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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide information to practitioners who are establishing and implementing volunteer programs on their campuses. First, the historical and contemporary roots of civic participation by students in American higher education is explored in three historical phases: (1) higher education as preparing an elite group of men for service in the secular and religious life of the new nation; (2) higher education's post-Civil War development of specialized academic disciplines; and (3) the current concentration on developing and training experts rather than producing generally educated people. Next, the paper examines the types of volunteer programs currently found on college campuses. This is followed by a discussion of the essential components that make up a model volunteer program in higher education, including: the need for collaboration and communication between the institution and community agencies; financial support from the college, and ideally, the community; comprehensive training and support for participating college students; and program goals that acknowledge the importance of personal growth for the students as well as those who are being helped. Finally, the paper discusses 2 stages of assessment that are necessary in order to implement a volunteer program, and concludes by listing 10 characteristics of an effective service-learning volunteer program. Contains 28 references. (GLR)

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The Campus Volunteer Center:
Mission, Models, and Strategies

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Abstract

The tradition of civic participation in American higher education is manifested in a resurgence of college volunteer centers. The development of a model volunteer center should include integration of academic and extracurricular learning and assessment of the developmental needs of students as well as the needs of the community.

The Campus Volunteer Center: Mission, Models, and Strategies

A current trend on American college campuses is the student volunteer movement (Theus, 1988). Often initiated through student action, this movement is marked by greater involvement of college students in community service. As a result, student affairs professionals and others are responding to this emerging interest by developing systems to facilitate student volunteerism. In many cases, systems are established within existing formats without the necessary planning which considers the particular needs of students, campuses, and communities.

The purpose of this paper is to provide information to practitioners who are establishing and implementing volunteer programs on their campuses. First, the historical and contemporary roots of civic participation by students in American higher education will be explored. Second, the types of programs currently found on college campuses will be examined.

Finally, the essential components of a model volunteer program in higher education will be delineated.

The Roots of Civic Participation

Historically, a key feature in the founding of the United States of America and its institutions of higher education was the concept of citizen participation. The founding fathers incorporated this concept into the Declaration of Independence and educators addressed the idea of service in the mission statements of the colonial colleges. Thomas Jefferson, as a statesman and an influential figure in higher education, expressed this belief when he said, "I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion by education" (Morse, 1990, p. 2).

The history of civic participation in higher education can be divided into three phases. In the first phase, the purpose of service and civic

participation was evident since 1636 with the founding of Harvard University, the first colonial college (Rudolph, 1962). The explicit mission of Harvard and each of the subsequent eight colleges was to prepare an elite group of men for service in the secular and religious life of the new nation (Rudolph, 1962, p. 7). Higher education was seen as the means of providing necessary manpower and knowledge to the country, and character development was a high priority as colleges attempted to instill in their students piety, loyalty, and responsible citizenship (Morse, 1990).

The second phase of the history of American higher education began after the Civil War when the country became industrialized and urbanized. With this occurrence, specialization of academic disciplines arose and access to higher education broadened, diminishing the unified intellectual and cultural world which had been found in the colonial colleges (Morse, 1990). Preparation for professions began to dominate and citizen education became the responsibility of primary and secondary schools.

By the twentieth century, the third phase of the history of citizen education, the civic foundation of the kindergarten through twelfth grade years had eroded also, so students came to higher education less prepared for service than in previous years (Morse, 1990). To compound the lack of student preparation, the mission of most colleges shifted to the training of experts rather than producing a generally educated person. In addition, while access continued to broaden to a greater percentage of the population, no unifying theme in education conveyed the importance of students contributing to the society at large. Some of the same leaders who sought increased democratization of higher education acknowledged this flaw in the system. John Dewey said, "Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is the midwife" (Morse, 1990, p. 1).

Arthur Levine addresses civic participation and the cyclical nature of social concern in his book, When Dreams and Heroes Die (1980). Influenced by research on college student values and attitudes, Levine

examines the "me-generation" to determine why students of the 1980s had no heroes or sense of social responsibility. He contends that cultures experience periods of community ascendancy, like the 1960s, which are followed by periods of individual ascendancy, like the 1980s (p. 25). For example, in the 1960s, the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War focused students' attention upon duty, responsibility to others, and the commonalities between people. During community ascendancy periods people are future-oriented and relatively ascetic in their personal styles. By contrast, a period of individual ascendancy like the 1980s is characterized by an emphasis on duty to self and a concern for personal rights. During such eras, people are concerned with the present and are more likely to focus on individual differences and to enjoy a more hedonistic lifestyle. Levine (1980) equates individual ascendancy with periods of rest and stability while community ascendancy evolves in change-oriented periods (p. 118). This paradigm seems to hold true through much of American history as the first

decline of civic participation can be traced to the post-Civil War era and the Industrial Revolution (Morse, 1990).

