

Service-learning in Christian Higher Education:
Bringing Our Mission to Life

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Abstract

The purpose of the study reported in this paper was to develop a working definition of service-learning, identify the best practices of service-learning in the context of Christian colleges and universities and, based upon that information, develop a model for replication. The study undertaken included: (a) examination of the findings of unpublished data from a survey on service-learning at 90 Christian colleges and universities and notes from a conference on service-learning at faith-based institutions; (b) conducting a thorough review of the literature on service-learning and the mission and purpose of Christian higher education; and (c) interviewing practitioners from seven Christian colleges or universities that met prescribed criteria for best practices in service-learning. A content analysis resulted in a comprehensive definition of service-learning, key elements of best practices in service-learning and a model which incorporates eight guidelines for Christian colleges and universities to use in developing a service-learning program. The comprehensive definition incorporates characteristics from previous definitions, but includes an added component of institutional support for service-learning. The best practices in service-learning in Christian higher education corroborate this finding and include key elements. The model for designing a service-learning program at a Christian college builds further upon the definition and best practices and includes eight guidelines. The model guidelines are meant to address both the philosophical and practical implications in designing an effective service-learning course and program in Christian institutions of learning. The data from this study strongly suggest that Christian colleges and universities should implement service-learning as a means of furthering their faith-based mission through the curriculum.

Introduction

Given their mission and philosophy, Christian colleges and universities should be institutions that use service-learning as a means to benefit the greater society and produce graduates committed to lives of service. Service-learning has been proven effective in meeting many of the objectives of Christian education but many Christian colleges and universities are either not using it or doing so insufficiently.

The Christian institution as a member of academia maintains as its primary purpose the development of intellectual growth among its students (DeJong, 1992). The emotional well-being of the students is also considered. Christian institutions are concerned with the affective domain of personality, psychological health, self-esteem, and maturity that are part of the emotional development of the student (Sandin, 1982). However, the distinguishing mark of the Christian college or university is the interest and emphasis upon the spiritual development of the student (Smith, 1996). As Sandin (1982) states, “the concerns of the Christian college in the area of theological knowledge, values clarification, and spiritual development inspire the hope that the education offered is something finer, more holistic, and more inclusive than is available at other types of institutions” (p. 44). Finally, the Christian college or university should prepare students to be active and engaged members of society (Benne, 2001). DeJong (1992) explained more fully when he stated, “the responsible citizenship advocated by church-related colleges seeks to pursue understanding across human, geographical, and cultural boundaries by shaping attitudes and behaviors that make for world peace” (p. 25). Holmes (1975) elaborated further: “the Christian college embodies a strategy for Christian involvement in the life of the mind and the life of a culture” (p. 116).

Service-learning fits this paradigm of the Christian college or university for several reasons. It is an effective learning tool as demonstrated in numerous studies which have shown positive outcomes in students’ GPA, writing skills, critical thinking skills and understanding of course content (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996). Service-learning enables students to participate in service to those in need, which is an integral component of the Christian faith (Longstroth, 1987), and reflect upon their experience in a manner which encourages emotional and spiritual questioning and growth (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fenzel & Leary, 1997). Gordon Smith (1996), in his research on spiritual formation in the academy, stated:

Spiritual formation happens when there are activities designed for specific ends in the formation of character that complement the formal academic program. Spiritual formation within the academic setting is most effective when the classroom is both affirmed and complemented, and where vital elements of the spiritual life are nurtured, taught and encouraged in settings other than the classroom. There is nothing quite like service to test the inner person and potentially inform not only our spiritual growth but also the classroom. There is a strong awareness of the interconnection of field experience with classroom reflection. (p. 3)

Service-learning prepares students for citizenship and social responsibility. Alexander Astin (1993) stated that service-learning is the most effective means of educating students “who understand and appreciate not only how democracy is supposed to work but also their own responsibility to become active and informed participants in it” (p. 24). Due to the reciprocal nature of service-learning, the participants develop a deeper understanding of social issues and how values, beliefs, and norms are socially constructed (Jacoby, 1996). Consequently, service-learning provides a venue for students to integrate Christian thought and action.

