

# Public Service Pathways

Last Modified – March 13, 2013

Public service pathways describe a range of possibilities by which we can make a contribution to the common good. These pathways intersect and overlap, demonstrating the interdependent nature inherent in working toward the common good. There is no one single path and people move in and out of these pathways over time.

In general, public service pathways:

- Have local, national and international audiences and populations of interest;
- Are imbedded in all careers in the public, private and independent sectors, and not limited to any segment of the economy;
- Require different but interconnected actions: education through community dialogue, direct provision of goods or services, statements and actions that support social justice and address inequities, creation of new knowledge, and development of resources that support the work;
- Are problem-based, not discipline-bound;
- Result in measurable community impact

As is true of nearly any attempt to classify concepts into discrete categories, this typology eventually breaks down as either too broad (too few categories) or too narrow (too many categories). Introducing the public service pathways to students is a means of facilitating an understanding of the range of distinct choices that exist when attempting to address a social issue or contribute to the common good.

Each of the Haas Center public service pathways contributes to the public good through:

- **DIRECT SERVICE:** giving personal time, energy, or resources to address immediate community needs or priorities.
- **COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP:** enriching knowledge of and informing action on critical social issues by connecting coursework and research to community-identified concerns.
- **ACTIVISM:** the process of involving, educating, and mobilizing individual or collective action to influence or persuade others.
- **PHILANTHROPY:** the voluntary redistribution of resources by individuals and institutions.
- **POLICY/POLITICS:** participating in processes of democratic self-governance.
- **SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:** creating or expanding organizational structures that adopt ethical and effective business practices and/or generate market-oriented responses to solve social problems.

# Principles of Ethical and Effective Service

## Reciprocity & Learning Through Partnership

- Develop, or continue to cultivate, collaborative relationships with community partners that recognize their role as educators of student participants.
- Involve community partners in the design, facilitation and evaluation of service initiatives (direct service activity, advocacy campaign, research, etc.) to ensure the value and relevance of the work to the community.

## Clarify Expectations & Commitment

- Clarify community partners' needs and preferences and develop mutual goals. Determine clear, realistic and transparent expectations and time frames between all parties involved. Consider nuances of the academic calendar; explore potential for sustainability and/or develop appropriate exit strategies.
- Arrange for periodic check-ins with community partners to seek feedback and to ensure accountability and that mutual expectations are being met.
- Model and emphasize the importance of keeping commitments made to community partners.

## Preparation

- Prepare for a service initiative with the attitudes, skills, knowledge, and materials you need to serve effectively.
- Understand the context in which the service experience is embedded: share current and historical information about the partner organizations and communities, and the impact of political, economic, environmental, and social contexts.
- Seek advice from community partners in determining content, and involve them in preparing or training students whenever possible.

## Respect For Diversity

- Model respect for diversity, broadly and inclusively defined (on the basis not only of gender identity, race, religion, age, ability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic levels but also cultural norms and ideologies).
- Before, during and after the service experience, actively challenge biases, stereotypes, and assumptions regarding the community you are working with and the issues you are addressing.

## Safety & Wellbeing

- Anticipate and take steps to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all service initiative participants.
- Understand and comply with special safety or liability requirements of community partners and the university.

## Reflection & Evaluation

- Intentionally and creatively build in opportunities to reflect throughout your service experiences, involving community partners when possible.
- Include opportunities to gather regular feedback from community partners and participants to assess value, refine practice, and inform future actions.

## Humility

- Serve with a listening and learning attitude ever mindful of the community's needs, assets, and interests; and their own expectations, limitations, and capacity to serve.
- View any service work you are asked to do as a valuable learning opportunity that complements knowledge and builds understanding.