Service-learning benefits

The benefits of service-learning have documented positive outcomes for students, faculty, and the greater community.

Community benefits:

- With curriculum engagement and student innovation coming together to serve our stakeholders, Western Michigan University can lead the region by introducing and engaging new ideas, products, and services throughout the region.
- Businesses and agencies have value added through student innovation, energy, and creativity.
- Meets community-identified needs.
- Provides access to university resources.
- Offers professional development and leadership opportunities.

Student benefits:

- Provides an opportunity for students to identify and dissect biases and stereotypes, empowering them to build a new framework for understanding.
- Contributes to a culture of innovation, unconventional thinking, and problem solving.
- Enhances work-force development and students’ employability through applied learning and real-life experience.
- Encourages civic engagement and social responsibility, and decreases effects of current cultural and political apathy.
- Offers opportunities for students to learn and practice leadership skills.
- Assists in the development of critical thinking skills.

Faculty and professional staff benefits:

- Generates opportunities for research and provides opportunities for publishing, using the growing service-learning education pedagogy.
- Supports professional development by engaging faculty and students in creative and innovative practice.
- May promote tenure and enhanced funding for service-learning designated courses.
• Engages faculty as both teacher and learner.
• Increases potential for stronger faculty/student relationships.
• Increases engaged student participation in class, and increases students’ ability to internalize course material through application of objectives.

**University benefits:**

• Cultivates the next generation of talent within Southwest Michigan’s region, and continues to grow Western Michigan University as a relevant research-one institution.

• Builds human capital by expanding and strengthening student experience.

• Enhances the reputation of the University as an engaged campus, committed to regional support, student growth, and economic development.

• Builds a reputation for our students as innovative, engaged learners from a full spectrum of disciplines.

• Meets the University’s mission to provide high-quality education, including a strong focus on experiential education.

• Provides opportunities for strong partnerships with stakeholders throughout the region.

• Prepares high-quality graduates who are better prepared to enter the workforce, which serves to entice potential students, both domestic and abroad.

• Engages the community in mutually supportive endeavors.