The Freshmen Day of Service: Empowering Students, the Community and Impacting Student Retention
4:00 – 4:10  Welcome & introductions

4:10 – 4:20  The Freshmen Day of Service (overview)

4:20 – 4:30  Roots & Leaves – the importance of the Aha moment
              2-3 mins thoughtful time; 7-8 minutes large group (tree)

4:30 – 4:45  Guided Visioning Activity
              Discussing key elements; planning for your campus

4:45 – 4:55  Small Group Share Out

4:55 – 5:05  Student Impact
              What can we measure in a single day?

5:05 – 5:15  Closing and questions
The Freshmen Day of Service
• A partnership with the General Studies Program as part of the Freshmen Year Experience course

• Multiple one-day service projects with local non-profit agencies

• Projects take place during first eight weeks (mostly Saturdays) of our spring quarter

• Planning with community partners begins during Fall quarter

• Projects are typically 4 hours long
Types of Projects

**Cultural** (Cambodian New Year-Festival - Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park)

**Community Gardens** (Great Plant Out - Project EAT)

**Food/Hunger** (Food Preparation and Serving - Open Heart Kitchen)

**Habitat Restoration** (Tule Ponds - MSN)

**Healthy Living** (Moving Day San Francisco - National Parkinson's Foundation)

**Education** (Tech Gadget Help - Hayward Public Library)

**Recreational Events** (Easter Egg Hunt and Pancake Breakfast - YMCA)

**Trash Clean Ups** (Cleanup - Keep Hayward Clean and Green Task Force)

**Environmental Projects** (Earth Day Clean-Up Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park)
Why do it?

• Connects students to the local community & enhances identity as “Cal State East Bay” students (Retention)

• Introduces the concept of social responsibility (ILO)

• Connects to goals of GE/Freshmen Learning Communities: to enhance student learning and success through a supportive network of faculty and peers; prepare students for success through explorations of personal and academic responsibility, majors, and community engagement. (Achievement/Retention)

• Students see themselves as ‘agents’ of change and as contributors to and constructors of knowledge, not just passive recipients. (Achievement)

• Begins students on a path to self-efficacy and self-awareness, challenging them to step out of their comfort zones, extend their social networks, and broaden their perspectives. (Achievement)

• Coming at the end of what can often be an over-whelming first year, FDoS offers students an ‘aha’ learning moment as they look ahead to sophomore year. (Retention)
How does it work?

The Center for Community Engagement...

- Coordinates projects with community partners
- Coordinates student registration
- Provides community partners with rosters of students and Project Leads
- Confirms freshmen participation with GS Faculty through the Liaison
- Communicates important dates and approaching deadlines to community partners & faculty
- Develops & disseminates resources & assessment tools

- Organizes, hires, & trains Project Leads (Pioneers for Change) who:
  - Check students in/out
  - Handle CSUEB rosters
  - Engage volunteers
  - Lead end of service reflection
  - Deliver classroom presentations
  - Staff tables for information, t-shirts
Community Partners…

• Provide suitable one day, 4-hour projects

• Provide freshmen with orientation and instructions

• Ensure a safe working environment and communicate results to freshmen

• Establish a clear beginning/ending for the project

• Notify CCE of any emergency project cancellations or student incidents
Timeline

- Community partners receive Project Description Form in October
- Community partners attend Information Breakfast in January
- Project Description submissions due end of Jan.
- Student registration opens mid-February
- Student registration closes early March
- Projects begin end of March
- Projects end mid-May
- Community partners receive rosters the Tuesday prior to their service project
- Community partners receive a feedback survey upon project completion
- Students complete reflections within GS course
How much does it cost?

FDoS is cyclical in work flow. From March to May the AAI is basically full-time on FDoS. Total ~$54,300

- .40 fte Administrative Analyst I Project Coordinator ($18,800)
- .25 fte Community Partnerships Coordinator ($15,000)
- GS Faculty Liaison (stipend $4500/AY)
- Project Leads (800+ hours; Pioneers for Change) ($10,000)
- FDoS T-shirts ($6,000)
What is the community impact?

2016

• 1362 freshmen
• 5238 hours
• 132 projects (31 community partners)

Five Years

• 6,003 freshmen
• 19,347 hours
• 410 projects

Partnerships:

• 7 partners have been with us all 5 years
• 7 partners for 4 years
• 5 partners for 3 years
Hours and volunteers per category
In surveys...

- 90% of partners indicate FDoS has a “high positive contribution towards the work of the agency.”

- 95% of respondents indicate, “This experience has positively affected our agency's perception of the university.”
Project EAT

GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025
Eden Housing, MedShare, Open Heart Kitchen
Roots & Leaves—
Identify 2-3 of the following:

Roots— a learning experience that influenced you as a student

Leaves—what was the impact & what made this experience so impactful
Key collaborators
(liaison role, strategic planning)

Oversight & Coordination?
Project Leads?

Where could Common Day of Service be housed?
Who are these students?
Key Element: Housing Entity

Think:
- Who has direct connection with a commonly organized group of students?
- Who has the ability to communicate regularly with these students?
- Who has the ability to run reflections with these students?

- A unit on campus that is the conduit to students—that houses a “community” of students
- Does not need to be the coordinating unit

- First Year Experience
- Student Support or Success Programs
- Campus Housing
- Academic Departments or Colleges
Key Element: Coordinating Entity

Potential ways to fill this role:

• Faculty on release time

• Staff allocated PT from likely over-sight units: an academic programs office, student affairs office

• Service Learning or Community Engagement Program (staffing varies widely within the CSU)

• Graduate Student/s (would need supervision)

Responsibilities:

• Plan & coordinate processes

• Collaborate with community partners

• Review projects

• Coordinate student registration

• Over-see implementation; trouble shoot cancellations, etc.

