

# Community Engagement and Service-Learning

California State University, Fresno has a rich history of engaging students in service to the community. As part of an overall educational experience, community service learning can have a profound effect on a student's personal, professional, and academic development. For these reasons, the CSU system and our university want to make service a part of every student's educational experience.

## Mission

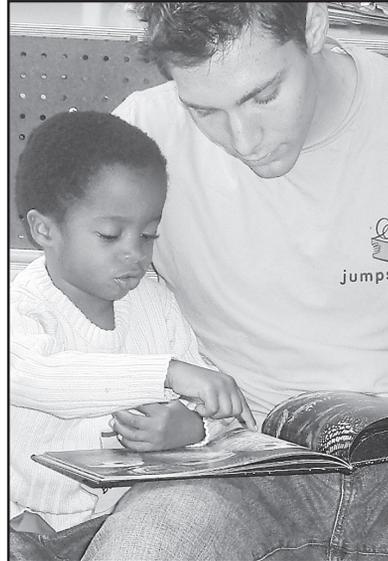
The mission of the Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning is to *engage the entire campus in creating a better community through service and learning*. To accomplish this mission, the CESL office coordinates a variety of community engagement efforts, including traditional community service opportunities and course-based service-learning.

## Community Engagement

Fresno State is committed to being a premiere engaged university. This is reflected in the many ways our university demonstrates through mutually beneficial partnerships the alignment between the university's teaching, research, and professional service agenda and the interests of our region. Examples of community engagement activities include, but are not limited to, the following: community service and volunteerism; service-learning; applied research; efforts that engage the campus community in the democratic process; faculty and staff professional service to the community; and projects that address the historical, cultural, and/or informational needs of the community.

## Service-Learning

Service-learning is an educational approach that involves students in meaningful community service directly related to the course's learning goals. There are more than 120 such courses offered each year at Fresno State. Approved service-learning



ing courses are listed in the catalog and the Class Schedule with an "S" designation. (See page 94.) Additional details can be found at [www.csufresno.edu/sl](http://www.csufresno.edu/sl).

To promote the value of service activities and enhance the subsequent learning experience, the university also offers two community service-learning courses for academic credit. (See box.)

## Who Should Get Involved in Service?

CESL hopes you will. If you enjoy the rewards of helping someone in need and are concerned with social issues, CESL can find a place for you to share your talents with others. In return, you will experience real-life situations that can help you be successful in all your endeavors.

## Who Benefits?

Everyone! Research has shown that students who are involved in community service activities during their undergraduate years significantly enhance many aspects of their personal, professional, and academic development. Nonprofit programs and citizens of our community dramatically benefit from the service work of students. Community service and service-learning provide an opportunity for everyone to gain important benefits.

“The opportunity to serve the community enriched my life far more than I imagined. I donated my time and in return I gained knowledge, leadership skills, self-esteem, and great memories. Volunteering also helped me relate what I've learned in all my classes to the real world—it all ties together and makes sense now.”

Mitchell Casados, Fresno State Student

The university offers two courses in which you can receive academic credit for your community service-learning experience.

### COMS 1. Community Service-Learning (1-3 units)

Provides a community service-learning experience where students apply their academic knowledge and skills to community-based issues and needs. Experiential learning will be enhanced through class discussions and presentations on topics related to community service-learning. *CR/NC* grading only.

### COMS 101. Community Service Internship (1-3 units; max total of 6 units can apply toward electives requirements)

Provides a community service-learning experience to help students develop personal, professional, and academic knowledge and skills. *CR/NC* grading only.

*Note:* Students are required to complete a minimum number of service hours with a non-profit agency of their choice. The required number of service hours is determined by the course and number of COMS units. For more information, contact the CESL director or visit the CESL Web page.