

## **Service Learning Guidelines for Students in GSS 3121**

GSS 3121 – Women in Leadership (WIL) is a course designed to help students focus on gender issues that either propel or hinder the ability of women to effectively take on leadership roles in business, government and other endeavors. The ideal service learning experience for students electing this option for the GSS 3121 class will provide an opportunity for the student to observe first-hand the daily trials and tribulations of a woman leader. It is expected that WIL students placed with agencies will be assigned to work with, report to and have frequent contact with women leaders. The work they perform on behalf of the agency is less important to their learning experience than the direct contact with a woman leader, so this should be the primary criterion for matching the WIL students to appropriate assignments.

Some of the ways in which the students can gain the experience desired and make a valuable contribution to the agency's work are suggested below:

- Working as an assistant to a woman in a leadership role (executive director or other key management role) the student can take minutes of meetings, maintain the calendar for appointments, and perform other supportive tasks to help the woman leader.
- With direction from the woman leader, the student can take an active part in planning and coordinating special events for the constituents of the agency.
- The student might attend board meetings, town hall meetings, or other smaller meetings as an observer.
- Whatever tasks the woman leader can delegate to the student that would otherwise fall to the woman leader will provide good experience on the range of work the leader would regularly perform.

Any work performed with or on behalf of the constituents of an agency will also be acceptable tasks for the students, provided ample interaction and feedback from the woman leader is provided.

## **Service Learning Option for GSS 3121-091 Women in Leadership:**

Students may elect to do a Service Learning project in lieu of the research project. All other assignments and course requirements remain the same. The Service Learning experience requires

- 30 hours volunteer service at a not-for-profit or government agency where students will be assigned to work with/for a woman in a leadership role. The Work/Study Guidelines provide guidance on what the recommended and acceptable workload for students should be.
- Students must also maintain a Blackboard personal journal to record their dates and times of service and the tasks performed at each visit. A Discussion Topic Journal, private to the student and Professor Vito only, will be provided for this purpose. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the journal is requested once the paperwork for the Service Learning assignment has been completed.
- Students will write a reflection paper based on experiences encountered and how the students' perspectives may have been changed by them. A list of questions for reflection is provided as guidance on how students might approach their consideration of the experience for both themselves and for the agencies they serve.
- Students will also prepare a Power Point slide show to highlight their experiences for other students' viewing and present the slides during an in-class reflection on their experience. The slides should incorporate photos of the agency site and/or web based details about the agency. It should be presented in good form for viewing as a slide show with a visually appealing format and easy to read slides, and must also be posted to the Blackboard for viewing by students and guest discussants of the class.

- Students must attend one group reflection session conducted by the Director of Service Learning with students from across the curriculum. As there are many scheduled sessions during the semester, students should find several that fit their schedules so that alternative options exist if their first choice time slot becomes inaccessible for any reason. Service Learning students are admonished to attend an early session and not wait until the last few sessions, which often wind up cancelled for various reasons as the semester winds down. Failure to attend a reflection session results in an “I” incomplete grade for the semester until the session gets attended in the following semester. This can be particularly troublesome for graduating seniors.
- The Service Learning assignment is considered the equivalent time commitment of the research project, which is expected to include extensive research, reading and writing about the selected subject. Students doing the Service Learning option do it in lieu of the research project.

## **Reflection Papers -- Questions to Answer:**

1. When you started your service-learning experience, what motivated you to choose that option? Did your feelings about motivation for service learning change during the time you did your service?
2. What did you learn from the service-learning experience that might not have been a similar learning experience in an ordinary internship in your field?
3. Were there role models and/or mentors in the service-learning environment for which you developed an admiration? Did they add to your motivation to serve?
4. When attending the reflection sessions at RSC, did you find your service-learning experiences very different from that described by other students in other disciplines? How so and why do you think that is the case?
5. Would you recommend the service-learning experience to others? Why or why not?
6. What valuable skills or values did you acquire through your service-learning?
7. Can you quantify the way(s) in which you added value to the organization you served? Could someone else have done your work as easily and made as much of a contribution? Will the agency regret losing you when your service is done? Or be glad they don't have to "find things for you to do"?
8. How might the service-learning experience have been improved for you? For the agency?
9. Did you feel you served as a goodwill ambassador for Richard Stockton College and helped to build bridges to the community? How? If not, why not? How might you have improved on that image?
10. What would make the service-learning component more meaningful for you? For the agency? For the agency's constituency? For the professor?