



Kirtland

Community College

Service Learning
Self-Assessment
2010

Nicholas Holton
Service-Learning Coordinator
Kirtland Community College

Kirtland Community College

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Introduction

As the service learning program at Kirtland Community College enters its 2nd decade, it is time to again reflect on the successes of the past and the challenges of the future. To this end, this self-assessment document will set the stage for future improvements and opportunities for community service at Kirtland.

In the early 1990s Kirtland Community College had an informal service learning program. With only a collection of unrelated courses scattered throughout several departments and no coordination, Kirtland's efforts were sporadic and largely experimental. Through the efforts of Dr. Steven Berg KCC created several new courses dedicated solely to service learning. Active in state organizations, Berg also developed a service learning web site and used service learning as a regular part of his English Composition course.

When Dr. Berg left Kirtland, service learning came under the purview of Nicholas Holton. Convinced of the life transforming power of service learning, Holton became the leading advocate for the program. Through a series of grant initiatives in the late 1990's Holton and

faculty, with help from Michigan Campus Compact, began to build the program one project at a time. He provided start-up funds for faculty interested in trying service learning, professional development for new practitioners, and began a systematic way to reward and recognize outstanding faculty achievement. The KCC service learning faculty cadre started with about a dozen members in 1998 and by 2006 had grown to include nearly half of the full-time faculty, many part-time faculty, all instructional administrators, and many community partners.

Has service learning really made an impact in the institution as a whole? Is Kirtland Community College close to making service learning an integral part of its mission? These and other questions are the impetus for this self-assessment. The results from the first self-assessment survey formed a baseline from which future efforts can be measured. With the data from the last self-assessment in 2005, the service learning team will be able to chart past progress and plan for future accomplishments. While engaging in high profile "feel good" community service activities carries its own intrinsic rewards, efforts not leading to real systemic institutional change will be transitory and, at best, temporary.

Finally, independent observers have also expressed the need for assessing the service learning program. As part of the National Campus Compact "Indicators Of Engagement Project," Kirtland Community College hosted a site visit from national service learning expert Dr. Robert Franco. Dr. Franco sited many positive aspects to the KCC program, but added in his preliminary report to KCC, "Future efforts might also include an increased focus on assessing the outcomes of service-learning...." The self-assessment surveys since 2003 did just that. Clearly the college has made great strides in promoting service learning to the faculty, students, administrators, and the community. Now it is again time to assess progress toward stated goals.

As a guide towards the systemic institutionalization of service learning at Kirtland Community College, this report includes the Pyramid of Service Learning and Civic Engagement (see Appendix A). Consisting of three levels, this pyramid provides the readers with a frame of reference for assessing the effectiveness of service learning efforts. Level One forming the base of the pyramid is "Critical Mass Building." Colleges and universities at this level are concentrating on:

- Faculty Development and Recruitment
- Developing Enabling Mechanisms for Faculty and Community
- Developing Service Learning Course Content

Level Two, the middle tier of the pyramid, is "Quality Building." Colleges and universities at this level have succeeded and continue to engage in level-one activities, but they also work to increase the effectiveness of their efforts. They do this through increasing:

- Faculty Rewards and Recognition
- Interdisciplinary Projects
- The Community Presence of the College

At the top of the pyramid in level three, the college or university has reached sustained institutionalization. Service learning at this level is now included in the college mission and is clearly promoted and encouraged by the academic leadership. More than just moral support,

service learning programs at this level receive external resource allocation and are an integral part of the all programs on campus.

