



MercyCollege

Service Learning Handbook Mercy College of Ohio



2017-2018

Service Learning Handbook Mercy College of Ohio

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Cover photo:

Morgan McConnell, Joanne Bartos and Dominique Bishop painting at the David School,
David, Kentucky

(photo by Sister Sally Marie Bohnett, SND)

Welcome to Mercy College of Ohio Service Learning Program

As the Director of Campus Ministry and Service Learning at Mercy College of Ohio, it is my pleasure to welcome you to both the College and the Service Learning Program.



Service learning at Mercy College of Ohio is embedded within the curriculum of each academic program. This means that as part of a Mercy College education, students will complete a “service learning” experience in those courses that have been selected by the faculty that will engage students in living out their commitment of civic responsibility.

Mercy College of Ohio students have been involved in local, regional, and international service experiences. We hope to expand these programs in the coming years.

The service learning experience will provide students with the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others, and the reflections on those experiences will personally impact the students.

I look forward to working with the students, faculty, and staff in the Service Learning Program at Mercy College of Ohio.

Sister Sally Marie Bohnett, SND, MA

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1. Introduction

Service learning or “learning through providing service” is an essential part of every student’s educational experience at Mercy College of Ohio. The service component is stated in the Mercy College of Ohio Mission, Vision, and Core Values statements.

Mission

The Mercy College of Ohio Mission states that the institution “educates and inspires students to lead and *to serve* in the global community.”

Vision

The Mercy College of Ohio Vision states: “We will be the leader in educating individuals committed to intellectual inquiry, *social engagement*, and lifelong learning.”

Core Values

Mercy College of Ohio has six core values and one is identified as: “Engaging the college community to enrich the lives of students through professional and *community service*.”

MEdS (Institutional Learning Outcome)

Mercy Educational Standard #1 states that our students will be leaders who “are committed to *social engagement*, demonstrating the knowledge and skills required to be an active participant in the betterment of society.”

Strategic Plan (2016-2020)

The Mercy College community worked on the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, and it reaffirms the College’s commitment to service learning. Goal Two, Objective Four states that the College will remain engaged with community organizations. Goal Four, Objective One states that the College will strengthen service opportunities for students, faculty, staff and administration. Goal Four, Objective Two states that the College will build relationships with the Catholic community where the College has a physical presence.

2. Service Learning Defined

2.1 Definition

The literature contains many different definitions of “Service Learning.” *The Conference for Mercy Higher Education* provides information on service learning for those who are members of the Conference. Mercy College of Ohio is currently not a member of the Conference, but espouses the works written by Dr. Jennifer Reed-Bouley & Ken Reed-Bouley. (See information that follows).

One of the fundamental resources of Mercy service learning is the *Introducing Students to Social Analysis and Theological Reflection: Foundations for Facilitators of Service-Learning at Colleges and Universities founded or sponsored by Sisters of Mercy*, written by Dr. Jennifer Reed-Bouley and Ken Reed-Bouley. This work, commissioned by the Conference for Mercy Higher Education, is as useful for those who are just beginning a service learning program as it is for those seasoned professionals who have implemented several service learning experiences. (www.mercyhighered.org/service.html).



The Conference of Mercy Higher Education divides service learning into two categories: curricular and co-curricular.

Curricular Service Learning:

- Curricular service-learning is a pedagogy that integrates community service into academic courses to meet specific learning goals for students. Faculty, in partnership with representatives of community organizations, design service-learning projects based on two main objectives: advancing the students' understanding of specific course content and related civic learning objectives, and responding to community-identified needs and assets. Strong reflective and analytical components are built into the course to help students consider relationships between their service, the course's curriculum, and its impact on their values, vocations, and professional goals (Reed-Bouley & Reed-Bouley, 2007).

Co-Curricular Service Learning:

