

Report on Binghamton University Faculty Needs for Implementing Community-Based Learning Opportunities

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Report prepared by:

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Executive Summary

The newly established Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) at Binghamton University encourages Binghamton University students, faculty, and the surrounding community to attain academic, personal, and professional growth through civic engagement. During the fall semester of 2010, students from Professor Kristina Lambright's Logic of Inquiry class partnered with the Binghamton University Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) to gather information on the resources needed and desired by Binghamton University faculty members for the further improvement and implementation of community-based learning opportunities.

The overarching purpose of this report is multifaceted and will intend to: (1) briefly highlight faculty definitions and barriers of community-based learning opportunities; (2) illuminate needed and desired resources for further implementation of community-based learning opportunities at Binghamton University; and (3) determine faculty topics of interest and preferred formats for receiving community-based learning information. This report is based on qualitative data collected from five focus-groups composed of Binghamton University faculty members that have implemented or are interested in implementing community-based learning opportunities.

Binghamton University faculty members who participated in this study frequently described barriers to community-based learning; however, they also requested several resources that would help reduce these barriers, such as access to financial resources, increases in interdisciplinary communication, and improvements to course management. Faculty also described community-based learning topics about which they would like more information, including the legal and safety measures as well as information about community needs. To learn about these community-based learning resources and topics, faculty members wanted information available to them either in written or electronic format from a centralized location, such as an office or website. They also mentioned community events that they could attend to receive information about community-based learning opportunities. Faculty felt that by having access to the resources and information they described, they could better incorporate community-based learning into their curricula and improve educational opportunities for their students.

Introduction

Created in the spring of 2010, Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) seeks to develop partnerships between Binghamton University and the community and to provide affiliates of each group with opportunities for interaction and engagement. Community-based learning is one method for developing such partnerships and opportunities as it is a pedagogical tool that actively engages students and faculty in the community. Thus, it is important for CCE staff to understand the services and resources necessary for Binghamton University faculty to incorporate community-based learning into their curricula.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the services and resources Binghamton University faculty need to implement community-based learning in their classrooms. In partnership with CCE, Kristina Lambright's Fall 2010 Logic of Inquiry class conducted focus groups with Binghamton University faculty who use or who are interested in using community-based learning in their curricula. Conducted between October and November 2010, the focus groups were designed to gather information to assist CCE in improving community-based learning services and resources. The qualitative data collected in these focus groups is summarized in this report.

Study Design

On September 14, 2010, Allison Alden met with Kristina Lambright's PAFF 510 Logic of Inquiry class to discuss the CCE focus group project. She explained that the CCE wanted information about (1) community-based learning resources currently available to Binghamton University faculty, (2) services and resources that will assist

Binghamton University faculty in incorporating community-based learning into courses, (3) community-based learning topics about which Binghamton University faculty want more information, and (4) formats in which Binghamton University faculty would like to receive community-based learning information.

The PAFF 510 class was divided into five teams of four to five students. Each team developed a potential data collection protocol, which included a pre-focus group survey with an implied consent statement (to be distributed to and completed by focus group participants prior to their participation in the focus groups), an oral consent script (to be read at the beginning of each focus group), a project information sheet (to be distributed to focus group participants), a focus group questionnaire, and an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. Kristina Lambright selected the documents to be used as the final data collection protocol and reviewed the pre-focus group survey and focus group questionnaire with Allison Alden to improve the data collection measures.

Following IRB approval, focus group participants signed up for a focus group session with Allison Alden. Allison Alden then e-mailed the pre-focus group survey to focus group participants. Appendix B includes a copy of the pre-focus group survey.

Five focus groups were conducted between October and November 2010 and consisted of one to seven Binghamton University faculty members as well as one student moderator and at least two student note-takers. The focus group sessions were recorded to ensure that the note-takers' written or typed notes were accurate. The facilitators ensured that each participant completed the pre-focus group survey before participating in the focus group. Participants who did not complete the pre-focus group survey prior to the focus group session were provided with a survey to complete at that time.

Next, the focus group moderators distributed project information sheets to participants. Included in Appendix C is a copy of this form. Then, the moderators read an oral consent script, which indicated that the focus groups were confidential and voluntary and asked for the participant's verbal consent to both participate in the focus groups and to record the sessions. The oral consent and audio release statement is presented in Appendix D. After reading the oral consent script, the moderators asked participants the questions included in the focus group questionnaire, which is available in Appendix E.

Following the sessions, moderators and note-takers listened to the audio recordings and compiled notes detailing focus group members' responses. The notes were shared with each student team to be coded and analyzed. The coding scheme used to code and analyze this report is included in Appendix F.

Recruitment

Allison Alden, Director of CCE, utilized a census approach to recruit focus group participants. She had access to faculty through pre-existing contacts developed via the services that CCE delivers. Participation in the focus groups was entirely voluntary. CCE staff recruited all Binghamton University professors of whom they were aware were either currently using community-based learning or were interested in incorporating community-based learning into their courses. Appendix A describes the focus group sessions. Only one person participated in Focus Group 1. The CCE director intentionally assigned faculty with less experience using community-based learning techniques to Focus Group 3 so that these faculty would feel more comfortable sharing their opinions and would not feel intimidated by more experienced faculty.

