

California State University Long Beach Institutional Commitment to Service

California State University Long Beach (CSULB) has a long-standing commitment to service evidenced by the level of institutional support provided to community engagement and reflected in our mission and strategic priorities/goals. CSULB formally embraced community service learning in 1998, creating the Community Service Learning Center—now the Center for Community Engagement (CCE). The CSU system provides \$45,000 annually and CSULB commits 3 FTE positions for the CCE and 1 FTE position in the College of Education to administer the Federal Work Study America Reads/Counts program and Service Experiences for Revitalizing Education.

CSULB is “a diverse, student-centered, globally-engaged public university committed to providing highly-valued undergraduate and graduate educational opportunities through superior teaching, research, creative activity and service for the people of California and the world.” Other formal statements flesh out our mission, describing a commitment to develop “responsible citizens” who are prepared for “responsible civic participation.” We strive that students “graduate as skilled problem-solvers and practitioners of their disciplines through participation in research projects, creative endeavors, community service learning, and internships” and that “faculty, staff, and students are intensely involved in community service and partnerships with community agencies and non-profits, schools, and local government agencies.” In our Strategic Priorities service learning is a pedagogical means toward academic quality. We have a Strategic Goal to “expand synergistic, sustainable partnerships with the local community, linking campus expertise and local community issues.” Student and faculty researchers should “make significant contributions to resolving community and regional problems and planning for future needs of our region and the nation.”

Community engagement permeates our campus culture. Student Life and Development hosts Make a Difference Day and supports 21 student service organizations such as American Red Cross at CSULB, CSULB Clothesline Project, Engineers without Borders, Habitat for Humanity and Up 'Til Dawn. The Career Development Center supports JusticeCorps, an AmeriCorps program with the LA County Courts involving 17 CSULB students. Beta Alpha Psi and Accounting Society run the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. Staff Council supports the American Cancer Society and local needy children through drives, fund raisers and Relay for Life. We host over 1,000 athletes at the Special Olympics SoCal Summer Games.

Academically, we have a well-developed service-learning program and several degree programs recently developed or under development with community engagement at their core: an Applied Sociology MA with a concentration in Community Development and Social Change, a BFA in Theater of Engagement and Minor in Business and Nonprofit Development in Ethnic Communities. The CCE recently completed a HUD HSIAC-funded project involving hundreds of students and numerous faculty leveraging campus and community resources to provide cross-agency support and services to homeless and recently homeless families and military veterans residing at Villages at Cabrillo in west Long Beach.

The driving forces behind our commitment to service are complex and long-standing. The City of Long Beach is second in size only to the City of Los Angeles within L.A. County. It's a city of great socio-economic, ethnic, and language diversity. We have a history of successful partnerships, as demonstrated by our K-16 partnership between Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach City College, and CSULB. Many of our faculty, students and staff have deep roots in the community, and all of these, along with administration that recognizes and values the role of the university in the community, provided the means and the opportunity for CSULB to develop into a truly engaged campus.