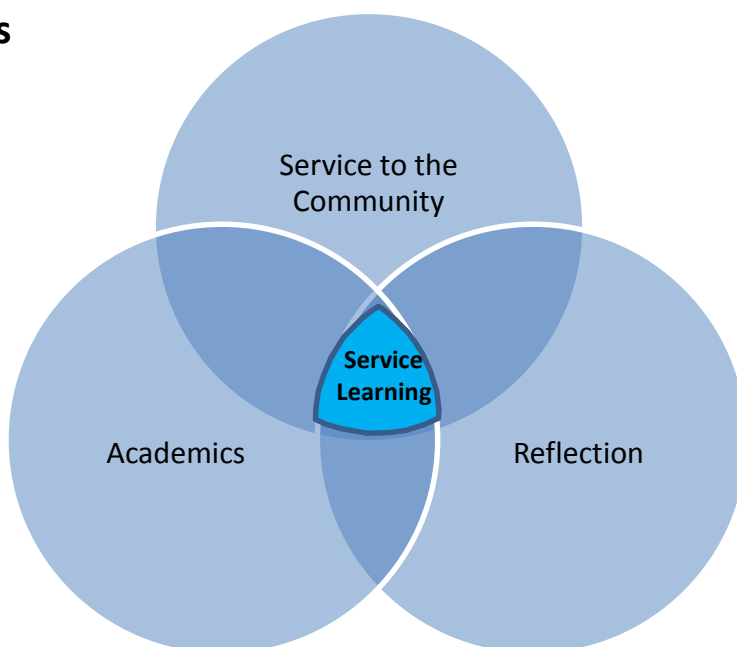
- Co-curricular service-learning differs only with regard to a link to course content. The service has specific learning goals for participants, the service responds to community-identified needs and assets, and the process includes strong reflective and analytical components. Generally, these service-learning activities are directed under the leadership of student organizations and groups (Reed-Bouley & Reed-Bouley, 2007).

Mercy College of Ohio integrates both types of service learning into the educational experiences of students. For the purposes of this handbook, curricular service learning will be emphasized.

2.2 The Basics of Service Learning

What are the key components of service learning? The three areas of the educational experience that are essential to service learning are: service, academic learning, and reflection (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1:
Components
of Service
Learning**



The three areas are described below:

- a. **Community Service** - Meaningful service, which is of benefit to the community (agency), occurs. The ideal service relationship is one that the community (agency) and the student arrange collaboratively. The agency must recognize the service performed as necessary work of the community (agency).
- b. **Academics** - The service performed must link directly to the learning goals of the course. It contributes to the students’ understanding and/or practice of academic concepts or skills (DeLeon & Kirby-Stokes, n.d.).
- c. **Reflection** - Essential to service learning is the ability of students to reflect on their contributions to the community (agency) and the impact it had on the community (agency) and the student(s). The oral and/or written critical reflection provides the “learning” piece of service learning, which creates the difference between service learning and volunteering. As part of the reflection, students must relate the experience to their course curriculum as well as the Mercy College Core Values. Based on its Catholic heritage, an expectation of this reflection is that students discuss whether this experience was transformative for them. Therefore, there are three areas that are essential for the reflection: how does the service experience relate to the course curriculum, how does the service experience relate to the Mercy College Core Values, and was the service experience transformative for the student, and if so, in what way(s).

The critical reflection creates the difference between service learning and volunteering. Volunteering for a community agency or cause is certainly worthwhile and to be commended. However, volunteer service is usually “outside of the classroom, and not linked to a course.” For example, Mercy College of Ohio takes part in Project Linus making fleece blankets for Mercy Children’s Hospital and Lucas County Children’s Services. This one-day event brings the campus community together to tie the knots that put the finishing touches on the blankets. This would be considered volunteering. The reflection and the academic learning are not part of this initiative.

Briefly, co-curricular service learning, even though not related to a course, has service learning components. For example, the alternative spring break trip is co-curricular service learning. Direct service takes place with a community (agency), students study the population/area that will be served, and the reflection is included at the conclusion of each day.

2.3 Service Learning Requirements

Mercy College of Ohio embraces service learning as described in the Mercy Conference for Higher Education. Service Learning is embedded in College degree program coursework and the requirements are as follows:

Associate Degree Programs	10 hours
Bachelor Degree Programs	20 hours
Bachelor Degree Completion Programs	10 hours

Service Learning must be provided at a 501(c)3 not-for-profit agency. This information is provided on the agency’s website or by the manager of the agency. Any questions about the not-for-profit status of the agency should be directed to the Director of Campus Ministry and Service Learning.

The assignment/project must include an oral and/or written critical reflection from each student on his/her experiences. (See Section 6 of this Handbook)

The assignment/project must be related to course content. It must be a meaningful part of the course not just an “add-on.” The ideal project is one in which the student(s) and the agency together decide what service will be performed rather than the student telling the agency what he/she wants to do.

Each student must also complete a Service Learning Verification Form, which will be submitted to the course instructor/professor. (See Appendix D of this Handbook). These forms will provide the information for the professor to fill out the Service Learning Documentation Form.