Twenty-one faculty members participated in this study. Demographic information was not collected for two participants. The recruited sample for which demographic information was available was comprised of 12 females (63%) and 7 males (37%) whose ages ranged from a minimum of thirty to over sixty years old. All participants were Caucasian. Eight participants were tenured faculty, and all other participants were untenured and not on a tenured track, except one study participant who was untenured, but on a tenure track. The participants taught in seven different disciplines: humanities; social and behavioral sciences; math/engineering/computer science/technology; business; human development/public administration/social work/student affairs; nursing; and health/wellness/recreation. (One participant did not indicate the discipline in which she taught.) Two participants taught at only the graduate level (11%), nine at only the undergraduate level (47%), and eight at both the graduate and undergraduate level (42%). One participant who taught at both the graduate and undergraduate level indicated that she also taught international courses.

Potential Validity and Reliability Threats and Strategies for Minimizing Them

As previously stated, focus groups were utilized to collect information for CCE regarding resources Binghamton University faculty need to better incorporate community-based learning into their curricula. Use of focus groups presents some considerations regarding reliability, measurement validity, and generalizability of study results so the class developed strategies to reduce the effects of these threats.

Within the context of this study, reliability refers to the consistency of participant responses to focus group questions. One characteristic of this study that threatened reliability was utilizing a different moderator to facilitate each focus group. Moderators

may have probed participants, set-up the focus group room, and utilized an interview style unique from one another, affecting how the same participants responded under different environmental and social conditions. To reduce differences among focus groups, consistent approaches to conducting the focus groups, including a standardized focus group questionnaire with probing questions, were developed.

Measurement validity in this study refers to how well focus group questions gather data relevant to the study's purpose. Participants with extensive responses may have limited the responses of others, resulting in inaccurate measurement of participant feedback and thus a threat to measurement validity. To minimize this threat, moderators were instructed to ensure that no participant dominated the focus group and that all participants responded. Similarly, participants' responses to focus group questions may have influenced the truthfulness of the responses other participants provided. For instance, negative responses to community-based learning by some participants may have inhibited supporters of this pedagogical method from responding honestly, again threatening measurement validity. While conducting individual interviews or issuing surveys could have minimized this measurement validity threat, limited resources prevented interviewing from being a viable option. Further, surveys would have limited the detailed qualitative data available by conducting focus groups.

Additionally, professors were participants and students were moderators and note-takers, establishing power asymmetries within the focus group sessions. Because the power asymmetries may have impacted the way moderators facilitated the focus groups and/or the responses participants provided, measurement validity was threatened.

Utilizing non-student moderators and note-takers could have reduced power asymmetries;

however conducting the focus groups was an assignment for the students. Use of other moderators and note-takers was not an option.

Participants' interpretations of any unclear questions asked during the focus group influenced both reliability and measurement validity, as the consistency and accuracy of participants' responses to such questions could not be verified. To better ensure participants understood questions, moderators explained the purpose of the study to participants and developed specific probes to follow open-ended questions. Similarly, the length of the focus group session may have also influenced both measurement validity and reliability. Lengthy sessions may have resulted in inconsistent or inaccurate responses due to participant fatigue or apathy. To reduce this threat, moderators limited focus groups to one hour and addressed questions thoroughly, yet concisely.

Finally, generalizability refers to the extent to which study findings can be applied to the population of interest. As mentioned previously, Allison Alden used a census approach to recruit participants via pre-existing contacts with Binghamton University faculty who belonged to the population of interest – faculty who use or who are interested in using community-based learning in the classroom. Other Binghamton University faculty may have belonged to this population, but were not included in the sample; thus, the recruited sample may not be representative of the entire population of interest, threatening generalizability. In addition, the community-based learning views of the faculty who volunteered to participate in the focus groups may differ from the views of faculty who did not volunteer to participate; thus, generalizability was again threatened. As the entire population of interest may not have been asked to participate in the focus groups and participation was voluntary, there were few measures available to reduce

generalizability threats. Multiple focus groups were conducted in an effort to include as many faculty members as possible and maximize generalizability of the study results.

General Impressions of Community-Based Learning Services and Resources

Participants in the focus groups provided diverse examples of community-based learning and levels of experience with this pedagogical tool as well as a dedication to continued incorporation of it into their curricula. Unfortunately, participants more often described barriers to community-based learning and missing resources as opposed to available resources and supporting factors. These observations indicate that there are services and resources desired by Binghamton University faculty that CCE could develop and provide.

Throughout the focus group sessions, faculty also discussed a variety of community-based learning topics on which they could use more information, ranging from safety and legal concerns to appropriate evaluation measures. Participants also suggested formats in which they prefer to receive information relevant to community-based learning. This information is valuable for CCE in improving and developing faculty services and resources that support community-based learning initiatives.

Characterizations of Community-Based Learning

In order for CCE to improve community-based learning services and resources for faculty, it is important to understand how faculty perceive and define this teaching method. Focus group participants were asked how they define community-based learning. In general, participants agreed that community-based learning involves students actively engaging with the community, and the purpose of this interaction was characterized as having a focus on service, practice, or a combination of the two. Faculty describing a

service focus regarded community-based learning as a reciprocally beneficial interaction between the student and the community partner, whereas faculty referring to community-based learning with a practice focus emphasized the benefits of the process for the student. Interestingly, faculty teaching within nursing unanimously viewed community-based learning as a both service and practice.

In two focus groups, some participants mentioned implementing community-based learning within the classroom by inviting community partners to engage with students within the classroom. As one participant described, “You can take the students to the community or bring the community to the class.” But among all focus groups, community based learning was described as a service and/or practical experience for students beyond the classroom.