Application of Levine's model can also be used to better understand the current era of increased social engagement behavior in college students (Levine & Hirsch, 1990). In the 1989-90 survey of college freshmen from the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, Astin notes that these responses are similar to the patterns found before the 1960s student activism. For example, 62% of the freshmen began volunteer work before they entered college (Astin, 1990). A Carnegie Foundation study similarly found that 50% of college students had engaged in some volunteer-service activity (Levine & Hirsch, 1990). In addition, national volunteer coordinating groups like Campus Compact and the Campus Opportunity Outreach League (COOL) report increases in institutional memberships and in student participation rates (Theus, 1988). Evidence of a community ascendancy trend can also be found in the attention which Congress has

focused recently on bills recommending national service for youths (Theus, 1988). Thus, it seems that the fifteen year cycle of individual and community ascendancy is clearly shifting toward a new era of concern for others.

Types of Volunteer Programs

The return of community ascendancy and social involvement to college campuses takes many shapes and sizes, and diversity is the norm (Eisenberg, 1990). Volunteerism is found at every type of institution: public and private; large research universities and church-related liberal arts; urban and rural (Eisenberg, 1990). The structures employed are equally diverse. According to the 1990 survey of Campus Compact members, 53% of their member groups have loosely organized and de-centralized structures while 47% report centralized community service efforts (Eisenberg, 1990). Within this group, 56% also responded that they have some type of campus advisory group. The relationships which campus service organizations have with community groups is another

source of variance, but naturally the better campus and community coordinate efforts, the better service is provided to the recipient and the provider (Rubin, 1990, Schultz, 1990).

The levels of organization also vary in volunteer groups around the country. Institutional systems can be student or staff-initiated and housed within student government associations, student affairs divisions, or other administrative units, and beyond the campus, there are state, national, and international coordinating systems which link volunteers and their organizations. For example, in Florida, both public and private colleges can be involved in the Florida Office of Campus Volunteers and/or join the Florida Compact. On the national level, Campus Compact and COOL are organizations which encourage community service. Campus Compact was started in 1985 by a small group of college presidents in order to foster civic responsibility on college campuses (Campus Compact, 1990). The purpose of Compact is to "provide information and technical assistance to member

campuses; create incentives for student participation by helping to shape policy at the federal, state, and local levels; and promote a national awareness of the important resources of college students offer in the public interest" (Campus Compact, 1990). COOL, on the other hand, is a student-initiated organization which also promotes student involvement in a full range of civic activities. COOL disseminates information, consults on college campuses, and sponsors workshops and conferences about volunteerism (Campus Outreach, 1990). International efforts in volunteerism include many campus projects to benefit Third World countries (Eisenberg, 1990) as well as the global efforts of the Giraffe Society to recognize civic participation. Although it originated outside of education, the Giraffe Society's purpose is to salute individuals who have "stuck their neck out" by taking risks for the common good in any field (Shnayerson, 1980). Rather than providing direct service, the Giraffe Society promotes increased involvement by acknowledging the special efforts of those who already serve. Thus, the

structures and missions of service agencies cover a broad spectrum of possibilities.

Just as the structures vary, so do the funding bases, the types of services provided, the incentives offered, and the links with the academic arms of the college. In funding, 50% of the campus volunteer centers are financed primarily through the host institution (Eisenberg, 1990). Other funds come from federal, state, local, and private grants (Eisenberg, 1990). One fairly unique system is a proposal for Fall Term 1991 at Louisiana State University (LSU) where fees will be collected through a positive check-off when students pay tuition (Moore, 1991). Similar to the way that the Public Interest Research Groups are financed in Florida, LSU students will be asked to support their volunteer center through contributions of time and money.

The numbers of students volunteering and the types of programs in which they participate is growing steadily. Campus Compact members reported an average participation rate of 11% of their students at their

institutions, providing an estimated $49 million dollars worth of community service, based on a minimum wage rates (Eisenberg, 1990). In addition, approximately one third of Compact members experienced increased student participation rates of 20% or more (Eisenberg, 1990). The types of agencies receiving services are also extensive with the most popular volunteer programs being tutoring/mentoring, environmental, housing, hunger, elderly, physically challenged, and women's concerns (Eisenberg, 1990).

