



Staff Community Service in the Jesuit Tradition

Staff Community Service Handbook

Program for
Paid Release Time



**Santa Clara
University**

The Ignatian Center for
Jesuit Education

Letter from the President

Dear Santa Clara Staff Member:

It is my privilege to present to you this new community service initiative developed by staff for staff as a means of reaching out to the surrounding community. Inspired by the words of the Jesuit Superior General, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., during his 2000 visit to our campus, this initiative encourages and facilitates greater involvement of university staff in community service.

As part of this overall initiative, we will be offering a one year program to provide an additional incentive for those who may find volunteering difficult on weekends or in the evening.

The program was developed by a volunteer planning group over the past year under the direction of the Bannan Center and Arrupe Center staff. They consulted the appropriate university governance committees and revised the project as they developed more specifics.

The university will engage in this program for one year. The results of the first year experience will allow us to determine whether to establish the pilot as an ongoing program of the university.

To support your efforts at serving our community the program offers release time from work with pay. This booklet explains how to find more information about the program along with specifics about how to participate in it. The program will be managed this next year by a Pilot Implementation Committee under the auspices of the Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education.

Sincerely,
Paul L. Locatelli, S.J., President

The Mission

As we strive to encourage our students to be educated, active, and in solidarity with others less fortunate, so we, as staff of a Jesuit university, are called to the same ideal.

In October of 2000, when he inaugurated Santa Clara's sesquicentennial year, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus, noted that "Tomorrow's 'whole person' cannot be whole without an educated awareness of society and culture with which to contribute socially, generously, in the real world." Calling for a new Jesuit educational standard, "to educate the whole person of solidarity in the real world," Father Kolvenbach captured the challenge of acting justly and said, "The whole person will strive to fashion a more humane and just world for all people, particularly the poor."

The Plan

A new collaborative effort to encourage greater involvement of University staff in community service exists at SCU. The program promotes "a culture of service . . . to society in general and to its most disadvantaged members" and advances "an engaged concern for the common good . . . of the local community," both of which are among the fundamental values of our University community. **Alumni for Others**, the **Arrupe Partnerships** and the **Bannan Institute** work in collaboration to encourage broader staff participation in service opportunities. This new initiative helps meet the strategic challenge to "draw upon the faith perspectives of all members of the University community in order to foster a common conversation about issues of injustice and a collaborative search for just solutions to social problems." (Kolvenbach)

The Collaborators on Campus

The **SCU Alumni for Others** (AFO) program was developed to continue the Jesuit mission of "Service to Others." In the tradition of giving back to the community around us, AFO organizes projects to reach out to those less fortunate. This program is open to all alumni, their families, and friends in the spirit of opening ourselves up and helping others. Some of the groups AFO supports are Home Safe Domestic Violence Shelter, Sacred Heart Nativity School (a middle school for low income, at-risk boys started by the Jesuits in 2000), Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together and more. Most of these service projects are held in the Greater San Jose area.

The **Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education** serves as the central coordinating department for the Staff Community Service in the Jesuit Tradition program. Using the extensive contacts with community partners that the **Arrupe Partnerships** has developed over the years, additional community service opportunities have been identified for staff. These opportunities will complement those already developed by Alumni for Others and ACT.

Program for Paid Release Time

Staff participants in the Program will be able to get paid work release time to do community service that takes place during regular work hours. The program has been designed to provide a new incentive and vehicle for Santa Clara staff to experience broader participation in community service opportunities. This program is for those staff who want to participate in community service opportunities that occur during the work day, and it is especially designed for those who are new to community service.

In conjunction with existing university programs, it builds community relationships while addressing community needs, advancing university goals, and satisfying the desire of staff to serve the community. It is a new kind of commitment on the part of the university to the ideal of solidarity, a commitment that benefits the local community, the staff participants, and the university.

Highlights of the program include:

- ▶ Up to 40 hours/year paid release-time (includes travel time and reflection sessions, if held during work hours)
- ▶ Part-time staff will receive release time on a pro-rated basis.
- ▶ Approval of supervisor required. Depending on department needs, supervisors may deny requests and/or limit the number of employees in a work group who take time off.
- ▶ Time off should not result in missed deadlines or paid overtime
- ▶ Limited to 25 participants.
- ▶ Community service placements are to be approved by the pilot implementation committee
- ▶ This paid time off is for personal time to do community service. It is not a university assignment.
- ▶ Participating staff personally assume the risks associated with the community service placement they choose.

Examples of Community Service Opportunities in the Program

- ▶ Helping at **homeless shelters** by serving meals, sorting and distributing donated clothing, or providing hospitality at a reception desk
- ▶ Helping at **free kitchens** by preparing and serving meals to the poor.



- ▶ Participating at **multi-service centers** by serving meals, teaching English to immigrants, distributing food and/or clothing, assisting in adult classes or pre-school, interpreting, providing client follow-up, providing IT support.
- ▶ Tutoring and working with elementary children **in after-school homework and enrichment programs.**

Reflection Sessions

Reflection is an important component of any SCU community service program and will be a mandatory part of participation in the Program. Ideally, the reflection sessions will take place in three phases: before the community service experience, during the experience, and following the experience. This reflection will provide an opportunity for program participants to talk with each other about their motivation for participating in the program, what they hope to gain from the experience, to share what they learned from the experience and how the experience strengthened their solidarity with the community.

Trained facilitators will convene the reflection sessions. The sessions will be 60—90 minutes most likely during lunch.

