Principles for Ethical and Effective Service

Haas Center for Public Service
Stanford University
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WHY PRINCIPLES?

Community organizations long have provided rich learning opportunities for Stanford students engaged in public service. Stories abound of students' transformative experiences through community involvement. Many faculty, staff, and students have established mutually beneficial relationships with partner organizations that enhance student learning and contribute to the mission of a community partner. At times, however, there have also been breaches of community trust and respect.

In an effort to raise awareness about the university's shared responsibility to communities and organizations involved with public service activities at Stanford, the Haas Center for Public Service developed the *Principles for Ethical and Effective Service* in 2002. These principles emerged from a process of consultation with over 75 community participants, faculty, students, and staff. At the Haas Center, the principles inform program design and implementation as we continually revisit the alignment between our work and guiding values.

The following document provides snapshots of the *Principles for Ethical and Effective Service* in action, using examples from the Haas Center's own programs. We hope this document will foster continued discussion about the opportunities and challenges inherent in public service.

1. RECIPROCITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

- Develop collaborative relationships with community partners and recognize their role as educators of student participants.

- Involve potential community participants in the design of service projects in order to ensure the value and relevance of the work.

Working Toward Reciprocity
Science in Service connects Stanford undergraduates to neighboring youth through science mentorship. Each quarter, Haas Center students and staff develop a theme to unify their after-school science lessons at the Boy and Girls Club of the Peninsula (BGCP). BGCP staff contribute ideas and feedback when the Haas students and staff develop the

theme, providing important perspective on community needs within the curriculum development process. Recently, the Haas students proposed the theme of forensic science to BGCP staff, who expressed concern about forensic science's connection with crime and popular television shows like CSI. The staff explained their vision for Science in Service: to give BGCP students' tools to better understand themselves and the natural environment. Taking this feedback into account, the Haas tutors decided to focus instead on "human biology of the senses," working with BGCP students to better understand the science behind vision, sight, smell, touch, and hearing.

Reflection Questions:
What does reciprocity look like between you and your community partner(s)? How do you evaluate community partner needs and interests? What ways can you think of to show appreciation to your community partners for their educational role?

2. HUMILITY
- Encourage students to serve with an attitude of listening and learning from community participants as part of the process of getting things done in a service-learning situation.

- Prepare students to view the work that they may be asked to do at their service project as a valuable learning opportunity.

Working Toward Humility
Public Service Leadership staff challenge students to consider the privilege that comes with their Stanford affiliation and to recognize the value of community partners' rich history and expertise. It could be easy at times for a student volunteer to criticize the work of a community partner because the student is coming from a place of privilege. Student tutors working in under-resourced schools, for example, are encouraged to view teachers as experts, with a deep knowledge of effective strategies to reach individual students. Through leadership development programming, student service organizations learn to leverage their unique resources and acknowledge their limitations.

Reflection Questions:
How will you prepare yourself and your team to be humble in service experiences? What would / does humility look like in your service context?

3. RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

- Create an atmosphere that models respect for diversity, broadly and inclusively defined.

- Train students in issues of diversity.

- Encourage collaboration among diverse campus-community groups.

Valuing Respect for Diversity

The Public Service Leadership Program (PSLP) strives to include participants from diverse socio-economic, racial, cultural, and academic backgrounds working on a range of social justice issues. Haas Center staff actively seek out nominations for the program from a variety of academic departments, ethnic and cultural community centers, and other student affairs offices to ensure wide representation. Once students are admitted to the program, their different perspectives allow them to provide tremendous insight to each other as they collaborate on leadership challenges. In the program's introductory course, students directly grapple how their personal identity, privilege, and background affect their approach to service leadership through leadership case studies and a "World Café" dialog called "The Take-a-Stand Café." By actively recruiting a broad range of students and having direct dialog around these topics, the program continually works toward respect for diversity.

Reflection Questions:

How do you and your team explore and respect the diversity among your partners? Are there any diversity related issues in your service area that you must address?

4. COMMITMENT

- Model and emphasize to students the importance of keeping commitments, tacit as well as explicit, made to community partners.

- Provide feedback mechanisms for accountability to community partners (e. g. a designated staff person at the Haas Center who community partners feel comfortable contacting with any concerns).

- Clarify the expectations and time frame of the service project to both students and partners.

Clarifying and Fulfilling Commitments

The Stanford College Preparation Program motivates and supports first-generation, college-bound youth from East Palo Alto Academy High School on their journey to higher education. Each year, more than 45 Stanford undergraduates serve as tutors and mentors to 75 high school

students. At the beginning of the year, a panel of local community organizations discusses the importance of volunteer consistency with all undergraduate tutors. All Stanford tutors commit to at least three months of weekly tutoring sessions. A group of six undergraduates commit to a full academic year as tutor coordinators, guided by full-time program staff working in close consultation with East Palo Academy teachers.

Reflection Questions:

What commitment(s) have you made to do service in your issue area? What are your community partner's expectations? What happens when the expectations of the community are not met? If you are leading other volunteers, what commitment are you asking them for? What commitment *should* you be asking for?

5. ONGOING COMMUNICATION AND CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

•   Provide a structured experience that encourages safe, comfortable channels of communication and sets clear expectations between students and community organization representatives.

•   Clarify community organization's preferences for service projects.