Christian institutions possess many attributes that naturally foster an environment for easy integration of service-learning, including: an emphasis on teaching over research, smaller class sizes, and a values-centered curriculum and co-curriculum (Bayless, 1997; Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999). This structure allows for close student and faculty relationships that can be enhanced through the collaborative process inherent in service-learning while also creating a dynamic holistic learning experience for all involved. Finally, Christian colleges and universities should be recognized as religiously affiliated organizations that express their faith commitment through serving others (Benne, 2001; Holmes, 1975). Arthur DeJong (1992) articulated this concept more clearly when he stated:

Community service is a fundamental component of responsible citizenship. A Christian view of life ostensibly leads to a visible commitment to one's neighbors. Rooted in a vision of the Kingdom of God, religiously affiliated institutions exhort their participants to be humble in sharing with and caring for other persons. (p. 24)

Service-learning requires the university community to work in partnership with the greater community to address the needs of both parties thus developing an important and necessary relationship based on service.

Because the relationship between service-learning and the mission of the Christian colleges and universities is apparent, why are many Christian institutions not embracing service-learning as a priority within their curriculum? The reasons for this has included lack of resources in conjunction with low administrative and faculty support (Wutzdorff & Giles, 1997) and many people within these institutions not being knowledgeable about service-learning and thus not recognizing the effectiveness of the pedagogy for Christian institutions in particular (Eby, 1996; Oats, 1995). Of those that have used service-learning in their curriculum, the number of classes and opportunities has been significantly lower than that at secular institutions (Wutzdorff & Giles, 1997). It has been surprising, considering the mission of Christian colleges and universities, that Christian institutions have not been demonstrating a greater commitment to service-learning within their curriculum than secular institutions (Caron, 1999).

To further complicate matters, service-learning is a relatively new field and not clearly defined. As of 1990 over 147 variations of definitions of service-learning existed (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Consequently, many at both Christian and secular institutions have been using the term service-learning as an umbrella term for programs that are actually internships, field work, or volunteer efforts (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Howard, 1998). In such cases the accomplishments of the programs have been hindered in terms of potential effectiveness since they did not encompass the attributes proven necessary for a service-learning course to meet its intended goals and impact student learning (Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

Method

To address the issues regarding service-learning and Christian higher education, the author examined the findings of unpublished data of 90 private Christian colleges and universities from a population of 239 surveyed (Schaffer, 2000). The purpose was to determine the current knowledge and practices with regards to service-learning among private colleges and universities. The author also conducted a thorough review of the literature on service-learning and higher education. Based upon the findings from the surveys and literature review, seven private colleges that exemplified "best practices" in service-learning were identified and interviewed. The subjects were those institutions that met the

following criteria: (a) had an established service-learning program at their institution which had at least one full-time staff person (who was the contact for the interview); (b) the service-learning program must have utilized at least six of the seven characteristics identified in the literature as necessary for effective service-learning programs (which are outlined later in this article); and (c) the service-learning program must have been cited or recognized for its effectiveness outside of the college or university (through participation in a research study or cited in a service-learning or higher education publication).

The interviews were transcribed and a content analysis was performed with the use of an interrater and the findings tabulated. Based upon the results, a summary was made of the data and conclusions were drawn to address the research purposes.

Results

Defining Service-learning. The primary phase of the methodology enabled the researcher to determine a definition of service-learning based upon the literature review and subsequent studies in program development for service-learning. The researcher examined 70 research articles or texts on program characteristics of *effective* service-learning in which seven characteristics were deemed “significant”. In order for a characteristic to be considered significant it had to be identified in at least 30% of the 70 articles examined. The researcher also considered the findings of the surveys and program interviews of “best practices” institutions when formulating the definition. What resulted was the following comprehensive definition: Effective service-learning takes place when: (a) the service is tied to the learning objectives of a course, (b) the community is involved in the teaching and learning process, (c) the service performed by the students meets a need that is identified by the community, (d) guided reflection, both oral and written, is required of the students, (e) the service performed is meaningful and appropriate for the course, (f) there is assessment and evaluation of student learning and the service-learning program, and (g) the institution (college or university) provides support and incentive for service-learning.

This comprehensive definition integrated previous explanations proposed by Howard (1998) and Kendall (1990), but incorporated an added dimension of institutional support. This seventh characteristic of institutional support was not only prevalent in the literature review, where it was stated by 33% of the sources, but also in the institutional interviews. As this article later explains, the responses in this area were significant and considered a necessary attribute in order for an institution to truly be able to have an effective service-learning program.

