

Service Learning Project for Promoting Student Engagement: Takeaway and Results from a Sustainability Survey Project

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ABSTRACT

Student engagement has received a lot of attention in recent times in higher education from all stakeholders. Many academic institutions are purposely promoting the initiatives that are reputed to promote student engagement in academic settings which include Service Learning (SL) initiatives.

Through this paper presentation, first, I would like to share my understanding of the service learning, its objectives, and good principles in implementing service learning projects. For example: What is SL? What does SL involve? How is it different from community service or volunteering? What aspects of core learning objectives of core curriculum does SL target? Second, I would like to describe the SL projects that I implemented in my Production and Operations Management (POM) course on an experimental basis in fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters, and the results obtained from conducting a sustainability awareness survey on our campus. Finally, I would like to share my experiences and takeaways from this SL project and solicit thoughts and suggestions from peers at the SWBAT 2016 Conference.

Key words: Service Learning, Sustainability Awareness, Student Engagement, Production and Operations Management.

I intend to organize my paper as follows

Introduction: Definitions of the key terms and techniques and relevant literature review of Service Learning as were discussed in the summer 2015 SL workshop organized by our University's PROF center that I attended.

Sustainability Awareness Survey in POM Course: A brief note on the implementation of SL project in my POM course with financial and technical assistance from our University's SL Center. Selecting the topic and designing the survey instrument (see attached), obtaining IRB approval for the survey, and including SL project as an assignment in my POM class.

Sustainability Awareness Survey instrument and its administration: Details of survey questions and how the survey responses are collected from subjects by POM students and tabulated in MS Excel Spreadsheets with the help of a graduate research assistant. We obtained 375 responses in fall 2015 and 685 responses in spring 2016 for total of 1060 responses. Some significant finding from the survey data will be reported here.

Conclusions and Takeaways: I will summarize what I learned as an instructor from my service learning project experience, from my student feedback and how it can help me in improving the Service Learning project implementation in my future POM classes for better results.