

# SERVICE LEARNING IMPACT MEASUREMENT

FALL 2018-  
SPRING 2019

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS  
SERVICE LEARNING INITIATIVE

PREPARED BY KATIE W. POWELL

Jennie Popp, Ph.D.

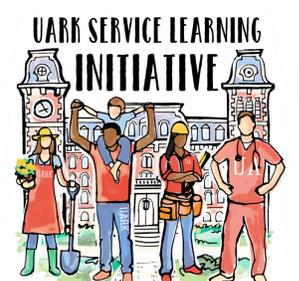
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Angela Oxford



OUTCOMES  
AND TRENDS



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Virginia Commonwealth University, Division of Community Engagement, Service Learning Program Office, originally created and utilized the Service Learning Impact Measurement to assess student perceptions of service learning outcomes. Many thanks for their generosity in allowing us to adapt their tool for our institution.

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# UARK SERVICE LEARNING INITIATIVE

## OUR HISTORY...

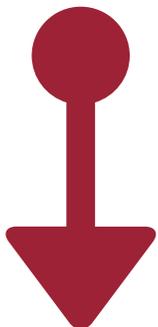
The Service Learning Initiative (SLI) is a joint initiative of the University of Arkansas Provost Office, the Honors College, and the Division of Student Affairs with the purpose of formalizing and expanding service learning opportunities on campus. In May 2014, Jennie Popp, Ph.D (*Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness*) and Angela Oxford (*Center for Community Engagement*) were appointed as Co-Chairs of the SLI to oversee the academic and community partner facets of Service Learning for the University of Arkansas.

## IN THIS REPORT...

- The Service Learning Initiative: Since the Beginning
- Executive Summary
- Demographics of Survey Respondents
- Academic Learning
- Civic Learning
- Career Readiness
- Student Responses

**2018-2019** marks the first year of implementation and assessment of the **Service Learning Impact Measurement.**

## WHAT'S NEXT?



- The UARK Service Learning Initiative plans to continue distributing the SLIM each academic year.
- A Service Learning Faculty Outcomes survey was distributed in Fall 2019 and will be analyzed in the coming year.
- The UARK Service Learning Initiative will release a Community Partner Impact Survey, tentatively scheduled for Fall 2020.

# SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE SERVICE LEARNING INITIATIVE...

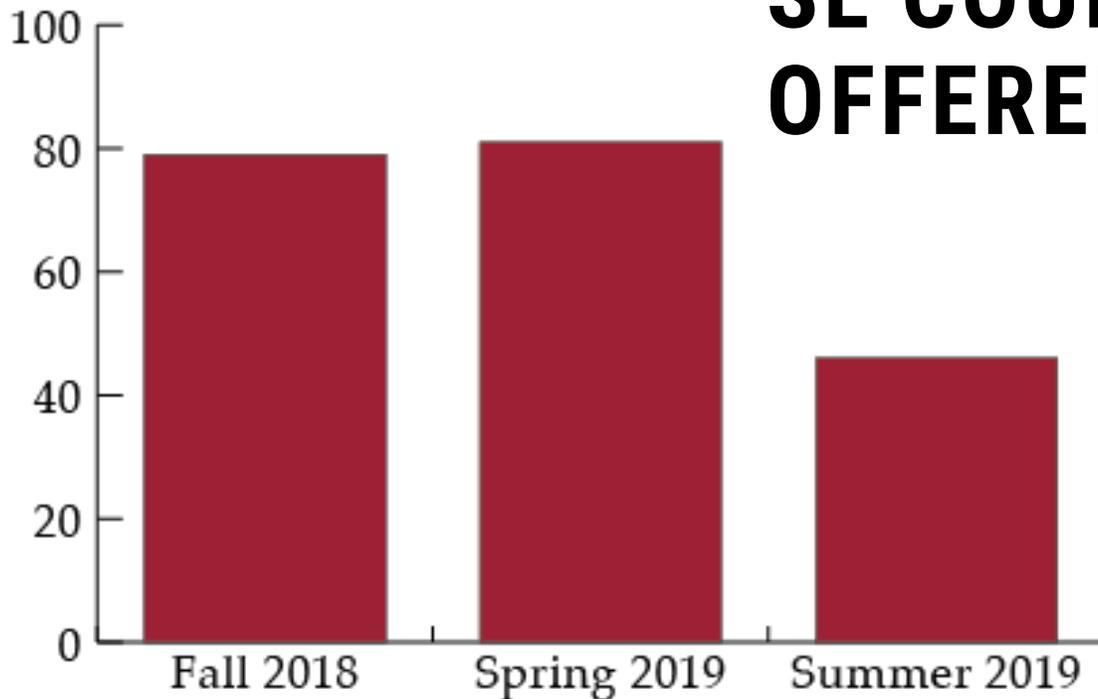
**6,500+**  
students have participated in service learning courses

**750**  
course sections have been designated as service learning

**273,000+**  
hours of service to the community in conjunction with academic learning logged



## 2018-2019 SL COURSES OFFERED



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*Photo: Students collecting data for Maynard High School*

Service learning is a credit-bearing, faculty-directed, teaching-learning experience that is course specific. It strengthens academic content knowledge and sense of civic responsibility. Students build critical thinking skills as they engage in experiential, community-based activities that are aligned with and integral to academic course work. At the same time, the community (real people in real situations) benefits from assistance that would otherwise not be available.

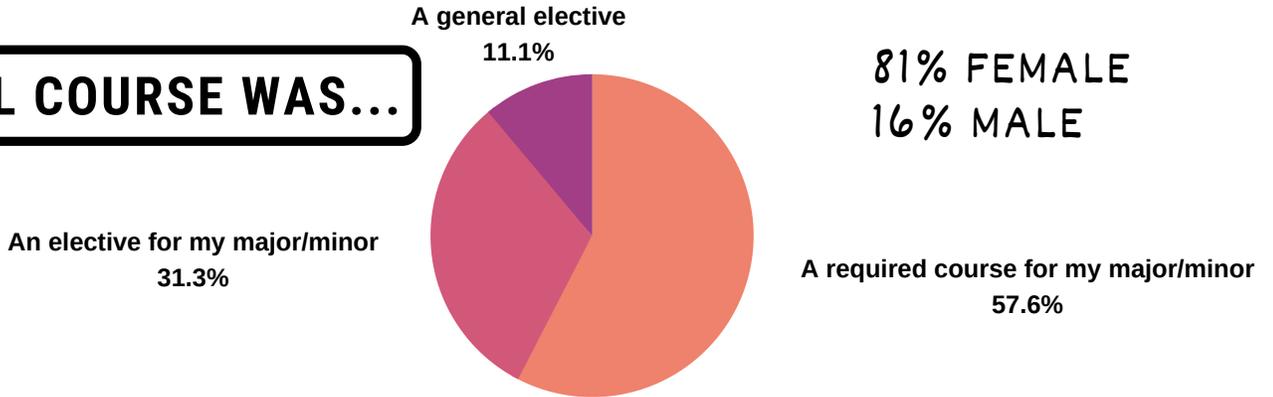
The University of Arkansas Service Learning Initiative began distributing the Service Learning Impact Measurement (SLIM), as adapted by VCU, in Fall 2018 to all students enrolled in service learning courses. We emailed the SLIM through service learning courses in order to assess student outcomes and identify areas of growth for service learning courses at the University.

For 2018-2019, surveys were emailed to 2,036 undergraduate and graduate students who enrolled in service-learning classes during each semester. Six hundred surveys were submitted with a response rate of 15%. This report provides highlights of survey respondents and our growth in service learning from the beginning, as well as data highlighting student perceived impacts of three main focus areas that were identified by VCU: academic learning, civic learning, and career readiness.

# SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Of those that responded to the survey, we found that...

## THIS SL COURSE WAS...



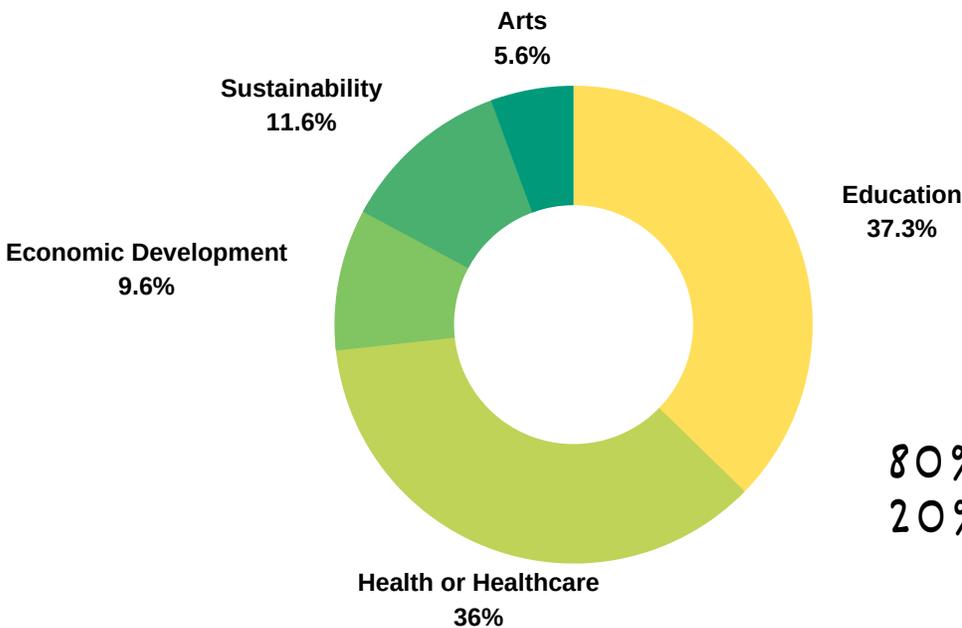
81% FEMALE  
16% MALE

A required course for my major/minor  
57.6%

An elective for my major/minor  
31.3%

A general elective  
11.1%

11.1%



## TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS STUDENTS SERVED

80% UNDERGRADUATE  
20% GRADUATE

## RACIAL MAKEUP OF RESPONDENTS

Percent & Number of Respondents (of 307)		
White	78.2%	240
Hispanic	8.8%	27
Bi-Racial	3.9%	12
African American	2.9%	9
Prefer Not to Answer	2.6%	8
Asian	2.3%	7
Native American	1.0%	3
International	0.3%	1

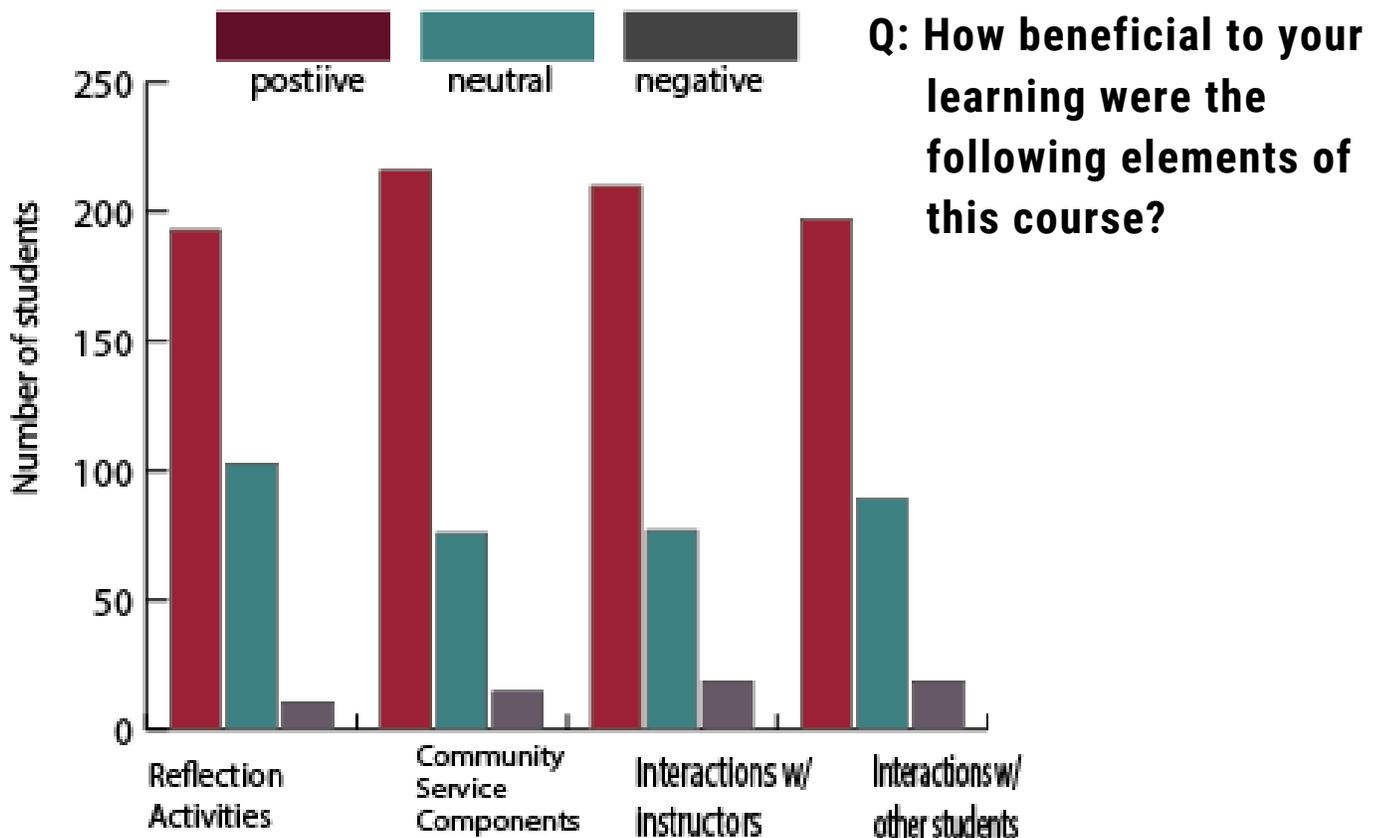
# ACADEMIC LEARNING

The SLIM survey contains questions that ask students to rate the degree to which they believe participating in their service learning class deepened their academic learning. The results of these questions are shown below.

**84%**  
of students felt that their service learning course enabled them to recognize how theories and conceptual models can be applied in real world situations

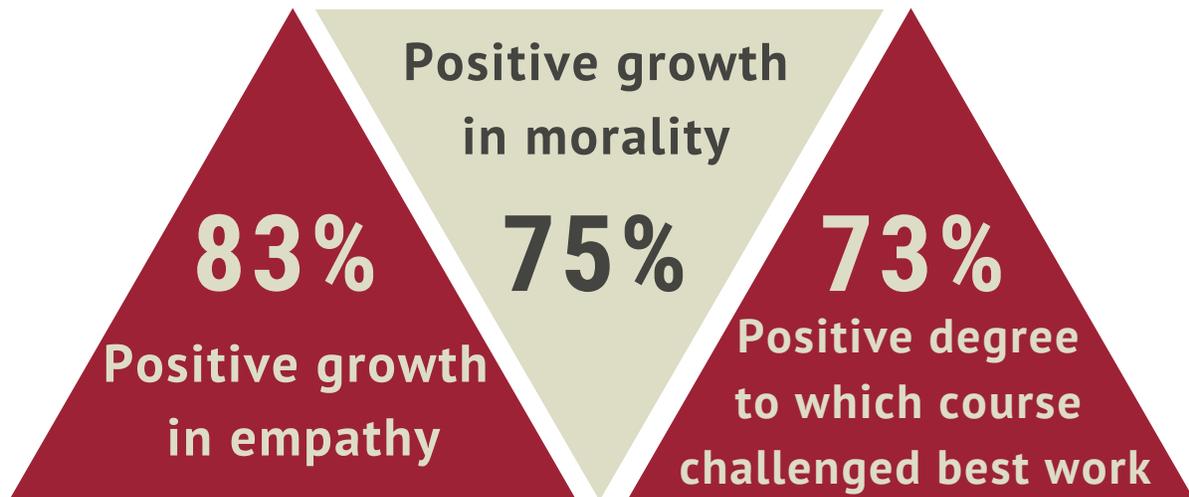
On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) the following percentages of students gave ratings of 6 or greater:

- **74%** described the service learning course as beneficial to connecting them to societal problems or issues;
- **76%** described the service learning course as beneficial to connecting their learning to things they have learned in other classes;
- **73%** felt that the service learning class helped them examine the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic or issue.



# CIVIC LEARNING

The SLIM contains questions that ask students to rate the degree to which they believe participating in their service learning class deepened their civic learning. The results of these questions are shown below.



On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) the following percentages of students gave ratings of 6 or greater:

- **65%** described the service learning course as being beneficial to them becoming more aware of their own biases and prejudices;
- **71%** described the service learning class as being beneficial to them becoming more aware of local, state, national, or global issues that need to be addressed;
- **69%** described the service learning class as being beneficial to them being an active and informed citizen;
- **72%** described the service learning course as being beneficial to them considering different cultural perspectives when evaluating different social problems;
- **70%** described the service learning course as being beneficial to them being a role model for people in the community;
- **68%** described the service learning course as being beneficial to them developing a personal code of values and ethics.

# 66%

of students felt that their service learning class helped clarify their career or professional goals

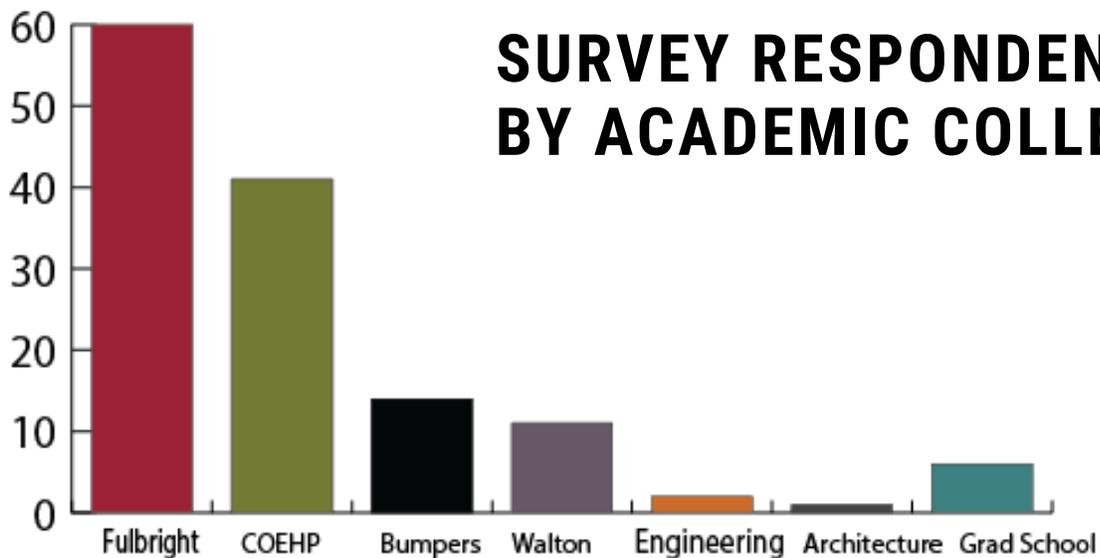
## CAREER READINESS

The SLIM contains questions that ask students to rate the degree to which they believe participating in their service-learning class deepened their career readiness. The results of these questions are shown below.

