Facts on Community Service Learning in the California State University 2002/2003
The California State University

Mission and Scope
The California State University is the largest system of senior higher education in the country with 23 campuses and six off-campus centers, nearly 400,000 students and 44,000 faculty and staff. The CSU, stretching from Humboldt in the north to San Diego in the south, is renowned for the quality of its teaching and for the job-ready graduates it produces. With its commitment to excellence, diversity, and innovation, the CSU is the university system that is contributing to California communities.

While part of the CSU system, each campus has its own unique identity. Some CSU campuses are in large urban settings with student populations of more than 25,000, while other campuses are located in rural communities and have much smaller student populations. All CSU campuses have distinct features and programs, but share the same mission—to provide high-quality, affordable higher education to meet the ever-changing needs of the people of California.

The CSU offers more than 1,600 bachelor’s and master’s degree programs in 240 subject areas. Since the CSU began in 1961, it has awarded nearly 2 million degrees. The CSU prepares about 60 percent of the teachers in the state and more graduates in business, engineering, agriculture, communications, health, education, and public administration than all other California universities and colleges combined. About half the bachelor’s degrees and a third of the master’s degrees awarded in California are from the CSU.
**Student Profile**

The CSU is the nation’s most diverse university system with minority enrollment topping 53 percent—more than twice the national average for four-year public universities.

- **Forty percent** of CSU students come from households where English is not the main language spoken, and **more than one-third** of CSU students consider themselves to be multiracial.

- The average age of a CSU student is 24. Approximately **85 percent** are commuters. Four out of five students have jobs, and **36 percent** work full time.

- About **one in five** students is the first generation in his or her family to attend college.

To support the CSU’s educational vision, individuals and institutions across the CSU have dedicated themselves to developing partnerships and building bridges—across academic and administrative units, across communities, and across the nation. In this spirit, community service learning has become an essential element of the CSU experience and will continue to convey the CSU’s vision as it meets the challenges and opportunities of higher education in the 21st century.

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**Commitment to Service**

Faculty, students, and administrators in the CSU have been partnering with their local communities since the first CSU campus was founded in 1857. These partnerships not only improve the quality of life across California, they also advance faculty research and support CSU programs while teaching students the value and satisfaction that come from contributing to society.

Over the last decade, the CSU has taken bold steps to provide a variety of opportunities for students to contribute to California communities and enhance their learning and pre-professional experiences.

- In 1997, representatives from across CSU campuses came together to develop the CSU Strategic Plan for Community Service Learning. This plan stated a primary goal of offering service-learning and community service opportunities for each CSU student prior to graduation.

- In 1998, the Office of Community Service Learning in the Chancellor’s Office was created to provide leadership and coordination for CSU campuses as they develop and implement community service-learning initiatives.

- In March 2000, the CSU Board of Trustees passed a resolution in support of community service and service learning (see pages 5-6 for more information).

- In January 2001, the Corporation for National and Community Service honored the CSU with the Higher Education Award for Leadership in National Service. The CSU was one of seven institutions in the nation and the only California institution to win the award.

Through campus-based successes and systemwide coordination, the CSU has emerged as a national leader in developing opportunities for university students to California communities through service learning, community service and national service programs.
**Service Learning**

Service learning is a teaching method that promotes student learning through active participation in meaningful and planned service experiences in the community that are directly related to course content. Through reflective activities, students enhance their understanding of course content, general knowledge, sense of civic responsibility, self-awareness, and commitment to the community. Over 1,600 service-learning courses in a wide variety of disciplines are offered each year across the CSU, and additional courses that incorporate service learning continue to be developed.

**Community Service**

There are a variety of campus organizations and student clubs that sponsor community service activities, several for more than 40 years, and they are still going strong. Calstate Cares Day, a statewide day of service organized by the California State Student Association, is just one example of the many ways that students are actively involved in community service across the state. In 1999, the CSU received the regional service award from USA Weekend, recognizing the community service contributions of CSU students on National Make A Difference Day.

**National Service**

Many CSU students are providing community service through national service programs like AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America. AmeriCorps, often known as the “domestic Peace Corps,” engages citizens in structured community service over a defined period of time. Participating CSU students commit to 450 or 900 hours of service over a year, and in return receive a living allowance and an education scholarship. Currently, eight AmeriCorps programs are offered to CSU students, providing service opportunities in education and health.

