Expanding knowledge and taking responsibility for effecting positive change throughout Texas communities are core values at The University of Texas at Austin. The Academic Service-Learning Program furthers these core values by facilitating the collaboration of students, instructors, and community partners on service projects that are mutually beneficial to the university and its students and to community partners.

**What is Academic Service-Learning?**

Academic service-learning is

- A form of experiential education in which students in a credit-bearing course engage in activities that address community priorities;
- A program of study that integrates service with student learning outcomes; and
- A method of pedagogy in which service and learning are equally important components.

Two critical aspects may distinguish service-learning from volunteerism or an internship.

- **Reflection** activities help students connect what they learn through their service with the theoretical background that is set forth through course materials.
- **Reciprocity** between the organization being served and those engaged in service promotes a sense of mutual responsibility and a situation in which students feel a sense of belonging in the community and community partners feel empowered to bring in students to help meet a priority.

With reciprocity and reflection, the service-learning activity enables students to collaborate with community partners to create sustainable long-term solutions to complex problems.

**Benefits of Academic Service-Learning**

Students, instructors, and community partners may benefit from an academic service-learning course.

- **Students.** Engagement in academic service-learning can enhance students' interpersonal, cognitive, moral, and intellectual development, as well as a sense of civic responsibility. Students may also begin making deep connections between coursework and real-world application in employment or community service.
- **Instructors.** Faculty members have the opportunity to develop courses that facilitate student learning and encourage strong collaborative relationships between students and instructors.
- **Community Partners.** Eager, enthusiastic student learners enable organizations to meet their goals as well as represent the link between the partner and the intellectual resources at The University of Texas at Austin.

The staff of the Academic Service-Learning program provides resources and support for faculty who are currently teaching or would like to teach an academic service-learning course, for students who are interested or enrolled in a service-learning course, and for community partners who are interested in collaborating with UT-Austin faculty and students.

Please contact the Academic Service-Learning office at utasl@austin.utexas.edu or 512.471.6161 for more information on academic service-learning class development or offerings.