Program Review
Response and Action Plan
Engaged Learning Office

July 26, 2021

Lead by:
Lucy Smith, Engaged Learning Coordinator
Supported by:
David Hubert, Associate Provost of Learning Advancement

Contents

OVERVIEW OF THE REVIEW

The Engaged Learning Office (ELO) began the Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) program review self-study process in November 2020, and the study was completed by April 2021. Once the self-study was finished, the stakeholder focus groups were scheduled and occurred May 5-7, 2021. Three reviewers lead the process: Melissa Seaboch, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Anthropology at SLCC, Kevin Kecskes, Ph. D. Associate Professor, Public Administration at Portland State University, and Kate Stephens, Ph. D., Associate Director for Community Engagement at Utah State University. The reviewers read the self-study and then facilitated discussions with six focus groups to review the ELO. The focus groups included students, staff, community partners, Associate Deans, Deans, faculty, and administrators. The driving questions for the focus groups were organized into four areas: 1) Strategic Alignment, 2) Processes, Services, and Programs, 3) Structure, and 4) Serving Clients. Once the focus groups were complete, a final report was compiled. This report highlights areas of commendation, discusses some recommendations in-depth, outlines a timeline for implementing the suggestions, and discusses the additional resources necessary to accomplish goals.

AREAS OF COMMENDATION

Participants in the focus groups feel that the work of the ELO is effective and primarily attribute the success to the leadership, energy, and passion of its staff. There is unanimous consensus that the team is well respected and appreciated. The participants feel that ELO prioritizes equity, diversity, and inclusion in alignment with the College's Mission, Vision, and Values, and their efforts are lauded. The Service-Learning program demographics mirror that of the general SLCC college population, which is an indicator of accessibility for this program, which is the largest that the ELO supports.

Results indicate that the ELO does an excellent job mentoring faculty to create service-learning courses and in the development of Engaged Departments. The rubrics created to support the course designation process for faculty-led programs are clear and compelling. It was noted that the ELO staff is very responsive to student and faculty needs, and the communication from the office is helpful and informative. Classroom presentations, in particular for Study Abroad, are seen to be beneficial and informative. The process for student applications for programs like Study Abroad, Domestic Study, and the Service-Learning Student Project fund are clear and effective. The ELO was also commended for keeping the service-learning program going during the pandemic.

Collaborative efforts with internal departments that the ELO works with most, such as the Faculty Development Office and the Thayne Center are successful. External efforts related to working with community partners (in collaboration with the Thayne Center) are also effective. It was noted that relationships with community partners were based on mutual respect. The Provost also mentioned successful cooperation with other departments as a highlight as well as the leadership, energy, passion, and enthusiasm of the staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Most recommendations from the final report will be investigated or implemented since they will help the ELO programs develop, align with national best practices, and improve rigor and access. Since there is a lengthy list of recommendations and some are self-explanatory, there will not be an attempt to explain everything in depth.

Highlighted Recommendations

Review the ELO web pages with an equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility lens.

It is recommended that the ELO web pages be reviewed for equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Many ELO web pages were revamped or newly built during the COVID pandemic since the office workflow changed due to a decrease in programming. Because the ELO web presence is larger and because equity is a college priority, it is essential to devote additional time to this task. Therefore, this project will start as soon as possible during the upcoming fall semester.

Utilize the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification as an institutional roadmap for community engagement (CE).

The coordinator has started conversations focused on researching the impact of service-learning on student retention. This research will occur in collaboration with data science and analytics. Many national studies on this topic indicate that high-impact practices, including service-learning, positively influence retention. We hope to gather data about this specifically at SLCC.

Change the name of service-learning (SL) to community-engaged learning.

Investigating the feasibility of this change will start at the beginning of the 21-22 academic year. This change appears straightforward on the surface but, there any many places where the service-learning program is listed and the SLCC community knows the program by this name. Updates need to happen with marketing material, web pages (including reference to the program on other web pages), faculty professional development offerings (including Canvas courses), and within student programming to reflect the change, therefore more research on this topic needs to occur prior to moving forward. A service-learning faculty retreat is occurring on September 10 and this topic will be discussed.

