

Long-term sustainability of service-learning programs: A ten year follow-up study of the Health Professions Schools in Service to the Nation program

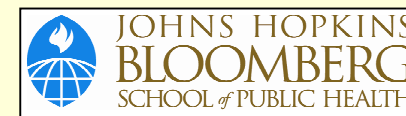
Preliminary Findings

Amanda L. Vogel MHS

Sarena D. Seifer MD

APHA

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this session participants will:

- Be familiar with the experiences of a national cohort of 17 health professions schools related to sustaining service-learning (SL) programs from 1998-present.
- Identify forms of SL program sustainability
- Identify key factors in the academic environment that influence the sustainability of SL, including: infrastructure, funding, leadership, organizational culture, and broader academic trends.

Outline

1. Define SL
2. Goals of SL in health professions training
3. Relationship between goals and sustainability
4. Study Aims
5. Case Study: HPSISN Program
6. Preliminary findings:
 - Long-term sustainability of SL
 - Factors in academic setting that influenced sustainability

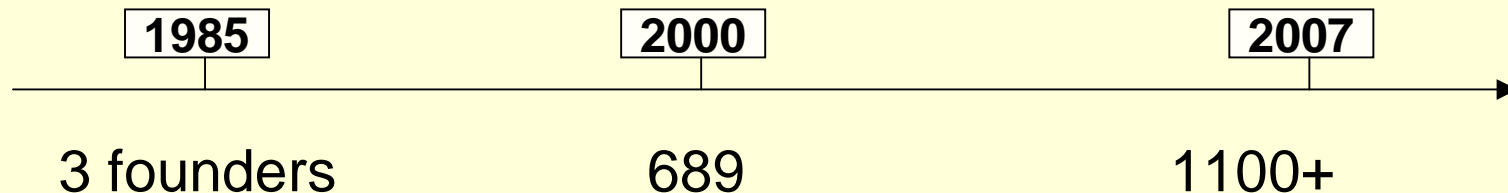
1. SL is...

“a structured learning experience that combines community service with **preparation and reflection**. Students engaged in SL provide community service in **response to community-identified concerns** and learn about the **context** in which service is provided, the connection between their service and their academic coursework, and **their roles as citizens.**” (Seifer, 1998)

Growing Popularity of SL

- Campus Compact

- Exponential membership growth:



- 98% offer SL courses
- 86% have a service learning/community service office

- SL in health professions training endorsed by:

- Institute of Medicine (2002)
- Liaison Committee on Medical Education (2006)
- Pew Health Professions Commission (1993, 1998)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (1999)

2. Goals of SL in Health Professions

Students

- Gain community health competencies, population health perspective
- Develop an ethic of civic professionalism

Communities

- Receive direct health services, health benefits
- Develop capacity to address health and social concerns

Academic Institutions

- Develop a culture of civic engagement
- Contribute as members of their communities

Both Communities and Academia

- Build capacity to engage in future community-academic partnerships of mutual benefit: service, research, training

Gaps in the Literature on SL Benefits... What We Don't Know

- Does SL increase capacity of community partner organizations to address health and social problems?
- Does SL improve community health?
- Does SL influence the academic institutional culture towards civic engagement?
- Does SL builds community and academic partners' capacity to collaborate for service, research, and training?

3. Sustainability

- Are sustained SL programs more likely to produce benefits for communities, academic institutions?

If so....

- How is sustainability operationalized in the most successful programs?
- What factors support the sustainability of SL programs?

4. Study Aims

1. To evaluate long-term sustainability of a cohort of SL programs in health professional schools
 - *Were programs sustained over 10 years?*
 - *What characteristics of sustainability do they display?*
2. To identify factors that influenced long-term sustainability
 - Program design, implementation
 - *Characteristics of academic institution, community partners*
 - *Broader community and academic environments*
3. To explore the relationship of sustainability and impact
 - Benefits for communities and institutions?
4. To develop a conceptual framework for SL sustainability and impact
 - Based on data from a long-term follow-up study
 - * *This presentation focuses on findings related to the italicized RQ's.*

5. Case Study: HPSISN

- First and only national demonstration program in SL in health professional schools in the US
- Implemented many recommendations of Pew Health Professions Commission regarding SL
- Aims:
 1. Strengthen partnerships between health professional schools and communities which address unmet health needs
 2. Instill an ethic of community service and social responsibility in health professional schools, students, faculty
 3. Equip the next generation of health professionals with community-oriented competencies necessary to practice in a changing health care environment