Reasons Faculty Implement Community-Based Learning

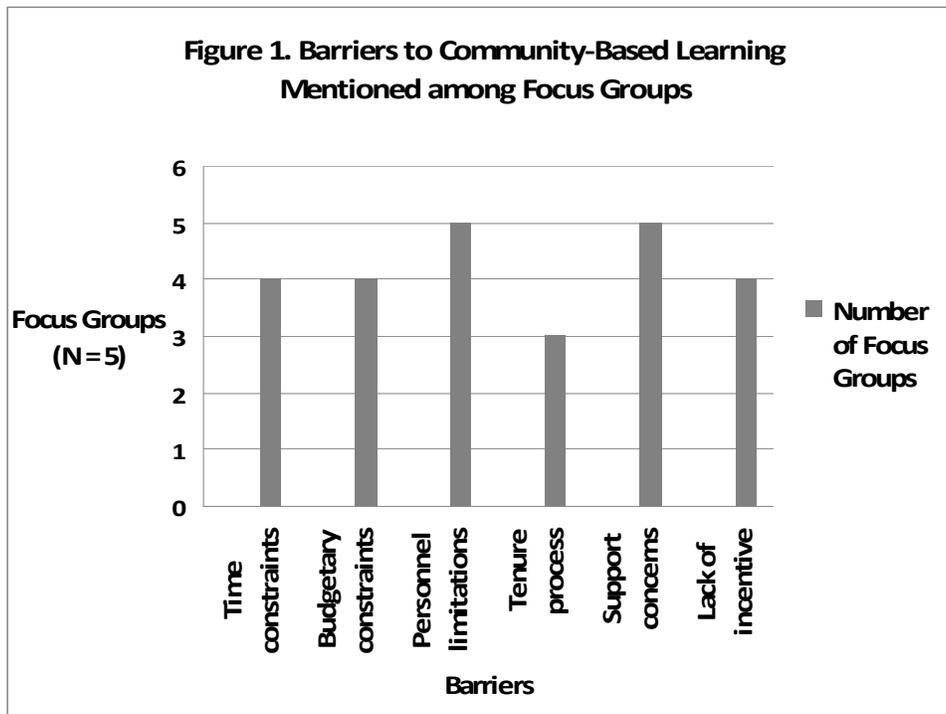
Faculty only cited few reasons for implementing community-based learning opportunities, but the positive regard with which focus group participants discussed their motivation for utilizing this teaching method suggested that these factors were critical for continued use of community-based learning. Among all participants, three primary factors were identified as reasons faculty implement community-based learning: (1) benefits to the student; (2) benefits to the community; and (3) personal preference.

Faculty mentioned benefits to the student and the community more often than personal preference. “The students can do something that the city will never do itself. The students are involved in the community and get valuable information,” one participant explained, emphasizing the benefits to both the student and the community. Furthermore, faculty particularly focused on benefits to the student, such as personal or cultural

development and practical experience. As one faculty member explained, “Community learning presents valuable learning experience because students have to be ready to respond to unexpected events – what will happen in the real world.” The reasons faculty cited as motivating them to implement community-based learning are consistent with some of the findings of Alden & Lambright (2010), who conducted a case study regarding service-learning sustainability at Binghamton University.

Barriers to Community-Based Learning

Although faculty members were not asked directly about the barriers they encounter when implementing community-based learning, they identified several barriers when describing their experiences with the pedagogical tool. Figure 1 illustrates the barriers most commonly identified by focus group participants.



A barrier to community-based learning well-recognized by participants was personnel limitations, as all focus groups frequently focused on the investment of human resources required to implement such projects. They felt overwhelmed by logistical activities, such as contacting community partners and coordinating student schedules. One faculty member said “...basically I have to find 40 placements, minimum every year and I had a part-time employee who did that and was cut, so then I have no one.” Participants in all focus groups also expressed concern regarding organizational, administrative, and departmental support needed for community-based learning.

Consistent with concerns regarding personnel limitations, participants in four focus groups described the process of implementing community-based learning as a “time consuming” process. The same number of focus groups also recognized a lack of funding for community-based learning. In addition, four focus groups focused on the lack of recognition they received for implementing community-based learning projects. One participant asked, “Is there some kind of carrot involved?” emphasizing the lack of incentives faculty have to incorporate community-based learning into their curricula.

Participants within three focus groups explained that the tenure process also serves as a barrier because it focuses on publications and research rather than on instruction. Also, few focus groups mentioned uncontrollable factors (i.e. student attitudes, weather) that challenge community-based learning, but discussions on these topics were infrequent and brief.

Like the reasons faculty provided for implementing community-based learning, the community-based learning barriers they identified, including time, budgetary, and personnel constraints, support concerns, the tenure process, and a lack of

recognition/incentive, are also consistent with the barriers to service-learning identified by Alden and Lambright (2010) in their case study investigating service-learning sustainability at Binghamton University. Recognizing these barriers is important as it helps CCE identify weaknesses that can be addressed when improving current services and resources or when developing new ones.

Current Community-Based Learning Resources

It is also important for CCE staff to be familiar with the community-based learning resources Binghamton University faculty currently identify and utilize to avoid redundancy in developing new resources and services. Thus, moderators asked focus groups what supports are currently available to assist faculty wanting to become more involved in community-based learning. In general, faculty members asserted that resources are limited or nonexistent, an observation further supported by recurrent faculty descriptions of community-based learning barriers rather than current resources. One participant stated, “There are not many resources...” Overall, focus group participants identified only a few community-based learning resources that they currently utilize, including colleagues, Binghamton University research and academic institutions, community partners, and CCE as current resources.

