

# TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

## SERVICE-LEARNING FACULTY FELLOWS (SLFF) PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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The Service-Learning Faculty Fellows Program is a year-long faculty development program that provides an opportunity for selected faculty members to integrate service-learning into their teaching, research, and public service while becoming recognized campus leaders in service-learning pedagogy and community engagement (University of Georgia: The Office of Service-Learning, 2012). The program is a partnership between the Center for Teaching Excellence, Office for the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Department of Student Activities' Leadership and Service Center, the Solved Initiative, and the Office of Sustainability. Up to nine (9) Service-Learning Fellows will be selected for the 2017-2018 class in a competitive review process and will be awarded a \$2,500 faculty development award. **Fellowship applications for Fall 2017 – Spring 2018 are due May 26, 2017.**

### RATIONALE

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The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement released a call to action and report in January 2012 entitled *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future* (The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement). This task force encourages institutions of higher education to reclaim their civic mission. Several strategies, including service-learning were mentioned to accomplish this charge. Jacoby shares "service-learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to promote student learning and development" (1996, p. 5). Service-learning is a powerful pedagogy that promotes civic learning and has shown positive effects on numerous learning outcomes including but not limited to critical thinking, cultural awareness, moral development, and increasing students' sense of civic responsibility (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001). Not only are these outcomes relevant on a national level, but more importantly in the wake of Texas A&M's commitment to learning through Aggies Commit and the University's Quality Enhancement Plan, this faculty development program can prepare faculty to integrate high-impact practices in their curriculum (Texas A&M University, 2012).

### PROGRAM GOALS

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The Service-Learning Fellows program is committed to supporting participants in the following endeavors:

- Becoming part of a core group of campus leaders knowledgeable about and engaged in service-learning pedagogy;
- Increasing familiarity and exposure to service-learning theory and current research;
- Applying best practices of service-learning research and pedagogy;
- Exploring evaluation and assessment strategies for measuring service-learning's impact on students, faculty, and community members;
- Developing and implementing a service-learning related project;
- Connecting to public service and outreach initiatives and existing community-university partnerships;
- Developing interdisciplinary service-learning projects through conversation and collaboration with faculty from other disciplines; and
- Enhancing the CTE Service-Learning Resources page in the Faculty Teaching and Learning Portal in order to educate faculty campus-wide about this high-impact practice.

## **WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?**

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There are many definitions for service-learning which makes the term amorphous and confusing for many educators. However, at Texas A&M we utilize the following definition: “Service-learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to promote student learning and development” (Jacoby, 1996).

## **ELIGIBILITY & WHO SHOULD APPLY?**

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The program is open to all tenure and non-tenure track TAMU faculty members with an interest in service-learning. Previous experience in service-learning pedagogy or familiarity with service-learning or civic engagement research is not required. Be advised that this program is intended for faculty members who are relatively new to the field of service-learning. Faculty members who are well-versed in service-learning pedagogy should **not** apply to this program.

## **FELLOWSHIP AWARD**

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A \$2,500 fellowship award is provided for discretionary use for activities such as professional development, course development, research, and implementation costs that could include curriculum materials, shared materials for community partners, and course- or project-related travel. Funds must be spent during FY18 and cannot be used for summer salary.

## **PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

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In an effort to promote integrative and lifelong learning for students at Texas A&M University, the Service-Learning Faculty Fellows Program is a collaboration between the Center for Teaching Excellence, Office for the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Department of Student Activities’ Leadership and Service Center, the Solved Initiative, and the Office of Sustainability.

