FACTS ON

Community Service Learning

IN THE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

CSU

2004-2005
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California State University</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission and Scope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Profile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Service</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU’s Commitment to Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Service Learning</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Service</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California’s Call to Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts and Figures</td>
<td>8, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Service Learning</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Work Study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Profiles Across the CSU</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Highlights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources and Contact Information</td>
<td>18, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mission and Scope

The California State University is the nation’s largest university system, with 23 campuses and seven off-campus centers, nearly 409,000 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 significantly contributes 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 rurally 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 California.

The CSU offers more than 1,800 bachelor’s and master’s degree programs in 240 subject areas. Since the CSU began in 1961, it has awarded more than 2 million degrees. The CSU prepares a majority of the teachers in the state, 40 percent of its engineering graduates, almost half its business graduates, and more graduates in agriculture, communications, health, education, and public administration than all other California universities and colleges combined. Altogether, approximately half the bachelor’s degrees and a third of the master’s degrees awarded annually in California are from the CSU.
**Student Profile**

The CSU is the nation’s most diverse university system, with students of color above 53 percent, 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.
The CSU’s Commitment to Service

To support our educational vision, individuals and institutions across the CSU have dedicated themselves to developing partnerships and building bridges—across our academic and administrative units, across our communities and across the nation. In this spirit, community service learning and civic engagement have become essential elements of the CSU experience and will continue to inform our vision as we meet the challenges and opportunities of higher education in the 21st century.

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 preprofessional 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 landmark resolution in support of community service and service learning.

“When I discovered service learning, I can say without exaggeration that it fundamentally changed me as an educator. It allowed me to move to that next phase of teaching that I had read about and aspired to but didn’t quite know how to reach. It revolutionized how I viewed teaching, learning and the purpose of education.”

Penelope Wong, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor of Education
CSU Chico
• In August 2000, state legislation established March 31 as “Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning,” a state holiday. Since its inception, more than 5,000 CSU students and 39,000 K-12 students have participated in service and learning activities that honor Cesar Chavez.

• 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.

• In October 2003, the CSU launched a new, multi-million dollar civic engagement initiative supported by Learn and Serve America. Over a three-year period, each campus will assess current civic engagement efforts and design activities to carry out the civic mission of education.

• Starting with the 2004-2005 academic year, the CSU has reached a major milestone—over 15 percent of the student body has the opportunity to participate in service learning. New opportunities continue to be developed as well as a robust focus on sustaining current service-learning opportunities.

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

Civic Engagement

Rekowned scholar, Thomas Ehrlich, defines “civic engagement [as a] means to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make a difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and nonpolitical processes.” Offering a course that introduces students to local political issues, developing a campus policy that promotes environmentally-friendly practices and hosting a community and campus dialogue on a timely and topical issue are illustrations of a few civic engagement activities.

Academic Service Learning

Academic 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.
Community Service

There are a variety of campus organizations and student clubs that sponsor community service activities. Student-led organizations such as Community Action Volunteers in Education (CAVE) at CSU Chico and Educational Participation in Communities (EPIC) at CSU Los Angeles have been providing students with opportunities to contribute to California communities for more than 40 years—and they are still going strong.

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.

California’s Call to Service

In March 2000, the California State University Board of Trustees passed a landmark resolution in response to a request from the governor for a community service requirement for all students in California’s public institutions of higher education. In a strong display of support for community service learning, the CSU Board of Trustees’ resolution called for the chancellor and each CSU president to “ensure that all students have opportunities to participate in community service, service learning (deemed academically appropriate by faculty), or both.” This unprecedented commitment bolstered existing service initiatives that had developed over the decades, resulting in a comprehensive systemwide initiative.

Since the 2000-2001 academic year, all CSU campuses have been successful in creating courses with new service-learning components and strengthening service-learning infrastructure. For instance, the number of service-learning opportunities offered in the 2003-2004 academic year has more than doubled.

On an annual basis, the chancellor reports to the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT) on the CSU’s accomplishments with this effort. Members of the Board of Trustees also convey the importance of this initiative by participating in national civic engagement meetings and speaking enthusiastically at BOT meetings. At a past board meeting, CSU Board of Trustees Chair Murray L. Galinson remarked that community service learning is “exactly what the California State University system is all about; it is a way to give immediately back to the community some of the things that they are giving to us.”
Overview

• On an annual basis, CSU students provide nearly 30 million hours of service, or an equivalent minimum wage value of $200.5 million.