HPSISN

- Subgrants to 17 health professional schools, 1995-8
- Each Institution:
 1. Established SL partnerships with communities to address unmet health needs
 2. Developed SL curriculum
 3. Created infrastructure to support SL: program coordinator, advisory group
 4. Received technical assistance and faculty development
- Funders: Pew Charitable Trusts, Corporation for National Service, Health Resources and Services Administration
- Administered by: Center for the Health Professions, University of California-San Francisco
- Evaluation of early impact, 1998 (Gelmon, et al)
- Ideal case study for sustainability: ten year time span, unified cohort, 100% participation in prior evaluation

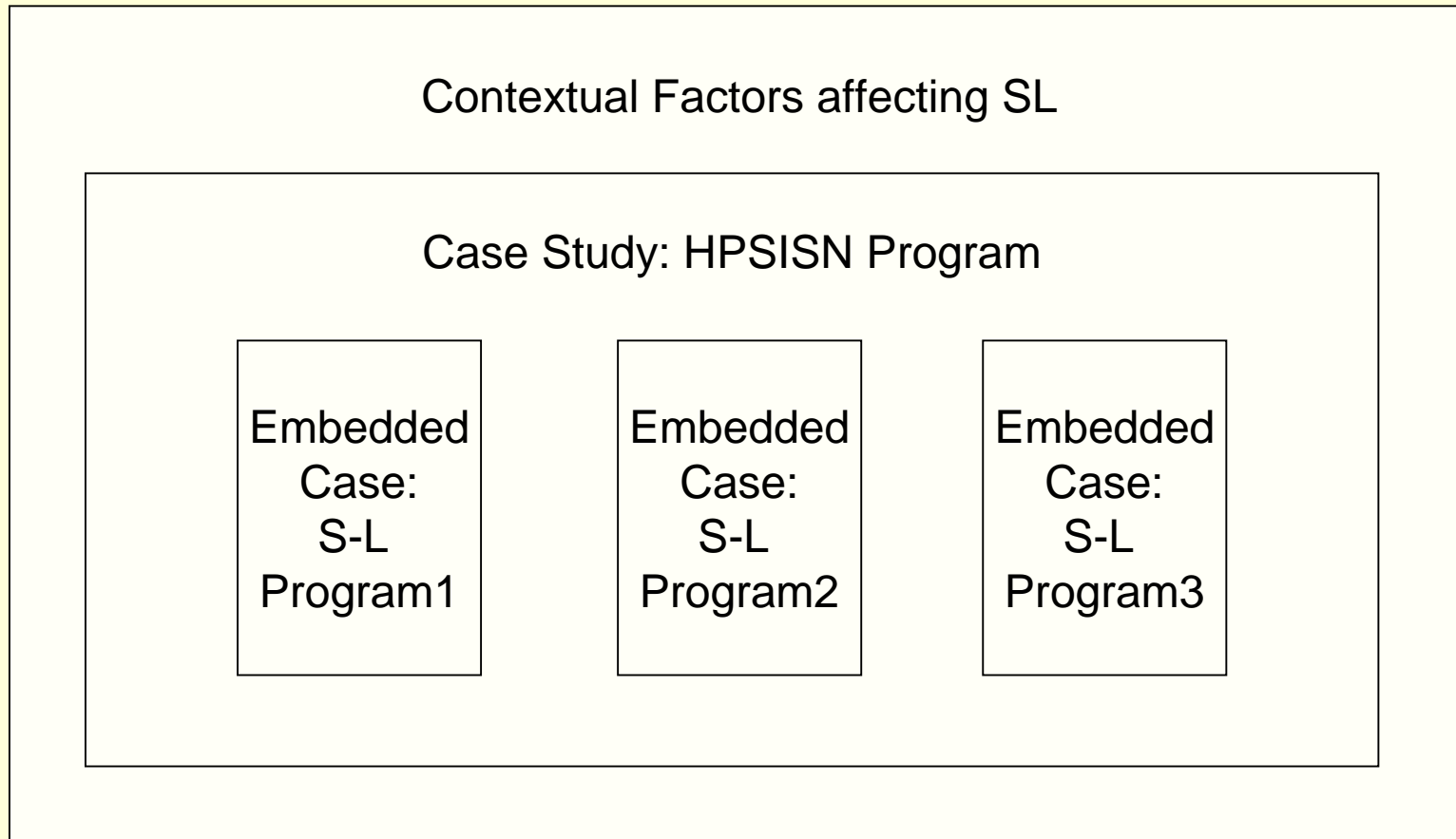
Grantees

1. Georgetown University
2. George Washington University & George Mason University
3. Northeastern University
4. Ohio University
5. Regis University
6. San Francisco State University
7. University of Connecticut
8. University of Florida
9. University of Kentucky
10. University of North Carolina
11. University of Pittsburgh
12. University of Scranton
13. University of Southern California
14. University of Utah
15. University of Utah & Purdue University
16. Virginia Commonwealth University
17. West Virginia Wesleyan College