The program interviews with practitioners from Christian colleges and universities with best practices in service-learning corroborated many of the characteristics used in this definition. For instance, 86% of the respondents stated that the service should be tied to the learning objectives of a course (point 1 in the definition) and 71% stated that the service should meet a community need and that the community should be involved in the process (points 3 and 4 in the definition). Reflection was mentioned by 42% of the respondents (point 4 in the definition) and much discussion was given to the importance of designing purposeful service and the crucial role of institutional support (points 5 and 7 in the definition). Forty-three percent discussed the importance of meaningful work and ensuring that the service provided connections to the course content (point 5 in the definition). As a result, the comprehensive definition was supported by the literature review and the comments from the program interviews.

Best Practices of Service-Learning. The second phase of the methodology was designed to determine the distinguishing characteristics of service-learning in a Christian academic setting and included data from the unpublished survey of Christian colleges and

universities and results of the “best practices” program interviews. Five key elements of what constituted best practices emerged. Fifty percent or more of the colleges or universities included in the program interviews mentioned each of these elements. The elements are presented in no particular order and include the following: (a) Institutional Support, (b) Mission, (c) Definitions and Guidelines, (d) Academic Validity, and (e) Faith and Learning Tool.

Institutional Support. In the program interviews, all (100%) of the respondents stated they had institutional support, which was defined as: operational funds, office space, salaries for at least one full-time staff person and resources for training and workshops. This coincides with the literature review and program interviews. Ed Zlotkowski (1998) and others (Caron, 1999; Mintz & Hesser, 1996; Ward, 1996) discussed specifically in their research the need for the leadership within a college or university to embrace the philosophical and pedagogical reasons for service-learning as a means to be a force for positive change in the campus culture and community. This form of leadership provides the practical resources of facilitating the growth of service-learning on a college campus. Aside from operational and staffing funds, institutional support also included: formal encouragement from the administration to the faculty to integrate service-learning into their courses; resources to aid faculty in coordination, design and evaluation of a service-learning course; and recognition of service-learning as a criteria for rank, tenure, and promotion within the institution. Institutional support legitimized the academic component of service-learning and further communicated its importance within the curriculum and co-curriculum. Not surprisingly, the research found that if the cornerstone of institutional support was lacking, service-learning remained dormant or nonexistent on campuses. As a result, this attribute was included in the comprehensive definition of effective service-learning practices stated previously.

Mission. Coinciding with institutional support was the importance of the mission statement of the organization being an impetus for action. The language of the mission statement and subsequent dedication to the statement were key components of the seven programs interviewed. This corresponds with the literature review, which indicated that most Christian college and university mission statements consisted of the same elements: language on Christian heritage, teaching, research, and service (Holland, 1999; Hughes & Adrian, 1997). Since each word of the statement should have meaning, the mission is a powerful advocate for designing opportunities that engage students and the campus community in fulfillment of the mission. Furthermore, the literature showed that the greatest commitment to service-learning occurred when it was explicitly linked to the mission and thus made a priority within the institution (Wutzdorff & Giles, 1997). The congruence between a mission focused on faith-based service and practice was a foundational component for those colleges considered having best practices since it empowered service-learning to be a tool in fulfilling the mission.

Definitions and Guidelines. The research and interviews revealed that a definition or set of guidelines is needed to clarify the difference between service-learning and other forms of volunteer work. More important, however, was that the interviews and literature review both indicated that in order for service-learning to be effective as a pedagogical tool, a proper working definition and/or guidelines must be followed (Astin et al., 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Zlotkowski, 1998). Seventy-one percent of the respondents interviewed had a definition, written guidelines, and assessment tools designed to assess the effectiveness of the service-learning on their campus. As a result, the service-learning staff was able to ensure the quality of the service provided, that learning took place, and that the service-learning met the intended objectives because guidelines were clearly communicated. Definitions and guidelines are not used for only assuring quality, but also to educate. Eyler and Giles (1999),

found in their extensive research, that one of the barriers to faculty using service-learning was simply not knowing what it is or how to effectively use it.

