

Tulane University's

# Office of Service Learning

Student Handbook

## Community-Based Service Learning

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## **Tulane University's Office of Service Learning**

The mission of Tulane's Office of Service Learning is to engage faculty members and students in an endeavor that combines community service with academic learning. Service Learning aims to benefit students' education, further faculty research and teaching, and build community goodwill.

To achieve this mission, the Office strives to help create a "classroom without walls" that is beneficial to the following groups:

For **College Students**, the office will help students

- apply concepts from the classroom to community service
- work within a very diverse community
- gain knowledge and expertise from the community
- evaluate, question and reformulate civic values
- prepare for internships and future research
- explore career options.

For **Faculty Members**, the office will

- assist in the development of innovative approaches to instruction
- provide support for service learning courses (orientations for students, site monitoring, reflection activities and mini-grants for new courses)
- sponsor programs, speakers, and symposia on service learning
- support faculty members' efforts to disseminate information through conference presentations or publications
- provide opportunities for collaborative community research and project development.

For **Community Partners**, service learning

- makes available to them the services of university students
- increases volunteer diversity in sex, age and race
- allows them to identify needs and develop a service program that meets needs of both the community and the university.
- builds on-going relationships between the university and the community partner
- offers support through a mini-grant program.

For the **University**, service learning

- furthers the goals of Tulane's strategic plan
- allows the university to be an active, engaged partner in the community.
- facilitates university teaching, research, and program development.

In conclusion, the Office of Service Learning aims to facilitate collaborative learning between university, community, faculty, and students by integrating each groups' cultures with the New Orleans' urban setting to foster mutual understanding and accessibility.

## **Community Guidelines for Service Learning Students**

**Tulane University is committed to working in the New Orleans community.** Through service learning, the university and community work together, involving hundreds of students like yourself as partners in making New Orleans a better place.

As service learners in the New Orleans community, *you represent Tulane University*, including its administrators, faculty, staff and your fellow students. Exercise courtesy and maturity at all times and seek assistance immediately from the Office of Service Learning should any questions or problems arise.

Your responsible efforts are vital in determining the respectability of Tulane's efforts in the community as well as the quality of your own educational experience and your personal empowering efforts in the community setting.

### **Learn About the Community Setting**

#### ***Learn about the community and the people in it***

- § You may come from a very different community than the one you become a part of through your service learning assignment. Therefore, it is important that you do not assume that you know how to solve perceived "problems".
- § Make an effort to learn about existing strengths as well as needs in the community.
- § Be open to seeing things in new ways. Seek out other people's viewpoints. Observe and respect cultural differences in language, expectations, and values. Try to develop mutual trust and make efforts to understand and appreciate the culture of the community and/or organization.
- § Ask questions and HEAR what is being said!. Let the people who work and live within the area of your service learning placement help you become an effective service learner.

### **Students' Role in the Community**

#### ***Realize that you do not have all the answers***

- § Know what you are expected to do as a service learner at your service learning site.
- § Realize that you may not already know how to do what has been expected of you.
- § Prepare yourself by asking questions. Seek out useful information about the agency and the project on which you will be working.
- § Critically think about the purpose of your service learning assignment and actively work toward generating a product that will serve the agency's needs.
- § Work to understand the activity's relevance to your academic course.
- § Pay attention to how you practice power. Learn and serve WITH the people in the community.
- § Be aware that people in the community have different priorities.

§ Adapt to the pace at your workplace! Learn that non-academic settings do not work by the academic calendar.

§ Accept, enjoy, celebrate and build on small successes.

**Build Positive Rapport**

*Establish a positive working relationship with individuals you work with in the community.*

§ It is important to be non-critical and non-judgmental.

§ Work over time to create a consistent and stable experience for the person(s) with whom you are working. Let the site supervisor and the individual know when you have to be absent.

§ Be positive and firm in your interactions. Set personal limits that are comfortable for you. Keep an open mind. Use positive reinforcement whenever possible.

§ Build a positive relationship with your site supervisor.

§ If you become concerned about any aspect of your project, let the site supervisor know of your concerns and seek his/her advice, but don't bother the supervisor about trivial matters that you can handle yourself.

## Safety

**In case of an emergency, immediately contact 911. Then, contact your designated Service Learning Coordinator. Always keep your OSL coordinator's telephone number on-hand during service.**

Service learning takes place in a variety of settings throughout the New Orleans community. Community-based risks to service-learning students can not be controlled by the University. Students must decide whether or not they feel comfortable participating in service-learning activities at a particular site. You should not participate in any activities that make you feel uncomfortable. If you feel uncomfortable in a placement, talk with your service-learning coordinator about other service options.

Some things you can do to reduce risk are the following:

Be aware of your surroundings. Educate yourself about the environment in which you are working and always use precaution. Information about safety in the New Orleans area can be accessed through Tulane's Office of Public Safety:  
<http://www.tulane.edu/~dps/police/police.html>.

Discuss safety issues with your Service Learning coordinator immediately in order to address potential problems. Do not be afraid to talk about things that make you feel uncomfortable.

