Loyola University New Orleans  
Office of Service Learning  
2009-2010 Annual Report

1. Executive Summary

2009-2010 was a year marked by intense growth for the Office of Service Learning. Service learning at Loyola gained incredible traction among faculty and students. Faculty development efforts intensified around the theme of facilitating reflection. After the Office’s re-launch in 2008-2009, numbers of service learning courses and students more than doubled. Although this strained the limits of the program’s small staff and budget, feedback from students, faculty and community partners was overwhelmingly positive.

2. Unit Identification or Profile Summary

2.1 The Office of Service Learning supports the development and implementation of service learning and community-based learning experiences in academic courses and programs of study at Loyola University New Orleans. Our goal is to bring education to life by connecting the classroom to community needs. OSL supports and enacts Loyola’s Jesuit mission of forming students toward social responsibility and a concern for justice and the common good.

2.2 OSL reports to the Office of Academic Affairs, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. This year, supervision of OSL transferred from Dr. Roger White (Vice Provost) to Dr. Lydia Voigt, Senior Vice Provost. OSL was originally established at Loyola in 2001. After a three year post-Katrina hiatus, OSL operations were re-launched in August 2008. OSL does not oversee extracurricular, non-course based service activities at Loyola, although OSL staff work closely with those who do. Because OSL focuses strictly on academic, course-based service activities, its primary clients are Loyola faculty members. Students are secondary clients of OSL in the sense that they engage OSL’s services when they take a course with a service learning component. Currently, faculty members at Loyola opt to include service learning in their courses for pedagogical reasons. There are no university-wide service learning requirements at Loyola at this time. OSL’s goal is to give faculty members a wide range of well-supported choices so they are free to craft the most appropriate and engaging service learning experience for students in their course. At the same time, OSL aims to give students the supports they need to successfully undertake and complete a wide range of different kinds of service learning activities. OSL is located on the first floor of Bobet Hall.

2.2.1 1 full-time director. 1 Federal Work Study student worker (8-10 hours/week). 1 full-time Americorps/VISTA (Adam Robinson) was placed in OSL from August 2009-August 2010. This is not a Loyola position and is not reflected in FRS or payroll records. This position is federally funded.
2.2.2 In 2009-2010, 28 Loyola faculty members taught a service learning course.
2.2.3 In 2010-2011, 770 undergraduate students did service learning for an academic course.
2.2.4 In 2010-2011, 10 graduate students did service learning for an academic course.
2.2.5 NA
2.2.6 NA

3. Assessment

3.1 During 2009-2010, OSL administered a triad of surveys. Service learning students were surveyed twice per year, once at the end of each semester. A sample of service learning faculty was surveyed in December 2009. Finally, community partners were surveyed in May 2010. Survey results were published and shared widely with community partners, students, faculty and the wider community. Internally, results were used to review service learning policies, develop more streamlined processes, and plan faculty trainings. Aside from this triad of surveys, OSL’s other important assessment mechanism is regular meetings with constituent-specific leadership councils. OSL’s Community Partners Council (CPC), launched in 2008-2009, met quarterly with OSL staff to provide feedback and input about how OSL should collaborate with stakeholders in the wider community. In addition, in 2009-2010, OSL launched the Student Leadership and Advisory Board (S-LAB). There were 6 student leaders on the inaugural S-LAB, and they met regularly from December through May. The final S-LAB meeting was specifically devoted to assessing the effectiveness of S-LAB and refining members’ roles and responsibilities.

3.2 OSL’s goals for 2009-2010 included: (a) identifying more ways to use technology to streamline service learning records and processes; (b) exploring with departments and colleges the possibility of implementing a credit-bearing co-requisite for courses that incorporate service learning; (c) exploring with key stakeholders solutions to the problem of service learning transportation; (d) effectively managing, supervising and tasking a full-time Americorps/VISTA; and (e) expanding the number of SL courses by 20%. All of OSL’s goals were designed to support OSL’s primary strategic priority: enhancing the quality of service learning at Loyola (as this is distinguished from, but also related to, the quantity of service learning at Loyola). This strategic priority is derived from and directly supports all three of Loyola’s current strategic priorities: (a) enhancing Loyola’s national stature and reputation, (b) increasing student retention; and (c) enhancing Jesuit values.

