The Cost/Benefit of Good Practices in Student Internship and Service-Learning Placements

FOA/PSSOA Annual Conference
March 28, 2012
Sacramento, California
Topics of Discussion

• Definition of “Internship” & “Service Learning”
• Internship vs. Service Learning
• EO 1064
• Overview of Minimum Standards in Internships & Service Learning
• SPLIP & SAFECLIP
• Questions, Discussion, & Resources
Internship - Defined

• From EO 1064

“An internship formally integrates the student’s academic study with practical experience in a cooperating organization. It is an off-campus activity designed to serve educational purposes by offering experience in a service learning¹, business, non-profit, or government setting.”
Service Learning - Defined

A teaching method that promotes student learning through active participation in meaningful and planned service experiences in the community that are substantively related to course content. Through reflective activities, students enhance their understanding of course content, general knowledge, sense of civic responsibility, self-awareness and commitment to the community.
Internships vs. Service Learning

Internships & Service Learning are very closely aligned with a few similarities.

To gain a better understanding of each, let’s focus on the differences.
In short, **Internships** are assisting a student in developing their skills for post-graduation endeavors. In other words, helping the student get prepared for their career.

**Service Learning** prepares a student to better understand course content via “learning by doing”.
About Internships

Internships are not necessarily aligned with “service learning” as an internship does not have to be related to community, non-profit or “civic responsibility”. Rather, an internship can be strictly related to a business or governmental enterprise.

- **Example**: An accounting major has an internship with a major CPA firm.
- Or…a Political Science/Pre-Law student interns for a Federal Court judge.
About Internships

• Many students “self-place” themselves with an internship, often without the knowledge of the University.

• In a majority of internships, students receive financial compensation.

• If an internship is tied to a course, the vast majority of the course time is focused on the internship placement.
About Service Learning

• Provides students opportunities to participate in organized service activities that meet community needs while linking the community service experience to the course content.

• Students do not receive financial compensation and the service-learning placement is a critical component of the course material, but does not embody the entirety of the course.
About Service Learning

• 1998 – CSU Office of the Chancellor establishes the first systemwide Office of Community Service Learning in the country. Infrastructure is developed on all 23 campuses.

• 2001 – As Service Learning Expands So Does Risk Management Issues

  • In a 2-year period, three working groups were formed and developed the 2002 manual, Community Service Learning in the California State University: Best Practices for Managing Risk in Service Learning.
About Service Learning


The *Resource Guide* Sounds Swell…What is in it for the University?

**Resource Guide** = Provides the Foundation

• Serves as the brick and mortar for a successful program;
• Maximizes learning initiatives and opportunities;
• Promotes good practices designed to maximize the safety of students; and
• Enhances the University’s, employee’s and student’s insulation from liability.
EO 1064 – Student Internships

• This executive order establishes guidelines for campus student internship policy and procedures.

• The minimum internship policy guidelines go hand-in-glove with the principles addressed in the “Resource Guide for Managing Risk in Service Learning”

• Most of the guidelines and standards related to service learning can be applied to internships and were the basis of EO 1064.
Overview of Minimum Standards in Internships and Service Learning

**Internships**
- Internship Planning
- Placement Assessment
- Internship Site Visits
- Placement and Orientation
- Annual Review
- Document Retention

**Service Learning**
- Develop a Risk Assessment Plan
- Pre-Placement Risk Assessment (may or may not include a site visit)
- Service Learning Agreement (typically in effect for 3 years, review needed for renewal)
- Student Orientation
- Learning Plan
- Document Retention
Internship Planning/Develop a Risk Assessment Plan

Key (Finance) Points

• Awarding of Academic Credit
  • This is key for insurance program purposes

• Accommodation Considerations - students w/ special needs
  • Lack of accommodation can be an acute and costly exposure

• Emergency Response Plan
  • Mitigate risk & promote safe placement practices – it is what would you want for yourself, family, friends or loved-ones

• Student Compensation (if applicable)
  • Workers’ Compensation exposure?