Provide more support for Engaged Departments.

Engaged Departments provide a sustainable framework for civic and community engagement that encompasses a department's mission, vision, and values, faculty culture, department-wide community partners, and intentional pathways for student civic engagement. Engaged Departments move from "my work" to "our work," which helps community engagement evolve beyond a random assortment of service-learning courses to a concerted, intentional department-wide effort. Engaged departments provide a supportive environment

for faculty, students, and administrators to participate in a broad range of civic-related efforts. Defining additional support mechanisms will happen in AY 21-22 and implementation will occur in 22-23.

Create more Domestic Study programs.

Proposing domestic study courses is faculty-driven, but steps can be taken to encourage the process. Conversations will occur individually to encourage faculty to propose domestic trips that support global learning. These trips can be equally educative as Study Abroad but involve less time and cost, thereby providing more access to students. Thus far, one trip To Washington focused on African American studies was approved but subsequently canceled due to lack of enrollment. A place-based trip to Louisiana is slated for Summer 2022.

Action Plan AY 21-22

Recommendation	Action	Target start date	Responsible party	Notes
Increase marketing and promotion of ELO (institutional).	1) Focus on differentiating between the ELO and Thayne Center. 2) Expand social media presence.	9/1/21	Lucy Smith and Cassi Hoffmeister	
Increase marketing and promotion of ELO programs (faculty).	1) Increase focus to include adjunct and incoming faculty.	10/4/21	Lucy Smith	
Increase marketing and promotion of ELO programs (student)	2) Present to incoming students.	8/2/21	Cassi Hoffmeister and College Intern (CIP)	
Update the ELO webpages.	1) Review website language and photos with equity and accessibility lens.	8/9/21	Cassi Hoffmeister	
Utilize the Carnegie Community	1) Support research focused on the impact of	9/1/21	Lucy Smith, Institutional Research and	

Engagement Classification as an institutional roadmap for community engagement (CE).	service-learning on student retention. 2) Support the development of a CE database.		Jen Selter Stitt	
Consider changing the name of service-learning (SL) to community-engaged learning.	1) Begin investigating the feasibility and impact of the change.	9/10/21	Lucy Smith and Cassi Hoffmeister	
Make service-learning more universally available.	3) Develop a regular review process for existing SL courses. Require ePortfolio as a part of the review.	8/24/21	Lucy Smith	
Make service-learning more universally available.	1) Provide more ideas and examples of how SL can be incorporated into courses.	11/15/21	Lucy Smith	
Collaborations	1) Coordinate with Civically Engaged Scholars staff to build links in academic affairs and grow SL program. 2) Work with community partnerships staff to connect partners with faculty & academic departments.	12/1/21	Lucy Smith	These items are listed on the Thayne Center program review but require collaboration with ELO.

Undergraduate Research	1) Clarify the role of the ELO in supporting undergraduate research		David Hubert and Lucy Smith	

Action Plan AY 22-23

Recommendation	Action	Target start date	Responsible party	Notes
Make service-learning more universally available.	1) Investigate a tiered SL designation and create a simple online SL course designation form. 2) Provide faculty with greater rewards & compensation for developing SL.		Lucy Smith	
Make service-learning more universally available.	1) Leverage Civic Faculty Fellows to promote SL.		Lucy Smith	
Service-Learning	1) Provide training for faculty who inherit SL courses.		Lucy Smith	
Engaged Departments	1) Provide more support for Engaged Departments.		Lucy Smith	
Study Abroad	1) Create partnerships		Lucy Smith	

	with local universities. 2) Better fund Study Abroad.			
Domestic Study	1) Create more Domestic Study programs.		Lucy Smith	
Undergraduate Research	TBD			

Recommendations Not Acted Upon

Consider creating opportunities for students to engage virtually with communities abroad.

Because of the limited capacity of the staff and due to the emergent nature of this type of program, this suggestion will not be acted upon immediately. If the office receives extra staffing in the future, these types of programs can be investigated. Virtual Study Abroad opportunities expanded nationally in response to travel constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These opportunities also stemmed from a desire from organizations to stay afloat if this was their main source of income. Currently, there is not an urgent demand for these opportunities at SLCC. Additionally, there is a desire to see how this type of programming evolves in the future. Therefore, more research is needed on this topic.

