

## Research Incentive Fund Report

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In 2012, the Center for Service-Learning at Indiana University East was relocated to the Campus Library. The Library Director (Frances) has served as faculty liaison for service-learning since 2010 and supervises two staff members who have service-learning responsibilities. Her research project explores service-learning philosophy, instruction, applications to specific curricula, and the support required from academic libraries. She examines the alignment of service-learning with the library mission of promoting information and civic literacy in partnership with faculty, through community service.

The research questions are:

- How can academic libraries effectively partner with campus constituents to facilitate community engagement?
- What is a replicable process by which academic libraries can expand their service role to include being a center for service-learning that benefits all stakeholders involved?
- What are the benchmarks of effective library and constituent partnerships?

Based on analysis of program logistics and interviews with faculty, campus administrators, students, and community partners, Frances shares with us a “top 10” tips list for academic library involvement in service engagement:

10. There will be some people who are negative or don’t “get it.” Ignore them.
9. “Protect IU” policies are important. Adhere to them.
8. Staffing – hire people with a “service heart” and some schedule flexibility. Some evening and weekends will inevitably be required.
7. Reach out to everyone, be inclusive. You will be amazed and delighted at where you may find partners and what project possibilities are conceived.
6. Memos of understanding are important. They establish mutual expectations and formalize service tasks. They are, literally, NOT written in stone...they may be revised and updated as needed.
5. Record, document, compile, analyze and chart *everything*. The more information you have, the more opportunities you have to share the stories. The most essential data needed is # of students involved, what they are doing, where and for how many hours, and what the impact is.
4. Communication among all stakeholders is key to avoid misunderstandings, maintain productive and on-going partnerships, and assess what works and what needs to be changed.
3. Create a t-shirt/sweatshirt design that is bold and distribute it among all the campus partners involved in service...and make sure they wear it when they are engaged in their service projects. Promotion helps share the message of service and gives recognition to the program, which administrators and marketing departments are keen to have happen.
2. Reflection is essential to help students critically think about their experiences, ponder the impact, and share the story.
1. **Impact** (on both givers and receivers) – this is why we do it.

Consider these quotes from IU East students who were in service-learning placements coordinated by the Library and the Center for Service-Learning:

“Through my work in service learning I have seen with my own eyes how my actions impact the lives of others. Never before have I witnessed this. Service is not only making me a better person through the requirements needed to attain it, but the experiences I receive cross over to many classes. A priceless experience.”

“I grew up in a middle class white family. I learned quite a lot about what students are going through that are unlike me and the different obstacles other people face that I did not have to endure. I learned patience and new found respect for those caring enough to assist these young girls.”

“I think it is a good thing for aspiring teachers to connect with the community on multiple levels. The students we teach are affected by so many hardships. It is important that we are aware of the kinds of programs for the poor, elderly, addictions etc., so that we are not wrapped up in our own worlds. It is important to be aware and understand that there is more out there.”

There will be an article about the CSL at IU East Library in the upcoming issue of *Indiana Libraries Journal* and there are other publication prospects on the horizon. This research is ongoing and Frances welcomes questions or comments; you can email her at [fyates@iue.edu](mailto:fyates@iue.edu)