The Saint Louis University Center for Service and Community Engagement, or CSCE, creates a coordinated interface between the University and the urban communities that surround it, seeking ultimately to prepare participants to be effective servant leaders and agents for social change, as well as to foster the creation of a just and equitable society by supporting efforts of students, faculty, and staff in the areas of community service, service learning, academic research, and community partnerships.

We serve the entire SLU campus as a clearinghouse and consultants for:

- Service opportunities for students, faculty, staff and alumni.
- Academic learning and community engagement.
- Research to identify strategies that will enhance a just and equitable society.

**Part 1: Accomplishments and Highlights**

1. **Make a Difference Day**

Following from the CSCE’s strategic plan to provide meaningful opportunities for individuals to engage in community outreach, over 3,100 students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni participated in SLU’s annual Make a Difference Day in October 2011. This marked a 12.2% increase in participation from the previous year, and included 130 service sites both in and around St. Louis. SLU’s growing Make a Difference Day efforts are a key reason for being name on the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the 5th consecutive year and for being listed as the #1 private university in the country for community service hours and outreach (and 2nd in the nation behind a major public institution) by The Washington Monthly, an a popular on-line news source.

2. **Service Learning**

SLU’s pervasive “service culture” extends to faculty who are estimated to offer between 80 and 100 service-learning courses each semester. To help sustain these courses in the 2011-2012 academic year, the CSCE provided 29 faculty consultations and led 13 presentations or workshops on service-learning instructional techniques. The CSCE also hosted over 100 participants at two service-learning “meet-and-greets” that connected SLU faculty with 40 different community agencies interested in providing educational opportunities to student volunteers.

3. **Federal Work Study Community Service**

The CSCE’s management of the Federal Work Study Community Service Program at SLU grew from just 77 student participants working at 13 community sites last year to over 200 students working at 22 organizations in the 2011-2012 academic year. With this growth, 33,500 hours of service were contributed to the community, more than doubling last year’s figure of 13,000 hours.
4. *Interfaith Service and Dialogue*

Spanning 48 events and involving over 7,500 participants both on- and off-campus during the 2011-2012 academic year, the inaugural White House’s *Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge* helped institutionalize interfaith dialogue at SLU, furthered education on various faith traditions, and enhanced the sense of community and religious diversity on campus. Nine of the student-driven events were supported by an “Interfaith and Service Challenge Grant” administered by the CSCE, such as the Interfaith Bus Tour, Atlas Week’s Interfaith Worship Service and Interfaith “Service Saturdays.” Altogether, it is estimated that interfaith groups contributed more than 22,000 volunteer hours in the St. Louis community. While not a complete measure of impact, this figure certainly displays the time commitment of SLU students to serving others in the context of interfaith engagement.

5. *Supply Drives and Sustainability*

The CSCE’s annual drives – from school supplies and Christmas toys for struggling families and children to toiletries and clothing for homeless adults and victims of disaster – broke all records by exceeding previous years’ collection marks. The School Supply Drive during the summer months of 2011, for instance, saw the collection of over 20,000 items which were distributed at the three SLU-sponsored charter schools, as well as to KidSmart, a non-profit agency that provides school supplies to more than 90,000 children across the St. Louis area. SLU’s contributions to KidSmart, in particular, were recognized for being the highest among area higher education institutions (and 7th among more than 145 businesses and corporations). The CSCE’s collection efforts also promote sustainability, as seen by the “Don’t Be Trashy” move-out campaign in the residence halls which diverted nearly 4,000 pounds of salvageable goods from the landfill, including clothing, small appliances, electronics, furniture, bedding, and toiletries that were shared with community partners.

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**Part 2: Outcomes Assessment**

**Community Service Fair Evaluation**

Seventy-one community agencies registered for and attended the fair in September 2011, representing a significant increase in the number of attending organizations compared to past years (between 60-65 attended in 2010). Agency members were asked about the setup and organization of the fair; student traffic and interaction during the fair; overall satisfaction; as well as additional comments/suggestions about the strengths and weaknesses of the fair. Based on the 55 respondents to the survey, as well as feedback from university staff members, we saw improved student-agency interaction, with many organizations indicating how pleased they were with the many volunteers they were able to enlist (nearly 73% of respondents rated the fair as “excellent.”) Attending agencies represented a diverse set of interest areas, with 20 different broad service categories, ranging from healthcare service opportunities to environmental service opportunities to child and animal care. The diverse allotment of
attending agencies has helped ensure a service fair that appeals to the broad interests of the university community.