While determining a definition is helpful in educating people to what service-learning is, the research revealed that there is a greater need for guidelines on how to properly design service-learning. For example, creating a service-learning course and not tying the service directly to the learning objectives of the course will likely reap different learning outcomes than had the service been designed to connect to the objectives of the course. Likewise, for the students to synthesize the service and learning, some form of reflection is needed. If the students do not reflect, they often will not make the connections between their action and learning.

Academic Validity. Typically, what differentiates service-learning from other forms of experiential learning or volunteer work is its connection to course learning objectives. Enos and Troppe (1996) discussed this in their research, stating that service-learning gains its academic credibility based upon the precept that the service must be tied to the learning objectives of the course. Six of the seven colleges interviewed by the researcher have their service-learning program funded by the Academic Affairs portion of their institution and four of the seven report directly to the Chief Academic Officer. The research indicated that if faculty are to embrace service-learning, they must see the validity of the learning component and understand that the greatest learning takes place when there is an intentional connection between the service and learning objectives (Astin et al., 2000; Morton, 1993).

Faith and Learning Tool. The facet of this study that perhaps is most interesting for Christian colleges and universities is the relationship between service-learning and the integration of faith and learning. As the literature review accounted, most Christian colleges and universities have as a primary interest creating a campus culture that combines the acquisition of knowledge and the faith development of the student. The faith-based mission of Christian colleges calls them to this endeavor and yet it is a combination that has been addressed in a fragmented fashion through the curriculum and co-curriculum (Dirks, 1988). This faith perspective is concerned with the students' development of faith as well as an awareness and demonstration of love, peace and humility: all fruits of the spirit (Sandin, 1982).

Service-learning challenges students to consider what they believe as they confront situations and people that may question their motives or beliefs. Such philosophical and emotional challenges foster spiritual growth (Smith, 1996) and studies have shown that service-learning impacts students' spirituality and allows for them to make the connection between their personal faith and values and their service to the community. Therefore, it is not surprising that so many of the respondents in both the unpublished survey (98%) and the formal interviews (100%) believed that service-learning can be used as a tool for integrating faith and learning in the classroom. This coincides with the research that found that Christian colleges want to challenge students to draw parallels between what they experience in the world and how their faith calls them to respond.

When discussing how service-learning may be a tool for faith development, many of the respondents in the interviews pointed to the act of service itself. Service is Christian faith in action and service to the community is a fundamental basis of citizenship and should be an integral part of the students' experience while at the Christian institution. However, many institutions stop here and believe that simply engaging the students in community service is integrating faith development. The literature and respondents felt that service alone is not enough and that spiritual development is fostered in environments where students are challenged philosophically and emotionally and where they can see the relevance of faith in their everyday lives (McNeel, 1991; Parkyn & Parkyn, 1996).

This is where the academic and reflection components play a role. The academic component addresses issues of everyday living and decision-making. The reflection component allows for dialogue not only about the course content and service activity, but also about topics that engages those involved in developing a worldview and faith perspective. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents pointed to the reflection component, coupled with the service, as an opportunity to not only challenge the students philosophically but theologically. Many practitioners created reflection activities and assignments that engaged the students in application of their faith to the course content as well as personal reflection on the relationship between the service, course concepts and their belief system. The various components of service-learning (as seen in the definition) create a rich environment for issues of faith to be nurtured in a course that may not typically be faith-related and therefore generate an even deeper learning opportunity.

A Model for Christian Colleges and Universities

Based upon the scope of the results, eight guidelines were identified that form a model intended to aid in the development of a service-learning program or for use in evaluating an existing program. Many of the guidelines in the model coincide with the five key elements of “best practices” outlined previously, but provide them in a context for overall service-learning program effectiveness. Each guideline in the model builds upon the previous; however, if colleges are already engaged in service-learning the model can be used to assess current practices or in accordance to the specific needs of a campus. Further, the guidelines are meant to address both the philosophical and practical implications in designing an effective service-learning course and program. Each guideline is based upon research and proven effectiveness with consideration given to the distinct mission and purpose of Christian higher education. As a result, the following eight guidelines are recommended as a model for designing an effective service-learning program at a Christian college or university: (a) examine the mission, (b) enlist others, (c) establish a definition, (d) educate and train, (e) develop community partnerships, (f) pilot test, (g) reflect and evaluate, and (h) gain institutional support.