Working Toward Ongoing Communication and Clear Expectations
United Students for Veterans' Health Stanford chapter brings volunteers to the Menlo Park division of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Students spend time with veterans at the Geriatric-Psychiatric Nursing Home Care Unit each week, enriching the living atmosphere with lively conversation, outdoor walks, and friendship. A recreational therapist at the VA conducts an orientation session on patient care and assigns volunteers to the veterans most in need of interaction. Each week, volunteers write a brief account of their experience which is reviewed by VA staff. The USVH student board fields all comments and instructions from the hospital, which are then communicated to individual volunteers as needed. This clear path of communication has allowed USVH to continuously work with its individual volunteers to improve the quality of service.

Reflection Questions:
How could you improve communication with other people or groups engaged in your issue? Have you established clear lines of communication to your community partner(s) and facilitated an environment of reciprocity and openness?

6. PREPARATION

- Prepare students for service projects with the attitudes, skills, and knowledge they will need to serve ethically and effectively.

- Involve community partners in preparing or training students whenever possible.

- Provide students with current and historical information about their host organization, and the community the organization works with, before beginning the service project.

Improving Preparation

The Public Service Fellowship Program supports intensive summer work experiences in non-profits, government agencies, and NGOs. Guided by fellowship staff, faculty mentors, and summer supervisors, students engage in in-depth preparation for their summer fellowships. All students participate in a one-day orientation, designed to incorporate recommendations from past fellows and participating organizations. During spring quarter, students develop learning plans to articulate their summer objectives. Pre-summer meetings with faculty mentors and summer supervisors provide a starting point for discussion about each placement's history and needs.

Reflection Questions:

What have you *not* been prepared for in the past? What did you do to be more prepared in the future? What does your personal plan for preparation look like? How about your plan preparing others? How might you creatively build preparation into your program design?

7. CONTEXT

- Assist students in connecting service experiences with the larger contemporary and historical political, economic, and social context in which the service experience is embedded.

- Involve knowledgeable community members and utilize other available materials to present key issues specific to the community and organization in which students are serving.

Including Context

Alternative Spring Break (ASB) exposes students to complex social and cultural issues through experiential learning, group discussion, readings, and reflection activities. During winter quarter, all ASB participants take a 1-unit directed reading course facilitated by trip leaders and sponsored by a Stanford faculty member. Students participating in the 2008 trip, "Separate but Unequal: Urban Education Issues in California," for

example, discussed how race/ethnicity, culture, poverty, and residence impact educational attainment and achievement. Students deepened their understanding of the broader social and legal contexts surrounding their issue by meeting with educational experts, practitioners, and policymakers. This understanding brought a valuable perspective to the service work they performed on their spring break trip.

Reflection Questions:
How well do you understand the broader context in your issue area? What resources are available to you that might deepen your understanding of the context surrounding your issue? What can you share with others to help facilitate this learning? How will you keep yourself and others up to date on events that influence your service issue or site?

8. PARTICIPATORY PEDAGOGY
- Engage all participants (students, community participants) as teachers and learners.

- Provide students with opportunities to share new knowledge obtained from their service experience.

Working Toward Participatory Pedagogy
Supported by a Haas Center faculty grant, Professor Carol Winograd teaches a service-learning course on women and aging.   Class requirements include readings, films, guest lectures, and a 21-hour service commitment that involves connecting with an older woman. Students spend time conversing with their "older buddy," eating meals together, and participating in daily activities such as exercise classes, movies and art. For many students, spending time with their new friend is eye opening and stereotype-busting. The exposure to the perspective of an older woman brings the class readings and discussions to life. At the end of the quarter, Professor Winograd hosts a celebratory lunch, including singing entertainment by the Raging Grannies, during which class participants, old and young, speak to their mutual learning.

Reflection Questions:
How can you more fully engage all your constituents in your work? How can your community partner contribute to your learning outcomes and overall experience?

9. SAFETY
- Anticipate and take precautionary steps to ensure the safety of all people involved in service activities.

- Comply with special safety or liability requirements of community partners.

Ensuring Safety

Each summer, Haas Center fellows work on service projects in locales ranging from New York City to Rio de Janeiro and from Accra to Tapei. Students who anticipate needing alternative transportation or cell phones due to safety concerns are awarded a modest stipend supplement from a designated "safety and security" fund. Fellowship staff members incorporate safety awareness and scenario planning into all orientation activities, and students serving internationally are enrolled in a travel insurance program through the university risk management office.

Reflection Questions:

What are the particular safety concerns in your issue area? Have you spoken with your community partner(s) about safety issues and made plans to help mitigate risk?

<u>**SUGGESTED USES**</u>

Since developing the *Principles for Ethical and Effective Service* in 2002, we have used this document to guide workshops with students, faculty, and staff. Leaders of student service groups, for example, use the "reflection questions" related to each principle as a springboard for assessing their work with the community. Similarly, the Principles are shared with faculty members who apply for service-learning grants. They are encouraged to think about how course design can promote ethical and effective service.

Of most importance, community partners' inclusion in the development of the principles has yielded a platform for ongoing conversations about how university-community interactions can both enhance student learning *and* benefit the community. We urge readers to consider how these principles might be adapted for their own communities and open up dialogue with diverse stakeholders about what challenges are at the core of university efforts to engage all service participants as both learners and teachers.