Benefits of Community Service

To Staff:

- ▶ Opportunity to experience solidarity as Father Kolvenbach defines it.
- ▶ Improved leadership and interpersonal skills.
- ▶ Increased opportunity for staff to explore and develop new areas of expertise.
- ▶ Increased interaction with employees in other segments and levels of the university.
- ▶ Additional variety and fulfillment in work and an increased sense of self-worth.
- ▶

To the University:

- ▶ Improved relations with the surrounding community.
- ▶ Improved public awareness of the University, giving the University a “human” face.
- ▶ Increased cooperation and good relations with community leaders.
- ▶ Improved recruitment and retention of employees.
- ▶ A more cohesive, motivated workforce.
- ▶

To the Community:

- ▶ Provides non-profit agencies with much needed services for their clients.
- ▶ Increased understanding between the university and the community non-profit sector.
- ▶ Improved quality of life in our community.
- ▶ Serve as an example to encourage other organizations to reach out to the community in a similar manner.

PROGRAM MECHANICS

1. Participants Will need Permission of Supervisors to Participate

The Program for paid release time is open to staff members who have approval from their supervisors to participate. It is especially designed for those who are new to community service. The schedule of community service hours will be mutually agreed upon by the supervisor and participant. No more than one employee from the same department will be eligible to participate in the program at any given time. Larger departments may consider allowing more than one of their staff members to participate.

Staff members are advised that, if they work in a very busy department, it may not be possible for them to be released from work time to participate in this program. This program is a privilege and not a right. Therefore, some staff members interested in committing time to community service may have to do so on their own time outside of work. They are encouraged to pursue the many evening and weekend community service opportunities.

As a community service program the design committee considered that busy departments may need to cover for staff members while they are away. They urge departments to consider community service as a department contribution to the community and not just an individual volunteer opportunity of a given staff member.

As an alternative, a department may consider choosing a community service project in which the entire department may participate in. The Ignatian Center staff are ready to help organize this option.

2. List of Community Service Opportunities

The Implementation Committee has investigated community service opportunities by contacting our already existing community partners. This list contains information about each placement site, times of operation and the specific kinds of community service opportunities that exist at that site. These are available for the interested staff member to review and select an appropriate community service opportunity.

3. Procedures to be Followed for Time-Off for the Program

Regular full-time employees who participate in the Program will be granted up to 40 hours with pay for the pilot year for this service and for the reflection components associated with it. Part-time employees will receive release time on a pro-rated basis



Three SCU staff contribute community service hours as Child Advocates

As in scheduling vacation leave, employees will need to obtain prior written supervisor approval to participate. HR has established a method for tracking the hours of the time sheets. Program participants will be responsible for any expenses (e.g., parking, mileage, and meals) associated with their community service assignment.

4. Application Forms

Staff members who wish to participate in the paid release time community service Program must complete a simple application form indicating their interest in participating, listing their choice of community placement, the day and hours they plan to participate, and their supervisor's signature of approval. These are submitted to Ignatian Center, Sobrato Hall, Room 30.

5. Waiver Will Need to be Signed

Staff members wishing to participate in this Program do so with the understanding that the university is granting them this paid time off as personal leave to do community service. As such, it is not a university assignment. Participating staff personally assume the risks associated with the community service placement they choose. This information is printed on the application form and their signature is indication that they agree to these terms of participation.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. When does the 40 hour clock start?

A. The clock begins when the participant begins the program. The forty hours must be completed within a year of beginning.

Q. What if I work through lunch, do I count that hour as community service time on my time sheet?

A. This would be the same as if you were at work. If you are a non-exempt employee who gets unpaid time off for lunch, then the same applies when you are away. You cannot claim the community service work you perform during your lunch period as paid time off.

Q. Am I allowed to claim overtime to make up for lost work?

No. You are responsible to guarantee that your community service on any given day does not push you into an overtime situation.

Q. How do I account for my community service hours on my electronic time sheet?

A. Fill in the number of hours on your time sheet for the date in question and on the pull-down menu at the end of the row select "Community Service Hours" (COM) for those hours.

Q. Does travel time and reflection time come out of the 40 hours?

A. Yes



SCU alums and staff prepare Christmas dinner at Homesafe.

Q. Will release time procedures apply equally to exempt and non-exempt staff?

A. Yes

Q. If I choose community service hours that extend beyond the time of my normal work day, do I count these as paid release time?

A. No. The employee can claim as paid release time only community service time that takes place during that employee's normal work day. Additional hours spent in community service become your personal contribution to the placement site.

Q. If I perform community service outside of work time can I count these as community service hours in this program and claim the hours by taking an equivalent amount of time off work?

A. No.

Q. What if my supervisor says no to my request to participate in the Program?

A. Department work loads vary and these factors determine whether it is prudent to release a staff member during the work day. Therefore the supervisor has the final say about an employee participating in the pilot project. There are however a number of community service opportunities that are outside of work time. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities. The supervisor should feel free to suggest this to the employee.

How to get involved in the Program

- ▶ Visit our webpage www.scu.edu/communityservice to review the detailed information about the Program
- ▶ Choose a community service placement that seems to suit your temperament and which will make good use of your skills.
- ▶ Complete the Community Service Release Time Request Form. Get your supervisor's *verbal agreement* to proceed further to make contact with the community service placement.
- ▶ Call the contact person listed for the community service site you have selected to determine a start date and available days of the week and times of the day for community service.
- ▶ Once a start date and available days and times have been determined, you will need to negotiate specific days and times with your supervisor within the 40-hour time limit and parameters specified on page 5. Secure your supervisor's *written approval* on the Form.
- ▶ Submit the Form to the Ignatian Center, Sobrato Hall, Room 30.
- ▶ If your application is approved by the Pilot Implementation Committee, you will want to speak with the community service site contact person to confirm your participation and to inquire about any special requirements such as orientations, fingerprinting, TB tests, start date, etc.
- ▶ Note: You will be required to provide your own transportation and to cover any costs associated with your service placement such as parking, costs of fingerprinting, or TB tests.

For more information:

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