

1 | DEFINITION OF A COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING COURSES

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3 | I. POLICY DEFINITION

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5 | Community Service Learning (CSLS) is a structured learning experience within an
6 | academic course. The service work is directed toward the achievement of course learning
7 | objectives and also toward making meaningful contributions to the areas of need
8 | identified by the community being served.
9 |

10 | The service activity is used to clarify, illustrate, challenge, or stimulate additional thought
11 | about the topics covered in the classroom. Structured ~~W~~written and/or oral reflection ties
12 | the service experiences to the academic content of the course and also provides students
13 | with the opportunity to develop or strengthen their awareness of the relationship between
14 | the course material and societal needs, a service ethic, and their role as citizens.
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16 | The community service could take on a variety of forms. Examples include the
17 | following:
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- 19 | • Direct service to people in need
- 20 | • Policy analysis
- 21 | • Community outreach and education
- 22 | • Program assessment and improvement of community resources;
- 23 | • Organization for action on social, health, safety, or environmental issues;
- 24 |

25 | The service activity should correspond with and must be appropriate to the student's level
26 | of academic preparation. Activities must take place only at sites approved by the
27 | instructor and under contract with the University in accordance with University risk
28 | management procedures. An "Informed Consent Waiver" must be completed when a
29 | non-CSUSM-approved site is selected, and should only be considered by the instructor
30 | under extraordinary and compelling circumstances.
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32 | A Community Service Learning course includes:
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- 34 | • Explicit learning objectives and explanation in the syllabus of the role of the
35 | service experience in attaining those objectives;
- 36 | • Preparation in class for the service activity to increase the student's understanding
37 | of the community context that the student will be entering, needs and issues they
38 | may encounter, standards of conduct expected of them, etc.;
- 39 | • Ongoing, structured, critical reflection with regular instructor feedback that ties
40 | the community experience with the academic course content, thus enhancing
41 | both; and
- 42 | • Evaluation that is based on the quality of the student's learning; not just the
43 | completion of certain hours of service; and a grading weight that is proportionate
44 | to the community service learning component of the course.
45 |

46 | The time allotted to the community service learning portion of the course includes the
47 | preparation and analysis time and the time for written and oral reflection as well as the
48 | actual time spent in the community. While, typically, the largest portion of time in

49 community service learning would be in the service activity, time allotted for ongoing
50 critical reflection should be substantial as well.

51
52 The criterion used to determine whether the community service learning makes enough of
53 a contribution to the achievement of course objective for the course to qualify for
54 designation as a Community Service Learning course is that at least 15% of the student's
55 grades will be based on the community service learning portion of the course. It is
56 suggested that the service consist of at least 20 hours of direct, academically-relevant
57 community service.

58
59 All courses and/or sections meeting the definition above must be identified as such in the
60 class schedule so that students can enroll in courses knowing in advance of this
61 expectation.

62 63 II. PROCEDURES

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65 A. If all sections of an existing course will meet the definition given above, then the
66 department chair (or program director, or associate dean) must submit a brief memo
67 to that effect to the Catalog and Curriculum Coordinator in the Curriculum and
68 Scheduling Office so that the course can be so coded at the course level. (Then all
69 sections subsequently created sections will automatically be identified as Community
70 Service Learning section in the class schedule.)

71
72 B. If some, but not all, sections of a course will meet the definition, then the department
73 chair, program director or associate dean must identify those sections to the Office of
74 Community Service Learning (OCSL). OCSL will consolidate the requests to have
75 sections identified as Community Service Learning sections and relay this
76 information to the Academic Scheduler in the Curriculum and Scheduling Office so
77 that these sections are properly identified in the class schedule.

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79 1. If a Community Service Learning section is identified to the Academic Scheduler
80 in time for the section to appear as such in the class schedule prior to any students
81 registering for the section, then no further action is necessary.

82 2. In the event that a faculty member receives a class assignment or reaches the
83 decision to employ Community Service Learning pedagogy after some students
84 have already registered into the section, it may still be identified as a Community
85 Service Learning section, but the instructor must offer students the opportunity to
86 replace participation in the Community Service Learning component with
87 alternative coursework (e.g., additional reading and writing assignments).

88
89 << Section III was removed since it was neither a policy nor a procedure >>

90 91 H. PROCEDURES

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93 ~~If all sections of an existing course will meet the definition given above, then the~~
94 ~~department chair (or program director, or associate dean) should submit a brief memo to~~
95 ~~that effect to the Catalog and Curriculum Coordinator in the Office of Academic~~
96 ~~Programs so that the courses can be so coded at the course level.~~
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98 If some sections, but not all sections, of a course will meet the definition, then the
99 department chair (or program director, or associate dean) should identify the community
100 service learning section(s) to the Academic Scheduler in the Office of Academic
101 Programs when the class schedule is under construction.
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103 Recommendation: ~~Creating Companions to Existing Courses~~

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105 ~~There are situations where it may be desirable to create a community service learning~~
106 ~~course that would operate in tandem with, and supplement another course~~
107 ~~(referred to here as the “primary” course) which may or may not itself be a~~
108 ~~community service learning course. This recommendation suggests how such a~~
109 ~~companion CSL course might be used to reinforce the academic material and~~
110 ~~learning objectives in the primary established course. If the primary course did~~
111 ~~not already have a community service learning component, then the companion~~
112 ~~CSL course would offer the additional learning strategy of community service~~
113 ~~learning, and if the primary course did already include community service~~
114 ~~learning, then the companion course would provide an opportunity to increase~~
115 ~~the quantity of the community service learning.~~
116

117 ~~The proposal for a CSL companion course should specify that the primary course is a~~
118 ~~co-requisite. When both the primary and companion courses are offered,~~
119 ~~students registering for the primary course would have the option of also~~
120 ~~registering for the CSL companion course, in which they would participate in~~
121 ~~community service learning (or in additional community service learning) and~~
122 ~~the reflection activity associated with the service experience or the additional~~
123 ~~service experience. For instance, there could be a primary course called XYZ 350~~
124 ~~carrying 3 units of credit, and a community service learning companion course~~
125 ~~called XYZ 350C, carrying an additional unit of credit; students could register for~~
126 ~~either XYZ 350 alone, or the pair: XYZ 350 and XYZ 350C.~~
127

128 ~~Like other service learning courses, the companion CSL course syllabus would~~
129 ~~explicitly integrate the role of the service activity in attaining the overall primary~~
130 ~~course objectives. The course would include preparation for entry into the~~
131 ~~service; ongoing structured critical reflection with instructor feedback to tie the~~
132 ~~service experience to the academic course content; and evaluation that is based~~
133 ~~on the quality of the student’s learning and not just the completion of certain~~
134 ~~hours of service. In the case where there was no community service learning in~~
135 ~~the primary course, the CSL companion course might include in-class time as~~
136 ~~well as in the community time, in order to include the necessary preparation and~~
137 ~~reflection. If, however, the established, primary course is also a community~~
138 ~~service learning course with in-class reflection, it is possible that the companion~~
139 ~~course might consist primarily of additional service hours with which to deepen~~
140 ~~the student’s experience. It would be important, however, to ensure sufficient~~
141 ~~student reflection and feedback and enough contact to support the students with~~
142 ~~their increased community involvement. A one-unit CSL companion course~~
143 ~~should include 45 hours of direct academically relevant community service.~~

