

**Proposal to the Faculty Senate for a CSL Designation for UMass Courses Listed in SPIRE**  
**From the Provost's Committee on Service-Learning**  
**Co-Chairs: Art Keene, Anthropology and Leda Cooks, Communication**  
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Many faculty here at UMass Amherst teach service-learning courses, building community service into their courses and using the students' experience of service as a source of their learning. Faculty experience both here and across the nation has shown this to be a very powerful way to enhance learning, and many students are eager to find and take such courses. However, there is no clear way for students to identify which courses each semester have this approach. On many other campuses, service-learning courses are designated as such through their registration system. Therefore, the Provost's Committee proposes the following:

- 1) That the Faculty Senate approve that courses using service-learning be given a Service-Learning designation through SPIRE. (Note: we are not requesting a cross-listing with the Service-Learning rubric, but the addition of an alpha marker, such as an "SL" after the course number, which would clearly designate every Service-Learning course.)
- 2) That the Faculty Senate designate the Provost's Committee on Service-Learning to serve as a subcommittee of the Academic Matters Council for the purpose of reviewing/approving the courses. The PCSL would evaluate courses requesting an SL designation and pass their recommendations on to the AMC. This would keep the approval process within the Faculty Senate boundaries as the proposals would be received by the Faculty Senate and the recommendations would flow back through the Academic Matters Council to the full Faculty Senate.

In addition to allowing students to easily find service-learning courses, such a designation would have at least two other benefits. Many high school students engage in service and look for ways to continue this experience in college; having clearly marked service-learning courses easy to find on the UMass website will help us to recruit such students—especially from out of state. Moreover, service-learning on other campuses has been strongly linked to student retention; being able to identify service-learning in students' transcripts would allow us to track its impact on retention on our campus.

**Criteria:** For a course (undergraduate or graduate level) to bear the service-learning designation, *service* and *learning* must be integrated in order to enhance both. At a minimum, the course should have:

- *Service:* significant community-based work defined in response to a need or aspiration presented by a community partner organization.
- *Clear linkage* between the service and course learning goals, including both academic and civic learning. (Civic learning entails the knowledge, skills and attitudes one needs to be an effective citizen in a democratic society. It includes such things as the ability to take the perspective of someone different from oneself and the ability to participate in deliberation of alternative courses of action.)

- *Preparation for service:* a plan to prepare students for the roles they will occupy, and also to prepare them to enter with respect a community that may not be their own and to work with people who may differ from them significantly in terms of race, class, or other elements of social identity.
- *Structured reflection:* a plan to engage students in systematic reflection on their experience in the community—through talking, writing, or other means—in order to make of their experience a text for the course and take from it what it can teach them, and to link this learning with their learning from other course materials.
- *Evaluation of both the service and the learning:* at a minimum, a plan for assessing whether the students' service provides something of value to the community, and for assessing what students learn from this combination of service and academic work.

These criteria should be reviewed from time to time and revised as principles of best practice emerge both from the service-learning field and from our relationships with our community partners.

**Process:** For a course to bear the service-learning designation:

- The instructor submits a proposal accompanied by a syllabus which shows how the course meets the criteria listed above.
- The proposal is reviewed by the Provost's Committee on Service-Learning (PCSL), which acts for the Faculty Senate in approving courses and passes its recommendations back to the Faculty Senate through the AMC.
- Service-learning course approval must be renewed every five years through PCSL review of a current proposal and syllabus.

Deputy Provost John Cunningham has consulted with the registrar and has learned that this change is technically possible; further consultation will determine the precise form that this designation will take in SPIRE and on students' transcripts.