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**California's Call to Service**

**The Governor's Call to Service**

In April 1999, Governor Gray Davis called for a community service requirement for all students enrolled in California’s public institutions of higher education. The governor stated that the primary purposes of his initiative were to enable students to give back to their communities, to experience the satisfaction of contributing to those in need, and to strengthen an ethic of service among graduates of California universities.

**The CSU Responds to the Governor’s Call**

The CSU was the first segment of California’s system of higher education to respond to the governor’s call to service. The Academic Senate CSU, campus faculty senates, students, community partners, community service and service-learning coordinators, and the CSU Advisory Group on Community Service participated in months of intensive dialogue, discussing how to strengthen and build upon the service initiatives that have developed over decades. An overarching view became clear: The CSU endorsed Governor Davis’s interest in strengthening an ethic of service as an important part of undergraduate education.

Following these deliberations, at its March 2000 meeting, the CSU Board of Trustees passed a landmark resolution on community service and service learning in the CSU.
Service Learning

• During the 2002-2003 academic year, over 1,600 courses with service-learning components will be offered—oftentimes with multiple sections—providing more than 51,000 students with opportunities to participate in service learning.

• CSU Monterey Bay has a service-learning graduation requirement for all of its students.

• The 1999 CSU Student Needs and Priorities Survey (SNAPS) indicated that 39 percent of CSU students have either taken or reported an interest in taking service-learning courses.

Of those students who have taken service-learning courses:

+ 65 percent indicated the courses helped them master the subject matter more than traditional courses.

+ 70 percent said service-learning courses developed civic awareness and responsibility better than traditional courses.

+ 69 percent said service-learning courses provided more opportunity to explore career options than traditional courses.

Number of courses with service-learning components offered in the CSU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Courses Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'00-'01</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'01-'02</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'02-'03</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicates courses with new service-learning components offered for the first time.
Community Service

• A 2001 survey revealed that over 151,000 CSU students, or 42 percent of the student body at that time, reported involvement in community service in 2000.

• Among the 151,000 students who participated in community service, nearly 42 percent reported that their community service focused on education and tutoring services; followed by social services (20.2 percent) and health services (10.8 percent).

National Service

• In 2002-2003, over 1,580 CSU students will participate in eight AmeriCorps programs. As a result, students will provide more than 711,000 hours of service and receive $1.98 million in educational scholarships.

• Countless CSU students will organize community service projects for the days of national service, such as National Make A Difference Day (October 2002) and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service (January 2003).

Federal Work Study Community Service Placements

• In 2000-2001, CSU campuses devoted an average of 20 percent, or $3.9 million, of their federal work study funding to community service placements, well above the federal requirement of 7 percent and the national average of 12 percent.

• In 2000-2001, CSU Sacramento committed 62.6 percent of its federal work study funding to community service placements—the highest percentage in the CSU and among the top in the nation.

• Five CSU campuses are in the top 20 for large universities that devote the biggest proportion of their federal work study funding to community service.

Courses Across the CSU

Service-learning courses exist across the CSU in a wide variety of disciplines. The examples below are just a few of the many engaging courses offered.

CSU Bakersfield students in a biology course learn nutritional basics, the latest information on a healthy diet, and how to prevent cancer with dietary selections. Students then provide nutritional seminars to communities in need, demonstrating how to make various healthy meals and providing samples.

CSU Channel Islands students in an art course will work with community-based organizations to develop public art projects that address specific needs in those communities.

CSU Chico students in a public relations course provide assistance in community organizations, applying their public relations skills and knowledge in writing, organization, budgeting, and planning.

CSU Dominguez Hills students in a computer science course teach youth at the Boys and Girls Club basic computing programs and how to navigate the Internet. In the next semester, new computer science students will teach those same youth to work with high-tech media production programs.

CSU Fresno students in a major required course called Communication and Learning are required to provide at least 15 hours of service as tutors and
classroom aides. This experience helps to provide the students with a greater understanding of the critical role communication plays in education and strategies for maximizing that role.

