

## **Midwest Consortium for Service-Learning in Higher Education**

### **Our Mission:**

The Midwest Consortium for Service-Learning in Higher Education promotes, mobilizes, and supports the efforts of Nebraska and South Dakota higher education institutions who are united in strengthening their academic and co-curricular programs through service-learning in their communities, state and nation.

Our primary aims are:

- to increase the level of commitment, partnerships, support, and communication from member institutions;
- to expand and diversify the base of faculty involved in service-learning, emphasizing civic engagement;
- to expand and improve relationships with community partners; and
- to contribute the field of service-learning through research and evaluations.

More specifically, the Consortium's five-year mission objectives are:

- to expand and enhance services to meet the needs of those in poverty or immigrant/refugee assistance environments;
- to develop and implement certification for agencies participating in sponsored events;
- to increase the number of faculty who participate in sponsored service-learning activities and then incorporate it into their curricula;
- to maintain a strong base of students and member institutions who participate in Consortium sponsored activities; and
- to improve service-learning assessments.

### **Definition of Academic Service-Learning:**

Service-Learning is a pedagogy, which integrates service in the community with academic study (theory/curriculum). Faculty, in partnership with representatives of non-profit, community organizations, design service-learning projects that meet identified community needs to advance the student's understanding of course content and which help to strengthen the community. Strong reflective components are built into the course to help students consider relationships between their service, the curriculum of the class, and its impact on their personal values and professional goals.

### **Definition of Co-Curricular Service-Learning:**

Co-Curricular Service-Learning is distinguished from academic service-learning in that it is not anchored in a specific course, but rather, is a part of the students' "life experiences" (for examples, residential life, career development, and residential learning communities). The pedagogical framework of co-curricular service-learning cultivates student reflections upon the intersection of the needs and concerns of their communities with their personal values and professional goals.