• A 2003 survey revealed that over 185,000 CSU students, or 45 percent of the student body at that time, reported involvement in community service learning, including service learning in 2002.

• Among the 185,000 students who participated in community service learning, nearly 42 percent reported that their service focused on education and tutoring services, followed by social services (23.8 percent) and health services (9.6 percent).

Civic Engagement

• Eleven CSU campuses are participating in the American Democracy Project for Civic Engagement Initiative, which seeks to foster informed civic engagement.

• For the past two years, CSU Fresno and Humboldt State University have been selected as Regional Centers for Student Civic Engagement—an honor that recognizes the two universities’ leadership roles in civic engagement. The Regional Centers, sponsored by California Campus Compact, seek to foster a network of student leaders and enhance students’ civic skills.

• Six minority-serving CSU campuses were recognized for exemplary civic engagement practices,
as part of Campus Compact’s Indicators of Engagement Project.

- Five CSU campuses participated in the 2004 Raise Your Voice Campaign, a national effort through Campus Compact to encourage students to identify issues that are important to them and plan activities that will increase student participation in all realms of civic life. From February 20-March 26, 2005, several CSU students will again lead activities that will deepen civic engagement efforts.

- In September 2004, the California State Student Association (CSSA) and several key partners launched the Election 2004 Campaign. Over 24,000 students were registered to vote as a result of this statewide effort.

- Student teams from four CSU campuses are leading Students in Action (SIA), a program funded by Learn and Serve America. With a small mini-grant, these teams will strengthen their skills and knowledge by identifying critical civic issues.

**Academic Service Learning**

- During the 2004-2005 academic year, over 1,800 courses with service-learning components will be offered—oftentimes with multiple sections—providing more than 65,000 students with opportunities to participate in service learning.

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

- Over three academic terms, the CSU conducted its first systemwide assessment to study the impact of service learning on students. More than 7,800 students have completed pre- and post-course surveys that examine how service learning influences student learning and attitude change. Here are some of the key findings:
  
  - Twenty service hours is a vital factor in the effectiveness of community service learning. Students who provided at least 20 hours of service benefited more than students who provided less service hours in all areas assessed: learning the subject matter, understanding/solving real-life problems, improving writing skills, improving critical thinking ability and increasing interest in the course subject matter.

  - Service-learning experiences positively impacted students’ commitment to engage in community service and awareness of and motivation to learn about community issues.
– Students reported that they most often reflect about their service-learning experiences with their peers (81.2 percent).

– Over 90 percent of students reported that the quality of their community-based assignment was “excellent,” “very good” or “good.”

– Sixty-five percent of students decided to participate in service learning when it was an optional component of the course.

**National Service**

• In 2004-2005, 10 AmeriCorps programs will be operating in the CSU, providing opportunities for more than 650 students to serve as AmeriCorps members.

• In 2004-2005, five CSU campuses will receive 12 AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) positions.

• Since 1998, over 3,200 CSU students have participated in national service programs. Those students received AmeriCorps education awards (educational scholarships) equaling more than $4 million.

**Federal Work Study Community Service Placements**

• In May 2004, CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed gave testimony to the members of the House Education and Workforce Committee as part of the Higher Education Act reauthorization proceedings. He urged Congress to “increase the amount of Work-Study that is devoted to

“I first volunteered to get a good grade in my class, and then later realized I wanted to get a good grade in my life.”

Student, San Diego State University
community service placements” and “consider incentives for institutions to devote more of their Federal Work Study allocation to community service.”

• In 2002-2003, the CSU devoted more than $5.2 million from the federal work-study program for community service placements, a 5 percent increase from the previous year. Twenty-seven percent of the CSU’s total Federal Work Study funding was designated for community service placements, well above the estimated national average of 14 percent and triple the minimum requirement.

• Some campuses do even better. CSU Sacramento devotes 67.3 percent of its Federal Work Study allocation to community service; much of that supports the tutoring program America Reads. Other CSU campuses with noteworthy community service allocations include CSU Fresno (55.8 percent), CSU Monterey Bay (52.4 percent) and CSU San Bernardino (41.3 percent).

