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**Implementing Service Learning in Higher Education**

Journal article by Robert G. Bringle, Julie A. Hatcher; Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 67, 1996

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**Journal Article Excerpt**

# Implementing service learning in higher education.

by Robert G. Bringle , Julie A. Hatcher

In a recent article, "Creating the New American College," Ernest Boyer challenges higher education to reconsider its mission to be that of educating students for a life as responsible citizens, rather than educating students solely for a career. By doing so, the "New American College" will take pride in connecting theory to practice in order to meet challenging social problems, particularly those faced by universities in urban settings. As Ira Harkavey of the University of Pennsylvania Center for Community Partnerships has noted, "Universities cannot afford to remain shores of affluence, self-importance and horticultural beauty at the edge of island seas of squalor, violence and despair" [5, p. A48]. Emphasizing service has the potential to enrich learning and renew communities, but will also give "new dignity to the scholarship of service" [5, p. A48].

Universities have valuable resources (for example, students, faculty, staff, classrooms, libraries, technology, research expertise) that become accessible to the community when partnerships address community needs. They also have a tradition of serving their communities by strengthening the economic development of the region, addressing educational and health needs of the community, and contributing to the cultural life of the community [12, 23, 27]. Emphasizing the value of community involvement and voluntary community service can also create a culture of service on a campus [for example, 17, 26].

From a programmatic perspective there are two salient means through which universities support and promote community partnerships: (a) extracurricular and (b) curricular. On campus a significant number of college students actively participate in extracurricular community service through student organizations, the activities of student service offices, and campus-based religious organizations [for example, 1, 24]. Many faculty, staff, and students, particularly those at urban campuses, are involved in their communities (for example, neighborhood development, community agencies, churches, youth work) independent of the university.

Academic programs can also engage students in the community. Professional schools in particular create...

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