

SERVICE LEARNING LOCATION AND STRUCTURE:

Council of Deans
Minutes of the Meeting of October 28, 1997

5. The issue of the location and structure of Service Learning (see Appendix A) was discussed at length. The issues are:
 - A. In Jennifer Jones-Hall we have a Coordinator for Service Learning who channels internal requests (by faculty) for securing placements for Service Learning. However, there is not sufficient awareness across the campus, especially with faculty, about what her office can provide for Service Learning initiatives.
 - B. Outside employers looking for students to provide short-term help (in the form of unpaid internships) often contact Sandy McGuigan, who then expends considerable effort calling up faculty and offices to find interested students. Often, the request goes unfulfilled, and Sandy has no way of knowing if a faculty member has actually directed a student to the employer. She feels concerned that this may not please employers on whom she is dependent for internships. There needs to be a designated contact person available to outside employers and agencies for internships and service learning opportunities. Should it be the same person who handles both?
 - C. A tabulation of existing and proposed opportunities for experiential learning (Appendix A) suggests the possibility of creating a more flexible form of internship (referred to as internship C on the chart) which may provide more opportunity for students unwilling to commit to full-term internships and for employers seeking short-term help. The proposal for creating such a rubric will have to be taken to EPC.
 - D. The persons responding to employers and opportunities need to have clearly-designated contact people in various colleges.
 - E. As Service Learning proliferates, we need to ensure academic accountability and put management structures in place. The following structure was proposed:
 - i. There will be an Experiential Learning Committee, not called upon to meet very frequently, which will ensure the coordination and management of all forms of experiential learning. The membership of this committee will be: Assistant Dean of Students for Greek Life and Volunteer Programs (co-chair); Director of Career Center (co-chair); and college-level experiential learning coordinators. There will be two or more representatives from Arts and Sciences and one from each of the other colleges. Preferably, these representatives will be the same as those assigned duties for internships and co-ops.

The Director of Career Center will be the designated contact person for internships, will field employer requests for student matches, and direct them to appropriate departments. We should recognize that students will not be available for many requests from employers for student help. An efficient, possibly electronic means should be devised for forwarding such requests to appropriate departments. If the college representatives are copied on such requests, they can provide some degree of follow-up. But follow-up in each instance will be time consuming. We should let employers know politely that not all opportunities can be matched, and that if the employers have not heard back from VU in a specified time, they should assume that we have not been able to find a student.

The Assistant Dean of Students for Greek Life and Volunteer Programs will be the designated contact person, for internal as well as external purposes, for Service Learning.

The deans are requested to send names of representatives to Associate Provost Renu Juneja, who will then convene the first meeting of this group. The Committee will explore the possibility of electronic bulletin boards and set up other means for campus-wide dissemination of experiential learning opportunities.

- ii. A subcommittee of EPC will be created to set down some ground rules for service and experiential learning: what kinds of experiences qualify; what requirements must be met by students, etc. The EPC subcommittee will review and approve courses for Service Learning. The subcommittee will devise a form reflecting these criteria which will be filled out by faculty proposing such courses. The subcommittee is also expected to set rules for how many service learning/experiential learning courses in the semester (or year) can be taken by a student, and ensure that all academic advisors know these ground-rules.
- iii. Arts and Sciences may create a position (1/4 released time) for a coordinator for Service Learning.

The relevant extract from these minutes will be sent to appropriate parties (e.g. Chair of EPC, Sandy McGuigan, Associate Dean Katharine Antommara, Professor Kathleen Mullen, and Assistant Dean Jennifer Jones-Hall) so that they we can move forward with setting up the necessary structures.