Assessment Instrument

This self-assessment uses the "Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education" by Andrew Furco. Furco is a Campus Compact Engaged Scholar for the Service-Learning Research and Development Center at the University of California at Berkeley. The rubric is designed to help colleges measure their successes and obstacles in their service learning programs and, as such, fits the goals of this project. In conjunction with the Service Learning Pyramid, this rubric measures the three-stage developmental continuum of "Critical Mass Building," "Quality Building," and "Sustained Institutionalization." The rubric, included in Appendix B, uses these three criteria to measure progress in five dimensions of service learning. These dimensions include:

1. Philosophy and mission of service learning
2. Faculty support for and involvement in service learning
3. Student support for and involvement in service learning
4. Community participation and partnerships
5. Institutional support for service learning

For each dimension, the rubric measures several components according to the three-stage criteria model. Furco suggests colleges and universities using the rubric follow a prescribed protocol that includes the following steps:

- A. Establish a college team of individuals to complete the rubric
- B. Become familiar with the dimensions of the rubric
- C. Discuss with team members each component of each dimension
- D. Agree on the responses to each component of the rubric
- E. Examine the group responses and reflect on the program in a holistic manner
- F. Develop a plan to advance the campus along the institutionalization continuum.

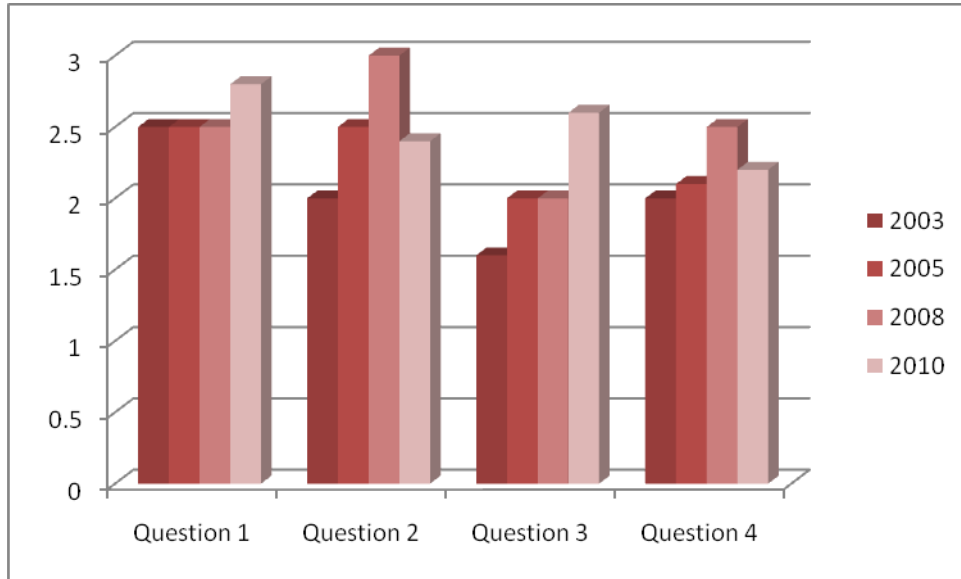
The rubric's guide implies that a team of key administrators, faculty and staff of the college should conduct the assessment. The Kirtland Community College service learning assessment team consists of the Dean of Instruction, Kathy Marsh; Service Learning Coordinator, Nicholas Holton; the Service Learning work-study, Lindsay Wargo; History Instructor, John Thiel; and Nursing Instructor, Susan Owens. After initial discussions, the team thought it was more important to gauge the opinions of the entire KCC service learning community rather than the few people closest to the action. In the initial study a concerted effort was made to survey the entire service learning community. In this assessment the team concentrated on a smaller sample size and improving surveying techniques.

In 2008, the Service Learning Advisory Board decided to follow the spirit and intent of Furco's assessment by keeping the survey to just the advisory board members. This group met in 2008 to discuss and assess each question of the rubric. The results of the team's assessment is included in the table below.

