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OUT-OF-CLASS EXPERIENCES TO PROMOTE VOLUNTEERISM

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this presentation is to describe *two* programs, which are designed to encourage volunteerism on the part of undergraduate students. The first program described is a credit-bearing internship; the second is a non-credit community service program. As part of our presentation we will describe the major aspects of our internship program and provide anyone interested with the write-up describing our program. Likewise, we will, provide examples of the projects on which our students have participated for internships and for community service activities.

THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

An Internship program has been available as an, elective for our students for over 15 years. Four years ago, we made the internship mandatory for all students majoring in the Department of Business Administration and Economics. Feedback from our graduates who had done an internship indicated that it was a valuable workplace preparatory experience. On the other hand graduates who had not done an internship indicated that they felt an internship would have helped prepare them for the workplace.

When we first mandated the internship, we encouraged students to work in profit-oriented organizations, because we thought this would give them experiences directly related to their majors. We have since shifted our focus to not-for-profit organizations. This shift took place for a number of reasons, which will be discussed as part of our presentation.

Another shift in focus has been to encourage unpaid rather than paid internships. Again, this shift resulted from problems encountered, which will be discussed.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

The Community Service Program came into existence for two reasons. First, we felt that there was an institutional inconsistency when admissions criteria looked favorably on students who had engaged in community service activities in high school, while the college failed to encourage such activity for its enrolled students. Second, we felt it was our

responsibility to encourage volunteerism on the part of our students in the hope that they will develop good habit of citizenship.

Because there is no centralized Community Service office on campus, our program of community service has developed with a somewhat informal structure. Much of the impetus and leadership has come from students and student organizations, with faculty and administration offering support and assistance from the sidelines. The Career Services Office, for example, developed and published a listing of over 100 agencies and projects in the community which seek volunteers, and conducted a Service Fair which brought 35 agencies to campus to talk with potential volunteers. But we believe that the strongest community service programs are those which grow from student interest and initiative, like the community service day which is part of our New Student Orientation program and student participation in the national Into The Streets project.

CONCLUSION

We believe that, encouraging our students to volunteer as part of their college experience makes sense. Further, we have found that students are willing volunteers. They come to us with their own "service records" already in place, and we are remiss if we do not continue to support them in developing and acting on an interest in volunteer service.