Utah State University

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SERVICE-LEARNING SCHOLARS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Service-Learning Scholars (SLS) are an elite group of USU students dedicated to making a difference in their community. Students accepted into this program will have the opportunity to complete service that is related to their personal field of study in addition to completing Service-Learning courses for general education credit. Upon graduation, scholars are awarded a Service-Learning Certificate, graduation cords of distinction, acknowledgement during commencement, and record on their official transcript, so employers and graduate programs can see evidence of a student’s determination to go the extra mile.

The purpose of the SLS Program is to provide students with the opportunity to:

- Make a difference in their community
- Combine service with their academic course work
- Enhance learning through experience
- Create sustainable change in the form of a capstone project

SERVICE LEARNING AT USU

Service-Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. All Service-Learning courses blend the three components of meaningful service, connection to learning and reflection into their classroom material.

**Meaningful Service:** It’s important that the service-learning project meet a genuine need that is significant and recognized as important by both the participants and the community. The activity can include teaching others, creating a product or performance, providing a service, community-based research, or advocating for change.

**Connection to Learning:** Effective service-learning establishes clear learning goals that require the application of concepts, content, and skills from the course and involves participants in the construction of their own knowledge.

**Reflection:** Reflection is the term for the processing of these experiences. It can take many forms, including essays, discussions, journals, presentations, creating a portfolio, or filming a video. When reflecting students should consider: WHAT? SO WHAT? NOW WHAT?

Service-Learning at USU is set up with reciprocity in mind, ensuring that the community partners, student, and university all benefit from the service project. Engaged community agencies are called Community Bridge Initiative (CBI) Partners at USU. CBI Community Partners regularly submit Service-Learning projects to the Service-Learning Program, which are then matched with available courses. CBI Partners are seen as co-educators, taking an active role in teaching students through implementation of service-learning projects. Faculty regularly report that adding a service-learning component to course material leads to deeper learning and more student engagement, while developing an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.
Service-Learning, provides students the following benefits:

- Develops deeper understanding of subject matter
- Fosters greater motivation to learn
- Promotes greater self-understanding
- Heightens awareness of community
- Integrates concepts from class into authentic issues
- Provides quality educational experiences in college
- Raises awareness of social issues
- Reduces negative stereotypes
- Increases tolerance for diversity
- Enhances interpersonal skills
- Improves leadership skills

HISTORY OF SERVICE-LEARNING SCHOLARS

The Service-Learning Scholars Program was created by Cameron Woolf, the 2003-2004 ASUSU Service Vice President. Along with student Aaron Brown and Community Service Director Nellene Howard, Woolf built the structure of the certificate program and gained approval of USU’s Vice President of Student Services, Dr. Juan Franco, the Provost’s office, and the Dean’s Council.

A Faculty Steering Committee was created, and developed the criteria for service-learning course designation through the Educational Policy Committee. The Vice President for Student Services drafted a proposal for the Service-Learning Scholars Program to be presented to the Faculty Senate. The University Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees, and Faculty Senate passed the proposal, ongoing funding was secured through a Tier II tuition proposal, and a part-time faculty coordinator to manage the program was hired in 2004. The first Service-Learning Scholar graduated with distinction in 2006.

Since 2013, Service-Learning Scholars has been run through the Center for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning, based in Student Affairs. Service-Learning Coordinator, Kate Stephens, is supported by a team of approximately ten Faculty Advisors who assist in designating Service-Learning courses and distributing Service-Learning Mini Grants. Since the Service Learning Scholars Program was started, 65 students have graduated with the distinction.

EXPECTATIONS AS A SERVICE-LEARNING SCHOLAR

To get the most out of this experience, Scholars should go into all service activities prepared, understanding goal and outcomes, and expectations of your role within the project. It is expected that all Scholars act professionally and respectfully when working with our community partners – remember our partners are going out of their way to work with USU and give you this opportunity. Please remember you are a guest when you are working in the community; be on your best behavior.

Some tips for creating and maintaining a productive professional relationship with Community Partners include:
• **Arrive on time and prepared to work.** If you can not make your service commitment, or will be significantly late, notify the partner in advance.

• **Pay Attention**- Store cell phones, tablets, or other devices during your service activity. Your attention should be on the service activity, not on your phone.

• **Be open and understanding** with clients or those you are working with

• **Maintain a positive attitude**!

• **Foster clear and regular communication** with community partner supervisor. This is especially true with your partner agency for your Capstone. Ensuring that you are meeting their need is an essential part of the project.

