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THE VALUE OF INCORPORATING A SERVICE LEARNING COMPONENT INTO COURSE CONTENT: A PRESENTATION AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

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ABSTRACT

This session will be a roundtable discussion on the topic of service learning. The session will begin with a brief presentation by the authors in which a videotaped anthology of one service learning project (Building a Habitat House) will be shown and a number of other service learning projects (i.e. Paint Your Heart Out) will be discussed. The presentation will be followed by an open discussion of how and when service learning can best be utilized. We encourage others who are using service learning to share their ideas and suggestions with the group.

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The primary emphasis in many courses is on the application of theory through experiential learning. One concept which has been particularly difficult to demonstrate through classroom experiential exercises is the concept of social responsibility. In many university business administration courses, students are taught that a corporation's first responsibility is to shareholders and specifically to increasing shareholder wealth. This perspective is often seen as in conflict with the concept of social responsibility.

In today's business environment the demand for social responsibility placed on contemporary organizations by an increasingly sophisticated and educated public are stronger than ever. It is therefore important for organizations to fashion an approach to social responsibility the same way that they develop any other business strategy. Social responsibility is a major challenge to managers, and requires careful planning, decision making, implementation, and evaluation.

We believe that we have the opportunity to transmit the values and skills required to be a good corporate citizen through our educational

system. We feel that by incorporating a service learning component into course content, we will demonstrate to students the importance of corporate responsibility by adherence to personal responsibility, a sense of obligation to the common good, the well-being of employees, their families, their communities and their future, and to our nation and our world. By providing students with the opportunity to become involved in the community and participate in helping to personally address a social issue, it is our hope that students will become individually socially responsible and carry these practices into the corporate setting. By doing so, we can enhance and strengthen corporate responsibility in relation to social issues.

SESSION OVERVIEW

This session/roundtable discussion will consist of three parts. First, we will give a brief overview of the concept of service learning. Second, we will show a videotaped anthology of one project (Building a Habitat House) and discuss a number of other service learning projects which have been undertaken by the authors. Some of these projects include painting houses for low income families (Paint Your Heart Out), developing selection systems, performance appraisals and opinion surveys for non-profit organizations such as Goodwill Industries and incorporating a social responsibility variable into business policy simulations. The third part of the session will be an open discussion. The discussion will be led by the presenters and focus on how service learning can be incorporated into almost any course. Session participants who have utilized service learning or would like to incorporate service learning into their courses will be invited to share their ideas and/or ask for suggestions and advice.