

## SERVICE LEARNING—What Is It and How Does It Benefit You?

### What do these terms mean?

*Service, Volunteer, Service-Learning, and Social Justice*

Service: can be performed at any time for any reason, typically provides some help to underprivileged

Volunteer: someone who performs work without pay, typically the work benefits an individual or individuals in need. Volunteering involves personal actions outside the realm of institutional change.

Service learning: community engaged learning directly tied to course content. The service activities have specific learning goals and benefit both the students and the beneficiary of the service.

Social justice: one who works for social justice participates in community engagement with the express purpose of helping those in need no longer face such need. A social justice advocate works with and for others in need to create lasting systemic change.

*Community Service, Service Learning, and Internship*

	COMMUNITY SERVICE	SERVICE LEARNING	INTERNSHIP
PRIMARY INTENDED BENEFICIARY	recipient(s)	recipient(s) and provider	provider
PRIMARY FOCUS	providing meaningful service	providing meaningful service and enhancing classroom learning	learning by doing
INTENDED EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE	moral, personal and social growth and development	Academic learning, enhancing intellectual and civic engagement	Career development and professional preparation
CURRICULAR INTEGRATION	None	Fully integrated into curriculum	Co-curricular or supplemental
NATURE OF SERVICE ACTIVITY	Based on student interest/motivation	Based on course topic or discipline	Based on industry or career

### So, is it “better” to be a social justice advocate than a volunteer?

Volunteering/Charity work and social justice work both provide help to those in need. “When charitable work is well-organized, run efficiently, performed lovingly and with integrity, and delivered to those who truly need it, it can literally save lives, prevent misery, and maintain the dignity of all recipients. Social justice, on the other hand, refers to the state of institutional or

structural arrangements in which there are no inequalities among individuals or that treat people unfairly”<sup>1</sup>. In other words, both are “good”; but one is focused on alleviating a need immediately and the other is about creating lasting change.

Both volunteering or social justice work can be the focus of your career, or something you dedicate a bit of your free time to. Either can be accomplished through small everyday choices you make. Because Loyola is a Jesuit institution, we hope you leave here with some understanding of how, in ways big and small, you can affect the lives of others with less.

### **What are the benefits of service-learning to you as a student?**

Studies have shown that the following are proven results of service learning in courses like yours:

- Enhanced ability to respond to change
- Better teamwork
- Increased awareness of diversity
- Improved critical and creative thinking
- Technical and cognitive abilities enhanced
- Enhanced personal growth and self-esteem
- Greater development of personal responsibility
- Deeper understanding of academic content
- Heightened ethical behavior and civic responsibility

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<sup>1</sup> Marullo, Sam and Bob Edwards, “From Charity to Justice: The Potential of University-Community Collaboration for Social Change.” *American Behavioral Scientist* (200) 43: 895-912.