Increase number of interns and target internships toward specific skill areas (e.g., website design, marketing.)

An increase in professional staff and office space needs to occur before additional interns can be supported. The ELO collaborates with the Career Services Office to hire interns. Interns are entry-level positions, and most students have minimal experience in a professional office setting and minimal job and life experience overall. Because of this, their ability to perform complex tasks independently is limited. This requires significant supervision and guidance, which is time-consuming given finite student employee outputs and benefits gained by the office. In addition, existing office space is limited.

Increase transparency in administering high-impact practice (HIPs) funding because of concerns of a possible conflict of interest.

The HIPs committee (comprised of staff, administrators, and faculty from diverse areas of the college) determined that the HIPs money would be distributed in two ways. First, a set amount of funding is allocated to specific areas of the college that have established, on-going HIPs with students. The areas include, STEM (undergraduate research), the ELO (Service-learning, Study Abroad, and Domestic Study), and the Thayne Center (SLiCE and Alternative Break). The funding amounts are established in advance and the department determines which

students are eligible. The second pot of funding is for open submissions from faculty, departments, or offices around SLCC who engage in HIPs with students. All funding should be directed toward first-generation, underrepresented, and/or students with financial need. Because this was determined by a committee and the funding amounts for departments are set, there is not a concern of conflict of interest by having the ELO support this process.

Recommendations to be Determined

Undergraduate Research

Participants in the focus groups stated that processes and oversight are desperately needed for Undergraduate Research at the college. Shortly after the focus group with the Provost, the ELO was asked to be a repository for information for faculty and students about issues and concerns such as liability, policy development, insurance issues, student stipends for fieldwork, evidence-based protocols, etc. There is a strong feeling about the lack of institutional oversight, vetting of research, IRB support, and funding for this HIP at the college. Undergraduate research goals are not outlined in this document because the final report strongly recommends that the ELO not undertake undergraduate research development unless additional staffing and resources are provided. This is repeatedly mentioned throughout the report. Please note that Undergraduate Research programs at other institutions (as well as Service-Learning and Study Abroad programs) are overseen by entire departments. Asking the ELO to support four separate HIPs is untenable.

Increase adjunct faculty participation in programs.

The ELO is current investigating the feasibility of involving adjunct faculty in Study Abroad and Domestic Study. Because of the FLSA and ACA rules surrounding part-time employees this issue needs further study.

Efforts will be made to increase the number of adjunct faculty involved in the Service-Learning program to better align with the percentages of adjunct faculty teaching at the college.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (TECHNOLOGY, PERSONNEL, ETC) NECESSARY

There was near unanimity that given the centrality and importance of ELO's programs to the core values of SLCC, the office's workload warrants a promotion of the Coordinator 3 position to a Director-level position, or equivalent. Staffing should also increase to at least three to keep pace with the rapidly growing programs. This was one of the primary recommendations in the report and was repeated throughout.

It was also recommended that the ELO be provided additional office space. The current office is shared by the ELO specialist as well as an intern. Physical space should be expanded to allow for privacy and confidentiality to avoid violating FERPA and HIPAA regulations. There is currently no additional space available if other staff are added.

Additional (or more stable) funding should be allotted to help increase accessibility of the Study Abroad and Domestic Study programs for students. High-impact practices funding is allocated to Study Abroad and Domestic Study yearly, but it is unclear if funding is allotted each year. There is also some funding offered by private donors, but this can vary from year to year. It is a matter of equity to seek IBP base funding to offset costs for program participation.

SUMMARY

Overall, the program review process proved to be extremely valuable. It provided insights into strategic alignment, process improvement, increased program efficacies, and effectiveness. These insights came from practitioner knowledge, national best practice, a place of caring, and continuous improvement. There was an evident desire to help the ELO improve, which ultimately helps us retain and support students through high-impact practices. These insights could not have been gained without the input from the reviewers and stakeholders who took part in this process. Immense gratitude goes to the reviewers who led the focus groups and completed the final report. Thanks also is given to the participants who participated in the feedback groups for the ELO.