Nationally, a major concern of those involved with the volunteer movement is the division between curricular and extracurricular activities. Many colleges are working to improve the effectiveness of service programs by integrating civic participation with the academic curriculum and increasing faculty participation (Eisenberg, 1990). Currently, there are many examples of faculty involvement in courses, seminars, internships, and workshops for this purpose, but much effort is being exerted to unify the

curricular and extracurricular activities as one mission (MacManamon, Rice, & Wilson, 1988).

Therefore, the spectrum of the modern day campus volunteer center is painted with common themes but with little apparent intentional planning. Rather, the systems seem to have evolved from emerging needs of campuses and are housed within existing administrative and academic patterns.

Components of a Model Volunteer Program

An optimum model for producing good service to the recipients, effective learning for the students, and efficient functioning for the institution is needed. This model would assist colleges in creating a "culture of service" in which theory, practice, and service would be joined in a dynamic approach to teaching and learning (Lee, 1988). Such a system provides an effective atmosphere for students to learn and for professors to teach while accomplishing a primary mission of higher education, character development (Levine, 1988). In addition, providing a model for student volunteerism gives students opportunities for

enhancing personal growth through civic participation (Rutter & Newmann, 1989).

Several possible theoretical frameworks could be applied to the development of a model campus volunteer system. Two frameworks seem to be especially appropriate. First, the teaching/learning model proposes that the components of theory, application, and reflection are the necessary elements of public leadership education (Agria, 1990). This model emphasizes the importance of "intellectual, experiential, social, and moral development" in a comprehensive approach to learning (Agria, 1990, p. 17). Symbolized by three intersecting circles, the model includes: theory as the conceptual knowledge acquired in the classroom; application as the experience gained in real world situations; and reflection as the integration of theory and practice. In this scheme, the component of reflection is often neglected and merits greater attention. The thoughtful processing of one's experiences is an essential aspect of all learning, especially service-learning (Wagner,

1990, p. 45). Thus, for civic participation to be vital to a college student's education it must include all three components of theory, application, and reflection.

Another appropriate framework for a model of campus volunteerism is the service-learning model for program development (Delve, Mintz, & Stewart, 1990). This model begins with Lewin's idea (1936) that "an individual's behavior (B) is a function (f) of the person (P) and his or her interaction with the environment (E): B = f(P X E)" (Delve, 1990, p. 10). So, in volunteer and other student development programs, professionals must find the proper balance of challenges and supports to assist the student's learning process. Delve (1990) applies this concept to student development theories to examine how a student's developmental stage interacts with components of a service learning project. The phases of exploration, clarification, realization, activation, and internalization are utilized to demonstrate how students at different developmental stages would react

differently to possible interventions. For example, a student who is developmentally in Perry's stage of dualism (Perry, 1970) sees the world in discreet categories, i.e. right or wrong. This student is more likely to participate in exploratory activities which do not involve a further commitment but do provide incentives. Carrying the model further, the more mature students are the more likely they are to join and stay involved with activities which require greater commitment and integrate the values learned through the experience. The crucial point in application of the service-learning model is the enduring principle that student programs must meet the students where they are in order to be effective and successful.

The next vital component for a model student volunteer program is the crucial link between the curricular and "extra" curricular functions of the college. "The most effective values education provided for students is an intentional process of collaboration between academy and community" (Schultz, 1990). The necessary skills of citizenship have been delineated as

communication, critical thinking, judgement, imagination, and courage to act (Morse, 1990). Beyond these skills, however, students need an education which emphasizes our common humanity as the traditional liberal arts have in the past (Levine & Hasselkorn, 1985). The curriculum must stress values, ethics, service to others, and leadership development (Levine & Hasselkorn, 1985). How can such a curriculum be developed? First, a constructivist approach can be taken which engages students in activities which promote the acquisition and development of knowledge (Wagner, 1990). The premise of this concept is that faculty members develop new knowledge through a complex of investigatory activities which include reading, consulting, and experiencing or observing phenomena or by what Wagner (1990) would call "service-learning" (p. 44). Therefore, students should participate in the same sort of multi-dimensional strategies. In addition, faculty should be an integral part of the system which is developed (Campus Compact, January 1990). This can be accomplished in part by defining

the role of faculty. Faculty, of course, can be involved as teachers as well as project sponsors, service providers, and role models. Next, curriculum should be developed which encourages a sense of social obligation and knowledge and skills. This curriculum can integrate public service with classroom experiences in students' learning. Finally, the college community should establish academic structures, incentives, and practices which enable faculty to be involved. These can include faculty development programs, involvement in advisory groups, and grants for course development on service issues. Robert Coles, a renowned faculty spokesperson for community service, also suggests academic chairs for Social Ethics (Levine, 1988).