**CSU Fullerton** students in Advanced Topics in Hydrogeology demonstrate environmental sampling techniques of soil and water to high school science students who then wear the protective gear and conduct the sampling techniques themselves.

**CSU Hayward** students in a psychology course perform campus-based research on transfer student satisfaction. They learn valuable research skills and host a colloquium to disseminate findings to campus, community, and community college members so as to impact future program development.

**Humboldt State University** students in a communications course utilize course concepts to create and deliver several training sessions on topics such as assertive communication, team building, and conflict management to nonprofit organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters.

**CSU Long Beach** students in an Asian American studies class assist permanent residents in the naturalization application process to gain an understanding of how immigration and naturalization laws are implemented, the importance of client confidentiality, and the value of U.S. citizenship for immigrants.

**CSU Los Angeles** students in a political science course work with national advocacy groups and in offices of elected officials. The activities range from public information campaigns to legal research to constituency service. The volunteer work gives students the opportunity to learn about the basics of civic engagement and political involvement.

**California Maritime Academy** students in an Auto/Biography course learn to write about themselves and others by interviewing senior citizens and veterans in the local community. After transcribing these “stories” from videotapes or telephone calls, students analyze the material, improve their interview skills, and find their own “voices”—while preserving oral history for future generations by creating an archival “library” of enduring value.

**CSU Monterey Bay** students in a writing course work in health care facilities that serve the migrant farm worker community, providing service and gaining a greater understanding of the health issues that migrant families are facing. Students then create poetry and host a reading for students, health care workers and farm worker families that spotlight the connection between human health and pesticide use.

**CSU Northridge** students in an introductory biology course conduct a new after-school program, Tomorrow’s Scientists, which brings 25 seventh graders to campus once a week during the semester for hands-on science lessons.

**Cal Poly Pomona** students in a community planning studio course develop and implement community workshops in a south Pomona neighborhood to examine issues of safety and livability.

**CSU Sacramento** students in a business course called Data Analysis for Managers analyze and interpret a data set for a nonprofit agency and present their findings to the agency to help improve its services.

**CSU San Bernardino** students in a course called Foodservice Procurement and Production provide hot lunches to the low-income residents of two community centers. The students then apply course learning to improve the preparation and delivery of food at those two sites to improve the clients’ nutritional status.

**San Diego State University** students enrolled in a public administration course examine the work of nonprofit organizations engaged in the field of youth
civic engagement, community economic development, and health provision in community settings.

**San Francisco State University** students in a chemistry course work with different non-profits or public institutions such as the San Francisco Unified School District and environmental organizations to identify toxins found in everyday objects. Students then disseminate results of the studies and their significance to the community.

**San José State University** students in an environmental impact analysis course help the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition inform residents about a proposed energy plant in their community.

**Cal Poly San Luis Obispo** students in a course on nutrition and aging expand their understanding of senior citizens and their nutritional needs through direct service to seniors in settings ranging from a day center for Alzheimer's patients, to a retirement community of low-income seniors, to private homes where seniors receive daily “meals on wheels.”

**CSU San Marcos** students in a new first year “learning community” plan and implement a Civic Fair for the neighboring city of Escondido. After months of planning, 1,500 community participants learn about the health, educational, and cultural resources of the Escondido community.

**Sonoma State University** students in a history course prepare curriculum units on the history and culture of a selected region, and teach these units to students in a local middle school. Particularly popular is their participatory simulation of Ellis Island, which teachers at the school are now adopting for their own American history courses.

**CSU Stanislaus** students in a communications course called Public Relations Campaigns apply their academic knowledge by working with local chapters of the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association on media campaigns, fundraising events, and educational programs.

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**Contact Information**

**Office of Community Service Learning, Chancellor’s Office**

The systemwide office of community service learning, created in 1998, provides leadership and coordination among the 23 campuses to ensure that all CSU students have the opportunity to participate in service prior to graduation, through academic service learning, community service, or national service.

More information about the office’s initiatives, programs, and staff can be found at [www.calstate.edu/CSL](http://www.calstate.edu/CSL).

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**Campus Contacts**

Complete contact information for the campus coordinators of service-learning, community service, and national service programs can be found on the systemwide website at [www.calstate.edu/CSL](http://www.calstate.edu/CSL).