

Maximizing the Long-term Sustainability of Service-Learning: Lessons from a Study of Early Adopters

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Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

Transforming Communities & Higher Education

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Learning Objectives

- Learn about key facilitating factors, challenges, and strategies for success that influenced the long-term sustainability of service-learning (SL) in one group of early adopters
- Identify concrete strategies that academic institutions and funders can use to support the long-term sustainability of SL
- Discuss findings with colleagues; learn from their experiences with sustaining SL

Introduction:

The Health Professions Schools in Service to the Nation Program (HPSISN)

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HPSISN

- First and only national (U.S.) demonstration program for SL in health professions education, 1994-1998
- Sub-grants, technical assistance, and professional development to 17 health professions schools for:
 - Integration of SL into the curriculum
 - Community-academic partnerships for SL
- Matching support, in cash or in kind
- Supported by: CNS, Pew Charitable Trusts, Health Resources & Services Administration
- Administered by: Center for the Health Professions at University of California-San Francisco & National Fund for Medical Education

Diverse Grantees

1. **Georgetown University, Washington DC**
2. **George Washington University, DC & George Mason University, Arlington VA**
3. **Northeastern University, Boston, MA**
4. **Ohio University, Athens, OH**
5. **Regis University, Denver, CO**
6. **San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA**
7. **University of Connecticut, Farmington, CT**
8. **University of Florida, Gainesville, FL**
9. **University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY**
10. **University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC**
11. **University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA**
12. **University of Scranton, Scranton, PA**
13. **University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA**
14. **University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT**
15. **University of Utah & Purdue University, Indianapolis, IN**
16. **Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA**
17. **West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckannon, WV**

Grantees: Community Partners

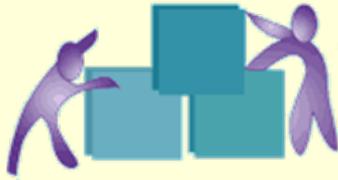
(examples)

- AIDS task force
- American Red Cross
- Boys and Girls Club
- Catholic Church
- Middle Schools
- Free Clinics
- Head Start
- Hospice
- Housing Authority
- Planned Parenthood
- Salvation Army
- Senior Center
- Sheltered Workshop
- Youth Center
- Wilderness on Wheels
- WIC Program

Grantees: Project Focus

(examples)

- School-based health education
- Health promotion and disease prevention
 - teenage pregnancy
 - domestic violence
 - oral health
- Worksite-based health education
- Companionship
- Case management
- Mentoring and tutoring
- Rural access to care



Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

Transforming Communities & Higher Education

To promote health (broadly defined) through partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions



HPSISN Evaluation Study, 1998

- Evaluation team at Portland State University
 - Gelmon, S.B., Holland, B.A., & Shinnamon, A.F. (1998). *Health Professions Schools in Service to the Nation: Final Evaluation Report*. San Francisco: Community-Campus Partnerships for Health.
 - Gelmon, S.B., Holland, B.A., Shinnamon, A.F. & Morris, B.A. (1998). Community-based education and service: The HPSISN experience. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 12, 3, 257-272.
 - Gelmon, S.B., Holland, B.A., Seifer, S.D., Shinnamon, A., & Connors, K. (1998). Community-University Partnerships for Mutual Learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 5, 97-107.
- Design based on multi-constituency conceptual framework
- Methods: surveys, focus groups, structured interviews, document review

HPSISN Evaluation Study, 1998

Research questions:

- How has HPSISN affected university-community partnerships?
- How has SL affected students readiness for health professions?
- To what extent have faculty embraced SL?
- How has the institution's capacity changed?
- What has been the impact of HPSISN on community partners?

Lessons Learned:

- Service-learning is a powerful pedagogy
- Committed leadership is essential
- To increase value, link SL to other activities
- SL is a higher priority when integrated into required courses
- Students as a whole value SL more when it is required
- SL helps to build community competencies
- Community assets are often overlooked in SL
- SL requires everyone to give up control

Why a follow-up study of HPSISN, 10 years later?

- Early adopters
- HPSISN is still one of only a few demonstration programs of SL in a single discipline or set of disciplines
- Standardizes some factors influencing sustainability (grant funding, matching support, technical assistance), allowing exploration of site-specific influences:
 - Institutional environment
 - Infrastructure and resources for SL
 - Design and implementation of SL

The HPSISN Follow-up Study

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Why study sustainability of SL?

