

Moving Forward Together in Sustainable, Effective, and Partnership-Oriented Ways:
Connecting Universities and Communities through Global Leadership Service Projects

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Abstract

Purpose: Sustainable and effective university-community partnerships are not easy to create, yet they are an integral part of student community-based learning (Enos & Morton, 2003) as they are uniquely designed to educate students about their roles as members of their local, national, and global communities. In this article, the extant literature on effective university-community partnering is reviewed and key themes are drawn to assist practitioners and researchers who are involved in the design, execution and analysis of partnership programs. Following the review, a model partnership program focused on increasing students' knowledge and skills in the area of international citizenship, called the Global Leadership and Service Project (GSLP), is presented as an innovative service-learning design template.

Design: This article presents a review of the literature, key themes drawn from the literature, and a case study for use as readers consider, adapt, and integrate tools for effective, partnership-based service-learning projects into their curricula.

Findings: Sustainable, effective, and partnership-oriented service-learning projects are difficult to design and execute yet they are extremely effective at enhancing students' awareness, learning, and development as global citizens. The model presented through the GLSP provides a useful framework for adaptation in other university and professional settings.

Originality/Value: This article focuses on the community organization side of effective service-learning partner-oriented program design and provides a case study example of how such programs can be executed in a sustainable and contributory manner, each

within the context of enhancing student learning as members of our global and interconnected society.

Classification: Conceptual paper; Case study.

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Today, we live in a time of uncertainty. Our national and international economic, social, and political environments appear fragile and tenuous in terms of recovery from the global financial crisis of which we are all a part. At the same time, we are collectively confronting the devastating short- and long-term impacts of recent natural disasters including the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti killing an estimated 230,000 people and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that killed an estimated 226,000 people in 12 countries. As we exist today, the interconnectedness of our global community and inherent issues of sustainability are more salient than ever before.

The uncertainty of the world around us has obvious consequences for universities and the higher education domain in which they exist. Calls for change in universities are rife, with a recent focus on business schools' myopic and narrow focus on profit and bottom line issues, resulting in the neglectful oversight of issues related to social, ethical, moral, and civic-oriented learning (e.g., see Harvard's 2009 online debate "Are Business Schools to Blame?"). Students must begin to see themselves as not only members of our global society but also active contributors to the larger social, economic, and political environments of which we are all a part. A tool for connecting universities to real-world, real-time issues and exposing students to issues of social, ethical, moral, and civic concern are curricular-based university-community partnership programs. As members of the higher education community, we can no longer exist in the ivory towers that dominated the 20th century university environment. We are now truly in an age that calls

for community engagement at multiple levels. As Kisker (2007) aptly states, “collaboration has become pivotal in ensuring quality postsecondary education” (p.282).

Today, we have research evidence that students, universities and communities are each positively and significantly impacted by university-community partnership experiences (Florence, et al., 2007). In the extant literature there are frequent calls for this type of partnership - an example is Flicker et al’s (2007) statement “it is now time to increase collaboration across and between communities and universities. As complex urban challenges become increasingly intractable, approaches that draw on the capacities and assets of all institutions are necessary” (p.239). As the world becomes smaller our partnerships are no longer restricted to local and regional organizations. In today’s academic environment, global partnerships are easier to facilitate than they have ever been before, given technological innovation and enhanced communication media. Moreover, these partnerships are also desperately needed to accurately reflect the realities of our civic, social, economic, geographic, and political interconnectedness and accessibility.

Although partnership programs at any level, ranging from local through global, are not new to academic environments, they are rapidly becoming the norm in university educational programs. Partnership programs are required components of many of today’s best practice teaching tools (e.g., internship programs, practicum experiences, community engagement projects, study abroad programs). Today’s partnership programs provide more than a simple “off-campus” location for student experiences. Education today pushes students to synthesise and evaluate (e.g., Bloom, 1956) as well as search for deep understanding (e.g., Biggs, 1999) about the economic, social and organisational systems

of which they are contributing members. Partnership programs in today's educational environments are designed to create a high level of awareness for students and community partner representatives, such that participating members can see beyond the borders of organisations and geographic regions to create opportunities for reciprocal learning and development (Paules, 2007). This type of interconnected community-oriented vision and awareness is required for success in today's professional world. To achieve sustainability (both in terms of high quality partnerships as well as environmental and social sustainability), organisations are entering into long-term cross-sectoral partnerships (Bendell and Murphy, 2002) as members of what is now being called "The Partnership Society" (Googins and Rochlin, 2000, p.127).

The purpose of this article is twofold: (1) to raise awareness, discussion, and action in terms of the creation and adaptation of service-based university-community partnership programs as a tool for increasing students' development as invested, aware, and contributory global citizens and (2) to provide resources for faculty members interested in facilitating university-community partnerships at the local, national, and international levels, with an overview of a model program focused on the development of students' international citizenship and leadership skills.

The article is structured to achieve the purposes listed above in the following manner. First, a review of the extant literature on university-community partnerships is presented, accompanied by key themes that have been drawn to assist practitioners and researchers who are involved in the design, execution and analysis of partnership programs. With respect to differentiation from extant work in the organizational sciences area, the themes in this article are designed with an underlying emphasis on issues raised

from the community partner perspective. This lens is important given that much of the existing literature is focused on the university and student perspective only (Bushouse, 2005). With a foundation for designing effective university-community partnerships in place, the article then presents a case study of a design model for internationally-oriented global service projects. The components of model are described and contextualized in terms of their organic development over the period of five years across eight partnerships with two programs in three countries around the world.