Through campus-wide development and implementation of a volunteer center model which incorporates academic and service-learning, an organization can be built which serves the students, the faculty, and the community. Schultz (1990) suggests several keys to optimum functioning. First, the program must combine rigor with relevancy (p. 92). This can be accomplished

through research into community needs and involvement of the community in campus activities as well as campus representatives involvement in community affairs. In addition, this rigor must be accompanied with ample opportunity for student reflection, immediate action, and personal development. This combination of activity permits the student to encounter new cultures, learn the realities of power in society, and become a member of a community and the larger society.

What kinds of structures encourage an integrated, effective program? First, the typical program should not mandate service as a requirement for all students. Naturally, there are exceptions to this suggestion such as institutions which were founded on service principles like Warren Wilson College in North Carolina (Eisenberg, 1990). For the average college, however, there is no evidence that mandatory participation benefits the student or the larger community and there are inherent risks in "coercing volunteerism" (Serow, 1989). A much more effective system is one which offers a broad spectrum of opportunities for members of

the academic community to be involved in projects of their choosing (Levine, 1988). For example, some campuses focus on a central values theme and incorporate it throughout the year in seminars, internships, workshops, and community experiences. The next factor which has been linked to higher student participation rates is a more centralized system of organization (Eisenberg, 1990). In a centralized system, student, community, and institutional needs can be more efficiently met.

Another area receiving considerable attention is that of tying community service and leadership development together. This idea can be accomplished by broadening the definition of leadership to one which encourages each individual to find a way to make a positive difference in the world (Delve & Rice, 1990). In addition, service-learning information can be added to existing leadership training programs and leadership training skills can be incorporated in community service training. Through retreats, credit and non-credit courses, community speakers, and student

activities the two concepts can be continually linked. Another essential ingredient is the incorporation of recognition programs that reward community service through awards, academic credit, transcript notations, scholarships, tuition waivers, and loan deferments. Campus Compact and the General Motors Corporation are already involved in sponsoring national awards for this purpose (MacManamon, Rice, & Wilson, 1988).

Therefore, to summarize, an effective model for campus service programs should include: collaboration and communication between the institution and community agencies; financial support from the college and ideally, the community; comprehensive training and support for participating college students; and program goals that acknowledge the importance of personal growth for the students as well as those who are being helped (Education Commission of the States, 1989).

In order to implement a volunteer program, two stages of assessment are necessary. First, one must assess the campus culture to determine existing

conditions (Levine & Hirsch, 1990). What are the traditions of the campus? Does the president and administrative staff support volunteerism? How reliable are student organizations in keeping long term commitments? What opportunities currently exist within the academic structure and the external community for involvement? What are the institution's values and how are these values demonstrated and communicated to the campus and others? The answers to these questions will assist colleges in choosing among the existing options as they develop a program to meet their unique needs. The second critical stage of assessment is that of on-going evaluation of programs which are implemented. Programs can be measured against these principles of good practice (Rubin, 1990). An effective service-learning program:

1. engages people in responsible and challenging actions for common good;
2. provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience;
3. articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved;

4. allows for those with needs to define those needs;

5. clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved;

6. matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances;

7. expects genuine, active and sustained organizational commitment;

8. includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service-learning goals;

9. ensures that the time commitment for service-learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved;

10. is committed to program participation by and with diverse groups (Rubin, 1990, pp. 117-120).

Therefore, developing a model volunteer program basically employs the standard techniques for beginning any student development program: needs assessment, goal setting, strategy development and selection, implementation, and evaluation. One who uses these techniques while considering the special issues of civic participation is well on the way to a successful program.

Conclusion

In these times when colleges are experiencing greater pressures to emphasize pragmatic results, "there are voices calling for a reaffirmation of the classic role of education as a way to articulate private aspirations with common cultural meanings so that individuals simultaneously become more fully developed people and citizens of a free society" (Bellah, 1985). Through a balancing of individual and community needs in a well developed campus volunteer center, perhaps the needs of both the students and society can be served. The public challenge of the future is to develop what Theodore Roosevelt called a "fellow feeling" in which an informed citizenry acts with mutual respect and kindness toward common objectives (Morse, 1989, p. 4).

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