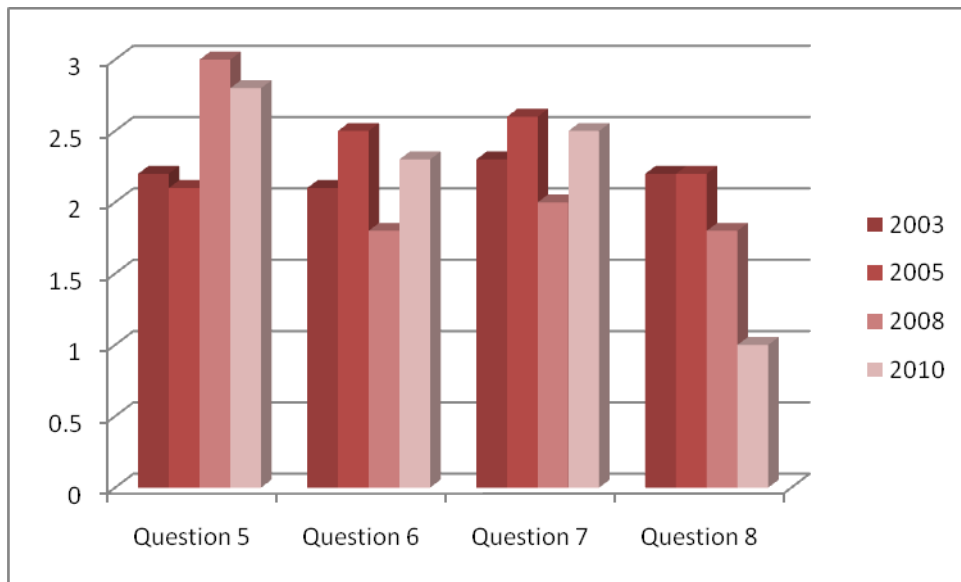
Service Learning Survey
Average scores per dimension per question

	2003	2005	2008	2010	2012	2014
Dimension 1						
Question 1	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.8		
Question 2	2.0	2.5	3	2.4		
Question 3	1.6	2.0	2	2.6		
Question 4	2.0	2.1	2.5	2.2		
Dimension 2						
Question 5	2.2	2.1	3	2.8		
Question 6	2.1	2.5	1.8	2.3		
Question 7	2.3	2.6	2	2.5		
Question 8	2.2	2.2	1.8	1		
Dimension 3						
Question 9	1.9	2.1	1.5	2		
Question 10	2.0	2.6	2	2.8		
Question 11	1.5	2.2	1	1.9		
Question 12	1.8	2.0	2.5	1.9		
Dimension 4						
Question 13	1.6	2.1	1.5	2		
Question 14	2.0	1.9	1	2.3		
Question 15	1.9	2.2	1	2.5		
Dimension 5						
Question 16	2.2	2.3	2.3	3		
Question 17	2.1	2.0	1.8	2		
Question 18	1.7	1.9	1.5	2.5		
Question 19	1.6	1.9	2	2		
Question 20	2.4	2.3	2.8	2.65		
Question 21	2.1	2.1	2.7	2		
Question 22	1.9	2.3	3	2.3		

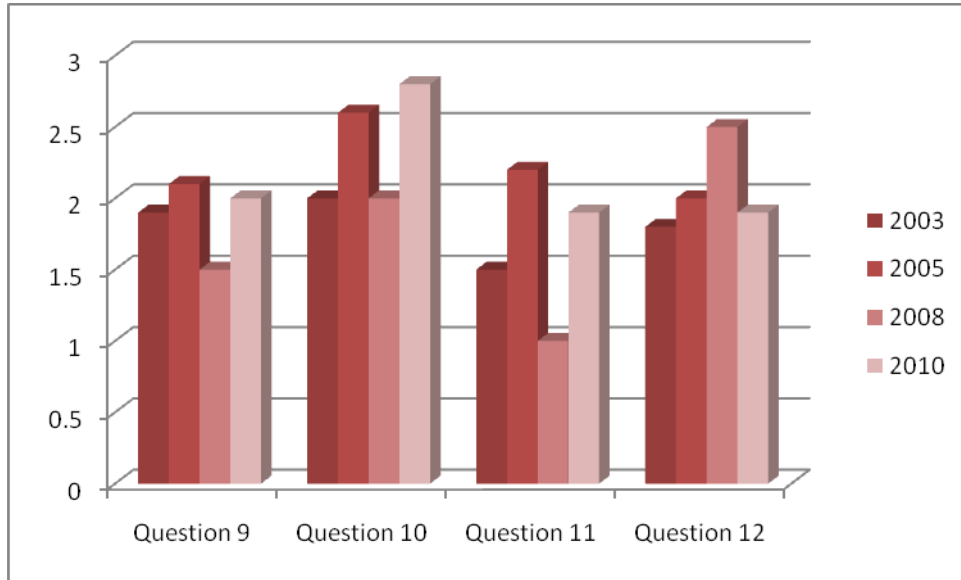
Dimension 1 Philosophy and Mission of Service Learning



