2011-2012

Saint Louis University Student Survey on Service

Executive Summary and Key Findings

Conducted by the Center for Service and Community Engagement
Introduction

The 2011-2012 Student Survey on Service was administered to the student body of Saint Louis University from April 24th – May 9th, 2012. This was the second year for the survey, and similar to the 2010-2011 version, it was meant to assess the service efforts of our students, including:

- Percentage of students who engaged in service
- Intensity of service performed by students (i.e. time commitment, number of hours, etc.)
- Community organizations impacted by our students’ service
- Information on service as a requirement

New for the 2011-2012 version of the survey, questions also addressed:

- Reasons why students did not engage in service
- Motivations for students to engage in service
- Impact of service on students

As with past surveys, data gathered will allow us to gain valuable insights into not only what our students are doing in the community, but also how their experience is affecting them, and what they are learning through the service. Data will also allow us to gain a greater sense of impact on both individual community organizations, as well as geographic areas of the St. Louis area. Finally, we hope to identify any gaps related to our students and service to the community, whether in learning outcomes, intensity of service, or student populations engaging in service at lower-than-normal levels.

Methodology

The survey was administered via email on April 24th, 2012, to all 13,422 students enrolled at Saint Louis University during the Spring Semester. This included all undergraduate, graduate, full-time, part-time, and professional students, as well as those enrolled in our Madrid campus. The survey was made available for two (2) weeks, and was sent using the University-sponsored survey tool, Qualtrics. Two reminders were sent to students, one (1) week after the initial survey was administered, and the day before the survey ended.

The 2011-2012 version collected specific demographic data on the students who took the survey, and this included:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Class Level (freshman, sophomore, etc.)

A copy of the survey, as well as more detailed analyses, is provided in Appendix A of the “2011-2012 Student Survey on Service – Executive Summary and Detailed Findings”.
Results and Interpretation

2,890 students participated in the survey, resulting in a 22% response rate overall. This is a significant improvement from the 16% response rate obtained for the first year of the survey, 2011-2011. Demographics of students who participated are outlined below, with comparisons to overall SLU student body percentages to illustrate how representative the sample is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Overall Student Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>70.7% Female 29.3% Male</td>
<td>59% Female 41% Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>71.9% White/Caucasian 12.9% Asian 5.8% African-American 3.2% Hispanic 6.2% Other</td>
<td>67.9% White/Caucasian 12.7% Asian 7.1% African-American 3.7% Hispanic 8.6% Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Level</td>
<td>17.0% Freshman 15.8% Sophomore 15.4% Junior 20.8% Senior/5th Year 31.0% Graduate/Professional/Other</td>
<td>14.4% Freshmen 13.8% Sophomore 13.9% Junior 19.0% Senior/5th Year 38.9% Graduate/Professional/Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Key Findings

The following are several key findings and themes from data interpretation. Key findings are broken down into four categories: 1.) Overall Amount and Intensity, 2.) Service as a Requirement, 3.) Community Sites, and 4.) Student Motivations and Impact.

For full results associated with each specific question, including analyses by demographics, please see Appendix A.

1.) Overall Amount and Intensity

- 81% of SLU students who responded volunteered at least once during the 2011-2012 school year, approximately the same as last year. This is more than three times the rate among college students nationwide (26.1%) in 2010, as measured by the USA Today and the National Corporation for Community Service.
- 3,737 instances of service were reported, totaling 174,021 hours from August-May.
- 55% of those who engaged in service did so on an ongoing basis, meaning at least 2-3 times per month.
- Of those students who did not engage in service, the most common reasons given were: 1.) Lack of time, 2.) Unsure of how to get involved, and 3.) Lack of transportation.
• 38% of these non-volunteering students expressed an interest in getting involved, and provided their contact information.

2.) Service As A Requirement

• 51% of students who engaged in service did so to fulfill a requirement, while 49% did not.
• Requirements for an academic course and for group or club membership were the most common.
• Alpha Phi Omega (co-ed service fraternity) and Alpha Epsilon Delta (Pre-Health club) were the two groups mentioned most often.
• Of those students who did service as part of a requirement, 82% plan to continue or have continued their service beyond the required number of hours.

3.) Community Sites

• The list of most common organizations served, both in terms of Hours and Number of Volunteers, can be found in Appendix B of the “2011-2012 Student Survey on Service – Executive Summary and Detailed Findings”.
• The top sites for Hours were (number of hours provided in parentheses):
  o Saint Louis Public Schools, representing 17 different locations (4,123)
  o Saint Louis University Hospital (3,967)
  o Big Brothers Big Sisters (2,710)
• The top sites for Number of Volunteers were (number of volunteers provided in parentheses):
  o The Campus Kitchen (105)
  o Habitat For Humanity (83)
  o Health Resource Center (75)
• Make A Difference Day was the most often mentioned program by which students engaged in service, but was not included in the list of sites, since it is a campus event.
• As with last year, the two most popular fields to serve in were Healthcare and Youth.

4.) Student Motivations and Impact

• Students were asked to self-evaluate their motivations for engaging in service, as well as the impact that volunteering had, by responding to statements on a 4-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree)
• Top motivators included:
  o To make a positive difference in my community (96% either Strongly Agreed or Agreed)
  o To help others in need (96%)
To work for social justice and equality (74%)

Least motivating factors were:
- To satisfy a requirement (56% either Strongly Agreed or Agreed)
- Because my faith or spiritual tradition inspired me (59%)

Highest impacts included:
- Gained a greater respect for others' differences and diverse backgrounds (94% either Strongly Agreed or Agreed)
- Promoted or enhanced my leadership skills (92%)

Lowest impacts included:
- Encouraged me to become more involved in the democratic process (e.g., voting, lobbying, petitioning) (48% either Strongly Agreed or Agreed)
- Influenced or helped guide my career choice (71%)

Summary and Conclusion

Overall, results from the 2011-2012 Student Survey on Service were very impressive. The volunteer rates of our students remained in the 80's, putting Saint Louis University well above the rates for college students nationwide, as well as at peer institutions (as measured by the National Survey on Student Engagement). Response rate to this survey was drastically improved from the previous year as well, which provided us with a more reliable sample of students.

It is also encouraging that over half of all students who engage in service do so in an ongoing way. By being present at their site at least 2-3 times per month, the students will hopefully be able to strengthen their bonds with those they are serving, and in turn, strengthen their own spirit of solidarity with the community. And even with students who were required to do service, it is very encouraging that 82% of them continued or intend to continue.

For those that did not engage in service, it comes as no surprise that lack of time was the predominant reason given, and not much can be done to assuage that. However, students also mentioned that they were unsure how to get involved, and had no transportation. The CSCE will be personally following up with the 38% of students that did not engage in service, but provided their contact information as a means to do so next year. Ways to lessen lack of transportation as a barrier to service should also be explored.

Finally, it is heartening to see that the top motivations for students to engage in service were “other-oriented”, and not simply self-serving. It is also very impressive that almost all students gained a greater respect for others’ differences through their service – it is clear that the concept of diversity is inextricably linked to service. The single discouraging figure was the lack of impact on students’ involvement in the democratic process. The CSCE will be exploring ways to allow students to become more involved civically, whether through voting, lobbying, or other means to affect permanent, lasting change around issues of justice.