Fellow colleagues were one of the most commonly cited resources. One junior faculty member mentioned, “...I had colleagues that could point me in the right direction...” At least three focus groups mentioned names of specific colleagues they referenced when implementing community-based learning opportunities. As one faculty member stated, “Until [Name of Colleague] came, there was nothing as far as I am

concerned. And it was really difficult. It's been a struggle.” This comment also highlights faculty sentiments regarding the lack of resources described above.

Faculty also mentioned Binghamton University research and academic institutions, such as the Center for Applied Community Research and Development and the University Downtown Center, as a current resource. Discussion regarding such institutions was generally positive; however, two focus groups described concerns regarding the institutions as resources. Specifically, because these institutions were associated with particular Binghamton University schools, colleges, and departments, they believed that community-based learning was applicable only to those groups.

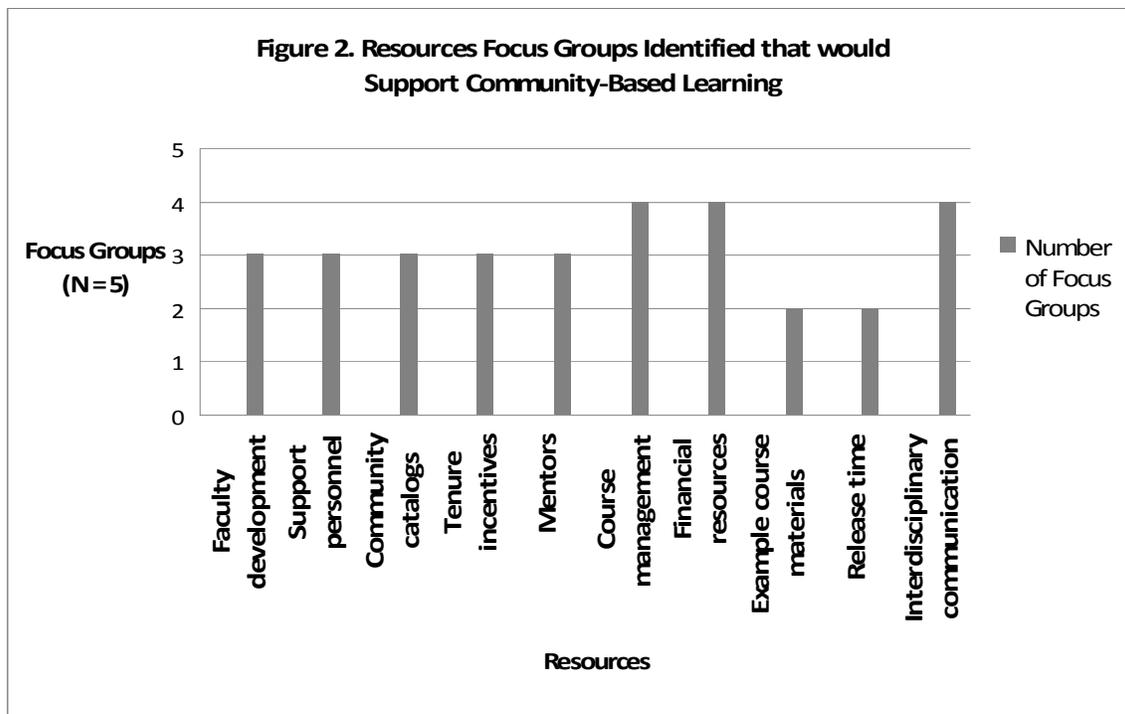
In addition, community partners were regarded as a positive resource by faculty, particularly those who teach classes within nursing. Nursing faculty noted that these relationships were difficult to develop initially, but after several semesters of implementing projects with the same community partners, they now served as a vital community-based learning resource. One participant who teaches in nursing contended that “the local schools and local facilities [now] love the Decker School of Nursing.”

The least prominently mentioned community-based learning resource was CCE with only three participants in two focus groups recognizing it. In fact, one participant stated that she found out about CCE through a community organization. Another participant explained “The only reason I know about the CCE is because I know [Name of Colleague].” Considering this participant's experience, the low number of participants recognizing CCE as a resource, and the brief history of the CCE as a Binghamton University organization, faculty may not be familiar with the community-based learning

resources CCE currently provides. Despite limited knowledge about CCE, faculty familiar with the organization held it in positive regard.

Resources Needed to Support Community-Based Learning

Focus group participants were asked what supports they felt would assist them in developing and offering community-based learning opportunities in their courses. Figure 2 illustrates the resources identified among the focus group sessions.



Interdepartmental and/or interdisciplinary communication: Four focus groups discussed a desire to communicate with other departments and disciplines regarding community-based learning. Faculty members noted that resources and knowledge from colleagues in other departments could improve their community-based learning efforts. One participant was interested interdisciplinary collaboration on projects because it would provide a more “real-world” experience for her students. Another participant

stated that “if we pressed more for interdisciplinary teaching, it would be fascinating because there would be new theories emerging.”

The need for interdepartmental communication is further supported by some participants’ impressions that current community-based resources, such as the Binghamton University institutions described earlier, are associated with particular disciplines. A more centralized forum for exchanging community-based learning information and ideas could address this issue. Developing resources that increase interdisciplinary communication may avoid impressions that community-based learning is a pedagogical tool reserved for a limited spectrum of disciplines.