## **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

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Commitment to full participation in the program activities is required for consideration as a Service-Learning Faculty Fellow. Applicants must commit to the following activities in order to be considered for selection:

- Participation in monthly Fellows meetings, which are generally 2 hours in length.
- Attendance at a mandatory daylong retreat is held in August at the start of the Fall 2017 semester. This retreat provides an introduction to service-learning pedagogy and the goals of the Fellows Program, a sustained opportunity to engage with service-learning topics, and an opportunity to build collaborative relationships with other faculty in the program.
- Development of a service-learning oriented project throughout the fellowship period. See below for project guidelines.
- Presentation of final project at the Service-Learning Faculty Fellows Showcase held in conjunction with the Leadership and Service Center’s annual Community Agency Breakfast during the following Fall 2017 semester. This event provides a venue for participants to be recognized by the larger campus community.
- Contribution to the Center for Teaching Excellence and Leadership and Service Center AggieServe website by sharing their profile, best practices, and lessons learned from their experience.
- Serve as mentors to future Fellows.

## PROJECT GUIDELINES

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The Service-Learning Faculty Fellows program is, first and foremost, a faculty development program, not a grant or project funding source. Each Fellow will undertake a service-learning related project during the year. Generally, projects are developed and implemented during the Fellowship year, but in some instances, the implementation of projects has extended past the Fellowship year. The Service-Learning Fellowship award of \$2,500 may be used to help implement this project or provide additional professional development support for participants. Possible project ideas include the following:

- Integration of service-learning into an existing course, where the service-learning aspect is a new component of curriculum;
- Creation of assessment tools or strategies for measuring the impact of service-learning on undergraduate student learning outcomes, faculty, or community;
- Community-based research projects that contribute to service-learning, civic engagement, and scholarship of engagement literature, or that expand understanding of service-learning within a discipline;
- Faculty and professional development projects related to service-learning;
- International service-learning projects;
- Development of interdisciplinary collaborations and/or connections between instruction and Cooperative Extension

**Additionally, preference will be given to those who have project ideas and/or courses that can creatively address issues related to food security or sustainability.**

### FOOD SECURITY & SUSTAINABILITY

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To qualify for the food security fellowships, the Fellow will need to provide opportunities for students in his or her course to work on research-rich service-learning projects that address a community need surrounding food security in Texas Food Banks. Specific projects may enhance efficiencies, increase productivity, and optimize resources through projects such as: assessment of current food security screening methods, assessment of marketing strategies, identification of best educational delivery solutions, assessment of client satisfaction, analysis of appropriate nutrition for special populations, and the evaluation of produce handling and acceptance criteria. This is not an exhaustive list of potential projects.

The Office of Sustainability is providing three additional opportunities for SLFs that incorporate sustainability. Texas A&M defines sustainability as the efficient, deliberate, and responsible preservation of environmental, social, and economic resources to protect our earth for future generations of Texas Aggies, the Texas A&M University community, and beyond.

The Sustainability Service-Learning Fellow (SSLF) will work to achieve the Texas A&M sustainability vision statement:

Every member of the Aggie family works together to champion environmental stewardship, encourage healthy living, and improve social and economic opportunities and outcomes locally, nationally, and globally.

To qualify for one of the SSLF positions, the Fellow will need to incorporate sustainability into their program. In accordance with the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) curriculum standards, sustainability Service-Learning will incorporate primary and explicit focus on sustainability and/or on understanding or solving one or more major sustainability

challenge (e.g. the course contributes toward achieving principles outlined in the Earth Charter or the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030). This includes:

- 1) Service-learning in which the *primary and explicit* focus is on sustainability as an integrated concept having social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Examples include Introduction to Sustainability, Sustainable Development, and Sustainability Science, however service-learning may also count if their course descriptions indicate a primary and explicit focus on sustainability.
- 2) Service-learning in which the primary and explicit focus is on the application of sustainability within a field. As sustainability is an interdisciplinary topic, such courses generally incorporate insights from multiple disciplines. Obvious examples include Sustainable Agriculture, Architecture for Sustainability, and Sustainable Business, however courses may also count if their course descriptions indicate a primary and explicit focus on sustainability within a field.
- 3) Service-learning in which the primary focus is on providing skills and/or knowledge directly connected to understanding or solving one or more major sustainability challenges. A course might provide knowledge and understanding of the problem or tools for solving it, for example Climate Change Science, Renewable Energy Policy, Environmental Justice, or Green Chemistry. Such courses do not necessarily cover “sustainability” as a concept, but should address more than one of the three dimensions of sustainability (i.e. social wellbeing, economic prosperity, and environmental health).

