



Risk Management in Community-Based Learning

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Community-Based Learning

- *Volunteerism* – student activities where the primary emphasis is to benefit the service recipient
- *Community Service* – volunteerism that helps make a difference in the lives of the recipients
- *Internships* – service activities to give students hands-on experience to enhance learning in a particular area of study
- *Service Learning* – equally intended to benefit both the provider and the recipient of the service. Typically have an academic context; designed so that the service enhances the learning and the learning enhances the service

Risk Issues in Community-Based Learning

- Touches many stakeholders
- Difficult to control
- Inconsistent procedures
- Multiple hazard risks
- International risks
- High Profile

Richard Perry, Marsh Risk Consulting

Recent claims reported @ URMIA*

Example #1

- Student was sent to local theater by professor to help with set decorations
- Amputated finger using table saw
- No health insurance
- No contracts
- No training
- Lawsuit pending against university and theater

* University Risk Management and Insurance
Association (www.urmia.org)

Recent claims reported @ URMIA*

Example #2

- Student service project involved visit to Haiti to assist following a major flood
- Student suffered bleeding ulcers and had to be medically evacuated
- No health insurance for overseas repatriation
- Not part of study abroad program
- Lawsuit pending against university

* University Risk Management and Insurance
Association (www.urmia.org)

Recent claims reported @ URMIA*

Example #3

- Student service project involved doing a census of homeless people in the community
- Normally traveled in pairs, but one student went on his own
- Beaten up badly
- Lost one month of classes
- Student wants all classes to be cancelled and tuition reimbursed

* University Risk Management and Insurance Association
(www.urmia.org)

“Risk Management” needs consideration

- Issue will remain on the forefront
- Requires broad thinking in our engagement work
- Campus Compact and Service-Learning Clearinghouse as hub for resources
- Learning from institutional experience

Case Study: Bowling Green State University (OH)

- “Environmental Scan”
(What is already in place?)
 - Policies
 - Current Resources
 - Internal Experts
 - Accessible Resources off campus

Source: Dr. Jane Rosser, BGSU

Case Study: Bowling Green State University (OH)

- Creating a “Campus Action Plan”
 - Updating Waivers
 - Reviewing system and processes for background checks
 - Articulating clear and accessible travel and transportation guidelines
 - Creating guidelines for service-learning projects

Source: Dr. Jane Rosser, BGSU

Case Study: Bowling Green State University (OH)

- Standards and Systems for the Future
 - What “qualifies” as a service-learning course
 - What is a common community partner agreement with room for flexibility
 - What is the process for assessing potential risks

Source: Dr. Jane Rosser, BGSU

Case Study: Bowling Green State University (OH)

- Lessons Learned
 - Good models exist nationally- don't reinvent the wheel!
- Partnerships can exist both internally and externally
 - Looking to colleagues in Rec Sports, Athletics, Study Abroad, Professional Schools, etc

Source: Dr. Jane Rosser, BGSU

Suggestions for Managing Risk

- **Develop an inventory of all service learning programs at your institution**
- **Categorize each program by degree of risk to students**
 - **Category A – high level of risk exposure (e.g., program involves using powered equipment, travel overseas, work in high crime neighborhoods, etc.)**
 - **Category B – medium level risk exposures (e.g., program involves working with youth groups, elderly groups, travel to sites, etc.)**
 - **Category C- minimal level of risk exposure (e.g., program involves developing a brochure for a local community agency, answering phones, etc.)**
- **Where feasible, require faculty/staff to make an orientation visit to all Category A program sites prior to assigning students**

Source: Richard Perry, Marsh Risk Consulting

Suggestions for Managing Risk Policies, Procedures, and Processes

Site Visits

- Visit with your community partner and talk through the questions posed above.
- Visit the community settings and organizations that your students are likely to be in during their service-learning experience.
- Visit these settings and organizations when your students are there, to gain first-hand knowledge of the situations in which they are serving and learning.
- Meet with your community partners after the service-learning experience has ended, to "debrief" about the experience from the risk management and liability standpoints - what would you do differently next time?

Source: California State University System Website

Suggestions for Managing Risk Policies, Procedures, and Processes

Supervision

- Having adequate supervision on-site and in the community - whether an agency staff member, volunteer, campus faculty or campus staff - will help to create a safe environment for service-learning.
- Be sure that direct supervisors are oriented to risk management and liability issues, in part to assure that the policies of your academic institution and the community partner are being adhered to.

Source: California State University System Website

Suggestions for Managing Risk Policies, Procedures, and Processes

Orientation

Risk management and liability issues should be covered in your program's orientation for participating students, faculty, and community partners. It can be helpful to involve students who have previously completed the service-learning experience as speakers during the orientation.

It is especially important to spend time orienting and training students in safety procedures, potential dangers, and the risk management policies of your school and community partners. When orienting students and community partners, provide a summary handout or handbook with checklists, appropriate forms, and emergency contact information.

Source: California State University System Website

Suggestions for Managing Risk Policies, Procedures, and Processes

Transportation

When the vehicle is either university-owned or operated, or community agency-owned or operated, these practices can minimize risks to both student and driver:

- screen all drivers,
- follow safety precautions,
- develop and implement training for all drivers, ensure all vehicles are safe (with appropriate maintenance schedules),
- When using public transportation, determine the risks of bus, train, subway, walking, etc. and take actions to minimize these risks (e.g., by organizing car pools, pairing students who travel by bus together to the site).

Source: California State University System Website

Suggestions for Managing Risk Policies, Procedures, and Processes

Risk Management Policies and Procedures Manual

- Check downloadable documents online
 - Student-related documents
 - Community partner-related documents
 - Do's and Don't Lists
 - Loss Reporting Files- structures, records, and reports

Source: California State University System Website

Risk Management on the Forefront

- Nonprofits being asked to do exponentially more with exponentially less
 - More issues of risk as less oversight of students.
- Rush to secure available money
 - Question of planning and risk management plan
- Expansion plans of CNCS will pose new challenges to campuses. Do we have answers regarding risk management for challenges?
- Continued growth in popularity of international programs

Engagement throughout the organizations

- Risk management requires the inclusion of non-traditional constituents in engagement work.
 - Increase in visibility
 - Relationships that extend beyond the “traditional” partnership actors
 - Potential for all to be more informed
 - Enhance the leadership skills and visibility of “on the ground” actors

Engagement throughout the organizations

- Directors of Community Service, Service-Learning, Community Partners, Students etc., MUST have a voice in identifying “RISKS.”
 - Work against “sensationalism,” and harmful stereotypes that result when there is minimal engagement or understanding of “the community.”
- Opportunity for educating broader campus about community assets and compelling educational resource of engagement work

Tap your network outside of campus!

- Campus Compact can be a useful starting point for reaching out beyond the campus to learn of current development in risk management.
 - Web resources accessible via www.servicelearning.org
 - Opportunity to help lead a state-wide conversation on best practices
 - Staff can serve as “sounding board” and connection point for more information

Tap your network outside of campus!

- Examples of online resources available RIGHT now!
 - Links to downloadable risk management in service-learning manuals (e.g. Emerson College, California State System)
 - Outlines of policies and rationales
 - Training resources for students
 - Forms and documents useful in process of negotiating the management of risk (student agreements, partnership agreements, waivers, etc.)

Let us know what YOU are up to!

- Sharing your campus information and resources helps create a rich base from which all can benefit!
- Contact NC Campus Compact or send examples via email.