Financial resources: Because of the additional costs required to implement community-based learning courses, four focus groups also highlighted the need for more funding. One participant explained that a recent community-based learning project cost over \$200 just for transportation. Another participant stated “One big factor is knowledge of what financial support there is going to be, because right now it’s ‘Well, pitch us an idea and we’ll see if we can afford it,’ which [laughter] doesn’t give us a lot of incentive for spending a lot of time thinking about it.” Taken into consideration with the frequent mentions of budgetary constraints as a community-based learning barrier, these comments illustrate the need of financial resources to implement community-based learning projects.

Course management: Four focus groups also described several course management improvements that would be beneficial to implementing community-based learning. Participants’ suggestions included labeling community-based learning courses as such in the University’s course catalogue, including community-based learning

courses as a general education requirement, and limiting the number of students enrolled in community-based learning courses.

Tenure incentives: Three focus groups discussed including community-based learning in the tenure process. Paraphrasing a participant in one of these sessions, “Faculty should be rewarded for using community-based research towards their tenure. That would help junior faculty who want to incorporate community-based learning.” Paraphrasing, another participant stated, “Community-based research should count towards tenure, which would make it easier to incorporate such learning into coursework.”

Consistent with this, only one focus group participant was untenured and on a tenure track, whereas all other participants were either tenured or untenured and not on a tenure track. Furthermore, three focus groups described the tenure process as a barrier to community based learning, as it focuses more on publication and research rather than course instruction. These observations further suggest that incorporating a community-based learning component into the tenure process may serve as an incentive to implementing community-based learning in the classroom.

Faculty development and training: Faculty members in three focus groups discussed faculty development and training as a resource, particularly for faculty new to community-based learning. One participant recalled not knowing how to implement projects when he started developing them. A participant in another group suggested a training program that would be sensitive to a faculty member’s discipline, but that would also allow a person wanting to develop a community-based learning project to “get all the tips.” Based on faculty comments, faculty development and training is a resource

participants recommended primarily for junior faculty or faculty with little experience implementing community-based learning opportunities.

Mentors: Another resource three focus groups discussed was mentor figures who have extensive experience incorporating community-based learning into the classroom and who can provide insight on planning and implementation. While faculty members wanted access to mentors, some expressed disinterest in serving as a mentor. Some participants were concerned mentoring would become part of their already sizeable workloads. Another participant explained, “I would not volunteer to be a mentor because people may not receive tenure if they focus on community-based learning,” further highlighting the tenure incentives described earlier as a potential resource.

Community catalogs: Faculty also described information resources that would assist them implement community-based learning in the classroom. Faculty explained that they invest significant time searching for potential projects and points of contact. Specifically, three focus groups suggested creating a catalog of community-based learning projects available with local agencies and organizations. One focus group also suggested creating a list of contacts persons within these agencies and organizations who are interested in committing to a project with faculty and students at the University.

Support personnel: Three focus groups discussed needing more human resources to complete the logistical activities associated with coordinating community-based learning opportunities. “It’s the multiple phone calls. It’s the multiple e-mails. It’s the amount of time. If somebody else can do this work for us... I would love to delegate to somebody,” one participant explained. Faculty described types of support personnel that could help perform logistical tasks, including community mediators and teaching

assistants. As four focus groups described personnel limitations as a barrier to community-based learning opportunities, the need for support personnel is further highlighted.

Release time: Because of the multiple logistical activities associated with coordinating community-based learning projects, two focus groups stressed the need for more release time from other instructional responsibilities. A possible explanation for faculty needing more time for projects is the lack of support personnel that all focus groups mentioned as a barrier. Fewer focus groups mentioned needing release time than needing support personnel, suggesting that faculty may value support personnel more than release time.

Examples of community-based learning course materials: Two focus groups specifically requested examples of community-based learning course materials, particularly sample syllabi, as resources that would be helpful in implementing community-based learning opportunities.

Community-Based Learning Topics of Interest

Focus group participants were also asked to provide any specific community-based learning topics about which they would like to receive information. Faculty described six topics on which they would like more information: legal and safety measures, community needs, student and project evaluations, developing and maintaining community partnerships, incorporating community-based learning into courses, and having research regarding the benefits of community-based learning.

Four focus groups discussed their lack of knowledge regarding the legal and safety measures necessary when requiring students to participate in activities beyond the

classroom. One faculty member explained that he did not consider liability and legal issues when he began implementing community-based learning projects: “Things I should have known about never occurred to me.” Two participants in another group expressed concern over the safety of their students while engaging with the community with one asking, “Are they [the students] safe?” These comments suggest the importance of community-based learning legal and safety information to faculty.

