

DBU's Commitment to *Service-Learning*



DBU Service-Learning Council 2010–2011—from left to right: Dr. Dawna Walsh, Hannah Montgomery (secretary, Center for Service-Learning), Christy Gandy, Dr. Gail Linam, Justin Gandy (director, Center for Service-Learning), Dr. Nancy McLaughlin (Chair), Jack Goodyear (Faculty Service-Learning Specialist), Dr. Stewart Tung, Juan Baldor, Dr. Joseph Matos, Jimmy Turner, Sandee Smith, Dr. Debra Moore, and Jay Harley. Not pictured: Dr. Denny Dowd, Mark Hale, Scott Jeffries, Dr. Tommy Sanders, and Amie Sarker.

Service-Learning

at Dallas Baptist University is a teaching and learning strategy which integrates academic instruction, community service, and guided reflection from a Christ-centered, faith-based perspective in order to enhance student learning, to foster civic responsibility, and to develop servant leaders.

During the Spring 2006 term—in conjunction with DBU's ongoing accreditation process—faculty, staff, and groups of students were asked to offer written recommendations regarding ways to strengthen student learning and better fulfill DBU's mission statement. A clear consensus arose from this University-wide feedback, and service-learning was the top choice of the University family. Many service-learning initiatives were already in place throughout the campus community, and faculty workshops were devoted to further development of this teaching and learning strategy. The fact that service-learning was so promi-

nent in the campus-wide survey indicates the DBU community's continued interest in developing a service-driven environment. Service-learning supports the University mission to develop servant leaders and will continue to increase DBU's impact upon its community and the world.

The Mission

of DBU's Service-Learning Program is to enhance student learning and to support the University's overall mission to produce servant leaders who have the ability to integrate faith and learning through their respective callings. The program allows students to practice theories learned in the classroom through hands-on service alongside community partners and agencies—both local and global—as students' knowledge is extended beyond the classroom walls, into the community, and around the world.

Due to the reciprocal nature of service-learning, students, community partners, and DBU all benefit from this teaching and learning strategy. Significant learning takes place as students reflect on their experiences and connect them to learner-centered course objectives. DBU encourages and assists faculty and staff in the integration of service-learning into the curriculum of every student's degree plan.

Three areas for student growth serve as the focus for the measurable learner-centered goals and objectives.

One The first goal is enhancing student learning. DBU provides academic and co-curricular experiences which allow students to demonstrate improvement in academic learning. Through these experiences, DBU students will understand the relevance and efficacy of their subject area knowledge and use critical thinking to analyze and solve problems.

Two The second goal is fostering civic responsibility. Through academic and co-curricular service-learning experiences, DBU students will develop a sense of global civic responsibility. The students will demonstrate understanding of important societal issues and critical community needs, while participating in community service opportunities.

Three DBU's third goal is developing servant leaders. Through academic and co-curricular service-learning experiences, DBU students will be equipped to become Christ-centered servant leaders. The students will apply the biblical concept of servant leadership and demonstrate the knowledge, attitude, and skills needed to become servant leaders.



Christy Gandy, DBU director of global missions, serves with DBU students in Guatemala.

Most students will find they will learn about servant leadership by not only researching and reading about it, but by living it out through projects, mission opportunities, and practical experiences. The goal of teaching servant leadership is to help impart the character of Christ into each student so they will be ready to live and serve the Lord in their chosen vocations, and the service-learning teaching and learning strategy supports this goal in unique and meaningful ways.

Written by Sara Thetford