3.3 Student learning outcomes for 2009-2010 included: (a) ability to make connections between classroom material and out-of-class service learning experiences; (b) awareness of social problems and ability to articulate possible causes and solutions; (c) understanding of social justice; and (d) critical thinking.
3.4 Service learning students were surveyed twice in 2009-2010, once at the end of each semester. There were 35 questions on this survey soliciting a mixture of open-ended qualitative responses, multiple choice responses, ranked responses, and Likert scale responses. Students provided feedback on (a) service learning courses, (b) service learning agencies, (c) scheduling and transportation, (d) learning and developmental outcomes; and (e) overall satisfaction. This survey was significantly expanded from a short, 15-question satisfaction-oriented survey in 2008-2009. For the first time in 2009-2010, OSL also surveyed a sample of service learning faculty in December 2009. There were 20 questions on this survey. Results from these surveys were used to improve SL processes and determine faculty development priorities. Finally, community partners were surveyed once in May 2010. This survey contained 50 questions soliciting a mixture of open-ended qualitative responses, single-answer multiple choice responses, ranked responses, and Likert scale responses. This survey was also significantly expanded from the previous year, where a simple, 10-question satisfaction-oriented survey was administered. The focus of this year’s survey was to get feedback from community partners about supervision, recruitment, communication, paperwork, student performance, and impact. Other assessment activities conducted in 2009-2010 included: 4 CPC meetings (see 3.1); site visits with 35 community-based organizations; 1 S-LAB meeting devoted to assessment (year-end survey and discussion).

3.5 All assessment activities listed in 3.1 and 3.4 are directly related to community-based learning and community-engaged activities. All assessment mechanisms are focused on measuring outcomes and impacts related to community work.

3.6 Findings from 2009-2010 student surveys show excellent progress on most student learning outcomes. A few highlights: 91% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed their service learning experience. Slightly more (92%) agreed that they learned from their service learning experience. 73% said that SL made their class more interesting. 71% said that their service learning was connected to course content and helped them achieve learning goals in the course. 83% indicated that their service learning gave them a better understanding of social problems. Results from May 2010 community partner surveys are currently being analyzed. Data will be reported in next year’s annual report. Analysis was completed on May 2009 community partner surveys, and this informed significant expansion of the survey. As of May 2009, community partners were overwhelmingly satisfied with their relationships with Loyola and with Loyola students. 93% reported that Loyola service learning students were reliable and consistent. 100% of partners reported that Loyola students were committed to their agencies and engaged with their clients and programs. However, 27% of partners reported that lack of transportation resources inhibited their ability to recruit and retain enough Loyola students. Responses uncovered another area of concern: 40% of representatives from partner agencies agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: “Ideally, service learning students should require little or no supervision.” This will inform future training efforts.
among community partners as well as future choices with regard to new partnerships and termination of existing partnerships. Faculty survey results from 2009-2010 indicate that faculty commitment to SL is becoming very well-rooted, and that faculty members are very satisfied with the effect SL has on student learning and engagement. 87% agreed or strongly agreed that students’ service learning activities helped them learn more about the topic of the class. 63% reported that SL helped students gain a deeper understanding of social problems. Survey data also indicate that faculty are glad to have a full-time professional staff present in the service learning office, since SL requires so much support and logistical assistance. 87% of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that it is more work to teach a service learning class than a non-service learning class.