Examine the Mission. The mission of Christian colleges and universities should shape not only the motivation behind wanting to serve, but provide learning opportunities that will challenge and develop students academically, socially, and spiritually. The first guideline is to examine the mission statement of the institution and determine how the college or university is fulfilling the mission through the curriculum and co-curriculum. Questions to consider when reviewing the mission statement include:

- What is the purpose of our mission?
- What intentional activities or experiences are available that will ensure that the students develop a Christian worldview that includes service to others?
- How is faith development explicitly addressed?
- Are only voluntary service and spiritual activities provided?
- What does the mission statement call the college or university to expect of its student’s, campus community and relationship to others?

These are not questions that can necessarily be answered by one person, but perhaps should be the impetus for dialogue with others who may be supportive of service-learning. Through examining the mission and asking these questions, the philosophical reasoning and efficacy of service-learning should be evident and a shared vision can be developed. Ultimately, it is the mission statement that in many cases provides the justification for service-learning and the commitment needed to see an effective program develop.

Enlist Others. When starting a service-learning program, solicit the support of others already involved with effective programs. Many of the respondents interviewed said they developed their program by dialoguing with faculty, staff and students who were already a part of a service club, certain majors, or other volunteer organizations on campus. These are people who should be part of the discussion regarding the mission and purpose of the institution. Once these partnerships begin to develop, recruit people from this group to serve as an advisory board to assist in fulfilling the subsequent guidelines. This board should also be representative of people who may not be currently involved in service, but may be an untapped resource. The advisory board should include faculty from each of the academic divisions, students, and key staff and community members who can provide visibility of the effectiveness of the service-learning program while offering valuable insight and feedback.

Establishing a Definition. A mutually-agreed upon definition of service-learning serves to educate, clarify and communicate the components of an effective service-learning course. Further, a definition will provide the outline for strategic planning and program assessment. Therefore, it is crucial that a definition is established that represents sound principles for designing an effective service-learning program as opposed to just another service opportunity. It should also embody the mission and unique purpose of the institution and therefore may not be exactly the same as the definition at another institution.

The first challenge is to determine what definition a college or university will use. Guidelines must then be developed to ensure correct and consistent implementation of service-learning throughout the institution. This is where an advisory board, even in its initial stages of formation, can be of greatest assistance. The advisory board can revisit previous conversations regarding the mission, adopt a definition and establish written guidelines for designing, implementing and assessing service-learning. Further, the members of the advisory board can communicate the definition and guidelines to their various constituents establishing a baseline expectation for service-learning at their particular college or university. Finally, as stated earlier, a definition provides vision and a foundation from which to strategically build a service-learning program.

Educate and Train. Once interest has been developed and a definition agreed upon, those involved need to be educated and trained. Forty-three percent of the respondents in the interviews moved the faculty from *interest in* service-learning to *implementation of* service-learning by hosting a workshop on campus. Even if only a few faculty are interested, if these individuals can implement effective service-learning classes and have a positive experience they will recruit more faculty in the future. In many cases, the institutions interviewed hired an outside consultant for their first workshop introducing service-learning to their campus. At a few colleges, the consultant spent one to two days educating the participants to exactly what service-learning is, and is not, and how to design, implement and assess service-learning courses and programs. Explanation of how service-learning can be used as a tool in the integration of faith and learning, particular in courses where connections are not so obvious, is also appropriate during the workshop. This is the setting to garner additional support and a shared vision for the potential impact service-learning can have not just in the classroom with the students, but also in the lives of the faculty and community.

Research shows that lack of information about designing service-learning programs is one of the greatest hindrances to faculty involvement. Further, institutional support is much easier to obtain when results clearly show that service-learning is an effective pedagogy and a means for furthering the Christian mission. But to do this, faculty and staff need to be properly educated and trained so that in the future they can conduct the workshops and training to their own colleagues, community partners, and interested staff.

Developing Community Partnerships. Community organizations that receive service from students are important partners in the learning process. It is imperative that people from

the community are involved in the process at two levels: identifying the need for services and designing appropriate service activities. To do this, partnerships need to be developed with people in the community. This can be achieved by enlisting the assistance of those on the advisory board who already have relationships in the community. For example, if the volunteer center already works with several social service organizations, ask for the names of the individuals at those service locations and make initial contacts. These people will already know the college or university, its mission, and hopefully will have had a positive relationship with the students. If they do not have appropriate service needs, they can provide other contacts.

