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

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

We gratefully acknowledge the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community’s cooperation, including: Dick Ferguson, Suzette Pico, and the student participants.

Lindsay Elrod, Elizabeth Fogle-Young, Savio Franco, Edel Jesse, Brent Kondritz, Heidi McGrew, Cody McMillen, Dan Trunk, and Carolyn Ridenour—Faculty Advisor

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
- • 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.

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
  • 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.

Semester of Service
- Informants: 14 University of Dayton undergraduate students
- Required Course
- Ongoing Engagement
- Time Management
- Professional Development
- Leadership in Community
- \( \text{Research Study} \)

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.

Student Voices
- "If you have a social justice orientation, that’s where it starts. Because you can’t make any structural change if you come in with the idea you’re going to change someone. You have to deal with the individual person in a way that makes them start to think. There’s a lot of questions that need to be asked. I think sometimes you can’t be direct...you need to challenge and really make a change..."
- "You have to be the one that diálogo en el mundo. And it’s not just for myself, but it’s for the community around me."
- "It’s not just a job. It’s not just a job. It’s a lifestyle."
- "Community does extend beyond the borders of campus..."
- "I have found my niche in the world where I can give my all..."
- "We’re all being challenged in ways that..."
- "I think there should be more opportunities where I could..."

results Themes

Prior Service
- Prior Collaboration
- Engagement
- Busting "UD Bubble"

Prior Faith
- Time Management
- Professional Development
- Various Roles

Dayton
- Service
- Relationships
- Growth
- Justice
- Life’s Work

BACKGROUND

EXPERIENCE

MEANING