“By far, service learning has been one of the most meaningful and impactful experiences I’ve ever had. You are constantly kept on your toes—thinking, reacting and applying what you learned to a specific situation.”

Student, CSU Long Beach
CSU Bakersfield

Coalescing volunteer service projects, such as graffiti removal, with urban planning research methods, CSU Bakersfield sociology students gain hands-on experience in neighborhood development and planning while also observing and reporting on the needs of the community.

CSU Channel Islands

CSU Channel Islands combined service-learning pedagogy with its American Democracy Project activities to meet a desperate need in Ventura County for bilingual election officers. Four faculty members included service learning in their classes to encourage students, some who were bilingual, to serve as poll workers in the November 2004 election.

CSU Chico

CSU Chico faculty provide significant leadership in infusing service learning into the campus’ teacher education program. Faculty and student interest has led to an increase in the number of teacher preparation courses that incorporate strategies for utilizing service learning as a pedagogy in the K-12 setting. There is also a strong curriculum emphasis that helps prepare special education teachers to offer service-learning experience for K-12 students who have severe disabilities.

“I acquired a tremendous amount of information that will directly affect my future career. Overall, my service-learning experience was excellent.”

Student, CSU Fresno
CSU Dominguez Hills

CSU Dominguez Hills students in a “Leadership and Service-Learning” course explore ways that they can bolster service and civic engagement into campus life. Participating in the Los Angeles City Neighborhood Councils, a grassroots civic engagement model, is one such avenue. As city residents, students have the opportunity to be active citizens, discussing pressing issues of importance to them and their communities.

CSU Fresno

Ranking at the top of the 50 national Jumpstart sites, Jumpstart Fresno pairs college students with low-income preschoolers to work toward school success. Assessments show that Jumpstart preschool children made significantly greater gains than nonparticipants in language and literacy development. Fresno has included national Jumpstart training in a service-learning course to provide tutors with enhanced learning and development.

CSU Fullerton

Building on a successful project, international service-learning opportunities are a focal point at CSU Fullerton. Last year, a university in Cambodia established a service-learning center, as a result of a joint effort between CSUF’s Center for Internships and Service Learning and University Extended Education. Community service-learning opportunities for CSU faculty and students are being developed in Macedonia and China.

CSU Hayward

CSU Hayward students planned and promoted the Relay for Life with the American Cancer Society. Health sciences students put their efforts toward the health education program, while the recreation and community services students concentrated on organizing the event. This interdisciplinary approach raised over $90,000 to contribute to cancer prevention programs and to the fight against cancer, making the day a successful partnership of community service and learning.
Humboldt State University

Two child development faculty who also served as the 2004 Service Learning Fellows reignited a series of story times in American Sign Language for children at the Humboldt County Library. In addition to sharing stories, Humboldt State students put on puppet shows and led arts and crafts projects designed to increase familiarity with deaf culture.

CSU Los Angeles

Professor Benjamin Lee is an outstanding example of a faculty mentor who utilizes service learning in dynamic ways to transform student learning. Students in his courses apply classroom theory to solve problems in the graphic communications industry. In 2003-2004, the Printing Industries Association named Professor Lee as Educator of the Year for his contributions as an instructor.

California Maritime Academy

Cal Maritime created new partnerships with the Vallejo and Benicia Fire Departments and formed a campus Emergency Response Unit, under the guidance of a marine vocational instructor. In March 2004, when a dangerous blaze broke out in the residence halls, these newly trained cadets rose to the challenge. Due to excellent fire-fighting skills, quick thinking and courage, the students contained the fire before the arrival of the fire department.

CSU Monterey Bay

Since its inception in 1996, 96 CSU Monterey Bay students have participated in the Student Leadership in Service Learning (sl^2) Program. Many graduates work in fields such as housing, health, adult literacy and community development. In spring 2004, the first cohort of students graduated with a minor in Service Learning Leadership, the first such degree program in the country.
CSU Northridge

MOSAIC (Mentoring to Overcome Struggles and Inspire Courage) is a partnership between CSU Northridge and the Los Angeles Police Department Jeopardy Foundation. By having CSUN students serve as mentors to youth who are vulnerable to gang involvement, the program encourages youth to make positive life choices.