- Increasing investments in SL by funders, schools, community partners
- Sustainability prevents challenges related to lapses in SL, e.g. reduced willingness of community agencies to engage in future community-academic partnerships
- Sustainability may help achieve ambitious goals of SL, e.g.:
 - Enhance mutual understanding among communities and schools
 - Shift the culture, activities (teaching, scholarship) of academia toward engagement
 - Build capacity of academic and community partners to address community needs, work for social justice

Research Questions

1. *To what extent did HPSISN grantees sustain SL, ten years after grant funding ended?
2. *What factors influenced the sustainability of SL?
 - Facilitating Factors
 - Challenges
 - Strategies for Success
3. What was the long-term impact of HPSISN-supported SL for academic and community partners?
4. What strategies did high-sustainability schools use to maximize the quality of SL?

Methods

Phase 1: Interviews, All HPSISN Grantees (2007-2008)

- 23 semi-structured phone interviews (16/17 PIs + 7)
- Document review
- Thematic coding, memo-writing

Phase 2: Two Case Studies (2009)

- Selection criteria: high sustainability of SL, different institutional settings, broad participation in interviews
- Site visits, document review, 47 semi-structured interviews
 - Academic (n = 32)
 - Community (n = 15)
- Pre-structured case outlines, memo-writing, matrices
- Comparisons across cases, types of interview participants

Approved by JHSPH IRB

Findings: Sustainability (n = 15)

<p><u>Low (n = 3)</u> SL continues, not a stable and regular activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SL in elective course / co-curricular experience • Maintained by individual faculty • No institutional resources invested to sustain SL
<p><u>Moderate (n = 5)</u> SL is stable and regular activity; support from resources, culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SL integrated into required courses • SL coordinated at level of course (2); or at level of department by faculty or SL director (3) • <u>Institutional resources</u>: departmental planning, faculty time, hiring SL coordinator, partnerships • <u>Institutional culture</u>: mission (4), rhetoric (3)
<p><u>High (n = 7)</u> SL is stable and regular activity; support from resources, culture, policies, infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SL integrated into required courses • SL center for school/college, with full-time director • <u>Institutional resources/culture</u>: All of the above. • <u>Policies</u>: hiring, promotion and tenure (3) • <u>Infrastructure</u>: SL center at school (7), university (5); SL steering committee in health professions (4)

Facilitating Factors

- Institutional Environment
- Infrastructure and Resources for SL
- Design and Implementation of SL

Facilitators: Institutional Environment

1. Institutional culture supports SL
 - Institutional mission (faith-based, public)
 - Institution's role in the community (urban)
2. Support for SL among high-level administrators at university, in health professions
 - University president, deans
 - Supportive rhetoric, expectations for community engagement
 - Cultivate support among other decision makers
3. "Critical mass" of support for SL
 - Academic administrators, faculty, students

Facilitators: Infrastructure, Resources

1. SL Center

- Full-time SL director to support participation by faculty, community agencies, students
- Resources for SL, quality standards for SL
- Centralized location in organizational structure, e.g. office of dean of a college

2. Support for faculty participation in SL

- Initial training, ongoing professional development, technical assistance
- Resources for using SL
- Fellowships, stipends, course release time

Facilitators: SL Design, Implementation

1. SL integrated into required courses
 - Used to teach valued learning objectives
2. Full-time SL director with skills to:
 - Advocate for SL: funding, institutional value
 - Cultivate champions: administrators/faculty/students/community
 - Maximize quality of SL: creative use of SL to address educational goals, community goals
3. Investing in stable, long-term community partnerships
 - Implement principles of community-campus partnerships: communication, reciprocal benefits, equity
 - Help partners fulfill organizational mission
 - Provide TA, professional development to partners
 - Make long-term commitment, select partners who will, as well: stable, leadership for SL

Challenges

1. Turnover among faculty engaged in SL
 - Threat to sustainability, quality
2. Competing priorities for faculty time
 - P&T emphasis on research
 - SL taken on in “spare time”
3. Turnover among champions for SL among high level administrators, highly-regarded faculty
 - Changes in priorities
 - Loss of peer leaders

Challenges, cont'd

4. Competing educational priorities
 - SL not seen as appropriate to teach to these objectives (clinical care skills; research skills)
 - Overloaded student schedules -- reduced time for SL in curriculum

5. Growth – how to accommodate increasing student participation with limited resources to support community partnerships, faculty participation
 - Challenge to quality for all participants