Moving beyond the article's intended purpose and structure, there are two underlying goals for this work. First, the demands of our current environment necessitate high quality, sustainable, and effective partnerships rather than those that Callahan and Martin (2006) have labelled "paper tigers" – those partnerships that exist in name only, with no educational or outcome-based substance. A second underlying goal is to heighten passion in both university-based faculty members and community-based organizational practitioners with respect to the need for, and powerful learning outcomes associated with, international student service-learning projects. As Friedman has aptly noted in his well-cited 2007 book *The World is Flat*, we can no longer continue to look inward with a myopic and restricted focus on the events taking place within the confines of our own communities and geographic borders. The world is large in terms of actual land mass but has become small in terms of communication, competition, interrelations, dependencies, challenges, and outcomes. As members of a now global society, we are interconnected and interdependent in unprecedented ways. As a result, we need to reach out to explore, understand, and celebrate our interconnectedness as we all move into the unscripted

future (DiPadova-Stocks, 2007) as members of our complex, diverse, and in many respects now borderless global community.

DEFINING UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

A number of theoretical perspectives have been used to examine university partnership programs – these include linkage complexity (Barnett, Hall, Berg, and Camarena, 1999), learning theory (Callahan and Martin, 2007), goal setting (Clark, 1999), network embeddedness (Kisker, 2007), participatory action research (Flicker, et al., 2007; Williams, et al., 2008), evolutionary theory (Wohlstetter, Smith, and Malloy, 2005) and interpersonal relationships (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002). With each theoretical perspective comes another variation on the definition of a university-community partnership. Despite this variety, the essential idea that runs across all of the definitions is that “sharing and joint responsibility” take place whereby “both parties, while coming from a different context, share an interest that allows them to work together for their mutual benefit and for the ‘larger good’” (Bernal, Shellman and Reid, 2004, p.33).

The definition above applies to university-community partnerships regardless of the catalyst for partnership formation. Reasons for creating a university-community partnership may include ideology (wanting to work with people with like-minded goals and values), generativity (wanting to work with people interested in producing new knowledge) and/or capacity building (wanting to work with people to stimulate change through positive interaction and outcomes) (Day, 1998). In terms of understanding interactions that lie at the core of these partnerships, one of key tenets of a partnership that involves a university partner is community involvement. Over time, universities

have been engaged in numerous forms of community involvement including, but not restricted to, “cooperative extension and continuing education programs, clinical and pre-professional programs, top-down administrative initiatives, centralised administrative-academic units with outreach missions, faculty professional service, student volunteer initiatives, economic and political outreach, community access to facilities and cultural events and, most recently, service-learning classes” (Bingle and Hatcher, 2002, p.503). In terms of the Australian higher education research context, many of today’s most visible pedagogical activities, each falling under the classification of “work integrated learning” (WIL), are only possible if university-community partnerships exist. These teaching tools include: work based learning; work experience; practice/ practicum; clinical placement /practice; community based learning/project; co-operative education; professional skills program; work/job shadowing; work experience/vacation work; internship; apprenticeship; sandwich course; industry project, cadetship/traineeship and enterprise project (NAGCAS Carrick Scoping Study, 2008). For many of the most innovative and impactful teaching tools in use today, university faculty members and students are being pushed to move beyond classroom walls into the larger community for real-world, real-issue-based learning opportunities and experiences. University-community partnerships make this possible.

MANAGING UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

A number of articles have been written with specific guidelines in place for managing university-community partnerships; most, if not all, of these articles focus on

the importance of effective communication. For example, Hamer (2007) recommends the following steps for establishing university-community partnership projects:

- (1) *do an educational needs assessment* to establish exactly what employers are looking for in your respective teaching domains,
- (2) *establish contact with community organizations*, with a particular focus on the professional level of the industry partner contact person or team (i.e., do they have sufficient authority to make decisions and provide resources) as well as the needs of the organisation,
- (3) *effectively market the students' abilities*, she calls this “marketing incentives” which translates into carefully considering what new resources your students can provide to the organisation and how the students are potential employees, board members, and professional liaisons,
- (4) *obtain commitment*, which may involve project contracts that come with issues of liability and confidentiality and
- (5) *monitor the partnership dynamics* as there will invariably be challenges that arise – to create a successful and sustainable partnership requires adaptability and understanding.

In terms of her last point, Hamer includes a thorough list of issues that may negatively impact community partners' abilities to carry through on project components; these are “sudden travel arrangements, unforeseen audits, termination of employment, relocation, company reorganisation, altered priorities caused by market forces, lack of resources, promotions, mergers and acquisitions and personal reasons” (p.26). In relation to this issue, it is important for partners, particularly those on the university side of the

partnership, to be able to “step into the shoes” (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 1991) of community partner members. Often, isolationism within the walls of the university leads faculty members to have unrealistically high expectations about timelines, priorities and outcomes. An academic partnership is usually only one of many collaborative relationships that local community organisation members are juggling to survive. With competing demands for resources, community partner representatives will often enter into the partnership with a “deep distrust” of the underlying goals of their academic partners (Ferman and Hill, 2004, p.252). If faculty members take the time to consider the community partners’ respective constraints and demands, and engage in open communication with the aim of collaboratively resolving issues as they arise (and they will arise), then the partnership is likely to grow stronger over time.