The community partners should also be educated and trained regarding what service-learning is and what their role is in ensuring that a program is effective. Service-learning is different than volunteer work and may require different expectations of the community organization especially if they are used to working with students in simply a volunteer status. It is important that this differentiation is clearly communicated and the established definition and guidelines explained. Regardless, some venue for education, training and dialogue should be established, as the community partners must be able to discuss their needs and how service-learning classes might address those needs. Ideally, faculty members themselves will gather with community partners and discuss their learning objectives to see if there is a need within the community that could connect the learning and service. This could take place during a combined workshop and together the faculty and community members could clarify their roles in designing and implementing an effective service-learning course. With time, those community partners who have a consistent relationship with the college or university should be invited to serve on the advisory board. The goal is to create true partnerships with the community based upon mutual understanding, purpose and service.

Pilot Test. As the previous guidelines come to fruition, it is time to pilot test service-learning courses. When asked about the best way to start a service-learning program, the respondents interviewed said to start with one class or one faculty member. While the temptation is to jump in and pilot a course immediately, it is better to work through the previous guidelines – especially regarding mission and training - before doing so. The ultimate purpose for piloting a class is to establish a foundation from which to learn and grow.

The pilot is not only a test of the service-learning program, but the sincerity of purpose and commitment of those engaged in the design and implementation of service-learning. Service-learning is not contained in a classroom environment where the only implications of a poorly designed pilot program are the disappointment of the faculty and lack of learning for the students. Service-learning has the potential to impact people's lives, both in the community and within the institution, by the quality and attitude of those providing the service. Therefore, the pilot should represent the best efforts of those involved in the planning with the intention of creating an outstanding first impression to the college and community about the legitimacy and power of service-learning.

Reflection and Evaluation. Reflection and assessment are key components of effective service-learning courses and are essential components in designing service-learning programs. The reflection process actually should begin during the first guideline when discussions take place regarding the role service-learning plays in fulfillment of the institution's faith-based mission. The process of reflection and evaluation should continue more formally with the pilot class or courses and be a regular part of a service-learning program. Further, it is through reflection that cognitive and moral development takes place, as those engaged must connect the service and the learning. Therefore, it is an important tool for those involved in the design and implementation process.

The evaluation process focuses on the more tangible aspects of service-learning. It often includes determining if the learning objectives of a course have been met through the service. Evaluations assess actual student learning, and measure the impact the service has had on the community. Again, this is an important aspect of the pilot program. To evaluate the process it is helpful to keep samples of students' work, especially any written work that would document a continuum of thoughts or growth. Examinations, projects, and any evaluation tools should be kept for documentation. The community member(s) should evaluate the process, both in written and oral formats. Based upon the reflection and evaluation process, those involved can make the appropriate changes and determine the direction for a strategic plan for the institutionalization of a service-learning program at a particular college.

Gain Institutional Support. The design and implementation of a service-learning course can be accomplished with few resources. However, if service-learning is going to grow and thrive on a campus it must have fiscal and psychological support. The reality is that financial support rarely comes without evidence that the investment will reap positive outcomes. Indeed, most institutions researched discovered that they gained institutional support *after* they had demonstrated that service-learning was an effective tool on their campus. This underscores the need to implement the previously stated guidelines as a means to becoming prepared and provides a strong argument for institutional support. While institutional support may happen gradually, it should be a pursuit nonetheless to ensure quality and sustainability of service-learning.

Conclusion

What is the role of Christian colleges and universities in our society? The faith-based mission of Christian higher education calls for an expectation to produce students who in some form emulate the Christian mission. Christ said, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (NIV, 1995, Matthew 20:27). Christ also talked of taking care of the hungry, thirsty, strangers, and those in need. If the Christian colleges wish to produce graduates that exemplify the Christian mission, how are they preparing students to do so? Just as Christ was a powerful influence on the world, Christian colleges and universities are in a position to be of great influence in their communities and more so in the lives of their students. The faith-based mission of service gives Christian institutions not only the freedom, but also the obligation, to engage their students in academic development and spiritual, emotional, and moral growth. Service-learning is a tool that can facilitate this process while engaging in Christ's command to serve.

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