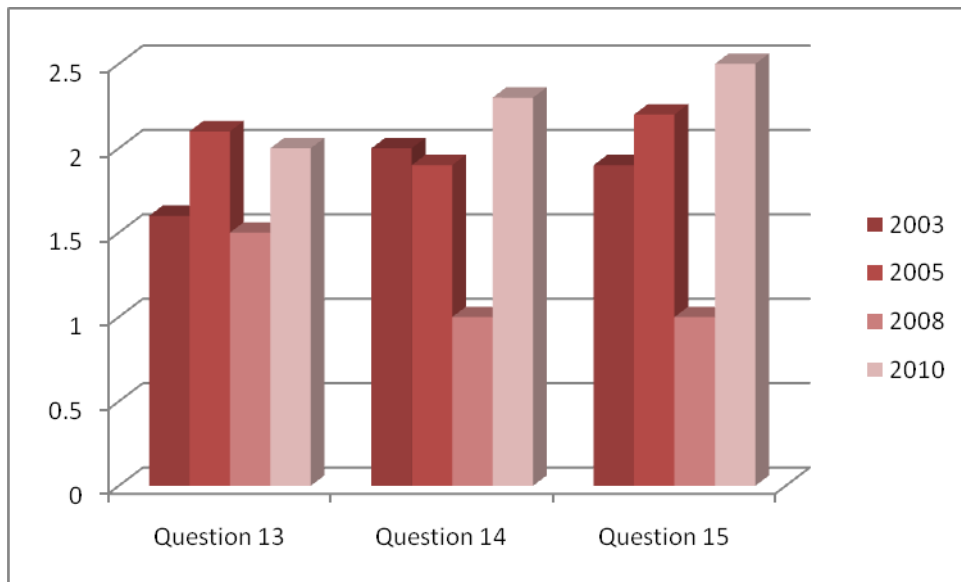
Dimension 2 Faculty Support for and Involvement in Service-Learning



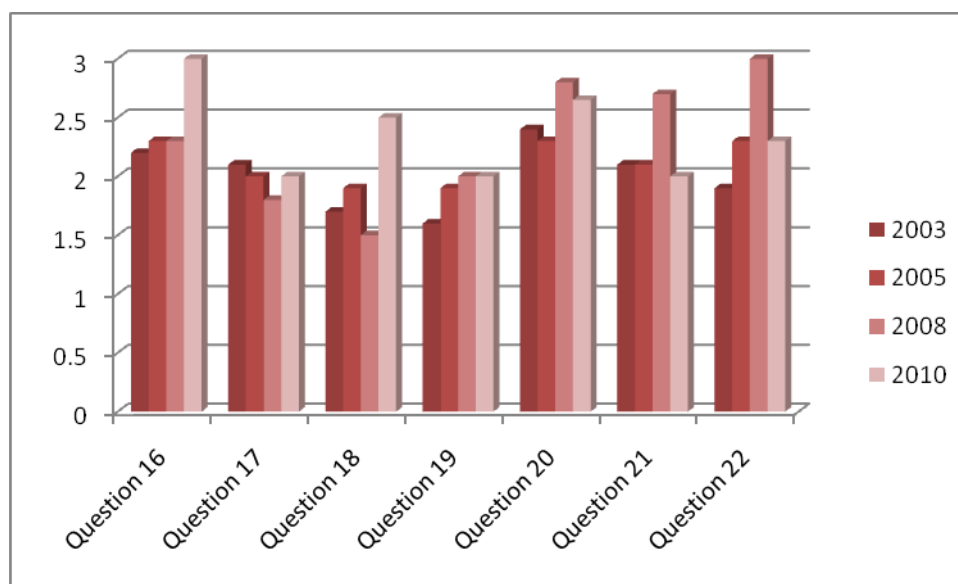
**Dimension 3
Student Support for and Involvement in Service-Learning**