• **Dress appropriately** for the work you will be completing

• **Maintain a professional relationship** – swearing, using slang, or being too casual may give the wrong impression.

• **Understand expectations and rules.** Each partner will have different rules and expectations on site. Take time the first time you volunteer to learn what is allowed and what should be avoided, and follow all rules.

• **Ask Questions** – Don’t be afraid to ask questions or for clarification if you don’t know the proper action. Also remember that they may do things differently than you, and this is their work space – even though something may not be what you would do, they could have a good reason to do it that way.

If issues or misunderstandings regarding expectations, goals, and your role within a project do arise, please notify the Service-Learning Program. We are happy to help you brainstorm solutions, or work with you to address any concerns or issues on site. If you don’t understand something or have questions about the proper behavior with a partner, please ask. Our role is one of a liaison between Scholars and Community Partners, and we are here to ensure your experience with our partners is beneficial and positive.
SERVICE-LEARNING SCHOLAR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Students who are accepted into the SLS program must meet the following requirements to graduate with this certificate:

1. **400 hours** of community service, documented on timesheets and submitted each semester
2. **9 credits** of Service-Learning course work
3. **Capstone (individual) project** that combines the student’s academic interests and service
4. **Service-Learning electronic portfolio**, documenting service experience and reflection
5. **Meeting** with the Service-Learning Coordinator each semester
6. **Attend** capstone/service-learning workshop the fall after you are accepted into program
7. **Maintain a 3.0 GPA**

SERVICE HOURS

Service-Learning Scholars are required to complete a minimum of 400 hours of documented community service while at USU. Service hours must:

1. meet a recognized community need through a non-profit agency or group, provide service to the broader University community, or assist an individual (non-related) person in need.
2. cover activities such as (but not limited to) direct service, advocacy, public policy development, community organizing, or other activities that meet the learning goals identified by a specific Service-Learning course.
3. NOT benefit a religion, fraternal organization, or political party. That said, service to the greater community organized by these groups can count. For example, teaching a religious study class would not count toward service hours, but participating in a food drive for the food bank that is organized by a religious group does count.
4. be performed without an hourly wage. Service supported through grants, work-study, stipends, AmeriCorps, and/or scholarships is acceptable.
5. Regularly log and update your service hours through the USU database correctly and timely.

SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE WORK

Service-Learning Scholars can fill the requirement of 9 credit hours of course work in one of two ways. (1) take courses that have already been approved as designated Service-Learning classes or (2) incorporate a service component into any course to make it a Service-Learning course.

Courses that have been approved SL are designated in Banner, and fulfill the Service-Learning course requirements. A list of current approved Service-Learning courses can be requested from the Center for Civic Engagement & Service-Learning. For students interested in incorporating a service component into a non-SL designated course, a Service-Learning Contract is necessary. (A blank Contract form can be found in the appendix.) This contract is an agreement between the scholar and an instructor to convert an upper-division course for Service-Learning credit. The instructor identifies service requirements to be completed for credit, and determines at the end of the semester whether the student has successfully
earned SL credit. Additional service work, beyond the standard course requirements, is not generally graded and would not affect the student’s grade in the course.

Service-Learning Contracts can be obtained from the Service-Learning Coordinator before the end of the second week of classes. Prior to filling out the form, students should gain approval from their instructor, and additional Service-Learning requirements should be agreed upon. Once an agreement is made the form should be completed, signed, and returned to the Service-Learning Coordinator. A copy of the contract will be sent to the faculty member at the end of the semester to verify completion. The deadline for a student to file a Service-Learning Contract is no later than the forth week of classes.

CAPSTONE PROJECT
The Capstone, or individual, project is the culminating activity of the Service-Learning Scholars program. It is recommended that the capstone project require between 50 – 100 hours of service. The capstone project should be self-sustaining and leave a lasting impact. Scholars should focus on creating something that will remain after they have left the University. For example, students might create a new service program, a new event that can be replicated, a piece of art work, a new hiking trail...the possibilities are endless.

EXAMPLES OF A COMPLETED CAPSTONE PROJECT:

- **Senior University:** After volunteering with and later directing the Val R. Christensen Service Center program Friends of the Elderly, Melissa created a program called Senior University. Each week a group of 20 to 30 senior citizens is bused from the Logan Senior Center to campus to attend a class presented by a volunteer faculty member. Classes included creative writing, indoor plant care, a lecture on sea turtles, and even the opportunity to dissect a squid! The program will continue as a new Service Center sponsored program.