Take advantage of the transportation offered through the Office of Service Learning. If you drive, try to arrange travel with another person, lock your car, don't leave valuables in sight, and park as near your service site as you can.

Complete your service hours before sundown.

Familiarize yourself with employment-related laws (Title VII, OSHA) and report to the Office of Service Learning any breach of law while participating in Service Learning.

Know your coordinators:

Service Learning Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Site Coordinator : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

# Service Learning Community Site-Specific Guidelines

## **I. Schedule your service time with your site.**

Know the exact number of service learning hours you are expected to complete. At the on-site orientation, tell your site supervisor the time you will be there each week.

## **II. Arrive on time and ready to work.**

It is important that you are consistent with your attendance and that you arrive at your scheduled day and time. You should identify a contact person at the site and obtain his/her phone number, so that you can inform him/her if you are unable to keep a scheduled visit.

## **III. Sign In**

### **On-Site Sign-In**

You are expected to sign in at your site. Sign-in procedures vary according to site. Make sure you are familiar with the appropriate procedures. Your professor will receive a copy of the on-site sign-in sheets so as to be able to compare it with your personal time sheet.

### **Off-Site Sign-In**

If you do not visit your service learning site on a weekly basis, you are expected to keep in contact with your service learning on-site supervisor and Service Learning Site Monitor through e-mail. Please complete the "Field Log" information in weekly e-mail updates.

## **IV. Recognize your limits.**

Accept assignments that you know you can handle. If you are given something that you think you cannot handle, make sure you discuss the situation with your site supervisor and your Service Learning Site Coordinator and request other duties immediately. Use your time wisely and do not interfere with the performance of others.

## **V. Limit your discussions about your experiences.**

We encourage service learners to talk about their experiences with others and reflect upon them in their journals. However, please do not use real names when discussing your experiences off-site. Simply change the names or omit names altogether.

## **VI. Dress Appropriately!**

Clothing should always be neat and professional. Consult with your site supervisor(s) about their policies on appropriate attire. The following items of clothing are **NOT** appropriate for community settings:

- **SHORT SKIRTS**
- **RIPPED CLOTHING**
- **HALTER TOPS**
- **HATS**
- **SHORTS**
- **TANK TOPS**
- **FORM FITTING CLOTHING**
- **LOW CUT SHIRTS**
- **FLIP FLOPS/SMELLY DIRTY SNEAKERS**
- **T-SHIRTS WITH ADVERTISEMENTS**

# Academic Guidelines

Students are responsible for fulfilling academic requirements. *If you are pursuing a one-credit Service Learning component, you must register for the 389 course at the beginning of the semester.* If you have any questions about requirements, please ask your professor.

## **I. Required Number of Service Hours**

Please consult your course syllabus for specific number of hours required.

## **II. On-Site Orientation**

All students are required to attend an on-site orientation. Make-up orientations will not be scheduled because they cause a great inconvenience for agency staff. Schedule accordingly.

## **III. Race, Class and Community Training**

In collaboration with Student Affairs, Student Employment and Local Community Representatives, the Office of Service Learning provides an important training for Tulane students working in the New Orleans community. Your professor will let you know if you are required to attend this session. However, we encourage you to attend even if you are not required to do so.

## **IV. Written Reflection Assignment**

Please consult your course syllabus for specific reflection assignments.

§ **Journal Entries, Short and/or Long Paper** Tying Service Learning to Course Themes

## **V. Oral Reflection**

Please consult your course syllabus for specific reflection assignments.

**In-class Rap Session**-Takes place during class with professor and OSL Service Program Coordinator participating.

**Hybrid Rap Session**- Includes professor and OSL Program Coordinator. Takes place outside of class time.

**VI. Weekly “Field Log”**: Service learning students working independently, with the majority of work taking place outside of an agency, will keep in communication with the Site Supervisor and Service Learning Coordinator weekly by E-mail. Entries should include number of hours served, a brief summary of service done and future identified tasks.

## **VII. Site evaluation:**

Students will be asked to evaluate their site about four weeks into service.

## **VIII. Final product**

Depending on the site, a final product or a summary of your work for the agency may be required and must be completed and presented to your professor, the community agency and the Office of Service Learning.



# TRANSPORTATION

The Office of Service Learning provides transportation to most service learning sites. White vans clearly marked “Tulane Service Learning” leave from the Office of Service Learning at 1332 Audubon St. We strongly recommend that you take advantage of the Service Learning Van. Several guidelines must be followed when going to and from Tulane to your service site.

## **I. Be On Time**

Due to the van’s tight route schedule, the driver cannot wait for students who are running late. Please arrive EARLY at the pick up and drop off points.

## **II. Sign-In/ Sign-Out**

To ensure that you will be picked up again when you are finished at your site, please sign the van log. Remember to fill in all of the appropriate spaces - failure to do so might cause delay or result in your not being picked up.

## **III. Partner Up For a Shared Experience**

Consider partnering up with one or more Tulane students at your site. This will allow you an opportunity to work together and share your experiences, concerns, and questions.

## **IV. Service Learning Shuttle Drivers are Great Conversationalists!**

If you have any questions while riding the shuttle, feel free to ask the drivers. As New Orleans Natives, they are very informed about the community.