Strategies to Respond to Challenges

1. Provide ongoing opportunities for faculty professional development
 - New faculty orientation, peer-to-peer outreach and mentoring, technical assistance
2. Articulate how SL contributes to valued educational objectives, both established and emerging
 - Use SL to teach to current educational objectives; link to accreditation guidelines
 - Use SL to teach about emerging “hot topics”
 - Use SL to establish new educational priorities best taught through experiential learning

Strategies, cont'd

3. Articulate how SL contributes to broad institutional goals
 - Town-gown relations, public relations
 - Other valued initiatives: research centers; elective tracks; other community-based training (practica, internships, or fellowships)
 - Student recruitment
4. Engage in “internal marketing” of SL
 - University newsletters, newspapers, local media
 - Focus on administrators interested in the community
 - Evaluation (research institutions, especially)
5. To ensure that growing SL initiatives retain quality: engage faculty in (1) peer mentoring, and (2) maintaining strong community-academic partnerships

Recommendations to Academic Institutions

Administrators, Faculty, SL Staff

- Have sustainability as a goal from the start of SL activities (or whatever stage you are in, now)
- Appoint a SL director who has time, skills to implement the strategies for success identified here
- Actively plan for sustainability: Develop incremental goals to work toward sustainability and revisit them periodically to assess progress, challenges, strategies
 - How will you link SL to the institutional culture? How will you make a convincing case?
 - What will you do to develop a critical mass of support?
 - How will you integrate SL into the curriculum?
 - How will you use SL to teach to valued educational objectives?

Recommendations to Academic Institutions

Administrators, Faculty, SL Staff

- Planning for sustainability, cont'd:
 - How will you secure resources to support faculty participation?
 - What will you do to build strong community partnerships?
- Identify current, anticipated, challenges and plan strategies to address or prevent them
 - How will you address turnover among champions? Among faculty who use SL?
 - What competing educational priorities exist? How will you articulate the equal value of the educational objectives taught through SL?
 - How will you revisit SL over time to ensure it remains relevant to changing educational objectives? What process will you engage in to adapt SL?
 - How will you plan for growth, while maintaining quality? What existing resources can be tapped? What new resources will be needed?

Recommendations to SL Funders

Related to the institutional environment, require grant applicants to:

- Include a compelling argument about how SL appeals to the institutional culture, and if needed, describe how they will make this case at their institutions
- Document existing support for SL among administrators (e.g. letter of support), faculty, students

OR

Describe what they will do to cultivate support

Recommendations to SL Funders

Related to infrastructure and resources, require grant applicants to:

- Describe what infrastructure and resources currently exist that could be used to support SL (e.g. community engagement center, faculty participation), and how they plan to leverage these resources

OR

Describe what process they will engage in to develop this infrastructure

- Provide matching funds that increase over the grant period to prepare the school to fully support SL by the time grant funding ends

Recommendations to SL Funders

Related to how SL is designed and implemented, require grantees to:

- Integrate SL into core curriculum, and use to teach core educational objectives
- Identify current full-time SL director/plans to hire SL director with skills to work with administrators, community, faculty, students
- Describe how they will nurture stable, long-term community-academic partnerships
- Earmark a portion of funding to support professional development / capacity building in community partners

Support grantees in addressing challenges, with professional development opportunities

- for a list of suggested topics, see: www.ccph.info

Limitations

- Generalizability
 - Findings may not be generalizable to other schools, especially outside of health professions; though may be generalizable to other professional schools
- Restrictions in variables that could be explored
 - HPSISN cohort had grant funding, matching support, technical assn and professional development during start-up; could not explore influence of these factors on sustainability
 - Rather, a focus on site-specific influences and influences after the start-up period
- Recall bias
 - Retrospective recall of influences over a 10 year period of time

Discussion

Moderator:

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For more information...

www.ccph.info -- search for “HPSISN follow-up study”

- Slides, posters, articles, full text Dr. Vogel’s dissertation
- Suggested professional development topics: addressing challenges to sustainability (see slides from April 2010 talk at CNS)

www.umich.edu/~mjcsl

- Vogel, A.L., Seifer, S.D., & Gelmon, S.B. (in press). What influences the long-term sustainability of service-learning? Lessons from early adopters. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, Fall 2010.
(phase 1 findings; phase 2 article forthcoming)

www.servicelearning.org/higher-education-sector

- Find the webinar recording and related materials
- Also find our new fact sheet, “The Engaged Community: Maximizing Community Impact”

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