

The Richter Center for 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 impact on a student's personal, professional, and academic development. During the 2009-10 year, the university provided more than 1.16 million hours of service to the community.

Mission

The Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning is dedicated to improving the education and development of our students and helping create a better community through service and learning. To accomplish this mission, the Richter Center coordinates a variety of community engagement initiatives.

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, 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 150 such courses offered each year at Fresno State. Approved service-learning courses are listed in the catalog and the Class Schedule with an "S"

designation. Additional details can be found at www.fresnostate.edu/facultysl.

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?

We hope you will! If you enjoy the rewards of helping someone in need or are concerned with social issues, the Richter Center 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. 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 Richter Center staff or visit the Web page at www.fresnostate.edu/cesl