One tip for doing this well from the beginning is to openly discuss incentives for the partnership (i.e., what does each side hope to gain from the partnership?). There will invariably be differences across incentives and goals - some will fit nicely together (e.g., strategic plan development, grant writing) and some will demand concession-giving from one of the respective sides (e.g., research projects, generation of academic papers). If, however, incentive-based issues, wants and needs are addressed early in the partnership, then each of the partners will be clear as to each side’s respective goals. Thus, moving forward and resolving issues as they arise should be much easier for both sides than it would have been without an early discussion of each side’s short-term and long-term interests.

A second point related to effective communication is the need to engage in ongoing reflection throughout the duration of each partnership project (Saito, Imansyah,

Kubok & Hendayana, 2007). Ideal partnership processes involve community partners in every aspect of the project(s) including survey development, interpretation of findings and communication of outcomes (Williams et al., 2008). To further highlight the need for continuous and effective communication, in an article on university-corporate partnerships, Michael Echols (2006) focuses on the value of communication and dialogue as critical components of successful partnerships. He states “if the university is not willing to engage in substantive dialogue around curriculum, there is a low potential for the educational partnership” (p.36).

In another example of how to manage these partnerships, Bernal and colleagues recommend the following “essential principles” as steps for success in developing and managing university-community partnerships:

- (1) Develop partnerships based on a solid personal and professional relationship.

Choose wisely.;

- (2) Entry into new communities has to be guided by sound principles of fieldwork.

See it, feel it, and think it.;

- (3) There must be continuous opened communications and mutual planning. Keep no secrets.;

- (4) The mission and goals of the partnership have to be clear and based on strong mutual commitment to the population served. Keep an eye on the ball.;

- (5) Partners should be committed to assimilating changes while keeping the core values of the program intact. Don't sell out.;

- (6) There needs to be a commitment to evaluation. Don't be afraid to look! and

(7) The continuation of the partnership requires persistence and perseverance by all parties involved. Don't give up! (Bernal, Shellman and Reid, 2004).

Again, the focus on clarity and open communication throughout the partnering process is evident. With open communication and effective monitoring and evaluation, partnership programs should continue to move forward rather than stagnate or fail unnecessarily.

While managing all types of university-community partnerships well requires effective communication, it is important to note that not all partnerships are the same. One important aspect of managing a university-community partnership is to understand the type of collaboration in which each side is interested. Enos and Morton (2003) identified a framework for categorizing campus-community partnership development over time. The continuum starts with what they have termed "transactional" one time events and projects and ends with "transformational" programs resulting in joint knowledge and work creation. Using this framework, Bushouse (2005) examined which type(s) of partnerships non-profit organizations were most interested in and found that, because of resource constraints (e.g., staff time), 64% of the organizations she sampled were only interested in transactional projects (the remaining 36% were open to longer term, more sustained engagements). A second way of conceptualizing a university-community partnership program is that of Dorado and Giles (2004). They discuss three 'paths of engagement' for university and community service partnerships: tentative, aligned, and committed. Tentative engagements are those where "learning behaviors are dominant" and "partners are not interested in building a sustainable relationship" (p.30). Engagements are aligned when partners "seek to create a better fit between their goals" (p.31); it is a path that most partners will not remain on long, as they either transition to a

committed partnership or dissolve their work together. Finally, the committed path of engagement represents those partnerships involving “actions and interactions that denote that partners value the partnership beyond the departing project” (p.31).

With a number of different paths and types of engagement, reflecting the various levels of interest, experience, and needs of community partners, an organization called “Campus Compact” (www.compact.org) published a list of “Benchmarks for Campus/Community Partnerships” – the stages and principles of this list are as follows (Torres, 2000, p.5-7):

Stage 1: Designing the Partnership.

Genuine democratic partnerships are: (1) founded on a shared vision and clearly articulated values and (2) beneficial to partnering institutions.

Stage 2: Building Collaborative Relationships

Genuine democratic partnerships that build strong collaborative relationships are: (1) composed of interpersonal relationships based on trust and mutual respect, (2) multidimensional: they involve the participation of multiple sectors that act in service of a complex problem, and (3) clearly organized and led with dynamism

Stage 3: Sustaining Partnerships Over Time

Genuine democratic partnerships that will be sustained over time are: (1) integrated into the mission and support systems of the partnering institutions, (2) sustained by a “partnering process” for communication, decision making, and the initiation of change, and (3) evaluated regularly with a focus on both methods and outcomes

Once again, communication is present throughout this list. Additional components of this list that reflect concepts described in the other lists above include the need for activity and progression (as conveyed through the following concepts in this list – articulate, initiate, build, involve, integrate, led) and the focus on decision making and evaluation. With a series of lists written from different perspectives about how to manage university-community partnerships, each highlighting a similar set of points, the guidelines for success are relatively clear. That said, while the information summarized above on categorizing, managing, and communicating as components of university-community partnerships is clear - it is only one piece of the puzzle. There are a number of key themes for implementation, drawn from the extant literature, that should be considered by both faculty members and community organization representatives involved in establishing or developing partnership programs.

KEY THEMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION: LESSONS LEARNED & LIMITATIONS

First and foremost, a key to effectively designing and developing university-community partnerships is to understand that each partner will, over time, contribute in different yet equally important ways. A true partnership does not exist with one partner leading the other; reciprocal contributions that are continually validated and celebrated are important components of these partnerships. This should be true in all aspects of partnership work – including research. Unfortunately, as stated above, the community partner side of the equation often has little or no voice (Ferman and Hill, 2004). There are a number of causes that have been attributed to this disparity.