When the assignments/projects are completed for the course, the instructor/professor must fill out the Service Learning Documentation Form and submit it to the Director of Campus Ministry and Service Learning. (See Appendix E of this Handbook)

Any additional requirements for service learning are at the discretion of the instructor/professor.

3. Value of Service Learning

3.1 Value for Students

Part of the Mercy College of Ohio Vision states the College is committed to educating individuals who are committed to lifelong learning. Service learning is part of that commitment, which instills in students a desire to continue to serve in their communities after graduation.

A student’s educational experience is enriched through service in the following ways:

- Interpersonal skills are enhanced through interactions that take place within and outside the community agency.
- Research and critical thinking skills are improved as students conduct literature reviews related to their assignment/project.
- Students develop a broader perspective of the world through service and curricular experiences.
- Problem solving skills are demonstrated by completing an assignment/project for the community agency as well as what is learned in coursework.
- Demonstrating care and compassion for the clients of the organization by the students, faculty, and staff.

The relationships that students have the potential of developing with community agencies can provide them with long term benefits such as a place where students can continue to serve after graduation as well as networking opportunities.

3.2 Value for the College and Faculty

Many high school students are committed to service learning since they participate in service throughout their high school careers. Mercy College provides first-time/full-time freshman an opportunity to continue their service in both curricular and co-curricular activities. Mercy College of Ohio posts service opportunities and stories of service on the College website. Studies show the level of student engagement in service results in higher retention rates (Lascell, 2014).

The College also provides an opportunity for transfer and completion students to participate in service learning. Many of these students come to Mercy College with resumes that include service to their communities and to organizations that include churches, schools, not-for-profits, etc.

Additionally, the total number of hours provided within the community and to community agencies, can be used as evidence in grant writing and marketing efforts. Service learning presentations and reflections can have an impact on the wider community. For example, the philanthropy grants awarded to community organizations by the former Community Health Nursing course is an example of how service learning can make a difference.

Faculty members are also provided an opportunity to engage with the community and become familiar with not-for-profit organizations. They find the student reflections very rewarding and heart-touching. Many faculty and staff also provide service in their communities and to not-for-profit organizations.

3.3 Value for Community Agencies

The value for the agencies includes the following:

- Building a relationship with Mercy College of Ohio and its students.
- Getting assistance with projects that need to be completed.
- Demonstrating care and compassion for the clients of the organization by the students, faculty, and staff.
- Providing research assistance to the organization by the students, faculty, and staff.
- Building trust in students to work with the clients of the organization.

4. Service Learning in Action

4.1 Overview

Service learning can be completed in a variety of ways. As the Francis Center for Servant-Leadership (2006) states, “Service learning activities can be incorporated into a variety of different disciplines in various ways. A faculty member may choose to have students participate in service learning activities as an entire class, in small groups, or individually.” Regardless of the approach selected, each has benefits and the faculty member may choose which one works best for his/her course. It is preferable that whatever service is performed, it should be direct service for a not-for-profit community agency, and as a rule with an economically disadvantaged or underserved population.

4.2 Grading

Since service learning is curriculum-embedded, it is up to the discretion of the faculty member to determine the grading methodology. (See examples of rubrics in Appendix C)

The syllabus must include information related to service learning so that students understand the course expectations.

5. Professional Behavior

5.1 Code of Conduct

Students are expected to follow the College Code of Conduct and act in a professional manner at all times. Students are guests in the community agencies and must follow their policies and procedures as well.

6. Assessment

6.1 Overview of Assessment

Mercy College of Ohio defines the purpose of assessment as improving “courses, programs and/or services,” involving “the continuous, systematic process of collecting and analyzing data” (Assessment, 2014). Simply stated, assessment answers two questions: 1. Are the college’s students learning what the faculty/staff identify as what they need to learn? and 2. Have faculty/staff identified the correct learning requirements of the certificate and degree programs?

Mercy College of Ohio defines assessment as:

- Focused on student learning.
- A set of expectations, criteria and standards that students must meet, as determined by the responsible faculty and staff.
- Evidence (data) that is gathered and analyzed is used to make substantive change if results are not in alignment with objectives.
- Ensuring and improving the quality of graduates.
- Ongoing processes that promote continual improvement of student learning at the College.
- An embedded process that is part of the organizational culture at the College.

The College has used different methods to gather data to measure the effectiveness of the Assessment Program, for example, course assignments, projects, and tests; certification and national licensure exams; and information gathered from the program advisory boards, just to name a few.