**Dimension 4
Community Participation and Partnerships**



Dimension 5 Institutional Support for Service-Learning



General Comments and Recommendations

Assuming that the Kirtland Community College wants to attend a "stage three" level of institutionalization for all of the questions on the survey, the data suggests the following:

Kirtland Community College has made the most progress in the following areas:

- Faculty Awareness
- Faculty Leadership
- Student Leadership Opportunities
- Administrative Support
- Departmental Support
- Evaluation and Assessment

Kirtland Community College has the mixed results in the following areas:

- Faculty Support and Involvement
- Student Awareness and Student Leadership
- Community Partner Involvement
- Community Partner Awareness
- Institutional Policy, Staffing, and Funding

Although Kirtland's Service Learning program has made gains in Faculty Awareness, Student Opportunities and Institutional Support, clearly we are regressing in Student Awareness, Student Leadership and Community Partner Issues. This is a disturbing trend and might be attributed to two major factors. First, two of our mainstay general education courses that required service learning have either been eliminated or severely curtailed. This has limited student opportunities to participate in service and has lessened the chances that all students will participate in service projects. The second factor affecting the assessment results is the change in the assessment procedure. In the first two self-assessments, efforts were made to survey as many service learning stakeholders as possible. The resulting sporadic response led to questions of validity and reliability. The current assessment followed the instruments intention and convened a the Kirtland Service Learning faculty advisory committee to review the questions. This smaller, but more involved group, probably have a more accurate perception of the depth and breadth of the program.

Generally, respondents view the Service Learning program as faculty driven and administratively supported. Faculty leadership has been key to the initial success of the program. Yet faculty involvement is still rated low. It is encouraging to notice that student opportunities have improved, but students do not access leadership positions. Students were starting to accept and even expect service learning to be a part of their curriculum at some point. This has regressed since the last assessment and needs to be fixed.

The self-study does indicate that the college needs to do more to include the community in the Service Learning program. Since the initial survey, the faculty has openly solicited community agency input and, as a result, has created an internet-based searchable database of community agencies for faculty to partner with in their courses. Additionally, the Service Learning team has an ongoing project to update and keep in contact with our community partners. It is encouraging when the community can contact the service learning office and have their needs met. Additionally, the Service Learning department has applied for an Americorp VISTA person to design, research and implement a collaborative relationship with River House Shelter in Grayling. This should fill the void of community input.

Finally, even though administrative support is rated high, this support doesn't require large amounts of funding, staffing, or institutional change. Upper level administrators can actively support the program by attending state events, guarantying a firm funding foundation and participating in local projects.

A sincere and honest self-study is always a bitter-sweet exercise for the principal investigators. It's a time for celebrating the successes and bemoaning the areas with greatest need. Even though Kirtland's Service Learning program is well established and has been an example of how to "do a lot with a little," clearly more needs to be done to move the college along to full institutionalization.