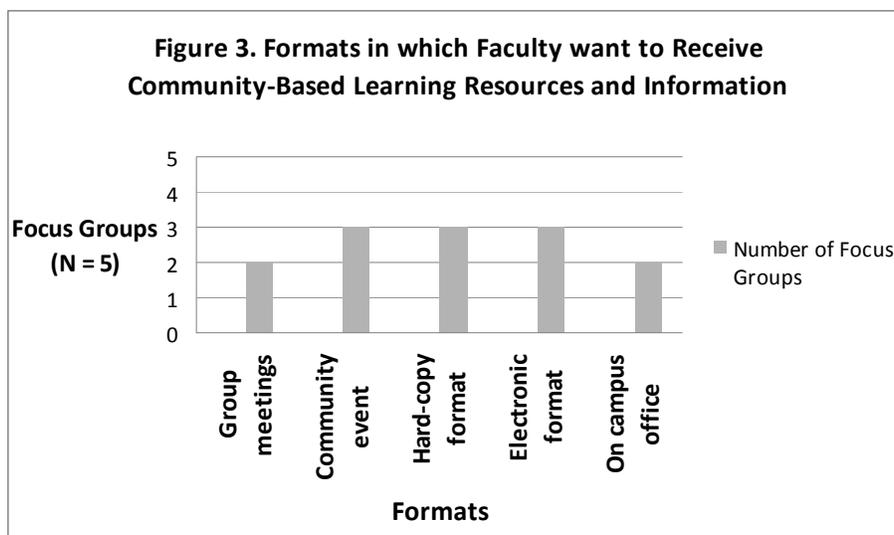
Three focus groups expressed a need for more information about what needs exist within the community. One study participant explained that in order to engage in community-based learning, faculty need to be knowledgeable about the community.

Another topic of interest identified by two focus groups was information on how to evaluate students and projects. “The thing I would like some guidance with now is how to fairly grade students because we’re not there. We don’t see how much they’re contributing, so that is my challenge,” one participant explained. Some faculty members also asked for more information on how to evaluate and improve the projects.

One focus group also mentioned a desire for information on how to incorporate community-based learning into the curriculum. As one participant expressing this interest explained, “...I know sometimes, as a teacher, I come up with these really great ideas sometimes, but I’m like ‘how do I implement that?’ ... Sometimes I don’t want to waste my time thinking about it...” Other topics identified by two different focus groups were information relevant to developing and maintaining community partnerships as well as research regarding the benefits of community-based learning compared to other pedagogical tools.

Formats for Receiving Community-Based Learning Information

Finally, focus group participants were asked in what formats they would prefer to receive information or support from the CCE. The most common formats mentioned by focus groups for receiving information were physical documents and electronic online resources. Other formats for receiving information mentioned included community events, group meetings, and a central office. Figure 3 illustrates these observations.



Three focus groups mentioned wanting information in hard-copy and electronic format. While participants were positive about receiving information electronically, they did not want to receive information via e-mail or listservs, commonly stating that their e-mail inboxes were already crowded with these items. “Listservs are very cumbersome,” stated one participant. A participant in another group shared this sentiment.

Another format mentioned by three focus groups was a community event, such as a community-based learning fair, where CCE staff, community partners, and faculty could network and share community-based learning information and resources with each

other. Participants within one focus group recalled an event like this being held at the University Downtown Center; however, many of them did not attend. If community events are planned as a resource for faculty members, it may be helpful to determine how to generate interest and increase attendance.

Two focus groups indicated a preference for receiving information and resources at group meetings. As one faculty member suggested, “Faculty seminar or workshops would be really great [for acquiring information about community-based learning].”

Finally, two focus groups recommended a central office, like the CCE, where they could discuss incorporating community-based learning into their courses. As, one focus group member said, “It’s time to be able to go to the office and say this is what I would like to do, and what I’ll give you, and you tell me who to see, and here is how you do it.”

Conclusion

This report analyzed the qualitative data collected from focus groups consisting of twenty-one Binghamton University faculty members who have used or are interested in incorporating community-based learning into their courses. An overview of the research methodology as well as a summary of the research findings is also included. Based on the data collected, Binghamton University faculty felt as though there were many barriers and few resources for implementing community-based learning in the classroom; however, they described resources and services that would facilitate community-based learning. They also described topics on which they would like more information, and explained the format in which they would like to receive such information.

In summary, faculty members generally had a positive view of community-based learning opportunities and believed these opportunities were beneficial for both the

student and the community. Faculty expressed sincere interest in developing ways to further the implementation of this pedagogical tool. The aim of this report was to identify resources faculty believe could facilitate community-based learning, as well as to provide insight regarding faculty topics of interest and preferred formats for receiving community-based learning information. This data is useful for encouraging and expanding community-based learning opportunities at Binghamton University.

Appendices

<i>Focus Group Information</i>	<i>Appendix A</i>
<i>Pre-Focus Group Survey</i>	<i>Appendix B</i>
<i>Focus Group Participant Information Sheet</i>	<i>Appendix C</i>
<i>Focus Group Oral Consent and Audio Release Statement</i>	<i>Appendix D</i>
<i>Focus Group Questionnaire</i>	<i>Appendix E</i>
<i>Focus Group Coding Scheme</i>	<i>Appendix F</i>
<i>References</i>	<i>Appendix G</i>

Appendix A Focus Group Information

<i>Date & Time</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i># of Participants</i>
<i>Wednesday, October 27, 2010 10:00-11:00 AM</i>	<i>University Union 123</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Thursday, October 28, 2010 10:00-11:00 AM</i>	<i>University Union 123</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Tuesday, November 2, 2010 1:00-2:00 PM</i>	<i>University Union West B08</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Wednesday, November 3, 2010 1:00-2:00 PM</i>	<i>University Union West B08</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Thursday, November 4, 2010 3:00-4:00 PM</i>	<i>University Union 123</i>	<i>4</i>
	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>21</i>

**Binghamton University Center for Civic Engagement Project
Pre-Focus Group Survey**

You have been invited to participate in a focus group on community-based learning opportunities by Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement. You are being asked to participate in this study because you have either used or are interested in using community-based learning opportunities in your classes. We are asking all individuals recruited to participate in a focus group to complete a brief demographic survey in advance of their focus group. This survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete. Your survey responses will be confidential. Your decision whether or not to participate is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, your relationship with Binghamton University or Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement will not be affected. If you do choose to participate, you do not have to answer all the questions and may stop at any time. Questions about your rights as a volunteer in research can be directed to Binghamton University's Human Subjects Research Review Committee at x73818. Other questions about the survey can be directed to Center for Civic Engagement staff at x74287.

