

# Students Who Serve: A Study of Undergraduate Students' Experiences in Community Service

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## Exploratory Questions

- 1) What meaning do college students ascribe to their service experiences?
- 2) What are college students' experiences and goals as they engage in sustained community involvement?
- 3) What are students' perceptions of leadership as they engage in service?

## Methods

- Qualitative research study
- Interviewers: Ph.D. in Educational Leadership students
- Informants: 14 University of Dayton undergraduate students
- 30 to 45 minute open ended interviews
- Structured coding to determine themes

Neighborhood Community Schools



Semester of Service



Photography courtesy of the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community

## Fitz Center for Leadership in Community Mission Statement

The Fitz Center for Leadership in Community *initiates and sustains partnerships* within urban neighborhoods and larger communities that *both support comprehensive community building* and provide a context for *broadly connected learning and scholarship*.

Dayton Civic Scholars



## Student Voices

"If you have a social justice...mindset, that's where it starts because you can't make any structural change if you come in with the idea you're saving someone...you need to [have] genuine interactions with people. ...because when you feel as if you're friend of someone in poverty or you're a friend of someone who is addicted to drugs, you can work on the issues [deeper] than if you go once a week to a soup kitchen and don't speak to anyone. I think sometimes you need to be like hurt or need to be challenged to really make a change." ~ Danielle

"Overall, the experience is one that filled me with so much joy. And it's not joy for myself, but I think it's joy for the community around me." ~ Miranda

Community does extend beyond the borders of campus." ~ Miranda

"Service has helped connect me to the City of Dayton in ways I never would have thought were possible." ~ Anita

"Now I am fully putting myself into a career because of service and because of the opportunities I have had in service, I think I have found my niche in the world where I can give my all." ~Anita

"In high school I did service learning class, it was a religion class." "It has always kind of been a background, and then at UD I wanted to continue." "The people I hang out with generally do service."

## Neighborhood School Centers

- Dayton's Neighborhood School Centers are public schools that are centers of their neighborhoods, serving as healthy places of learning for children and families. Each school works with the Fitz Center to place volunteers on a weekly or on a one-time basis.

## River Stewards

- River Stewards build opportunities for the Dayton community to see its rivers as the strategic natural resource central to the communal, economic, aesthetic and ecological vitality of the region.

## Semester of Service

- Semester of Service is a program that expands the students' worldview and empowers them to become advocates for social change. Through experiential education, intentional community, and support from local agencies, students learn and reflect while serving in the community.

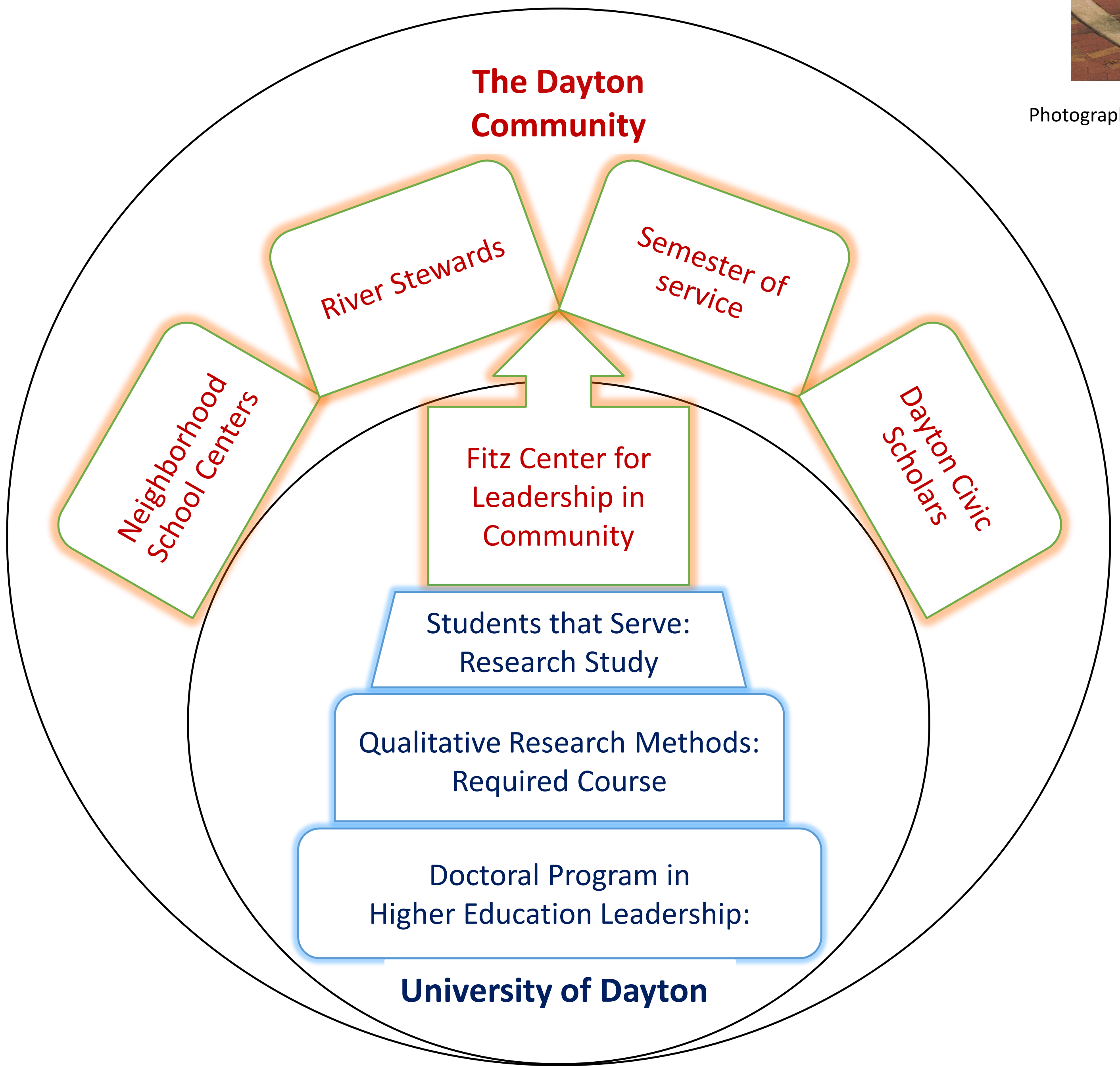
## Dayton Civic Scholars

- Dayton Civic Scholars program prepares civic professionals and citizen leaders through sustained interdisciplinary civic engagement and scholarship with a focus on the city of Dayton.

River Stewards



Photography by Andy Snow



## Resulting Themes