6.2 Director of Campus Ministry & Service Learning

The Director of Campus Ministry & Service Learning will prepare an annual report that will include the number of service hours completed by students and a list of places where the students provided service. The report will include the number of service hours by program, the faculty that require service learning in their courses as well as the specific course and level of the course (100-400).

The Director also serves as a resource for faculty members especially for those who want to embed service learning in one of their courses.

7. Reflection

7.1 Overview

Mercy College of Ohio values the reflection piece of service learning as vital to the overall process.

Reflection is another term for integrating learning. The reflective assignment is the culmination of providing the service and linking it to the course content. The reflection can be presented orally or in writing and demonstrates the processing of information gathered from both the delivery of service (experiential) and the learning from the course content (See Figure 1). This reflective assignment is what separates service learning from volunteer work.

Service learning at Mercy College of Ohio also requires students to address the Mercy Core Values of: Compassion, Excellence, Justice, Human Dignity, Sacredness of Life, and Service.

The reflective assignment requires students to critically think about how the service experience has impacted their lives by looking deep into their conscience and subsequently sharing that information. This requires trust on the part of the students and the faculty members. Some students may have a highly transformative experience while others will not; however, it is important that students be able to write openly about their experiences.

7.2 Types of Reflection

There are many ways to design the reflection assignment. For curricular service learning, it is most often done through a reflection paper, which is one way Mercy College assesses service learning. The faculty member can give students reflective questions as a guide or may give specific questions that are required to be answered. The Mercy Core Values should be referenced as part of the assignment.

One method that is frequently seen in the literature is: *What? So What? And Now What?*, which is one way to reflect based on Kolb's experiential learning cycle chart (APPLES, n.d.). In the first part, the student has the opportunity to descriptively tell about the service itself (*What?*). In the second part, students analyze the experience with regard to what impacted them, what they learned and/or how the experience enhanced or related to their course (*So What?*). The final part of using this method challenges students to apply what they have learned, look at root causes of the problems/issues, or how they might see themselves interacting with the agency in the future (*Now What?*).

Written or oral reflections may also follow the DEAL model. The student will Describe the experience; Examine the experience related to the assignment objectives and Articulate Learning (APPLES, n.d.).

Many of the courses at Mercy College of Ohio that have a service learning component use *theological reflection*. The Conference for Mercy Higher Education encourages this type of reflection, which leads to greater insight about the experience.

The Conference for Mercy Higher Education (Reed-Bouley & Reed- Bouley, 2007) uses the following four steps of *theological reflection*:

- Focus on some aspect of the experience
- Describe the selected aspect to identify the heart of the matter
- Explore the core of the matter according to the wisdom of the Christian heritage
- Discover from this reflection new insights and meaning for living.

In *theological reflection*, knowledge of the Christian heritage (or the wisdom of another faith tradition) is necessary for the faculty member to have along with an understanding of the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching (See Appendix A). Before students engage in *theological reflection*, they too, will need to have a good understanding of Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching.

Theological reflection occurs most naturally in the Religious Studies courses, but any course can implement this type of reflection. A reflection based on the wisdom of one's faith tradition and the Mercy Core Values could help students gain a deeper understanding of their lives beyond the time spent in the course.

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APPENDIX A

Mission

Mercy College of Ohio, a Catholic institution with a focus on healthcare, educates and inspires students to lead and to serve in the global community.

Vision

We will be the leader in educating individuals committed to intellectual inquiry, social engagement, and lifelong learning.

Values

- **Compassion** – Displaying respect, empathy, and a willingness to listen.
- **Human Dignity** – Respecting the significance of each individual.
- **Excellence** – Pursuing distinction in our professional and personal lives through quality academics and intellectual inquiry.
- **Service** – Engaging the college community to enrich the lives of students through professional and community service.
- **Sacredness of life** – Revering all life through our thoughts, words, and actions.
- **Justice** – Acting with integrity, fairness, honesty, and truthfulness.

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, every person's life and dignity must be respected and supported from conception through natural death.

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

The human person is not only sacred, but social. How we organize our society — socially, economically, legally and politically — directly affect human dignity and the ability of every human person to grow in community.

SOLIDARITY

We are one human family. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace.