4. Summary of Achievements

4.1 OSL provided oversight, management and leadership for 813 distinct service learning experiences in 2009-2010. 780 Loyola service learning students documented 17,188 hours of service learning (avg. 22 hours per student) for 61 different courses and worked with 50 different community partners. According to Independent Sector and the Corporation for National and Community Service (the federal government’s service arm), the in-kind value of Loyola’s service learning contributions in 2009-2010 was $321,588. In addition, OSL again offered a well-received intensive one-day workshop “Service Learning 101,” providing faculty members with a basic toolkit for starting or deepening their service learning practice.

4.2 NA. Service learning faculty had many outstanding achievements in 2010-2011, many of which are traceable to or rooted in their engagement with service learning. These will be reported by their departments and colleges.

4.3 Kelly submitted a proposal for a co-presentation at Gulf South Summit 2010 in Athens, Georgia with Dr. Sue Mennino (Sociology Department) and Ms. Kylie Faure (Class of 2013). This proposal was accepted and together they delivered a successful presentation (“Bringing Sociology to Life: Loyola and the Freret Neighborhood Center”) at this important regional service learning conference. Kelly launched a service learning blog (“Learn. Serve. Share.”).

4.4 6 students served on the inaugural S-LAB in 2009-2010. In April 2010, 2 new S-LAB student leaders were recruited. 3 students obtained Federal Work Study-funded jobs at service learning partner agencies.

4.5 OSL provided oversight and collaborative direction for 50 community partnerships with agencies and organizations throughout the greater New Orleans community. These partnerships are the condition for the possibility of all service learning activity summarized in 4.1. In 2009-2010, 11 new partnerships were formed with agencies. A major achievement in 2009-2010 was formalizing, together with the Office of the General Counsel, an MOU process which will
govern Loyola’s service learning community partnerships. This process is now fully in place, and MOU’s with community partners will be renewed annually.

5. **Budget for previous year and upcoming year’s goals**

5.1 $9,900 operating; $61,800 salary. $71,700 total for FY 2009-2010.

5.1.1 During the current fiscal year, $5,000 was allocated to OSL from the QEP budget. This was used to fund OSL’s faculty development efforts, which are a key priority in Loyola’s current Quality Enhancement Plan. In 2009-2010, OSL’s operating budgets, like most at Loyola, was cut by 10%, from $11,000 to $9,900. Only due to the QEP allocation was the office able to fund faculty development efforts, which are crucial to OSL’s future growth and improvement. The QEP allocation must become a permanent addition to OSL’s budget if faculty development efforts are to continue. Of the $9,900 operating pool, approximately $2400 was spent on the SERVE Fair. This twice-yearly event is the primary placement mechanism for matching students to community partners. It is indispensable for SL activities to begin in an efficient and orderly manner each semester. Sodexo policies in the Danna Student Center raise costs for this event. Of the remaining $7500, approximately $1500 was spent on office supplies. Printing and duplication costs for OSL’s growing number of publications (brochures, flyers, guidebooks, forms, etc) were approximately $1500. Of the remaining $4500, approximately $3000 was spent on service learning transportation, i.e., assisting Loyola service learning students in getting to and from community sites. OSL purchased and distributed gas cards and RTA tokens to SL students. These had to be rationed due to insufficient supply and funding. Under the leadership of Adam Robinson, OSL also developed Cycloserve during 2009-2010. This is an in-house free daily bikeshare service. Finding creative transportation solutions with limited resources, especially in the absence of any meaningful university-wide transportation supports, will be a major challenge for OSL as it grows. Of the remaining $1500, approximately $600 was spent on professional development (travel and conference registration fees). The remaining $900 was spent on postage, miscellaneous equipment and supplies for SL projects; books, subscriptions and other research materials; and travel, mileage and entertainment costs associated with approximately 75-90 community meetings per year.

5.2 OSL anticipates the same overall budget for FY10-11 ($9900 operating, $61800 salary, $5000 allocation from QEP budget for faculty development work).