- **Event Planning Handbook:** The English Learning Center of Cache Valley hosts an annual picnic to celebrate their students and bring communities together. After helping to organize the event as a volunteer, Sydney worked to develop an extensive handbook, with additional resources and a website, to be used in future years. This has greatly increased the capacity of The English Learning Center and addressed the challenge of transfer of knowledge and sustainability of their annual event.

- **Making Every Event a Green Event** – Viviane quickly noticed while at USU that many events created unnecessary waste, especially food waste! To address this issue, Viviane developed an educational brochure that could be offered to the planners of each event to advice on green practices and waste reduction. Partnering with other groups on campus such as SSO and Dining Services, Viviane also develop Green Event Kits that students can rent out.

For more information on Capstone projects and project criteria, please visit the Service-Learning website.

SERVICE-LEARNING ELECTRONIC PORTFOLIO
The Service-Learning E-Portfolio is a compilation of a student’s Service-Learning experiences throughout their time at USU. The Service-Learning Portfolio should be completed one month prior to graduation at the exit interview with the Service-Learning Coordinator.

The following items are **required** for the Service-Learning Portfolio:

- The syllabus, projects, and assignments from your Service-Learning classes
- Copies of Service-Learning contracts for any course adapted into service learning courses
- An unofficial transcript documenting 9 Credits of Service-Learning course work
- The reflection piece from your capstone project
- Photos of your service experience
- Monthly time logs documenting 400 hours of service

The following items are **suggested** for the Service-Learning Portfolio:

- Reflective journal entries
- Newspaper articles highlighting your service or projects
- Resource information about the agency with which you served
- Research regarding the community issue addressed
- Letters of thanks or evaluations of your work from community partners or faculty

**MEET WITH SERVICE-LEARNING ADVISOR**

Students are required to meet with their Service-Learning advisor each semester. This meeting should cover questions about scholar requirements, capstone project ideas, and progress toward completing program requirements. Meetings will be set up prior to the priority registration period for the next semester, so students can properly plan their courses to meet Service-Learning Scholar requirements.

**CAPSTONE WORKSHOP**

A series of 3-4 workshops are offered Fall semester annually. These cover expectations of the Service-Learning Scholars Program and help students start to consider options for capstone projects. Workshops are typically 1-2 hours long, and will happen over a range of weeks. Exact dates and times will be shared at the start of the Fall semester. It is an expectation you attend the first Fall after you’ve been accepted into SLS, although you are welcome to attend each year.

**MAINTAIN HIGH GPA**

To graduate as a Service-Learning Scholar, you must maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA. The Service-Learning Program will pull GPA’s on a semester basis, so up to date information is available during your semester meetings with the S-L Coordinator. If your GPA slips below a 3.0, a plan will be made to ensure you can continue on your path of graduating with the SL Certificate.
GETTING STARTED

Submit online application at http://www.usu.edu/asusu/servicelearning/scholarsApplication.cfm or to the Service-Learning Program in TSC 318. Note: application must be received prior to the first week of October in order to be admitted during the fall semester. Applications received after that will be considered for admission in the spring. For admission in the spring semester, application must be received by the last week of February.

Once you have submitted your completed application, the Service-Learning Coordinator will review and determine if you are a good fit for the program. The Service-Learning Coordinator will contact you regarding your application and, if satisfactory, will notify you of your acceptance as a Scholar.

If you have questions regarding the SLS program, requirements, or capstone projects, please stop by TSC 318 to speak with staff from Service-Learning Program to learn more!

Begin volunteering. The Val R. Christensen Service Center, TSC 332, has many volunteer projects, including one-time events or ongoing volunteer opportunities. You may participate in these projects if you choose, or you may volunteer at any non-profit organization or governmental agency that meets a community need. The Service-Center and Service-Learning program maintain a list of community needs from CBI Community Partners. SLS can review this list for on-going volunteer or internship opportunities. The Service Learning Scholar Advisor can make recommendations for service activities and help you establish contacts.

Be observant while volunteering. Try to notice something different each time you volunteer. Listen to those with whom you serve, whether they are service clients, agency workers, or other volunteers. Then ask yourself some questions.

- Why is there a need for my service?
- What is the underlying problem and why does it exist?
- What social, economic, political, and educational systems cause or perpetuate the problem?
- What can I do to work for change?
- How is my education preparing me to address this problem?