1. Please provide your first and last name.

2. Gender
 - Female
 - Male

3. Race / Ethnicity
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - African American (Black)
 - Caucasian (White)
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic (Latino)
 - Other

4. Please indicate your age range.
 - 20 - 29
 - 30 - 39
 - 40 - 49
 - 50 - 59
 - 60+

5. Please indicate your tenure status.
 - Tenured

- Untenured, tenure track
- Untenured, non-tenure track

6. In which academic discipline do you currently teach?

- Humanities
- Social & behavioral sciences
- Physical & biological sciences
- Arts
- Math, engineering, computer science, technology
- Business
- Human development, public administration, social work, student affairs
- Education
- Nursing
- Health, wellness, recreation
- Other

7. How many full years have you been teaching semester-long courses at the college or university level?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 – 4 years
- 5 – 8 years
- 9 – 12 years
- 12+ years

8. How many full years have you been teaching semester-long courses at Binghamton University?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 – 4 years
- 5 – 8 years
- 9 – 12 years
- 12+ years

9. What types of students do you teach? (Please check all that apply.)

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Other

10. What is the most common reason students enroll in the courses you teach? (Please check all that apply.)

- They need the courses for their major.
- They need to fill a general education requirement.
- They need to fill an elective requirement.
- I do not know.

11. Of the semester-long courses you have taught at a college or university level, how many of them incorporated community-based learning opportunities for your students?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3+

12. Of the semester-long courses you have taught at Binghamton University, how many of them incorporated community-based learning opportunities for your students?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3+

**Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement
Focus Group Project Participant Information Sheet**

Thank you for your participation in the CCE Focus Group Project. The purpose of this project is to determine what resources and services would help faculty incorporate community-based learning opportunities into course curricula. As a research subject in this project, please familiarize yourself with the following information.

- **Your participation is voluntary.**

You are not obligated to answer all questions and you may choose to leave the focus group at any time. *Your decision whether or not to participate in the focus group will not in any way influence your relationship with Binghamton University or Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement.*

- **All information discussed in the focus group will be confidential.**

All information collected in the focus group will be kept confidential by research project staff and will not be available to any other parties.

- **The focus group sessions will be recorded.**

Focus group sessions will be recorded only to ensure accuracy of notes taken by research project staff. The recordings will be destroyed upon the project's completion. *You may decline to have the focus group session recorded and still participate. Your decision whether or not to have the focus group session recorded will not in any way influence your relationship with Binghamton University or Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement.*

- **The results of this study will be provided to Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement to assist them in improving and providing resources and services that will assist Binghamton University faculty in incorporating community-based learning opportunities into their courses.**

If you have any questions throughout your participation in the focus group, please ask the focus group moderator.

If at any time you have any questions about the CCE Focus Group Project, please contact:

**Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement
x74287**

If you at any time you have questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact:

**Binghamton University's Human Subjects Research Review Committee
x73818**

**CCE Focus Group Project
Oral Informed Consent and Audio Release Statement**

Hello. My name is _____ and I am a graduate student at Binghamton University who will be facilitating this focus group. _____ and _____ are also graduate students at Binghamton University and they will be observing and taking notes during this focus group. We are conducting focus groups with Binghamton University faculty to determine what resources and services would help faculty incorporate community-based learning opportunities into course curricula. You are being asked to participate because you are a Binghamton University faculty member who has or is interested in incorporating community-based learning opportunities into your courses.

If you decide to participate in the focus group, your responses will be kept confidential by all research project staff. Any information collected during the focus group session will be accessible only to research project staff via a password for virtual data or key to a locked storage area for material data. Please note that you are not obligated to answer all questions and you may decide to leave the focus group at any time. The focus group session will last approximately one hour. We will be asking a series of open-ended questions relevant to community-based learning opportunities and the resources and services necessary or useful to providing community-based learning opportunities to students. Your decision whether or not to participate in the focus group will not in any way affect your relationship with Binghamton University or Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement.

Do you want participate in this focus group?

You have agreed to participate in this focus group. We would like to request your permission to record the focus group session. We will be recording the focus group session only to ensure that the notes we take during the focus group sessions are accurate. The recordings will not be used for any other purpose. The recordings will include focus group participants' names. The audio tapes will be stored at students' locked residences and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project. If you do not wish to have your responses recorded, you may still participate in the focus group. In that case, we will not record the focus group session; we will simply take notes. Your decision whether or not to have your responses recorded will not in any way affect your relationship with Binghamton University or the Binghamton University Center for Civic Engagement.

Do you give permission to have the focus group session recorded?

Questions about the project can be directed to Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement staff at x74287. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Binghamton University's Human Subjects Research Review Committee (HSRRC) at x73818 (607-777-3818 from off campus).

Do you have any questions about the focus group project?

May I proceed with the first question?