*Please do not eat, drink, or smoke in the van.*

**If you experience a problem with shuttle service,  
please notify Yvette Barnett @ 862-8060**

## **V. Driving Yourself?**

If you drive your own car to your site, do not leave any valuables in it and remember to lock the doors. If you intend to drive, we encourage you to go with another student.

## **VII. Tulane’s Off Campus Shuttle**

Some Service Learners may benefit from using the Tulane Uptown/Downtown Shuttle which leaves from McAlister, in front of Fogelman Arena. You will be notified about using this shuttle rather than the OSL shuttle at the time of your on-site orientation.

## Tulane's Office of Service Learning

1332 Audubon Street  
New Orleans, LA 70118

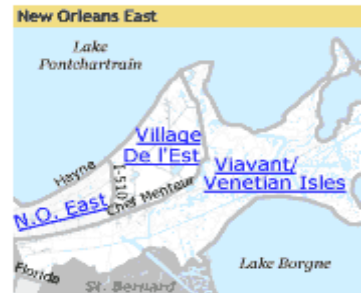
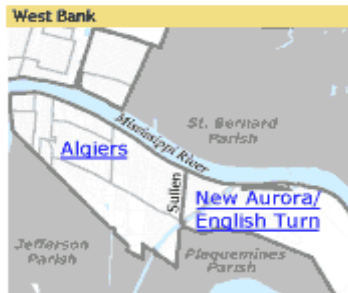
Phone: (504) 862-8060  
FAX: (504) 862-8061

Hours: 8:30AM - 5:00PM

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# Orleans Parish Data & Information

Greater New Orleans Community  
Data Center  
<http://www.gnocdc.org/>  
Map of Orleans Parish



## CREATING CLOSURE

*How can you, as a student service learner, best prepare yourself and individuals you have been working with for your departure?* Through Service Learning, students experience the frustrations and difficulties as well as the successes and hopes of working with different populations on a short-term (semester-long) basis. Closure signifies the ending of an experience, and will involve a period of time meant to effectively prepare participants for the conclusion of a service learning partnership.

### **I. Give advanced notice two to three weeks before your service ends**

In anticipation of final visits to the service site, you should inform the site supervisor and those with whom you have worked, the number of weeks left for your semester-long commitment. This way, the site supervisor will be alerted to the loss of assistance and the persons being served will have the opportunity to emotionally prepare for and express "goodbyes."

#### *i Plan a "Ceremony" for your final session*

Plan a gathering with drinks and snacks. This may be a time for acknowledgment, for sharing accomplishments, providing certificates and awards, taking and sharing photographs, create a bulletin board, photo album, or another memento to signify the experience. *The Office of Service Learning will help support these activities. Please ask about our "Celebration Grants"!*

#### *i Write Letters*

Write a letter to the service site and/or the person you served sharing how the experience changed you, what you learned, and the lasting impact the service has had on you. If you would like to continue writing after the semester, invite the individual(s) you worked with to write back.

#### *i Give Small Gifts as Remembrances*

Make a tape of music both parties like, take a Polaroid camera to the last service visit and take pictures of each other to exchange, give a book (one that you have read together or one that you think the person might enjoy). Don't spend large amounts of money on gifts, please!

### **II. Behaviors to avoid when saying "goodbye"**

Emotions may surface for you and the people you have been working with. It is likely that the people with whom you have worked have experienced losses and it is never an enjoyable part of a partnership. However, leaving a partnership without saying goodbye will leave both you and the other person feeling unsettled and abandoned. Be aware that you may become "romanticized" and may be inspired to make promises to perpetuate that feeling of good will. However, you must **BE HONEST** about ending the experience. Your time commitment is finished and it is appropriate for you to say goodbye. *Do not make promises that cannot be kept.*

\*\*\*Adapted from a text created by Lorena Shier, Virginia Commonwealth University, Division of University Outreach/Office of Community Programs, Richmond, Virginia, and used with her permission.\*\*\*



## Weekly Field Log

Weekly E-mail Updates with the following information should be posted on your course blackboard or sent to your SL Site Monitor: Amanda Buberger [abuberg@tulane.edu](mailto:abuberg@tulane.edu)

**\*\*\*E-mail Subject:** Professor's Last Name/Site                      **Ex:** Huck/ Mexican Consulate

1. Hours Spent
2. Tasks Completed
3. Future Tasks Identified
4. Questions/Comments

## Orientation Reflection Exercise

Reflection is a very important part of the service learning experience. We encourage service learners to reflect on their service activities throughout the semester so that they are thinking critically about the work they are doing and increasing their understanding of class concepts. Please begin your reflection by answering the following questions. Keep this form so that you may refer to it at the end of your service learning experience.

1. What are your initial observations about your service learning placement site?

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2. What are your expectations for this service learning assignment? What will you gain? What service will you provide?

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3. What are your feelings about your service learning assignment?

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**IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW**

Scheduled Time for Service

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Weekly

Responsibilities\_\_\_\_\_

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Final Product\_\_\_\_\_

Questions/Notes:\_\_\_\_\_

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