Action Plan

Considering the results of the survey, the Service Learning team proposes the following action plan for the next two years:

1. Develop enough service learning opportunities to ensure that every KCC graduate has engaged in a community service activity at some point
 - A. Continue gap analysis to ensure all students have access to service learning
 - B. Develop the service learning course matrix for students to identify service courses
 - C. Create service opportunities for students
 - D. Designate service learning courses in course schedule
2. Expand the professional development opportunities for faculty in community service
 - A. Increase the number of faculty and administrators who attend the state faculty institute
 - B. Increase faculty participation in discipline specific service organizations
 - C. Increase faculty participation in state-wide service initiatives
3. Expand the number of community partners and their influence in the service learning process
 - A. Conduct follow-up calls on potential community partners from past student experiences
 - B. Update the community partner database
 - C. Market KCC as a community problem solver
 - D. Create a new collaborative relationship with River House Shelter
 - E. Encourage other reciprocal agreements with potential partners
4. Ensure the viability of the service learning initiative by securing adequate funding
 - A. Secure adequate “hard money” in the KCC budget for continued service learning funding
 - B. Continue to supplement funding through grants and other initiatives
 - C. Provide a strategy to endow a fund for perpetual service learning support
5. Continue with the institutionalization of service learning at KCC
 - A. Apply for and secure a vista position
 - B. Have service to the community and world be an expected part of a Kirtland Community College education
 - C. Create institutional infrastructure to support service learning program
 - D. Recruit administration and faculty who openly support service learning
6. Conduct another self-study at the end of the two-year period

Comments of Preview Action Plan

Step one in the last action plan called for gap analysis to increase the number of service-learning opportunities for Kirtland Community College students. Since the last report, new projects have been implemented in nursing, criminal justice, sociology, political science, cosmetology, business, global awareness, and construction trades

Even though work still continues on the matrix, the service-learning program will proceed with the designation of service-learning courses in the schedule. This will improve student access to service-learning courses and provide a quick and easy way to assess program participation.

The second part of the action plan was to expand professional development opportunities for faculty. This has not been realized. Efforts to get faculty to conferences and other professional development activities have been sporadic at best. Efforts will continue for the next two years with increased emphasis on developing the quality of our program.

The third part in the action plan was to maintain, nurture and expand our group of community partners. This has been a great success as we gain about 1 – 2 partners per month. The service-learning team will continue this expansion while it seeks to strengthen existing partnerships. Priority will be given to building a focused collaborative relationship with River House Shelter. We will seek an Americorp VISTA volunteer through Michigan Campus Compact. This person will spend one year to coordinate this initiative. This has a great potential to supplement Kirtland's curriculum while helping River House meet the needs of their clients.

Step four concerns the funding of the service-learning program. Kirtland's institutional funding has increased by about \$1,000 in the last 3 years. This has gone to expand funding for the work study position and more professional development dollars. There has been no progress in establishing an endowment for service-learning.

Step five called for continued institutionalization of service-learning at Kirtland Community College. This will be supported by the aforementioned VISTA position. This application was submitted in March, 2009. The service-learning team will create institutional infrastructure to support the program. Web-based calendars, newsletters, and data bases will be expanded and refined to allow the team to work smarter and more efficiently.

References

Furco, A. (2002). *Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education*. Campus Compact

Gelmon, S, Holland B., Driscoll A, Spring A., Kerrigan S. (2001) *Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement*. Campus Compact

Appendices (see attached)

Service Learning Pyramid

Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education

The Pyramid Defined

The pedagogy of service-learning has spread significantly in recent years. Evidence of this is found in the dramatic increase in Campus Compact's membership, from 300 campuses in 1993 to more than 600 in 1999. In a 1998 survey of Campus Compact's members, 99% of respondents reported having at least one service-learning course, up from 66% in 1993. Of the 99%, 19% had 40 or more courses, 48% had between 10 and 39 courses, and just 33% had less than 10 courses.

Although widespread, many campuses are only in the early stages of adopting the service-learning pedagogy and seek much guidance and outside expertise. Others, where service-learning has taken hold, grapple with the difficult issues of institutionalizing the practice on their campuses – issues such as redefining faculty roles and rewards and providing the necessary infrastructure. Finally, there is a small number where service-learning is widespread – campuses whose missions are inextricably bound to their civic responsibilities.

This broad range of representation, from introductory to intermediate through advanced practice, comprises what Campus Compact calls the Service-Learning Pyramid.

