SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION
(revised 2006)

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BACKGROUND

The *Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education* was designed to assist members of the higher education community in gauging the progress of their campus's service-learning institutionalization efforts.

The rubric is structured by five dimensions, which are considered by most service-learning experts to be key factors for higher education service-learning institutionalization. Each dimension is comprised of several components that characterize the dimension. For each component, a three-stage continuum of development has been established. Progression from *Stage One: Critical Mass Building* to *Stage Three: Sustained Institutionalization* suggests that a campus is moving closer to the full institutionalization of service-learning.

The conceptual framework for the rubric is based largely on a benchmark worksheet that was developed by Kevin Kecskes and Julie Muyllaert of the Western Region Campus Compact Consortium's *Continuums of Service* program. The three-stage developmental continuum and most of the self-assessment rubric's institutionalization dimensions were derived from the Kecskes/Muyllaert *Continuums of Service* benchmark worksheet.[1] The other dimensions of the rubric were derived from various literature sources that discuss the critical elements for institutionalizing service-learning in higher education. In particular, the work of the following individuals provided important foundational information for the development of the rubric: Edward Zlotkowski of Bentley College and the American Association for Higher Education: Rob Serow, Diane C. Calleson, and Lani Parker of North Carolina State University; Leigh Morgan or the North Carolina Commission on National and Community Service; Amy Driscoll of California State University, Monterey Bay; Donna Dengel and Roger Yerke of Portland, Oregon; and Gail Robinson of the American Association of Community Colleges.[2]

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[1] The author expresses gratitude to Mr. Kevin Kecskes, Western Region Campus Compact Consortium Program Director and Ms. Julie Muyllaert, State Network Director for their permission to use and adapt the *Continuums of Service* Benchmark Worksheet to develop this self-assessment rubric.

[2] The author wishes to acknowledge Dr. Tanya Renner of Kapiʻolani Community College and Ms. Nicole Konstantinakos Farrar of the California Campus Compact for their assistance in reviewing and refining the components of the self-assessment rubric.

REVISIONS TO THE RUBRIC

The rubric presented here is based on an original version that was first published in 1998. The original version of the rubric was piloted on eight campuses and was subsequently revised in 1999. The 1999 version of the rubric became part of a series of regional Service-Learning Institutionalization Institutes, which were offered by Campus Compact. In 2000, an accompanying planning guide was developed to provide a step by step process for campuses' use of the rubric. Feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the rubric and planning continue to be collected. This feedback has been incorporated into new versions of the rubric, with slightly revised and updated versions appearing in 2002 and 2003.

Overall, this new 2006 version maintains the rubric's original five-dimension structure. This new version includes some revised language in Dimension V. component based on feedback provided by institutional leaders who have used the used.

Since its inception, the rubric has been used at more than 200 institutions in the United States and abroad. A Spanish version of the rubric (translated by Sebastian Zulueta of the Pontificia Universidad de Chile) is available. Expanded versions of the institutionalization rubric, which focus on broader issues of community engagement (Gelmon, Seifer, and Holland) and service-learning in teacher education (Anderson) are also available.

COMPONENTS OF THE RUBRIC

The self-assessment rubric contains five dimensions, each which includes a set of components that characterize the dimension. The five dimensions of the rubric and their respective components are listed below:

DIMENSION	COMPONENTS
I. Philosophy and Mission of Service-Learning	• Definition of Service-Learning • Strategic Planning • Alignment with Institutional Mission • Alignment with Educational Reform Efforts
II. Faculty Support for and Involvement in Service-Learning	• Faculty Awareness • Faculty Involvement and Support • Faculty Leadership • Faculty Incentives and Rewards
III. Student Support for and Involvement in Service-Learning	• Student Awareness • Student Opportunities • Student Leadership • Student Incentives and Rewards
IV. Community Participation and Partnerships	• Community Partner Awareness • Mutual Understanding • Community Agency Leadership and Voice

V. Institutional Support for Service-Learning	• Coordinating Entity • Departmental Support • Policy-making Entity • Staffing • Funding • Administrative Support • Evaluation and Assessment

For each component, three stages of development are identified. Stage One is the *Critical Mass Building* stage. It is at this stage the campuses are beginning to recognize service-learning and are building a campus-wide constituency for the effort. Stage Two is the *Quality Building* stage. It is at this stage that campuses are focused on ensuring the development of "quality" service-learning activities; the quality of service-learning activities begins to supercede the quantity of service-learning activities. Stage Three is the *Sustained Institutionalization* stage. It is at this stage that a campus has fully institutionalized service-learning into the fabric of the institution.

It should be noted that some components might take many years to develop. Our research suggests that it takes five to seven years for an institution to advance from one institutionalization stage to the next (Bell, Furco, Ammon, Muller, Sorgen, 2000).

USING THE RUBRIC

As a tool to measure development of service-learning institutionalization, the rubric is designed to establish a set of criteria upon which the progress of service-learning institutionalization can measured. Thus, the rubric is designed to measure the status of a campus' level of institutionalization at a particular point in time. The results of this status assessment can provide useful information for the development of an action plan to advance service-learning on the campus. It can help identify which institutionalization components or dimensions are progressing well and which need some additional attention. In addition, by using the tool at another point in time to reassess the status of service-learning institutionalization on a campus, the actual growth of each component and dimension over time can be measured.

As a self-assessment tool, the rubric is designed to facilitate discussion among colleagues regarding the state of service-learning institutionalization on a campus. Therefore, there is no one right way to use the rubric. Since a campus' unique culture and character will determine which of the rubric's dimensions are focused on most intensively, the dimensions and components of the rubric should be adapted to meet the needs of the campus. What is most important is the overall status of the campus' institutionalization progress rather than the progress of individual components. In some cases, individual components of the rubric may not be applicable to certain campus situations. In other cases, the rubric may not include some components that may be key to a campus's institutionalization efforts; campuses may wish to add components or dimensions to the rubric.

Some institutions may wish to have key individuals on a campus use the rubric individually to conduct a self-assessment of the campus' service-learning institutionalization efforts. The individual assessments are then compared with one another; discussions regarding the similarities and differences between individual members' impressions may be discussed. Other institutions may wish to discuss the dimension or component in detail and then come to a consensus regarding which development stage best characterizes the campus' development for each component of the rubric. While some institutions will give an overall score for each "dimension," other institutions will look at each component individually. What is most important is that the results of the self-assessment are used to guide the development of a strategic action plan for institutionalizing service-learning on the campus.

Generally, it is not recommended that partial stage scores be given. In other words, a campus group should not state that for a particular component (or dimension), the campus is "between" stage one and stage two. If the campus has not fully reached stage two, then the campus is not at stage two. Each dimension includes a "Notes" column, which allows for the inclusion of any statements, questions, or conclusions that might explain the particular assessment decisions that have been made or might suggest that further information be gathered before a final stage score is assigned.

Finally, this rubric should be viewed as only one assessment tool for determining the status of service-learning institutionalization on a campus. Other indicators should also be observed and documented to ensure that an institution's effort to advance service-learning on campus is conducted systematically and comprehensively.

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