One of the key lessons learned from the research in network embeddedness theory is that new partnerships typically default to highly structured interactions. This structure is often governed by the partner with the higher status, which in this case will invariably be the university partner. This fits with the criticism that many university-community partnerships are established on either charitable (i.e., one side “giving” to the other) or expert (i.e., where the university partner views his/her position as elitist and hierarchically dominant in the partnership) principles, rather than justice-based (i.e., where resources are viewed as mutual and issues are viewed as jointly owned) (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002). In terms of supporting the justice model, Carrie Kisker (2007) stated that for university-community partnerships to work they must be “jointly developed and managed... partnership participants must work to establish a high degree of trust among institutions and actors in them” (p.298).

The locus of decision making is one of the four factors identified in Callahan and Martin’s (2007) typology of organizational learning systems for university partnerships; they refer to this as joint versus independent decision making or “knowledge systems”. A suggestion for increasing the understanding required for joint decision making is to invite the academic partner representative to sit on the community organisation’s board for a specified period of time (Ferman and Hill, 2004). This step will not only increase the understanding on both sides of the partnership, but will also ensure that the partnership is visible to all board members and is on the organisation’s strategic agenda.

Another lesson learned is around realistic goal-setting and timeline establishment. As Flicker et al. (2007) highlight in their summary of issues raised in university-community partnerships, when working to create significant and sustainable change in a

community, university partner timelines are often unrealistically short. Change may take multiple semesters or years of continued work through the partnership. As such, setting realistic timeframes up front will alleviate disappointment, frustration and perceptions of failure on the part of engaged participants.

The creation of documents outlining clear expectations (e.g., terms of reference, contracts, partnership agreements, rules of engagement and decision-making processes, checklists) is another step toward establishing productive partnerships (Ferman and Hill, 2004; Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003). This can serve as a critical component of laying a foundation for open communication both in terms of front-end expectations and resource commitments as well as ongoing issues that arise as the partnership develops and matures.

Some seemingly insignificant, yet powerful in terms of sending a strong message about reciprocity in the partnership, actions that faculty members can perform to nurture and grow existing partnerships include:

- create inventories of university resources that community partner staff and clients can utilise (include contact details for relevant university members here);
- inform community members of activities and events that take place at the university when they are accessible to community members and not just students and staff;
- monitor the progress of any student projects – a simple phone call or email sends a message that you are thinking about the partnership and
- establish an end point for each aspect of the project – this will allow for small wins throughout the process and will give students and community members

opportunities for reflection and feelings of success and productivity (Ferman and Hill, 2004).

On a final note about application, for university-community partnerships to be sustainable and sustained, they must be “integrated into the missions, policies and practices of higher education institutions” (Jacoby, 2003a, p.318). This is arguably the case for community partners as well – that the need for, and benefits of, partnering with other organisations (of which universities are one type of member) is deeply embedded into the community partner organisation mission and culture. For members of both sides of the university-community partnership, this type of embeddedness and organisational-level commitment should readily result from a carefully crafted partnership grounded in frequent and open communications.

Finally, it should be noted that there are some limitations inherent to any organisational-level partnership that extend beyond the intentions and actions of the individuals involved. The world that we live in is chaotic and fluid; as a result, there will be times when partnerships are challenged, disabled, or dissolved based on external influences. For example, many non-profit organizations face constant financial pressure in terms of their survival; if a large grant runs out or supporting bodies change their monetary commitment areas, there is the distinct possibility that an organisation will fail. Another monetary issue is the fact that many community organizations have no unused resources to allocate to the supervision, communication, and monitoring of student volunteer partners. There is also the salient issue of timelines – university semesters typically operate on 12-14 week schedules. For many community organization members, this restricted timeline is at best inconvenient and at worst wholly conflicting with the

constant pressure they face 365 days per year. On the university side, there are political and organisational pressures that impact partnership survival. For example, a change in Deans, Presidents, or Vice-Chancellors could easily cause a redirection of available funds and interest in terms of partnership support. And for many academics, it is difficult if not impossible to continue large scale partnerships in an environment where there is either no support or, worse, a negative view of a particular partnership agenda. This is not meant to dissuade interested parties in partnership development, rather, it is meant to heighten awareness in terms of the very real political, financial, and organisational pressures faced by university-community partners in today's educational and community environments. It is, however, another reason why memorandums of understanding or contracts with community partners that are processed through a university's legal council are critical components of sustainable and effective partnership programs.

As a practical and applied example of effective partnering in an international and sustainable context, the next section of this article will describe a service-learning model that has, in figurative terms, organically designed itself. The model presented below is the product of an iterative feedback-oriented design process spanning six years involving an ongoing collaborative dialogue with eight university-community partners from three countries.

**A MODEL FOR INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING PARTNERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT & SUSTAINABILITY: THE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP
SERVICE PROJECT (GLSP)**

As can be seen in the article by Joy Beatty in this special issue, themes related to the public service-oriented experiential education tool commonly referred to today as “service-learning” have been incorporated into university-based education programs for over 100 years. In today’s educational environment, service-learning is being applied across all levels of education, across numerous disciplines ranging from accounting to zoology, and in countries around the world. Somewhat uniquely, as will be described in the project below, service-learning enhances not only acquisition of skills, but serves to broaden and deepen students’ civic and social as well as personal and professional knowledge sets. Service-learning itself finds its heritage in a multiplicity of issues and concerns about higher education, with discussion centering upon increasing the societal relevance of education and educational institutions, increasing students’ perceived relevance of education, and enhancing all aspects of the development of students’ lifelong learning skills.