DIGNITY OF WORK

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. To uphold the dignity of work, the basic rights of workers must be respected — the right to productive work, to fair and livable wages, and to organize and join a union.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every person has a fundamental right to life — the right that makes all other rights possible. Each person also has a right to the conditions for living a decent life — food, health care, housing, education and employment. We have a corresponding duty to secure and respect these rights for others.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

Scripture teaches that God has a special concern for the poor and vulnerable. The church calls on all of us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. This preferential option for the poor and vulnerable should be reflected in both our daily lives and public policies. A fundamental measure of our society is how we care for and stand with our poor and vulnerable brothers and sisters.

CARE FOR GOD’S CREATION

The world that God created has been entrusted to all of us. Our stewardship of the earth is a form of participation in God’s act of creating and sustaining the world. In our use of creation, we must be guided by a concern for generations to come. We show our respect for the Creator by our care for creation.

<http://thecatholicspirit.com/special-sections/legislative-guide/7-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching/>

APPENDIX B

Mercy Educational Standard #1

By the time a student completes a program from Mercy College, they will be leaders who:

1. Are committed to social engagement, demonstrating the knowledge and skills required to be an active participant in the betterment of society

Note: *The assessment tools for MEdS #1 are in progress.*

APPENDIX C – Grading Rubric 1 (Sample)

REL 101

Mercy Works Rubric

This reflection/research assignment is designed to integrate the student’s service learning experiences with the Mercy Core Values of compassion, excellence, human dignity, justice, sacredness of life, and service. The degree of success of this integration will be reflected in the grade of the paper. The student is required to participate in and to document a minimum of ten hours of satisfactory service to the community during the semester, give a presentation of service, and evaluate peer presentations.

Reflection on the Mercy Core Values in Action Assignment - Grading Rubric

Criteria	Points
Paper Length (8-10 full pages of written text, excluding cover page, abstract and reference page); double-space, 1-inch margins, 12 point type font	0-10
Clearly identify and describe in detail the purpose of the service in which you participated.	0-20
Clearly identify and describe in detail the agency (how long has it been in existence, who sponsors the agency, demographics, who is the target population, funding), and how many people are served in a typical time period (week, month or year).	0-20
Clearly identify and describe in detail the mission statement of the agency. Was the service in which you participated at this agency consistent with their mission statement? (This refers to the agency's services, not your own service.)	0-20
Reflect on your experience of this assignment: How are the Mercy Core Values expressed in your experience? Explain in detail.	0-20
What is the significance of this service learning experience in your professional development as a health care provider, and in your personal development?	0-25
What is the relevance of this service learning experience in relationship to the interaction between God and human persons?	0-25
Correct APA format including: (itemization of points listed below) Correct cover page = 0-1 points Abstract = 0-1 points Correct grammar, usage, and spelling = 0-6 points Correct references in body of paper = 0-1 points Reference page = 0-1 points	0-10

Courtesy of Zoe DeBlasio, DMin

APPENDIX C – Grading Rubric 2 (Sample)

MEDICAL ETHICS
 Rubric for Civic Engagement Project
 (please submit this page with your written reflection/research paper)

Name: _____

Criteria	Point Distribution	Points Earned	Comments
Appropriate agency chosen and Proposal submitted by due date and approved by instructor	0-50 points		
Service Learning Documentation form submitted by due date	0-50 points		
Length of paper, consistent style, first-person narrative	0-5 points		
Cover page, abstract, page numbers; rubric attached to paper	0-5 points		
Correct grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling	0-10 points		
Purpose of service learning experience	0-20 points		
Agency information	0-20 points		
Description of service	0-20 points		
Ethical issues addressed by the agency	0-20 points		
Reflection on significance of experience personally/professionally	0-20 points		
Relevance of experience with human relationship with God	0-30 points		
Reflection meeting with Dr. DeBlasio	0-60 points		
Presentation on service-learning experience and peer evaluations	0-90 points		
TOTAL	0-400 points		

Courtesy of Zoe DeBlasio, DMin

Appendix D – Service Learning Verification Form (Sample)
 (For the student to give professor/instructor)



Student name:	Phone #	Email:
Professor/Instructor:		
Course name:		
Course number:	Section:	Term:
Agency name:		
Agency address (number and street):		
(city, state, zip):		
Supervisor's name:		Supervisor's phone:
Start date:	End date:	

WEEK	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	TOTAL	VERIFIED
1:									
2:									
3:									
4:									
5:									
6:									
7:									
8:									
9:									
10:									
11:									
12:									
TOTAL HOURS:									

I certify that the service hours indicated above are accurate:

Student's signature:	Date:
Supervisor's signature:	Date:
Professor's/Instructor's signature:	Date:

