**Understanding and Supporting Service-Learning at UCA**

***Definition of Service-Learning***

Academic service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

***Community in the UCA Mission***

UCA’s vision, mission, and core values all explicitly underscore the relationship between the campus, students, and the wider communities in which we live, study, and work. As such, faculty community engagement aligns with this vision and contributes to the success of this mission.

**VISION:** The University of Central Arkansas aspires to be a premier learner-focused public comprehensive university, a nationally recognized leader for its continuous record of excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, scholarly and creative endeavors, and **engagement with local, national, and global communities**.

**MISSION**: The University of Central Arkansas, a leader in 21st-century higher education, is committed to excellence through the delivery of outstanding undergraduate and graduate education that remains current and responsive to the diverse needs of those it serves. The university’s faculty and staff promote the intellectual, professional, social, and personal development of its students through innovations in learning, scholarship, and creative endeavors. **Students, faculty, and staff partner to create strong engagement with the local, national, and global communities.** The University of Central Arkansas dedicates itself to academic vitality, integrity, and diversity.

***Benefits for Students***

* Positive effect on interpersonal development, the ability to work well with others, leadership and communications skills
* Positive effect on sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills
* Enhanced academic learning, when compared to similar courses that are not integrating service-learning
* Stronger relationships with faculty, when compared to students who are not involved in service-learning
* Improved satisfaction with college experience
* More likely to graduate, when compared to students who did not participate in service-learning
* Propensity to continue service and practice active citizenship following graduation

***Benefits for Community Partners***

* Useful service from student volunteers
* Enhanced organizational capacity to achieve mission
* Exposure of students to mission and purpose, possibility crating a lasting interest in volunteering with the organization
* Enhanced relationships with the university
* Foundation for continuing partnerships with the university

***Benefits for Faculty***

* Satisfaction with enhanced quality of student learning
* Connections with community organizations
* Efficacy and impact of course in the community
* Opportunities to develop scholarship related to community engagement
* Ability to demonstrate real world application of student learning
* Personal satisfaction
* Contribution to the university’s strategic plan and mission

Adapted from Eyler, J. S., Giles, D. E., Stenson, C. M., and Gray, C. J. (2001). At a Glance: What We Know about The Effects of Service-Learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions and Communities, 1993-2000. Third Edition. Vanderbilt University. <https://www.mnsu.edu/cetl/academicservicelearning/Service-Learning.pdf>

***Opportunities for UCA Service-Learning Faculty***

* UCA faculty members who designate a course as service-learning through the Service-Learning Program are eligible to apply for seed grants of up to $250 to fund their service-learning project.
* Service-learning faculty may be nominated for and receive the Service-Learning Faculty Practitioner of the Year award given each spring, as well as the Thomas Ehrlich Civically Engaged Faculty Award presented by Campus Compact.
* Faculty who are interested in in-depth professional development in service-learning, regardless of whether they have taught a designated service-learning course, may apply through CETAL to receive a stipend to participate in the Service-Learning Faculty Fellows Institute held each summer.