We here in the Service Learning Program are so glad that you have decided to include community engagement as a component of your education. It is our goal to help prepare you for a successful and meaningful service experience. In this orientation we will discuss:

- The mission and goals of the Service Learning Department
- An overview of service learning as a teaching tool and strategies maximize your impact and reward
- Reflections: helpful tips and tools
- Expectations and core requirements for completion of SLR 101
- Professionalism at the service site
Our mission

The Service Learning Department at Cape Cod Community College strives to create meaningful service learning opportunities for the students of the College and for the surrounding communities. It is our belief that through innovative partnerships between the College and community organizations we can work to support the goals for the betterment of communities, more effectively leverage important resources held by community partners and the College, as well as support the College’s mission to promote a global and multicultural perspective in our students’ learning.

To achieve this we have several main goals for the program:

1. Cultivate quality service learning projects for our students
2. Constantly evaluate our existing partnerships to ensure their continued success
3. Develop new and innovative partnerships to expand our project offerings and meet community need
4. Expand the reach of SLR101 into new disciplines to take full advantage of our students’ and faculty’s amazing knowledge, skills, and resources
5. Promote service learning among faculty and staff to encourage support for the program and continued use in the curriculum
**Service Learning in the Classroom**

Service Learning is a teaching and learning tool that allows students and professors to connect course content to real-life situations through service. Students complete a service project at an approved organization, participate in structured reflection activities, and earn course credit for their experience.

**What you get:**
- Hands-on education
- An additional credit hour
- Networking opportunities!

**What the community partner gets:**
- Cheap labor
- Use of the college’s most vital resource: you, with all your amazing knowledge, skills, and abilities
  
  Through this they can
  - Strengthen their impact
  - Widen their clientele base
  - Scout new members for their organization

**What the college gets:**
- Great publicity
- Awards, commendations, continued measures of success for accreditation
- A more involved student base

Research shows that involvement in service learning activities increases attendance and retention rates. It also promotes civic engagement outcomes. Students report increased self-esteem, as well as improved grades, and a desire to continue with their education.

**Maximizing your Impact, Expanding your Reward**

**Ask Questions**
Sometimes the right question allows an organization to view their processes and procedures in a whole new light, leading to a more thoughtful service environment.

**Give Feedback**
A wonderful side-effect of your service is that the partnering organization gets outside perspective on their current practices and policies. This “outsider information” is crucial to the continued growth and health of an organization. You never know, they could implement your suggestions!
Receive Feedback
The flipside of giving suggestions is being able to take them with the same attitude of service and improvement. You might learn something new as a result!

Take It Seriously
This is a wonderful opportunity to take control of your education while at the same time exploring new career paths or interests. Seek to learn as much as you can from this experience.

Have Fun
You shouldn’t dread going to your service site; this should be an engaging experience for you—even if it pushes you out of your comfort zone at times.

Expectations and Core Requirements

We expect you, as representatives of Cape Cod Community College, to uphold all of rules and regulations stated in the Student Handbook as well as the Student Code of Conduct.

We expect you, as willing participants in this course, to take all course requirements seriously and to participate 100 percent in all service and course-related activities.

We expect you, as citizens of the world, to treat anyone that you encounter with dignity and respect, and that you strive to be courteous and helpful to anyone seeking assistance from the organization you are serving with.

This course requires you to perform 50 hours of service over the course of the term.

Be professional:

If you must miss a scheduled service day or meeting, or will be late, you are expected to notify your service-site prior to the missed appointment, or if prior notice is impossible, as soon as possible.

Abstain from using foul language at the service site.

Dress appropriately for your service site.

Return phone calls and e-mails in a timely manner.

Maintain standards of confidentiality with clients.

If witness or overhear anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, or if you aren’t sure if something follows the organization’s policies and procedures contact your site supervisor and professor immediately to discuss the issue.
REFLECTIONS

For some of you, this might be the scariest part of your service learning experience. You might be concerned that you “learning the right things” or really connecting with your coursework. There are things you can do to help have deeper, more meaningful reflections. It might help you to understand why reflections are such an integral part of the service learning experience.

Reflections are what really make service learning. The connection to curriculum really makes it distinct from volunteering, at the same time that focus on the service provided makes it distinct from an internship. The reflection component gives students the opportunity to connect with their service in a way that encourages them to think about the root cause of WHY their service is needed, and how they can make an impact through their education. They also provide much of the coursework used to grade your experience. As the main component of your grade for this class, you should be very concerned about the quality of your reflection pieces.

Here are a few helpful hints for creating good reflections:

- Keep a journal of your experiences—it will help you remember specific experiences to draw upon when connecting your service to class concepts. Try journal after every service experience.
- Answer specific questions in your entries—having a focus to your writing will help you form a narrative of your experiences and keep you (hopefully) from rambling without thinking.
- Keep a routine—successful reflections are not rushed at the last minute; give yourselves plenty of time to process the material and make those vital connections.
- Ask for feedback—share your reflections with your professor, a staff member at your service site, or with another service learning student. Peer reviews can help immensely with issues of narrative, editing, and keeping on topic.

How you go about organizing your reflections is going to be dependent on several things. First, your professor may have outlined specific reflection instructions in your SLR101 contract. If that’s the case, follow their guidelines. Some reflection activities might be better suited to a specific project or class. A video blog might more accurately represent the learning outcomes for a Media Communications class than for an Economics class, BUT don’t let that discourage you from getting creative. You could

- Create a short film or documentary exploring class concepts and themes as they relate to your service project
- Use music, art, or poetry to capture some of the more raw elements of reflections that an essay might not convey
- Develop a PowerPoint presentation to help you create a thematic narrative of your service experience

Chances are that you will need to incorporate a written component into your reflections, so be sure to proofread carefully and ask for feedback.
If you do incorporate video or photography into your reflection activities, be sure to follow proper guidelines in terms of consent, privacy, and liability. Many organizations require you to obtain special permission before photographing their premises. You also need to obtain release and consent from any clients. You should never give out a client’s personal information such as name, address, phone number, date of birth, or any other personally identifiable information. When discussing clients in a paper or blog post, pseudonyms should be used in place of actual names.

Remember, reflections can be a valuable tool not only academically, but also for the community partners. It can help them see new perspectives on their organizations and their day-to-day work.