**Binghamton University Center for Civic Engagement Project
Focus Group Questions**

1. How would you define the term community-based learning? Please feel free to use examples when defining this term if you would like.
2. What, if any, experience do you have with community-based learning?
3. What supports are currently available to assist faculty hoping to become involved in community-based learning?
4. What supports do you feel would assist you in developing and offering community-based learning opportunities in your courses?
 - Faculty development?
 - Mentoring?
 - Lists of potential community partners?
 - Meetings with potential community partners?
 - Assistance with incorporating community-based learning into your course curriculum?
 - Examples of effective community-based learning projects?
 - Examples of syllabi for courses that have successfully integrated community-based learning?
 - Examples of memorandums of understanding (MOUs)?
 - Examples of assessment criteria
5. In what format would you prefer to receive information or support from the Center for Civic Engagement?
 - Online information?
 - Written information?
 - A listserv?
 - One-on-one meetings?
 - Group meetings?

6. What, if any, any specific community-based learning topic(s) that you would like to receive information about?
7. Is there anything that we did not cover that you think will help the Center for Civic Engagement better serve you?

Center for Civic Engagement Focus Group Coding Definitions

1. ***Characterizations of Community-Based Learning***
 - a. **Service**: faculty member describes community-based learning as an activity that serves the community
 - b. **Practice**: faculty member describes community-based learning as a practical experience for students
 - c. **Within community**: faculty member describes community-based learning as an activity implemented within the community
 - d. **Within classroom**: faculty member describes community-based learning as an activity implemented within the classroom

2. ***Reasons Faculty Implement Community-Based Learning***
 - a. **Student benefits**: faculty member describes benefits students receive as a reason for implementing community-based learning
 - b. **Community benefits**: faculty member describes benefits community receives as a reason for implementing community-based learning
 - c. **Personal motivation**: faculty member describes personal motivations for implementing community-based learning

3. ***Barriers to Community-Based Learning***
 - a. **Time constraints**: faculty member describes time constraint that interferes with implementing community-based learning
 - b. **Budgetary constraints**: faculty member describes budgetary constraint that interferes with implementing community-based learning
 - c. **Personnel limitations**: faculty member states lack of personnel interferes with implementing community-based learning
 - d. **Tenure process**: faculty member describes tenure process as interfering with implementing community-based learning
 - e. **Support concerns**: faculty member states lack of administrative, organizational, or departmental support interferes with implementing community-based learning
 - f. **Lack of incentive/recognition**: faculty member states lack of incentive and/or recognition to implement community-based learning
 - g. **Uncontrollable factors**: faculty member mentions a factor beyond his/her control (i.e. student attitudes, weather) that interfere with implementing community-based learning

4. ***Current Community-Based Learning Resources***
 - a. **Binghamton University Research Centers**: faculty member mentioned utilizing a research center at Binghamton University when implementing community-based learning

- b. **Center for Civic Engagement**: faculty member mentioned utilizing the Center for Civic Engagement as a resource when implementing community-based learning
- c. **Colleagues**: faculty member mentioned utilizing colleagues when implementing community-based learning
- d. **Community Partners**: faculty member mentioned utilizing community organizations and agencies when implementing community-based learning
- e. **Limited/None**: faculty member mentioned lack of resources available to assist with implementing community-based learning

5. *Resources Needed to Support Community-Based Learning*

- a. **Faculty development and training**: faculty member mentions faculty training as conducive to implementing community-based learning
- b. **Support personnel**: faculty member mentions access to support staff as conducive to implementing community-based learning
- c. **Community catalogs**: faculty member mentions a listing of community information as conducive to implementing community-based learning
- d. **Mentors**: faculty member mentions access to mentor figure(s) as conducive to implementing community-based learning
- e. **Course management**: faculty member suggests improvements to course management that support implementing community-based learning
- f. **Interdepartmental/interdisciplinary communication**: faculty member mentions communication among different disciplines as conducive to community-based learning
- g. **Financial resources**: faculty member mentions access to financial resources as conducive to community-based learning
- h. **Examples of course materials**: faculty member mentions examples of community-based learning course materials as conducive to community-based learning
- i. **Release time**: faculty member mentions release time as conducive to community-based learning
- j. **Tenure incentives**: faculty member mentions considering community-based learning efforts in tenure process as conducive to community-based learning

6. *Community-Based Learning Topics of Interest*

- a. **Community needs**: faculty member wants information regarding community needs where community-based learning may be helpful
- b. **Student and project evaluation**: faculty member wants information on how to evaluate community-based learning students and/or community-based learning projects
- c. **Developing/maintaining partnerships**: faculty member wants information on how to generate partnerships within the community
- d. **Legal and safety concerns**: faculty member wants information regarding legal and safety liabilities of conducting community-based learning

- e. **Incorporating community-based learning into curriculum**: faculty member wants information on how to incorporate community-based learning into his/her curriculum

7. ***Formats for Receiving Community-Based Learning Information***

- a. **Group meetings**: faculty member describes a group meeting for discussing community-based learning
- b. **Community event**: faculty member describes a community event focused on community-based learning
- c. **Written information**: faculty member refers to community-based learning information in hard-copy format
- d. **Electronic information**: faculty member refers to community-based learning information in electronic format
- e. **E-mail**: faculty member refers to community-based learning e-mail communications
- f. **On campus office**: faculty member refers to an on-campus community-based learning office

- Alden, A. & Lambright, K. (2010). *Case study: Instructors' perspectives on service-learning's sustainability at Binghamton University*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Public Administration, Binghamton University, Binghamton, New York.