The principal aim of this portion of the article is to expose readers to a case study model for implementing service-learning in management education programs through a Global Leadership and Service Project (GLSP) design. The outline for this case study section of the article is as follows. First, service-learning is defined and various models of practice are briefly discussed. Second, the GLSP model is contextualized as an evolved form of generalized service-learning. Third, the history and details of the GLSP concept are described. And, finally, a model for developing GLSPs through well-structured university-community partnerships in other locations around the world is presented.

Service-Learning Defined

To date in the literature, there are numerous, well-cited, and substantive yet varied definitions of service-learning. As a result, when discussing service-learning implementation, it is critical to present the definition that best matches one's own program design. The definition that we use to explore the central tenets of GLSP design is a compilation of definitions drawn from the extant literature. It is as follows: *service-learning is a pedagogical technique focused on enhancing learning advancing community interests and promoting citizenship education through the students' experiential activities service in and to the community* (see related definitions in Campus Compact, 2003; Godfrey, et al., 2005; Hogner, 1996; Kenworthy-U-Ren and Peterson, 2005; Middleton, 2006; Morton and Trope, 1996). The adapted definition provided above was designed to contextualize service-learning using the following principles:

1. *Andragogically-grounded*: Service-learning projects must be integrated into institutionalized learning objectives, these are usually objectives associated with for-credit coursework.
2. *Reciprocally-based*: A focus on reciprocity drawing upon both student and community interests is maintained by focusing on both student learning and on advancing community interests and through integrating all stakeholders into the planning, implementation, and assessment of projects.
3. *External to classroom*: Service-learning is developed to enhance student learning by experiences in civic activities that take place outside of the walls of the classroom, thus providing an experiential context and relevance for "classroom" learning and a deepening appreciation of a community and its political, social, economic, or moral issues.

4. *Community interest focused*: Service-learning experiences advance community interests through focusing on social justice issues.
5. *Aimed at enhancing democracy*: Service-learning experiences enhance democracy through the deepening and broadening of students' social discourse as well as the integration of a focus on the responsibilities inherent to community membership. Community is strengthened.
6. *Designed as a learning-based experiential enterprise*: Service-learning must reinforce targeted student learning through the incorporation of a shared, reflective component.

Service-learning thus combines concepts of *experiential learning* (i.e. enhancing learning through “hands-on” applications) and *active learning* (i.e. activities chosen to enhance socially, politically, economically, and morally relevant community interests). As a result, and as indicated above in the tips for designing effective partnerships, service-learning projects should be aligned the host university's strategic plans. In the case of the GLSP model we present, originally run through the Florida International University in Miami, Florida, USA, the project met criteria drawn from the university's College of Business Administration's *Civic Engagement Initiative*, a program that institutionalizes an effort to develop civic engagement as an organizational niche for the College. At the university level, these projects and the Civic Engagement Initiative were integral to the University adopting local, regional and global civic engagement as part of its own strategic plan.

To be effective, it is not enough to map the university's interests to the service-learning project. As described above, and as in the case of the GLSP, when service-

learning projects are designed with a partner-oriented focus, they serve a multitude of interests and stakeholders. Table 1 provides a representative list of the types of interests that have the potential to be addressed through effective and sustainable service-learning project design.

<Insert Table 1 About Here>

Noting the above, a successful and sustainable service-learning program or project thus depends upon overlapping these strategic interests. If this is done, the principal stakeholders, or those interested in them, will work to ensure the service-learning project's long-term viability.

Global Leadership and Service Projects: An Evolutionary Perspective

The concept of a Global Leadership and Service Project is an evolving one; indeed at any point in time several elements are being redesigned, reworked, adapted, and developed. As such, the form described here is a current snapshot of the organic and constantly changing program design. However, this form itself was the result of an evolutionary process which can be traced back to four principal developments that occurred at the host institution, Florida International University, during the years 2002-2009.

The GLSP emerged from the idea of having a college or institutional wide commitment to civic engagement. The Civic Engagement Initiative (CEI) in the College of Business Administration at Florida International University was designed to institutionalize service-learning within the college and enhance individual, classroom, and college-wide civic involvement with local, regional, and global communities. Separate engagement activities of this type have always been a part of the College since it

was formed in 1972 yet there was never an institutional “hub” for them prior to the CEI. When the CEI was initiated, it became a visible signal of the College’s efforts to tie its mission and goals with community involvement and service. A wide variety of service-learning type projects were developed under this initiative. As a direct result of the CEI, today, the College is seen locally and nationally as a leader in this “market niche.” It may be noted that the graduate school and the undergraduate college of the College of Business Administration (CBA) are both named for benefactors who supported the College’s work in ethics and social/civic involvement. With respect to GLSP support and embeddedness, such a commitment allows for planning and engagement at a programmatic level.

Second, in 2003 the International Business Honors Program was established. This was designed as a partnership between The Honors College and the CBA to develop a high quality management program that was based upon developing graduates’ analytical and writing skills within an undergraduate BBA program. It was designed to integrate civic responsibility as part of this management education program. The result was a BBA program with both a senior thesis requirement and a community service requirement.

Third, serendipity *is* as serendipity *does*. In an unrelated meeting with the then director of Chulalongkorn University’s International BBA Program, and with the internal CBA’s operational challenge of institutionalizing the IBH’s service requirement, a meeting took place where the Chulalongkorn University administrator raised issues of their own BBA students’ service projects and how to institutionalize them. The outcomes of that meeting were the formation of a Chulalongkorn IBBA Service Club, now called “ConnexxUs” and the idea for a Miami-based community service project in Bangkok for

the IBH Program. In a subsequent meeting with another colleague from Bangkok, the topic of the Klong Toey (Bangkok) community school arose, and the Bangkok 2005 Service Project at Klong Toey idea was born.

