Student Civic and Community Engagement at the University of Minnesota: Findings from the 2018 Student Experience in the Research University Survey
This report presents findings from the Civic and Community Engagement Module of the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey, which was administered in 2018 to undergraduate students at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. The University of Minnesota received responses from approximately 8,712 students in 2018 (~30% response rate). The report is organized according to student responses related to their participation in community service activities, course-based service learning, and other community-focused experiences. Key findings include:

- **Participation in Service:** Findings demonstrate that approximately 26% of survey respondents who answered questions in the civic and community engagement module (n = 2,2011) participated in community service on campus and 44% participated off campus during the 2017-2018 academic year.

- **Importance of Opportunities to Engage in Community Service:** The majority of students (81%) agree that opportunities for community service while in college are important to them. Additionally, 90% of students agree that opportunities to connect academic work with community-based experiences are important to them.

- **Involvement in Community Service:** Students are most likely to report that the reasons they became involved in community service include becoming a better citizen and community participant and because they hold a belief in the cause.

- **Areas in Which Students Volunteer:** Students are more likely to volunteer in organizations focused on social issues, education, and health. The top organizations in which students volunteer include Feed My Starving Children, Ronald McDonald House, and M Health University of Minnesota Masonic Children’s Hospital. The majority of students report volunteering in the neighborhoods bordering the Minneapolis campus (East or West Bank).

- **Course-Related Community Service:** Twenty-three percent of students indicated that they had a service learning experience related to their courses. Overall, students listed 84 courses in which they had community-based learning experience.

- **Community-Focused Experiences:** Students were more likely to have been engaged in experiences for job or career development (n=221), social change (n=118), and charity (n=117).

Compiled by Kateryna Kent in cooperation with the Office of Institutional Research, University of Minnesota
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Participation in Community Service (Module)

“During this academic year, have you done community service either on and off campus?”

The figure below is drawn from the Community and Civic Engagement module. About 26% of students who completed the module responded that they had completed community service on campus during the 2017-2018 academic year; 44% indicated that they had participated in community service off campus.

Figure 1. Student participation in community service either on campus (n=2,011) and off campus (n = 2,011).

Time Spent on Community Service (Core)

“How many hours do you spend in a typical week (7 days) on performing community service or volunteer activities?”

Forty-eight % of students indicated performing community service or volunteer activities at least one hour per week. About forty percent of students volunteer between 1 to 5 hours per week, 7% of students volunteer between 6 to 10 hours per week, and 2% volunteer 11 to 15 hours per week. These data are drawn from the core survey.

Figure 2. Number of hours spent performing community service or volunteer activities per week (n = 8,432).

Interest in Community-Focused Activities

“To what extent has participation in community-focused activities at this university influenced your desire to continue community-focused activities after you graduate?”

Sixty-one % of students indicated that their participation in community service influenced their desire to participate after college to some extent, 18% to a great extent, and 21% not at all.

Figure 4. The extent to which participation in community-focused activities influenced students’ desire to continue community-focused activities after they graduate (n = 724).
The majority of students (81%) agree that opportunities for community service are important to them, while 19% disagree that opportunities for community service are important to them.

Figure 5. Students’ level of importance for community service opportunities in college (n = 1,989).

The majority of students (90%) agree that opportunities to develop their leadership skills while in college are important, while 10% disagree that opportunities to develop leadership skills in college are important to them.

Figure 6. Students’ level of importance for opportunities to develop leadership skills while in college (n = 1,987).

The majority of students (90%) agree that opportunities to connect their academic work with community-based experience are important to them, while 10% disagree that opportunities to connect academic work with community-based experience are important to them.

Figure 7. Students’ level of importance for opportunities to connect academic work with community-based experience (n = 1,988).
Reasons for Becoming Involved in Community Service

“Which of the following were significant reasons for getting involved in community service?”

If students responded that they had participated in community service, they were then asked to indicate the significant reasons they became involved in community service. Students could select more than one significant reason for involvement. The most-selected reasons include to become a better citizen and community participant (80%), a belief in the particular cause (75%), a unique or interesting opportunity arose to participate (71%), and change conditions in the community (69%).

Figure 8a. Reasons students became involved in community service.

Figure 8b. Reasons students became involved in community service.
Areas in Which Students Volunteer

“What was the focus of the organization where you did community service?”

The largest areas of focus where students conducted community service in 2018 SERU include social issues (n = 481), education (n = 445), and health (n = 360). Students could select more than one option for this answer.

Figure 9. Focus of organizations in which students conducted community service (students could select all that apply).
Areas in Which Students Volunteer

“Please name up to three organizations and their location where you participated in community engagement during this academic year.”

The top ten organizations in which at least ten students reported volunteering in 2017-2018 are listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Number of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feed My Starving Children</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald McDonald House</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Health University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat for Humanity</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Harvest</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairview Health Services</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Brothers Big sisters</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Serving People</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What asked about the geographic location of volunteer activities, the majority of students indicated that they volunteer in the neighborhoods bordering the Minneapolis campus (n=891).
Course-Related Community Service/Service Learning

Students listed 84 unique courses that had a service learning component through which they had become involved in community service. The most frequently cited courses are listed below. Additionally, 23% of students indicated that they had been involved in a course with a service-learning component (Figure 10), and, of those who indicated enrollment in a service-learning course, the average hours of participation are located in Figure 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLA 1001/1002</td>
<td>First-Year Experience</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL1501W*</td>
<td>Literature and Public Life (WI)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURS1030</td>
<td>Nursing First Year Seminar</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSOS1211*</td>
<td>An Interdisciplinary Look at the Family in Multicultural America</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSOS2107</td>
<td>Preparation for Family and Community Engagement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAN 3401*</td>
<td>Latino Immigration and Community Service</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESPM3011W*</td>
<td>Ethics in Natural Resources (WI)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLHS3402W*</td>
<td>Capstone Project in SLHS (WI)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC4966W*</td>
<td>Sociology Major: Project Seminar (WI)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates a course with a service-learning attribute

Civic Engagement

“To what extent has your participation in community-focused activities while attending this campus enhanced your desire to continue studying at this campus?”

Seventy-nine percent of students agree that their participation in community-focused activities while attending this campus enhances their desire to continue studying at this campus.

Figure 10. Frequency of enrollment in courses that have a service-learning component (n = 2,008).

“During this academic year, how many times have you enrolled in a course that had a service-learning component?”

“What was the average number of total service hours for the service-learning courses you took?”

Figure 11. Average number of hours for service-learning course (n = 452).

Figure 12. The extent to which participation in community-focused activities enhanced students’ desire to continue studying at this campus (n = 724).
Community-Focused Experiences

“To what extent have you been involved in the following community-focused experiences during this academic year?”

Community-focused experiences include internships and field study, rather than individual course-related experiences. The areas in which students were more likely to participate at least one term include internship or clinical practicum experience (22.5%), academic field study (13.5%), and study abroad or other internationally-based experience (12%).

Figure 13: Student participation in other community-focused experiences.
Community-Focused Experiences

“Which of the following best characterizes the nature of your community-focused experiences during this academic year?”

The community-focused experiences in which students were most likely to engage include job experience or specific career development (n=221), community development (n=137), and social change (n=118).

Figure 14. Student engagement in various community-focused issues or activities.