

Service Excellence Initiatives

Recommendations from Focus
Carolina Service Excellence
Committee

Allan Brett, MD, chair

1. Establishment of a Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement

- Currently a half-dozen or more entities at USC that address service learning and community service, with overlap and duplication
- A Center to coordinate service learning was proposed in 2007 by a Task Force appointed by previous USC administration, but was never implemented

1. Establishment of a Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement

- USC should establish a Center that coordinates both “service learning” and community service more generally
 - “Clearing house” to facilitate contacts between faculty/staff/students and outside institutions
 - Enhance interdisciplinary collaboration within USC

2. Service excellence should be valued in tenure and promotion

- University leadership should send clear message to academic units that service excellence is valued in tenure/promotion
 - Especially service that involves students and makes impact on the community
- Necessary message to avoid cynicism that “service doesn’t matter”

3. Making connections with the community

- USC representatives (at the highest levels) should expand outreach to high-level representatives of local/state govt and other community leaders
 - to identify and prioritize the service needs for which university expertise would be valuable
 - Lend credibility to university's commitment to service excellence

4. Identify one or several thematic areas

- Focus on targets/themes for service learning and community service that involve interdisciplinary collaboration
- Examples: at-risk youth, elderly, homeless, literacy, environment/sustainability

5. Establish a “Lifelong Learning Institute” in Columbia

- Organized program offering informal courses, lectures, field trips, etc., to older adults in the community for nominal fee
- Already exists at USC Beaufort and Aiken
- We already have such programs at USC Columbia, but not organized as a unit
- Would strengthen bonds between USC and residents of greater Columbia
- Bernard Osher Foundation

6. Seek external funding to support service activities, including the new Center

- Donations via development office
 - idea of simultaneously giving to the university and supporting a more traditional charitable activity might appeal to some potential donors
- “Edward Kennedy Serve America Act”
 - Signed into law April 2009
 - Funds to support public service opportunities and service learning