Make A Difference Day Participant Survey

2,623 participants (out of the 3,118 total participants) in the 2011 SLU Make A Difference Day were surveyed electronically to measure both satisfaction and learning outcomes, with 706 responding (30%). Notable findings include 91% of respondents saying they were more likely to become involved in other service opportunities as a result of their participation, and 95.9% indicated that Make A Difference Day was a well-organized event. Suggestions for improvement to following years include asking sites to emphasize the importance of the project with their specific group of volunteers, and passing along any feedback from the community organizations to the group(s) that volunteered with that specific site.

“Open Doors” Services Evaluation

In March, following the event, the CSCE requested feedback from the 24 human service agencies participating in SLU’s Open Doors services event. A significant number of agency participants rated the organization of the event as “Excellent” (71%). Feedback suggests that the additions of the clothing room number system, check-in packets, and the layout options offered to agencies have been well received and helpful for the aims of delivering service efficiently. Over 200 people from the community attended and received services from housing guidance to health screenings.

Community Service FWS Program Reflection and Assessment

Employers and student workers were contacted in early May via email and asked to respond to a brief survey. Approval ratings of SLU students were very high, with nearly 60% of respondents indicating “excellent.” Students also rated their experience highly, with most saying the experience improved their communication skills. Nearly three-quarters of the student respondents also indicated that their experiences reinforced their career choices, and many other students said they gained greater knowledge of the social and economic pressures that their organization faced (most were schools). Both employers and students indicated a need for improved punctuality, suggesting that better training and clearer expectations should be communicated when students begin their positions.

Student Survey on Service

The survey was conducted on-line and sent to the entire student body in late April 2011 (13,422 participants). Twenty-two percent (or 2,890) responded (compared to 16% the year before). Just over half (51%) of the respondents indicated that they volunteer on an ongoing basis (at least 2-3 times per month). Compared to national reports by the National Corporation for Community Service, SLU’s volunteer rates are more than three times the national average for college students. See attached “Service at SLU” summary sheet.

Community Organization Survey

The 518 community partners in our database were surveyed via email during the annual SLU Community Organization Survey, which allows the CSCE to update vital contact information, as well as to conduct a
service needs assessment for each organization. 182 organizations responded for a 27% response rate. Key findings include a 100% satisfaction rate among organizations that received SLU volunteers during the 2011-2012 school year, and 97% of respondents rating the communication skills of SLU student volunteers as either "Excellent" or "Good" (improvement over 86% for 2011).

Note: Fuller reports for all of these assessments are available either on-line at the CSCE website or by request.

Part 3: In Their Own Words – A Student Narrative

Students have shared the following insights based on their service experiences at SLU. The last quote is from a participant in the Interfaith and Service Challenge.

"I really enjoyed participating in Make A Difference Day. It was a lot of fun and I believe Make A Difference Day should be more than just once a year! It is a great way to become involved in the community and learn about the needs of St. Louis."

“The main motivator [for community service] is probably just the people around me. People around me serving, seeing how important it was to them, because a lot of my friends went to Catholic or Jesuit high school, so it was already a part of their routine and seeing them come here, whereas in high school maybe it was a requirement or they had to do it for a class - get 20 hours for a certain class - they would come here and they would just do it anyway with no requirements. It’s just what they do and, seeing that, I definitely didn’t want to be sitting on the sidelines when they were doing those types of things. So that was the main motivator."

“This bus tour was so insightful and eye opening to the different faith traditions and their places of worship around the city of St. Louis. Observing the other faith traditions was so inspiring and really showed me how similar we are in our practices, but also the unique and beautiful distinctions within each faith as well. This event really has pushed me to pursue interfaith work as a mission and I hope to attend more events in the future!”