Finally, during the fall of 2004, IBH students formed the International Business Honor Society (IBHS). IBHS was the first collegiate honor society for international business and quickly took on the role for implementing the Bangkok service project during “Spring Break 2005.” IBHS oversaw fundraising, cultural awareness and education skills training, service orientation, and leadership development projects for the Bangkok 2005 participants.

Thus, as developed for the Spring 2005 project, GLSP-Bangkok was fulfilling the following objectives: (1) expand the existing *Civic Engagement Initiative* to an international level; (2) provide a high-profile service project for the IBHS; (3) offer an appropriate leadership and service project for International Business Honors BBA students; and (4) develop a signature project for the FIU’s undergraduate international business programs.

Training for GLSPs start months before each project takes place, continuing through the day before the project starts at the site location. For the Bangkok GLSP, students received cultural and language training, team building exercises, education and classroom management training, as illustrated in Figure 1. Much of this training was organized by the University’s Volunteer Action Center, a university center for increasing the level of civic engagement by students, classes, staff, and faculty.

<Insert Figure 1 About Here>

In March 2005, twenty-four undergraduate IBHS member-students, a faculty advisor and a graduate assistant participated in a ten-day service project in Bangkok. Twenty of the students worked five full days at the Klong Toey school. Four students worked for the five local engagement days at Bangkok's Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women (APSW).

In the following December, two of the Bangkok GLSP participants (IBHS BBA students) developed and managed a GLSP project in Nicaragua. For this GLSP, twenty-two students participated in a two week project at two rural orphanages.

In March 2006, twenty-six students participated in GLSP Bangkok 2006. They were accompanied by a Ph.D. student and a MBA student. Six of the undergraduates worked with approximately fifty-six Chulalongkorn students at a new site, the Children's Creativity Foundation, four worked at the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women, and the remainder at the Klong Toey school, partnered with ten students from the English Club at Bangkok's Rajabhat Chandrakasem University. It was at this point that the IBHS students created their first official outreach materials describing the programs on offer (see Appendix 1).

Three GLSPs took place during the 2006-2007 academic year. *Business Students Saving Lives* (see www.fiu.edu/~bssl) was a program where students worked to collect funds for *Salva Mi Vida*, a pediatric cancer clinic and foundation in Honduras. A second project called *Nicaragua December of Dreams*, a GLSP in Nicaragua, was repeated. It should be noted the BSSL project is not a direct experiential project in Honduras, but rather a local South Florida fund raising project operation designed to GLSP standards and partnered with the IBHS. Although the students did not travel to Honduras, their in-

depth research, contact with others, communication with the partner organization, lessons learned, and overall impact provided a rich learning experience as well as the template for a sustainable service-learning project.

The Bangkok GLSP was repeated in 2007, 2008, and 2009. The project maintained a partnership with Rajabhat Chandraksem University and its English Club students. It also maintained three years of partnering with Bahn Rajavadee, a public center for the care and development of mentally-challenged students, and with the two daycare sites of the Foundation for the Care of the Slum Child. In 2008, the Bangkok GLSP hosted a participant observer from another business school in the USA. This school's international business program held a 2009 GLSP in China and is planning a 2010 GLSP in Bangkok. It is important to point out that program design for each of the GLSPs involves local community partner input. GLSP program implementation also includes continuous feedback from both students and community partner representatives as we believe that communication and reciprocal learning are paramount to GLSP success.

Global Leadership and Service Projects: A Service-learning Perspective

As noted earlier, service-learning enterprises traditionally embrace five dimensions: (1) a classroom-based learning context; (2) reciprocity with the community; (3) extra-university, community based activity; (4) a social justice component; and (5) a student reflection component necessary for solidifying the learning experience. GSLPs with their service-learning parentage maintain these dimensions, with the exception of a traditional classroom-based learning context. As will be seen below, that context

expands significantly in GLSPs , broadening and deepening each project's potential andragogical value.

Classroom Based Learning Context

In an andragogical sense, every service-learning project moves learning *outside* the classroom. Indeed, the inherent value of service-learning is in its extra-classroom learning opportunities. Students bring community experiences into the classroom which allows them to integrate, then transcend, their knowledge into traditional classroom-based learning. This is at the same time they are bringing classroom-based knowledge to the GLSP and to the community.

GLSPs maintain learning as their primary focus by setting the goal of developing students who are majoring in business and organizational sciences programs into global business and community leaders. The GLSP model integrates classroom-based learning in the functional business areas (including a focus on the skills necessary to plan and manage the project) with knowledge and insight into the inner workings of community organizations and their accompanying civic, social, and moral issue agendas. GLSPs, when designed well, bring together a wide cultural, academic, and ethnic mix of students to facilitate exploration and understanding of diversity. For example, most of the FIU GLSPs have involved students from numerous disciplinary bases drawn from across the university, including majors ranging from Finance and Accounting to Psychology and Criminal Justice. Additionally, the FIU GLSPs are designed to target students from diverse cultural backgrounds and have included students from all over the world including Cuba, Egypt, Haiti, Monaco, Thailand, and Uruguay (to name a few). With this diversity-focused design model, discipline- and ethnically-diverse students in a

GLSP must learn not only to work together, but from each other. Students learn not only from technical experience, but also and perhaps more importantly, from the differing manner others use to approach these experiences. Individual students entering a GLSP, each with their own community and discipline experiences and world view, become teachers to “the others” in their GLSP team. Figure 2 illustrates this learning focus of successful GLSPs.

