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Cast a Net: Meshing Libraries with Service Learning

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Service Learning (SL) Defined
“Students not only address community needs but also enrich their own education by experiencing the real-world application of academic subjects and developing the habit of active citizenship.” - Paul Sather, Director of UNO’s Service Learning Academy February 9, 2005

Where is the Library in Service Learning?
“There is simply a research void abutting these two areas of higher education scholarship (service learning and information literacy), each pursuing separate paths of pedagogical justification, virtually oblivious to the other.” - John Riddle, Where’s the Library in Service Learning? 2004

What can the Library Offer SL Projects?
- Mesh Information Research Skills with Service Learning needs:
  - Provide information about the community organization.
  - Budgets, organizational charts, program descriptions.
  - Help the student become familiar with the problems the community agency tries to solve.
  - Assist in finding information for reflection.
  - Information regarding local, national and international social problems.
  - Incorporate critical-information thinking skills.
  - Find materials on the pros/cons on a particular problem.
  - Access demographic and census information to make comparisons across communities.

Tying UNO Faculty, Students and Community Partners Together

Sociology: Boys and Girls Clubs
Teachers Education: Girls, Inc.
Construction Engineering: North High School
Communications: Hope Skate

Students Participating in Service Learning

Common Missions & Goals
Local
- Goal 3: The University Library Instruction Program provides resources and services to meet the campus, distance learner, and community needs. - Criss Library Mission Statement and Goals

Community
- Develop partnerships between the university and the metropolitan community
- To enhance student learning, advance community service and initiatives and foster engaged citizenship.
- UNO Service-Learning Academy (2008 Presidential Honor Roll for Community Service)

National
- “Finally, we need to integrate service into education, so that young Americans are called upon and prepared to be active citizens. …and for all college students to perform 100 hours of service a year.” - Barack Obama, June 22, 2008, Colorado Springs, CO

Service Learning Projects at the Criss Library
- Library: Science Collection Development Class.
  - Created collection development bibliographies for non-profit organizations.
- Library Instruction for an English class.
  - Students wrote position papers regarding the homeless population in Omaha, NE.
  - Papers used by non-profit organizations to design homeless population programs.
- Douglas County Corrections - “Read me a Story” Program.
- Girls, Inc. of Omaha, NE.

Mesh Your Library with Service Learning
- Work with the Service Learning Director at your university.
  - Be part of the agenda and program planning from the beginning.
  - Develop policies concerning retention and disposition of project’s materials.
  - Collect and organize information that will help shape future research.
  - Work with public librarians who have found success in community-building efforts.
  - Identify Service Learning projects and mesh with library services.
  - Promote your library services with Service Learning faculty, students and community organization partners.