While a foundational course such as chemistry or sociology might provide knowledge that is useful to practitioners of sustainability, it would not be considered a sustainability course. Likewise, although specific tools or practices such as GIS (Geographical Information Systems) or engineering can be applied towards sustainability, such courses would not count as sustainability courses unless their primary and explicit focus is on sustainable applications. If there is a sustainability unit, module or activity within one of these courses, but it is not the main focus, the course may be counted as a course that includes sustainability.

Support for project development will be discussed during monthly meetings and through meetings with faculty partners familiar with service-learning pedagogy. Final projects will be highlighted formally at the end of the program during the Showcase. Projects may be adapted or changed during the year as participants develop in their understanding of service-learning. **For more information about potential projects, contact Tia Crawford ([tcrawford@stuaact.tamu.edu](mailto:tcrawford@stuaact.tamu.edu)), Assistant Director for the Leadership and Service Center and point person for service-learning initiatives.**

## **APPLICATION SUBMISSION and SELECTION PROCESS**

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To be considered for the 2017-2018 Service-Learning Faculty Fellows program, please submit an online application form and upload the following items to <https://tx.ag/SLFFellow> by **May 26, 2017**. Once submitted, faculty will be invited to participate in a brief interview. Selected faculty will be notified by **June 2017**.

1. Letter of Support from Department Chair or Dean (please limit to two pages). This letter should:
  - a. confirm support for the faculty member’s application, project, and attendance at all required meetings and events;
  - b. include an understanding that there might be a need to accommodate teaching schedules
  - c. describe how the department/unit would benefit from the applicant’s participation in the program; and
  - d. detail any departmental/unit contributions to the proposed project
2. Current *Curriculum Vitae* (please limit to 5 pages)

3. Letter of Intent and Project Proposal (please limit to three pages). This should describe the following:
  - a. Your previous experiences with service-learning, if any.
  - b. Your interest in the program and how you would benefit from the Fellowship.
  - c. How your department/unit would benefit from your participation.
  - d. Description of the proposed service-learning project with the following information:
    - i. Summary of proposed service-learning project
    - ii. Potential impact on student engagement
    - iii. Connection to community issues/needs
    - iv. If your project links to an existing academic course, please include the name of the course
    - v. Expected project timeline

## SCHEDULE

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\*Please note selected faculty must adjust their calendars accordingly to attend the meetings below.

Dates	Event
May 26, 2017	Application deadline
June 2017	Applicant Interviews
June 2017	Announce selected faculty
August 18, 2017 (8:30 am - 4:00 pm)	Retreat
September 2017 (SAVE THE DATE)	Community Agency Breakfast (8:30 am – 10:00 am) Volunteer Opportunities Fair (10:30 am – 2:00 pm)
September 8, 2017 (11:30 am-1:30 pm)	Meeting 1: Student Development
October 13, 2017 (11:30 am-1:30 pm)	Meeting 2: Community Partnerships & Risk Management
November 10, 2017 (11:30 am-1:30 pm)	Meeting 3: Assessment in Service-Learning
December/January	Individual Consultations
February 9, 2018 (11:30 am-1:30 pm)	Meeting 4: Reflection
March 9, 2018 (11:30 am-1:30 pm)	Meeting 5: Service-Learning Scholarship
April 13, 2018 (4:30 pm-6:30 pm)	Meeting 6: Service-Learning Showcase

**Workshop Topics Include:** overview of service-learning, student development theory, risk management, building community partnerships, reflection and assessment, international service-learning, scholarship and publishing, etc.

## PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

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