<Insert Figure 2 About Here>

Community Reciprocity

At each GLSP site, the community agencies and university partners share planning for the project. In that manner, the enterprise is designed from the beginning to reflect a shared understanding and equal balance of learning-based and community-attainment oriented objectives. In some cases, initial student developed ideas were rejected after review by site representatives. In other cases, site leader plans were adjusted or dismissed after hearing about student ideas and needs. And finally, as was indicated in the front portion of this article, all engaged partner stakeholders share in each project’s final assessment and evaluation.

GLSPs as Extra-University Activity

The plans for GLSP sites are deliberately chosen to be at non-university locations. In the case of Nicaragua, the sites were in two rural villages. In Bangkok, many of the sites are in the substandard housing areas, including the well-known “Klong Toey.” The other Bangkok site is in a centralized location near the airport serving both children from low-income families and children who are mentally-challenged. The public-private

Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women is near Bangkok's (old) airport and is affiliated with the Bangkok city government.

GLSPs as Social Justice Agents

There are three ways in which social justice is enhanced through the operation of GLSPs. First, the agencies chosen for GLSPs are social justice focused. As a fundamental component of the GLSP projects, an overarching goal is to have the organization's mission and strength enhanced. Second, clients of these agencies have their needs better met through the collaborative work of our students and the local community members. Finally, each GLSP experience for its student participants is in many ways a life changing event. One GLSP organizer reflected, "All that needs to happen is that one...**one**...of our participants after graduation is in a position to make a decision drastically affecting people's lives in a negative way, and that student says: 'wait a minute, those are people we are doing this to.'"

GLSPs as Vehicles for Personal Reflection

As reflection is a central tenet of all service-learning projects, each participant in a GLSP is required to produce a Personal Reflection Journal. This journal is composed during each day of the GLSP and contains students' notes on the meaning of that day's experiences. They are also asked to reflect on what surprised them that day and why they were surprised. These journals are collected at the conclusion of each GLSP.

Representative student reflections, from both FIU students and local Thai students working with the Bangkok 2008 GLSP include:

The strategic value that GLSP gave me as professional is definitely the understanding of the different cultures that we can find all over the world. It is also to understand

that there are different ways of living and doing businesses but this concept is sometimes ignored by us and this is why we see companies failing to do good jobs in other parts of the world and why some products are never successful in other countries. I have to say that I gained more on my human than professional side because the disabled kids at Rawajadee deeply touched my heart and made me realize how I do not value enough all the benefits that I receive everyday. Not only that but I learned about my capabilities and my ability to leave myself behind in order to work for others and for their benefit. I also developed my teamwork and leadership skills (I was a site leader) by working with people I had never talked to and I did not have a personal relationship with but at the end by working together for a great cause we bond in an unimaginable way. (FIU student)

After this experience I realized that I want to take on a profession for myself that is profitable as it is fulfilling. In this age of shrinking disconnections between entire cultures and markets, I realize that the decisions I make are going to have a ripple effect on people around the world, especially in the mass media industry. All in all I feel I there is a greater purpose to my existence and I want to express that in the work I choose to dedicate myself and my time to. (FIU student)

This is my first time to join with this project. At first I felt excited and also worried that I can't communicate with the foreigner friend and how I can adapt myself with foreigners. After I joined the project and saw the Thai and Foreign friends I was able

to adjust a little bit and started to develop a good relationship with my new friends.

(translation of Thai language from journal of Rajabhat (CRU) student)

This project is a very good project, kha. It is good in the following ways: (1) The student have a chance to exchange language and culture, (2) We give opportunities to the disabled children, (3) We see another corner of life with another group of people which is impressive and, (4) It is very important that we get good friends who speak a different language but we can still communicate with each other. (translation of Thai language from another student's journal from Rajabhat (CRU))

Finally, as should be a part of any effective partnership program, it is important to elicit and process comments and feedback from partner organization staff. Representative comments from local staff at two different sites during the Bangkok 2008 GLSP include:

FBLC has a good feeling about this activity. Every time the FIU students come to do this activity, every activity has usefulness to our children. Exchanging and having activities with each other and (our local) students learn a new language... I feel very happy that the students give their interest to work this project... The FIU students show interest to be a giver to the community. We welcome every student to come back to work with FBLC again. (staff member at FBLC)

This project is a very good project. We got a chance to exchange experience with each other and to give good feelings to each other. The children received and

touched the love by the people who, even though different in language and culture, can communicate with their mind. Thank you to whom it may concern and hope that we can join the programs again in the future. (staff member at Baan Rajawadee)

In the end, students are different because of any experience, but particularly those experiences that provide interactions within unknown environments. Reflecting upon intensive interaction with those once considered "others" changes not only a student's specific understanding of those people he or she came into contact with, but offers the opportunity to question the socially-constructed boundaries between self and other. A successful GLSP project has students reconstructing the past and the present, thus broadening the possibilities for constructing the reality and the humanity of their future. Why do we say this? Well, across the many GLSPs that have now taken place, there was a student from Niger....there was a Serbian student... there was a Venezuelan-Ukrainian student... there was a student from Florida (you get our point here). Each student was different, but they all recollected after a GLSP. Each, in specifics relative to his or her own pre-GLSP experiences explained that the "others" of their youth now had to be understood in a different manner. This is the type of learning we should all be striving for – learning that changes the lenses through which students see the world thus making a positive difference in how students see and interact with the world around them.