Track your volunteer hours. Track your volunteer hours both tied to service-learning courses and during your personal time using Aggies Giving Service at www.usu.edu/AGS. When recording hours you should indicate if the activity was curricular or co-curricular, and with which agency you worked with. Once you begin your capstone project, these hours should be labeled as such as well. You should record your hours regularly on an ongoing basis.

Develop a Personal Graduation Timeline. Review the current list of designated service-learning courses and determine which will fit into your schedule, when you will start work on your capstone, and how to fit all 400 service hours in before graduation. Remember, you can make ANY course into a Service-Learning course by creating a contract with your instructor to add a service project to the course.
requirements. Prepare to spend a minimum of 50-100 of the 400 hours on your capstone project. Please see the Appendix for the sample Graduation Timeline and Contract Form.

**Meet with the Service Learning Scholar Advisor once a semester.** Review the Personal Graduation Timeline and the fulfillment of certificate requirements. You may be eliminated from the program if you do not make contact with Service-Learning staff for at least two consecutive semesters. This applies to responding to emails from S-L Student Director.

**Begin thinking about your capstone project.** After serving in various capacities, begin to focus and make a commitment to one or two organizations or fields of service. The capstone project offers a way for you to synthesize your community service and your academic work. FYI, your capstone proposal form is due two semesters before you graduate, so start planning ahead.

**Begin gathering items for your portfolio.** Save your projects and assignments from your service-learning classes, take pictures of your service experiences, and keep a journal about things you are learning to be included in your final portfolio.
APPENDIX A: REFLECTIONS ON YOUR SERVICE

Describe the service activities you have performed during this month, and some of the results you have seen. For example: I tutored three elementary aged children this month and have noticed that they are completing and returning their homework more often.

What challenges have you experienced this month in your service, and what steps have you taken to resolve those challenges?

Describe what you are planning to do in the month ahead.

_____________________________________________  ___________________
Service Learning Supervisor Signature                  Date
APPENDIX B: SERVICE-LEARNING SCHOLARS CAPSTONE PROPOSAL

Name: ________________________________  A#: ____________________________

Email: ________________________________  Phone: ____________________________

Local Address: __________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Major(s) and Minor(s): __________________________

Semester and year you intend to graduate: __________________________

1. Describe the problem or issue you would like to address through your capstone project.

2. Describe your Capstone Project: What will you do to address the problem or issue in question one?

3. Outline the steps you will take and the hours you intend to spend to complete the project described above.
4. Explain how this project relates to your academic course of study.

5. Explain how this project will be sustainable after you have graduated as a Service-Learning Scholar

_____________________________________________ __________________________

Student Signature Date

_____________________________________________ __________________________

Service Learning Scholar Advisor Signature Date
Name: ____________________________________________  A#: __________________________

Email: ____________________________________________  Phone: __________________________

Local Address: ______________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

Major(s) and Minor(s): ________________________________________________

Semester and year you intend to graduate: ___________________________________________

1. Describe the problem or issue you addressed through your capstone project. Did you discover other related issues or problems as you completed your service?

2. Describe your Capstone Project: What did you do? What worked and what did not work?
3. Describe the steps you took and the hours you spent to complete the project described above.

4. How did you incorporate your academic course of study into this project?

5. Explain the steps you have taken to ensure the project will be sustainable after you have graduated as a Service-Learning Scholar.

_____________________________________________  ________________________________
Student Signature                              Date

_____________________________________________  ________________________________
Service Learning Scholar Advisor Signature     Date
APPENDIX D: SERVICE-LEARNING CONTRACT

A Service-Learning Contract is an agreement between a Service-Learning Scholar and an instructor to take an UPPER-DIVISION course for Service-Learning credit. The instructor decides what exercises are worthy of Service-Learning credit and whether the student has earned Service-Learning credit. The work is not generally graded and does not affect the student’s grade in the class. The deadline for a student to file a Service-learning Contract is no later than the fourth week of classes.

THE PROCEDURES:

Students: Pick up a contract from the Service-Learning Coordinator before the end of the second week of classes. Ask your instructor if he/she would be willing to work with you on a project worthy of Service-Learning credit. If so, legibly print the information below and return the completed and signed contract to the Service Learning Coordinator.

Instructor: If you agree to take on this additional teaching responsibility, describe the work that the student will complete and sign below as indicated. Questions? Call the Service-Learning Coordinator at 797-7947. The Service-Learning Scholars Program will send you a copy of the contract at the end of the semester to verify completion.

