

PANEL DISCUSSION ON SERVICE-LEARNING IN BUSINESS COURSES

AN INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Faculty in the department of business at Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) have increasingly used service-learning in the classroom in recent years. SWOSU's Center for Service Learning defines service-learning as having four elements: 1) There is an identified need on the part of a community partner, 2) student volunteers in the class can address that need, 3) the service learning project meets specific course objective(s) and students receive course credit for the activity, and 4) students do a reflective activity about the service learning experience and experiential learning. Service-learning is highly encouraged at SWOSU and business faculty have taken on these projects enthusiastically.

Zlotkowski (1996) identified a gap between what was being taught in business curriculum and the external legal, social, and political environment and proposed service-learning as a solution. "By developing curricular projects linked to community needs, faculty can further their students' technical skills while helping them simultaneously develop greater inter-personal, inter-cultural, and ethical sensitivity" (Zlotkowski, 1996, p. 5). Additionally, service learning has been linked to increased communication skills (Tucker, McCarthy, Hoxmeier, & Lenk, 1998), ethics (Schmidt, McAdams, & Foster, 2009), innovation (McGuigan, 2016), leadership and professional interpersonal relationships (Smith & Chenoweth, 2015), and applied business competencies (Ayers et al., 2010) when embedded into Business curriculum. Business faculty at SWOSU agree that service-learning engages their students and prepared them for the workplace in a way that traditional course structure does not allow.

This interactive session includes a dynamic panel of four faculty members from SWOSU's Department of Business. We will discuss current and past service-learning projects, how these projects engaged students, how service-learning has been transformational in their courses, and suggestions for implementing projects in your course. The panel will also be open to questions and discussion.

SELECT REFERENCES

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