• Minimum Requirements for Agreements Between the Site and the University
Placement Assessment/Pre-Placement Risk Assessment

Key Points

• Prior to placing students, an assessment of the appropriateness of the site as a placement for CSU students shall be conducted.
  • A written assessment summary of the site shall be completed and retained by the responsible campus office and be available for review.

• Identification of the potential risks of the site
  • Risk mitigation = financial, personnel/personal, reputation loss, etc.
Placement Assessment/Pre-Placement Risk Assessment
Site Visits…Really? – The Key Point

- Campus policy shall include criteria for when to conduct a site visit. The site visit may be bypassed if the campus can demonstrate and document sufficient knowledge of the site.
  - INTERNSHIPS - This could be accomplished through online review, published materials or direct contact with the site.
  - SERVICE LEARNING – This can be accomplished through a pre-placement risk assessment. The Resource Guide provides a template Rubric and example Assessment Forms which aid in assessing potential risk.

*The point here again is establishing good practices to mitigate risk in advance of a placement – due diligence is a needed practice*
Placement, Orientation & Agreements—Key Points

• A student orientation component that includes site information, conduct expectations, health and safety instructions, and emergency contacts

• Learning Agreement Student Form (INT) or The Learning Plan (SL) signed by the student, site supervisor and university representative. These address the work to be provided by the student, the desired learning outcomes, and the placement logistics.

• Liability Waiver Form
  • All students doing an internship must complete this form.
  • For service learning, campuses have discretion. Refer to “Learning Plan” section in the Resource Guide, pages 43-47.
Both Internships and Service Learning require a site placement Agreement that addresses both the site’s and the campus’s role (actual form titles vary).

Some Differences Between the Forms:

- Internships Agreement also includes the student’s responsibilities
- Service Learning Agreement includes 3 Components
  - Learning Site’s Responsibilities - ensures academic quality of SL experience
  - University’s Responsibilities - insurance coverage generally $1M with $2M aggregate and legal representation
  - General Provisions – includes indemnification language, student status

Key Point - An important tool in mitigating risk!
A Review should take into account information gathered from on-site supervisor, faculty, university staff and student experience.

- Internships require an annual review (campus policy will dictate type).
- Service Learning reviews are typically every 3 years, when an agreement is due to expire, or on an as needed basis.

Document Retention – see EO 1031
Student Placements are to enhance and promote education and learning opportunities while also addressing the safety of our student – thus parenthetically mitigating risk.
An Effective Cost/Benefit Insurance Program: SPLIP & SAFECLIP

Student Academic Field Experience for Credit Liability Insurance Program (SAFECLIP)

Student Professional Liability Insurance Program (SPLIP)

In 2006/07, CSURMA (Charlene) developed two insurance programs, SAFECLIP and SPLIP, for CSU students involved in off-campus learning programs for both service learning and clinical experience.
SAFECLIP provides general and professional liability coverage for students enrolled in service-learning course sections for which they receive academic credit. In essence, the program provides indemnity, including legal defense costs for students, faculty, campus and host institution (when required by contract/agreement), if there is a claim or lawsuit involving injury to others or damage to property in connection with service learning and other academic fieldwork experiences.
SPLIP

Similarly, SPLIP provides general and professional liability coverage as well as educator’s errors & omissions liability coverage for students enrolled in nursing, allied health, social work or education credential programs of the CSU who also perform community service or volunteer work for academic credit.
Guidelines are good and Resources can be even better!

- Websites – these websites include downloadable forms, FAQ and other useful resources
  - http://www.calstate.edu/cce/resource_center/servlearn_risk.shtml#resourceguide

- Listservs
  - offcampus@lists.calstate.edu
    (contact Judy Botelho at jbotelho@calstate.edu to subscribe)
Zachary Gifford, Associate Director
Systemwide Risk Management and Public Safety
zgifford@calstate.edu
562-951-4580

http://www.calstate.edu/risk_management/rm/