• Collaborate with Project Leads & Liaison

• Disseminate necessary resources
Key Element: Project Leads

Potential ways to fill this role:

• Academic courses (Recreation & Community Services; Communications; Sociology)
• Student assistants
• Scholarships
• Federal Work Study Students

Project Leads need:

• Training & Orientation
• Organization & Coordination (assigning projects, picking up rosters)
• Supervision
Liaison: Between coordinating entity and faculty/staff of housing entity

Responsibilities:
• Share & explain processes
• Troubleshoot & communicate regarding issues
• Share rosters

Strategic Planning...Name Names!
• staff in previously identified departments
• your campus’ community engagement or service learning program
• faculty in relevant departments
Share out...
Pitfalls...#whatcangowrong, will...

• Weather (outdoor projects)—have partners submit rain protocol; have a weekend point person

• Project cancellations—when planning ask partners if they accept ‘drop in’ registrations (not actually students dropping in, but staff adding students to a project that hold additional students as needed)

• Lost Project Leads—weekend point person

• Students behaving badly—Project Leads diffuse situations & communicate with staff

• Student Risk—waivers; let your Risk Management folks know about the initiative. (Your SL/CE Director can help!)

• Students unable to participate—alternative assignment.
• Have students sign waivers.
• Have emergency contact info on waivers.
• Have student emails for last-minute project cancels.
• Prepare a process for student project changes.
• Get site (day of service) supervisor cell phone.
• Send reminder emails to students with location, project information, special instructions, rain protocol.
• Send reminder email to partners with rosters and Project Lead.
• Have students signed in and out.
• Check with Project Leads regularly for feedback.
• Designate a place students can go to ask questions; prepare for traffic (designate an email or phone as well...).
• Have students reflect on the experience!
What can one day do?

Making a Difference
Students saw themselves as agents of change.

Community Awareness
“I learned...about the community.”

Gratitude
Students realized the need for appreciating what they have in relation to others.

Aptitude
Students had a self-realization through participation in the project about a quality or skill they possess. (Patient, organized, team player, hard worker, compassionate, people-person)

Student FDoS Feedback Summary

We received 1220 surveys from students and found themes in 658.
Evidence of increased retention rates for participants to sophomore year and after.

- The fall 2012 cohort of freshmen (FDoS Spring 2013) were retained into year 2 at 89% for participants versus 50% for non-participants; 80% versus 41% into year 3; and 73% versus 35% into year 4.

- The fall 2013 cohort (FDoS 2014) were retained into year 2 at 90% versus 57%; into year 3 at 76% versus 47%. And, so far, the fall 2014 cohort retention into year 2 is 89% versus 45%.
Within retention data, we are not analyzing other variables in these numbers that might also impact retention.

- previous community service experience
- family/cultural value of service
- the service projects (outdoor/indoor/weather/difficulty/tangible outcome)
- faculty/classroom experience

Other multiple variables that might affect retention such as advising.
Students often write these reflections within a narrative timeline--as in, "When I first heard about the assignment, I felt..."

Narratives include such concluding statements as: "The service learning day made me think and do things that I didn't think I could do."

Within both the written reflections and the surveys, student word choice and syntax are a telling indicator of transformation and impact. "I can" versus the "I should" or "I will." Also, many students lead into the reflections with "I never realized."

Within student writing is a rich area for further investigation and assessment surrounding the impact of the initiative and the language surrounding self-efficacy.
We are using survey data from this year to assist with the development of a pre and post survey.

Pre Questions

- I have participated in community service as a part of a school or organization (like clubs or Scouts) requirement.  
  □ Yes  □ No

- I have independently participated in service (because I wanted to, not because I was required).  □ Yes  □ No

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement

  Community service is valued in my home or local community.
  1    2    3    4    5
Pre/Post Survey

• Everyone should find the time to contribute to his/her community through service.

• I am aware of the needs and problems facing our society.

• I can contribute to the solutions of community problems is my responsibility.

• I can have a positive impact on my community.

• I can help others, because I have enough resources to help myself.

• I have a good understanding of my personal strengths and weaknesses.

• My education feels relevant to my life outside school.

• I am self-motivated.

• I am open-minded.

• I can motivate others.

• I treat others with respect.

• I work well with others.

• I communicate well with others.

• I can achieve the goals I set for myself.

• I can handle most of the challenges that come my way.

• I am good at completing tasks.

• I can solve difficult problems when I put my mind to it.
Brainstorming: A Common Day of Service (handout)

Key collaborators (liaison role, strategic planning)

Assessment: goals/learning outcomes of housing entity?

Oversight & Coordination?

Project Leads?

Where could Common Day of Service be housed?

Who are these students?

Notes:
Next steps….

• Have a conversation with your Service Learning/Community Engagement Director! [http://calstate.edu/cce/campus-contacts/community_service_directors.shtml](http://calstate.edu/cce/campus-contacts/community_service_directors.shtml)

• (Even if they don’t have capacity to house the program—they are the resource for community partnerships and student placement procedures.)

• Convene a meeting of key collaborators, including your SL/CE Director.

• Determine an appropriate pilot, with a select group of students and partners.