

Academic Service-Learning

Academic service-learning is housed within APU's Center for Career and Community-Engaged Learning (CCEL) (<https://www.apu.edu/ccel/>), which cultivates academically integrated learning experiences for community impact, professional development, and lifelong learning.

Academic service-learning is a teaching and learning method that promotes student learning through active participation in meaningful and planned service experiences in the community that are directly related to the academic content, with a focus on (a) connecting theory to practice, (b) critical reflective thinking, (c) personal and civic responsibility, (d) faith integration, and (e) relationship to students' planned vocation. The three distinctives that characterize service-learning at APU are that it is:

1. Academic: intentional and clear connection to learning outcomes and purposeful critical reflection throughout.
2. Reciprocal: active partnerships between faculty, community partners, and students as mutual beneficiaries and coeducators.
3. Making a Difference: outcomes of the project are evidenced through impact on the community as well as on student learning, civic understanding, goals, and faith development and application.

Service-learning staff work with faculty and community partners to intentionally integrate academic coursework with relevant community service that enhances student, faculty, and community scholarship. Courses designated "Service-Learning Course" in course registration materials meet the criteria for excellence in academic service-learning, and the designation is reflected on official school records and transcripts. Upon faculty verification, traditional undergraduate students who successfully meet a course's service-learning requirements earn university service credits (<https://www.apu.edu/spiritual-life/requirements/service/>) needed to meet graduation requirements.

Academic Service-Learning Student Outcomes

Connecting Theory to Practice

- Demonstrate competence in academic content and theory through practical application
- Gain increased understanding of how academic content relates to "the real world"

Critical Reflective Thinking

- Articulate connections between academic content and service-learning experiences
- Identify how service-learning affected sense of personal efficacy, personal identity, spiritual development, understanding of diversity, and moral development

Personal and Civic Responsibility

- Develop personal desire to contribute to local, national, and/or global community
- Evaluate how cultural competence and understanding of diversity are developed through informed and reciprocal interactions with others
- Strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility

Faith Integration

- Explain the relevance of Christian faith through the application of learning
- Articulate an integrated understanding of faith and learning in action

Relationship to Planned Vocation

- Prepare for employment by gaining practical experience and networking opportunities
- Demonstrate skills that employers seek (e.g., communication skills, leadership, problem solving, etc.)

Connect

Contact servicelearning@apu.edu for more information. The Center for Career and Community-Engaged Learning is located in Building 22 on East Campus.