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<tr>
<th>Student’s Name</th>
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<td>Instructor’s Name</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>UMC</td>
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<td>Instructor’s Email</td>
<td>Course Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course: Department, Number</td>
<td>Credit Hours</td>
<td>Semester/Year</td>
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<td>Student’s Signature</td>
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<td>Instructor’s Signature</td>
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THE REQUIREMENTS:

- Contracts are for use by Service-Learning Scholars only.
- The contract must be for an upper-division class that is part of the student’s plan of study.
- Contracts may not be used retroactively for classes taken previously.
- “Incompletes” are not permitted. The student must finish the Service-Learning work in the semester contracted.

THE WORK:

The work needs to meet a community need, integrating learning, action, and reflection (usually a reflective paper, relating the activity to the disciplinary content being discussed in the course and what the student learned through the activity about the discipline, the community needs, and themselves). The work should provide intellectual enrichment that goes beyond regular course material. The student and the instructor should meet outside of class at least bimonthly to discuss the project. The community agency or partner the student is working with must be involved in the development of the project.

Brief Description of Service-earning Credit Project:

The student and instructor will meet to discuss the project on the following schedule:

The project will encompass the following (write below, or attach to application):

The community agency the student will be working with:

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<th>Agency</th>
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<th>Course: Department, Number</th>
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By signing this you certify that the Service-Learning Contract was completed as planned and to your satisfaction. Form must be completed and returned to the Service-Learning Coordinator, or TSC 318 by the last day of classes.

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<th>USU Service-Learning Coordinator</th>
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APPENDIX E: SERVICE LEARNING SCHOLARS

GRADUATION CHECKLIST

This checklist is to be completed by the Service-Learning Scholar and should be reviewed by the Service Learning Scholar Advisor during the Exit Interview. The Exit Interview must be conducted at least one month before the scholar’s graduation.

The following items should be included in the Service-Learning Portfolio:

- Monthly Time Sheets documenting 400 Hours of community service. Should be turned in once a semester and compiled in your portfolio.
- An unofficial transcript documenting 9 Credits of service-learning course work.
- Syllabi from service-learning classes as well as service-learning projects included in portfolio.
- Copies of service-learning contracts for any course adapted into service learning courses.
- The capstone project reflection piece

The following items are suggested for the Service-Learning Portfolio

- Pictures of your service experiences.
- Reflective journal entries.
- Any newspaper articles highlighting your service or projects.
- Any resource information about the agency with which you served.
- Any research regarding the community issue addressed.

The following forms must be completed by the Service-Learning Scholar and will be kept in the scholar’s file and reviewed during the Exit Interview.

- The Service-Learning Scholars Application.
- The Service-Learning Capstone Project Proposal.
- The Service-Learning Capstone Project Evaluation.
# Personal Graduation Timeline

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## First Semester Enrolled
**Date: ____________**
- Complete monthly times logs for the whole semester regardless of enrollment date.
- Meet with S-L Advisor to review handbook, develop graduation timeline, and receive orientation training.
- If accepted in Fall semester, attend capstone workshops
- Begin thinking about Capstone project

## Each Semester Enrolled
**Date: ____________**
- Record volunteer hours on AGS weekly for the entire semester.
- Meet with the S-L Advisor (If you do not contact the S-L Advisor for two consecutive semesters you may be removed from the program).
- Update your Personal Graduation Timeline.
- Watch for emails from the Student Service-Learning Director and attend scholar’s socials and events and network with other Service-Learning Scholars.

## Two Semesters Before Graduation
**Date: ____________**
- Turn in the capstone project proposal form.
- Begin working on your capstone project and compiling your Service-Learning Portfolio
- Continue logging hours and meeting with the S-L Advisor

## Semester Of Graduation
**Date: ____________**
- Complete Capstone project at start of final semester.
- Complete the reflection piece for your capstone project and compile portfolio.
- Turn in the capstone project evaluation form and portfolio by 2nd week in October (Fall graduates) and before Spring Break (Spring graduates).

## One month Before Graduation
**Date: ____________**
- Meet with S-L Advisor for exit interview no later than last week of October (Fall graduates) and no later than last week of March (Spring graduates)
- Receive information about graduation recognition.
- Receive your service learning graduation cords.
- Confirm that the service-learning distinction appears on your transcript.

## After Graduation
- Stay in touch! We’d love to hear how you continue working with your community.