Connecting People through GLSPs: Conclusion

Global Leadership and Service Projects (GLSPs) represent an innovative and promising adaptation of experiential-based community service activity to undergraduate

international business education. Developing a successful and sustainable GLSP requires several organizational and personal resources. These are listed in Appendix 2. Not to be underestimated, and not to be left unsaid, any successful GLSP is at its essence an outcome of a social organizing process. As such, empowering participants means students and those partners being “served” by the project must all be engaged in the design of, and exercise some control over the execution of, the project. Stated simply, that means not only making resources available, but also trusting the organizational partner representatives and involved students to produce an exciting and successful enterprise. In the end, all of the engaged participant partners in a GLSP plan, organize, implement, and manage a community-based service-learning project that: (1) meets the standards of effective management techniques, (2) incorporates classroom-based theoretical concepts linked to experience via reflection, (3) provides an experiential and international learning experience incorporating real-world based lessons in civic responsibility, interconnectedness, and the human dimensions of globalization, and (4) embeds explicit and implicit messages about the importance of developing effective and sustainable partner organization-focused programs – with the underlying message that non-profit and charitable organizations and their clients, staff, and members, located in any and all corners of the world, are equal members of our global community.

As the GLSP programs above aptly illustrate, today’s university-community partnerships should be much more than one-time visits or one-off interactions – they should have a clear focus on sustainability via long-term, positive and reciprocally-based relationships. Barbara Jacoby (2003b) calls this “the engaged campus” and notes that for a truly engaged campus/community relationship both parties must have common interests,

responsibilities, privileges and power where “partnership synergies” are the result. Partnership programs like the GLSP prepare students to become leaders to navigate, lead, and meet the demands of our changing times. This reflects the pinnacle of business education practice by acknowledging the legitimacy of concerns beyond profit-making, such as social justice, and how the well-being of people is the foundation for the long-term well-being of business.

Given today’s environmental uncertainty, and the promise of carefully constructed service-learning partnership projects, the challenge put forth for readers of this article is to utilize the resources and ideas presented above to either collaboratively re-examine existing or thoughtfully initiate new university-community partnerships. In today’s global, interconnected, constantly changing, and wholly unscripted partnership-based environment, we have no choice but to move forward... together.

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Table 1: Stakeholder Interests in Service-Learning

Stakeholder Sphere	Stakeholder	Specific Interests Potentially Enhanced
Community	Agency or Organization	Providing needed volunteer labor; increasing awareness of agency goals activities and stakeholder interests; enhancing leadership and effectiveness for agency through new information, skills, and technology
	Social Justice	Broadening and deepening community relationships and communications (<i>discourse</i>); addressing community problems
	Democracy	Melding organization with society's political, social, political, economic, and moral issues
University	Administration	Providing positive exposure of university in media and with community; developing interests; increasing the quality of student recruiting; facilitating employee, faculty, and students experiencing a positive sense of university well-being
	Faculty	Opening the classroom to new information; providing research opportunities; heightening promotion, tenure, and raise opportunities; creating positive classroom experience; enhancing relevance of career
	Students	Illustrating relevance of learning objectives; creating a positive identification with college/university; increasing the potential for a sense of worthwhile education; facilitating personal development, moral development, leadership and management skill development

Appendix 1: The FIU International Business Honor Society's (2006) description of its Global Leadership and Service Project

The Global Leadership and Service Project (GLSP) is an initiative by the International Business Honor Society (IBHS) at Florida International University. It is an international community service opportunity for globally focused students that are dedicated to helping others.

Our mission is to manage and implement global leadership and service projects that promote the growth and development of young professionals by engaging them in international community service. Our desire is offer a substantial contribution to the community while leaving a positive impact on people and organizations that might otherwise not have the opportunity. We also strive to add value to Florida International University.

The purpose of the project itself is twofold. Firstly, students develop a profound awareness of the importance of civic responsibility through experiential learning. Experiential learning is the further enhancing the development of skills taught in the classroom through hands on applications and real life experiences. Secondly, students explore themselves as they enhance or develop new skills, challenge themselves in striving to meet goals and become sensitive to the importance of the "global citizen."

These objectives are accomplished through many levels of development. One aspect of it is achieved in the collaboration of the different sites with partner universities in the destination country. Students from the different universities work hand in hand to achieve the goals set for each site. Another level is developing their knowledge through readings that encourage awareness and by maintaining a journal for introspection. In addition, students develop their leadership and apply knowledge learned of international business through strategic planning for their site and corporate presentations. Some of the skills employed include project management, budgeting, marketing, and organizational behavior.

This year the GLSP has two projects. One is in Nicaragua and the other is in Bangkok, Thailand. Within these projects there are different sites that address some of the major global issues that affect many people throughout the world. They range from education to women's rights and disease awareness.

Students participating in the GLSP will be immersed in a cultural, leadership, and service-learning environment which will cultivate their skills in becoming the global leaders of tomorrow. Ultimately, the end result is a worldwide partnership of students and professionals alike.

Appendix 2: A Beginner’s Guide to Developing a Successful and Sustainable Global Leadership and Service Project

These Necessary Elements or Actions	Have this Function
An organizational mission supportive of GLSP	Provides meaning for organizers, participants, and resource providers
A supportive community, university or college environment	A ready source of internal and external resources and rewards for the project and organizers
A student organization which “naturally” relates to the GLSP	A source of resources, power and interest for year-to-year sustainability
Leaders with the vision and interest in the GLSP	Ongoing leadership for sustainability and success
Trusted relationships at GLSP site or location.	Facilitates planning and reciprocal relationship building
Logistical opportunities for GLSP	GLSP scheduling during Spring Break, vacations, etc.
Organizational culture supporting social, civic responsibility in business	Facilitating, not opposing, environment