conditions and adapt accordingly. By staying attuned to the “atmosphere” and watching the CBO’s staff for cues on how to act, you can help your host maintain a smooth operation and generate desirable outcomes for everyone.

## B. Restrictions

1. **Don’t** show up at your Community Organization/work site or, once you’ve arrived, remain there if you’ve taken any “controlled substance,” including alcohol, that could adversely affect your mental or physical functioning. Even if you are in a purely social situation (off-site, during non-business hours) at the invitation of your supervisor *and* you have reached the legal drinking age of 21, it is better to avoid even light consumption of alcohol. If possible, consult your supervisor and your course instructor about the advisability of participating in the social consumption of alcoholic beverages.

2. **Don’t** give or lend a client or member of the Community Organization’s service population money or other personal property. If you feel the need to provide a person asking for use of your money or belongings with a reason for declining his or her request, politely but firmly explain that you are prohibited from doing so by the terms of your service/civic learning agreement.

3. **Don't** make promises or commitments of any sort to the Community Organization, its staff, or its clients or members of its service population if you cannot or should not make them. Use good judgment. If in doubt, confer with your supervisor and course instructor.

4. **Don't** give anyone from or served by the Community Organization a ride in a personal vehicle. If you feel you need to provide a person asking for a ride with a reason for declining his or her request, politely but firmly explain that you are prohibited from doing so by the terms of the Student Placement Agreement between the University and the Organization.

5. **Don't** participate in any verbal exchange of a sexual nature. Don't even remain present in the immediate vicinity if you can avoid it. Don't do or say anything that *anyone* might perceive as sexual in nature. That includes laughing at somebody else's jokes, stories, etc. In short, if any talk occurs that conceivably *could* be construed as having *anything* to do with sex, immediately excuse yourself and go elsewhere.

6. **Don't** participate in any verbal exchange that might be perceived as discriminatory or biased against an individual or against a class or category of people because of the person's/group's age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious or spiritual beliefs, physical or mental ability, or ethnicity. Don't even remain present in the immediate vicinity if you can avoid it. Don't do or say anything that *anyone* might perceive as discriminatory or biased. That includes laughing at somebody else's jokes, stories, etc. In short, if any talk occurs that conceivably *could* be construed as discriminatory or biased, immediately excuse yourself and go elsewhere.

7. **Don't** engage in any type of business with others you work with, work under, or work for during the period of time you are engaged in service/civic learning-related activities.

8. **Don't** enter into a personal relationship or engage in activities usually associated with personal relationships, no matter how brief or casual, with any other person you work with, work under, or work for during the period of time you are engaged in service/civic learning-related activities.

**Note:** If you, the Student, believe that *your* rights might have been or could be violated, or that your ability to adhere to the guidelines and restrictions listed above has been diminished by the actions, instructions, expectations, requirements, or suggestions of any person you work with, under, or for, please contact your course instructor and CAVE.

***By enrolling and remaining enrolled in the course that contains a service/civic learning component, you, the Student, indicate that you:***

1. have read the Service/Civic Learning Plan carefully and
  - 1.1. understand the guidelines and restrictions listed above, and
  - 1.2. agree to abide by those guidelines and restrictions;
2. understand the connection between the educational goals of the course in which he or she has enrolled and the academic learning and civic learning goals to be pursued at the service site;
3. promise to act in a responsible, mature, conscientious, and ethical manner while representing California State University, Chico whenever present at the Community Organization or work site;
4. will abide by all rules and regulations established by the Community Organization for the proper conduct of its regular employees, volunteers, service/civic learning employees, and others;

5. will model professional behavior with clients (who may also be described as “patients” or as the “population served” or by use of substantially synonymous terms) and ensure that his or her interactions with them are safe, positive, and appropriate;
6. have participated, or will participate before beginning work at the Community Organization/work site, in all orientation sessions required by the course instructor, the University, CAVE, or the Community Organization;
7. have submitted all information required in the CAVE Clearance Packet;
8. agree to devote the number of hours specified on the first page of this Learning Plan to the task of achieving the learning and service goals stated in this Plan;
9. agree to complete any forms, evaluations, or other paperwork required by either the Faculty (course instructor), the Community Organization, site supervisor, the University, or CAVE; and
10. have been advised by the Faculty (course instructor) of the inherent risks of off-campus service/civic learning work, and willingly accepts those risks, including, but not limited to, those specifically listed below:

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**Faculty**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Course \_\_\_\_\_

Sign here if you have examined and approve this Learning Plan and accept the responsibilities set forth in Section VI, above. \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Organization**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign here if you have examined and approve this Learning Plan and accept the responsibilities set forth in Section V, above. \_\_\_\_\_

**CAVE**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign here if you have examined this Learning Plan and agree to perform the tasks required to place the Student in a community setting suitable for achieving the learning and service goals set forth above.

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