Cal Poly Pomona

A year-long faculty learning community explores university-community partnerships and the service-learning pedagogy while developing strategies for transforming Cal Poly Pomona into a more fully “engaged” campus. The faculty will also consider ways to integrate service learning with their scholarly agenda.

CSU Sacramento

Interior design, photography and graphic arts students at CSU Sacramento are revisioning the interior spaces of Salvation Army homeless shelter buildings. Their goal is to create a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere for both clients and staff. Photographs documenting students’ creative ideas for transforming the spaces will be incorporated into wall décor, along with photos and stories of shelter clients told in their own words.

CSU San Bernardino

Graduate social work students are leading a substance abuse prevention program at a local elementary school. The school is located in a high poverty and high crime unincorporated area of the county. The anti-drug program focuses on building self-esteem while reducing risk factors for substance abuse. CSU San Bernardino faculty and student involvement have been credited with saving the cash-strapped program.

“Community service learning is exactly what the California State University system is all about; it is a way to give immediately back to the community some of the things that they are giving to us.”

Murray L. Galinson, Chair, CSU Board of Trustees
San Diego State University

Students enrolled in an “Interaction and Health” course at San Diego State University learned the meaning of bridging academic theory with practice through their service-learning placement at Josue House—a residential facility for individuals living with HIV and AIDS. One student’s reflection of the experience: “I first volunteered to get a good grade in my class, and then later realized I wanted to get a good grade in my life.”

San Francisco State University

San Francisco State University has made significant inroads in institutionalizing service learning by passing an academic senate policy that defines criteria for service-learning courses. Subsequently, another policy was developed to record community service-learning hours on students’ official transcripts. The student transcript policy is the first of its kind in the CSU system.

San José State University

San José State is expanding its faculty-led international service-learning programs. In summer 2004, students participated in service-learning efforts in Peru, Honduras and Ireland. The university’s new Global Studies program is likely to increase future student involvement in service-learning opportunities abroad.

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo students leave behind a legacy that continues to make dynamic contributions to the community. In 2002, AmeriCorps member Yukie Nishinaga established a groundbreaking partnership with Jamba Juice to develop a nutrition curriculum for the San Luis Coastal School District. Today, student teams of nutrition majors continue to work throughout the school district applying classroom knowledge with important education outreach.
**CSU San Marcos**

Sociology students in an “Aging and Society” course have contributed to the Library of Congress Veterans’ History collection by gathering oral histories from veterans and spouses. In addition, they are passing that knowledge onto a younger generation via a mentoring project with local middle school students.

**Sonoma State University**

More than 1,000 students annually participate in service learning, AmeriCorps and volunteer programs. English 101 students, for example, temper their composition skills by writing pamphlets for local agencies. Alternative Spring Break students serve as teaching assistants at an elementary school in the Navajo Nation in Arizona. Locally, AmeriCorps students provide quality tutoring and instruction for afterschool programs that impact over 1,500 people.

**CSU Stanislaus**

Innovative faculty, engaged students and active community participation are the hallmarks of CSU Stanislaus. Professor Steven Filling, who has developed a service-learning tax preparation course, reflects on the power of this work, “Facilitating our students’ willingness and abilities to be active members of their community is at the very center of our academic mission.”
For more information on the various initiatives mentioned in this publication, visit:


- CSU’s California’s Call to Service – www.calstate.edu/csl/programs/servlearn_call.shtml

- California Campus Compact – www.cacampuscompact.org

- Campus Compact’s Indicators of Engagement Project – www.compact.org/indicators/

- Campus Compact’s Raise Your Voice Month of Action – www.actionforchange.org

To learn more about community service learning in the CSU, subscribe to *CSU Impact*, a monthly e-newsletter. For past issues and subscription instructions, visit www.calstate.edu/csl/resources/CSUImpact.

“Service learning is one of the most successful innovations I have tried in my courses. As a scientist, it was useful for me to think of service learning as a form of professional service for students moving into careers in science. Completing projects for government and nonprofit organizations gave students the opportunity to work in teams to apply the material they were learning in the courses to complex and challenging problems.”

Ethelynda Harding, Ph.D.
Biology Department, CSU Fresno
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.

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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.