5.2.1 If FY 10-11 projections hold, OSL’s expenditures will be roughly parallel to the current fiscal year. Still, this budget is inadequate to support the current size and activity level of Loyola’s service learning program. It is
even more insufficient to achieve near-term or long-term strategic goals. Staffing issues have been temporarily addressed by the VISTA program, but permanent solutions must be found with full- or part-time hires. To meet demand for transportation resources, expenses would increase by approximately 30% ($4k annually). Major expenses – software and technology to assist with tracking and assessment; additional workstations to accommodate student workers – are simply out of reach.

6. Planning and goals for upcoming year

6.1 Strategic planning in OSL falls into two distinct categories: (1) the formation of long-term goals guiding the design and delivery of OSL’s programs and services; and (2) strategic planning for community partnerships. The former is derived from institution-wide strategic plans and directly supports Loyola’s strategic priorities. The latter takes place through ongoing consultation with community partners, faculty and students and a process for assessing mutual needs and capacities. Since 2008, there have been two strategic priorities for community partnership formation and development: (1) Latinos and (2) the Freret corridor.

6.2 Since its relaunch in 2008, OSL’s primary strategic priority has been to enhance the quality of service learning at Loyola (as this is distinguished from, but also related to, the quantity of service learning at Loyola). Correspondingly, OSL’s other major strategic priority has been to develop assessment mechanisms to measure the quality of service learning at Loyola and set an example for other units university-wide. This twin focus is derived from and meant to support Loyola’s top three strategic goals: (a) enhancing Loyola’s national stature and reputation, (b) increasing student retention; and (c) enhancing Jesuit values. For example, OSL’s student learning outcomes (3.3) are informed by Jesuit values, and assessment data (3.6) indicate that OSL is significantly and positively impacting students’ understanding of Jesuit values and their ability to incorporate Jesuit values in everyday life.

6.3 Program goals for 2010-2011: (a) Develop an awards program to recognize outstanding service learning students, community partners, and faculty members, and develop sustainable funding for awards program. Assessment data indicate that recognition is important to faculty members for RPT reaons and that many faculty believe their SL efforts are underrecognized by chairs, departments, and deans. (b) Consult with colleges and administration about establishing a Master Practitioner/Faculty Fellows program to develop faculty leadership and mentorship in service learning. Assessments with faculty indicate openness to deepening and expanding community engagement practice. (c) Expand training opportunities for S-LAB members and explore possible stipends for S-LAB members. Year-end surveys from S-LAB members indicate a desire to know and do more, yet conflicting commitments – mostly the need to undertake paid work – often interfere with students’ ability to commit themselves fully to leadership roles on campus. (d) Continue to consult with key stakeholders about creative
transportation solutions. Assessment data indicate this is a continued source of frustration and logistical complexity for students, faculty and community partners. (e) Streamline tracking and assessment efforts and ensure wide distribution of tracking and assessment data. More could be done to make others aware of basic service learning statistics, which help demonstrate programmatic needs and successes. (f) Consult with supervisors, administrators and Institutional Advancement about developing service learning donor relationships.

6.4 Student learning outcomes will remain largely the same for 2010-2011, but will be expanded/clarified in consultation with Melanie McKay and in line with Carnegie Classification priorities. OSL will measure achievement of these outcomes using basically the same tools. Surveys will be reviewed and modified in preparation for 2010-2011.

6.5 The non-Loyola community plays a central role in all stages of planning and assessment within OSL. Quarterly CPC meetings, regular visits with community partners, and community partner surveys provide feedback which is crucial to the planning process.

6.6 OSL has the following intangible but indispensable resources to accomplish its goals: strong connections to colleagues at Loyola; positive relationships with faculty, and a good network of leadership and advisory committees. All of these will be crucial to achieving program goals for 2010-2011. In addition, however, OSL will need enhanced tangible assets, monetary and non-monetary, (25% budget increase, permanent staff solutions, added computers/workstations) to accomplish its goals.

6.7 OSL’s assessment plan (see 3.1) will remain unchanged. As usual, surveys will be reviewed prior to administration to capture deeper or more specific data.