- **69%** felt that the service learning course enabled them to develop a network of professional contacts and/or mentors;
- **85%** felt that the service learning course enabled them to understand how people within the profession think and behave;
- **86%** felt that the service learning course enabled them to better understand their own strengths and weaknesses;

On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much) the following percentages of students gave ratings of 6 or greater:

- **75%** described the service learning class as being beneficial to them working effectively in a group where people from different backgrounds felt welcomed and included;
- **75%** described the service learning class as being beneficial to them feeling comfortable interacting with people from a cultural group different than their own;
- **73%** described the service learning class as being beneficial to them better understanding someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from others' perspectives.



**Q:IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT DID YOU GET OUT OF YOUR SERVICE LEARNING EXPERIENCE? IN OTHER WORDS, HOW DID YOU PERSONALLY/PROFESSIONALLY BENEFIT FROM THIS COURSE, IF AT ALL?**



## PEOPLE SKILLS

Twenty nine students shared that this course helped them learn how to work with people.

This people experience ranged from community members to working on a team to working with people from different cultures.

**"I benefited by taking myself out of my own comfort zone and gained a lot of empathy in doing so. I was put in a new situation with people very different from me and this will benefit me in my career one day as a physician."**

**"I got the opportunity to see real life examples of what to expect from my future career. I also was able to gain much clarification on what I want to do with the rest of my life."**



## DIRECT SKILLS

Seventy-five students shared that this course helped them immensely in directly tying to a skill that would be helpful in their own future professions. From broad "real-life experience" to tangible skills such as teaching methods or health care requirements, students cited that this course helped reinforce or expose their idea of fit for their intended careers.

**"This course was exceptional for plugging me into a community that I moved to only months ago. I feel much more informed about the current events happening in NWA. I also developed an appreciation for other cultures and developed a new level of comfort."**



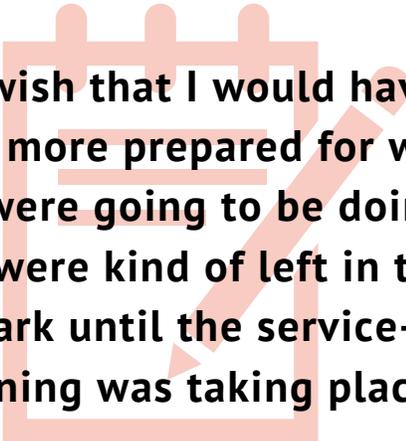
## COMMUNITY

Twenty three students shared that this course helped to plug them into the community. They felt that their personal and professional growth came from a better understanding of the way the community functions, and feeling connected to Northwest Arkansas.

# HOW COULD YOUR SERVICE LEARNING CLASS BE IMPROVED?

## ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Thirty students gave particular suggestions in regards to improvements in organization and structure. These included issues with understanding of class assignments, expectations, and logistics of the course such as transportation and time commitment.



**"I wish that I would have been more prepared for what we were going to be doing- we were kind of left in the dark until the service-learning was taking place."**



**"It would have been better had the organization where I gave service had given me more direction or potentially discussed with me the issues in society today regarding people with disabilities rather than only having this conversation with my professor."**

## SERVICE HOURS

Fifty eight students had suggestions that centered around the service hours. These suggestions ranged from issues concerning the number of hours to communication within the hours themselves. Additionally, students wanted more service hours, or felt that they had too many service hours.

## NONE!

Seventy five students intentionally wrote in this response that they had no recommendations and had a great experience.



**"I had a great experience with great mentors and I do not have any suggestions on how to better this experience"**

**"I think that this course was exceptional. I would take it again in a heartbeat"**

**TO FIND THESE REPORTS  
AND MORE, PLEASE VISIT  
THE SERVICE LEARNING WEBSITE!  
[SERVICELEARNING.UARK.EDU]**