Grantees: Diversity

- 11 public, 6 private, 4 faith-based
 - 5 South, 5 Southwest, 4 Mid-Atlantic, 2 Northeast, 1 Midwest
 - Principal investigators located in:
 - 9 schools or departments of nursing
 - 5 schools of allopathic medicine
 - 1 school of osteopathic medicine
 - 1 school of dentistry
 - 2 school of pharmacy
 - 1 at the university level
- * Does not sum to 17 because 2 schools had co-PIs

6. Study Design



Embedded Comparative Multiple Case Study

Adapted From R.K. Yin (2003).

Study Design

Phase I: Overview of HPSISN sustainability, influencing factors, and impact 1998-present

- Telephone interviews with original PI's and successors, document review
- To date: interviews with 16 of 17 PIs

Phase II: Exploration of factors influencing sustainability and impact, and their interactions

- Comparative multiple case study of programs with unique experiences of sustainability and impact
- Site visits, in-person interviews *with both academic and community partners*, document review
- To be conducted early 2008

7. Preliminary Findings, Phase 1

1. Have SL programs been sustained?
2. What characteristics of sustainability do they display?
3. What factors in the academic setting have influenced long-term sustainability?

Have SL programs been sustained?

Durability:

- 15 of 16 schools continued SL in the curriculum in some way
- 1 school discontinued SL, continues to recommend and recognize extracurricular service

Two Curriculum Models Emerged:

- SL Required: Incorporated into curriculum
- SL Voluntary: Elective courses and internship opportunities, with recognition programs as incentives

What characteristics of sustainability do programs display?

Range of integration into institutions, with two extremes:

- Routinization only: SL operates only at course level, faculty maintain partnerships, no advisory board, no dedicated funding for SL
- Institutionalization: SL coordinated by SL center, with hard money, full time staff; center maintains partnerships; institution provides technical assistance and other resources to faculty and to other institutions; conducts evaluation; hosts formal advisory board

Routinization = an innovation “has become a stable and regular part of an organization’s routinized activities.” (Yin, 1979)

Institutionalization = an innovation is “part of legitimate and ongoing practice, infused with a value and supported by other aspects of the system.” (Goodman and Steckler, 1989)

Institutionalization

During the HPSISN grant “I was teaching the... [elective SL] class every week, and... any student in the College that wanted to be in SL... would come to my class. But after the grant, we evolved into ***an integrated system*** where... with the support of... our university-wide SL center we identified five courses in the College of Nursing that were willing to become identified SL courses. That means they had to apply to the [Center].... And by having these five classes, we were able to integrate SL throughout the College of Nursing.....

After the grant... when we had university-wide funding tightness, I was concerned that I was not going to be able to continue to just be director of outreach forever. So that’s when I went to the... Center and to our administration and said, ‘I’d like to weave this throughout our curriculum rather than have it be a stand-alone,’ because I just wanted SL to survive.”

Adaptability

Diffusion: innovation maintained at original organization and adopted by others

- Some SL programs approached by other institutions, disciplines to provide technical assistance, to participate in teaching SL courses
- Mixed results related to diffusion of SL across health professions. Interdisciplinary programs generally could not be sustained.

Spin-offs: innovation moves to new organizational home to be sustained

- Some SL programs were folded into university-wide SL programs which allowed for sustainability.
- Some service activities created through SL programs spawned service and advocacy by faculty and students outside the program.

Renewal: innovation changes significantly to enhance its effectiveness and viability

- SL programs evolved to address new public health priorities and changing needs of specific communities

Renewal

“You know, being relevant is the most important thing you could do [to sustain a SL program]. I mean being relevant in the community, and being relevant with what’s going on in the institution in terms of education.... Everything is changing all the time. So you can’t just sit on your laurels, you’ve got to continue to grow and change if you’re going to... have a meaningful part in education and in community.”

“The major emphasis over the last few years has been on improving cross-cultural skills and addressing some of the health disparities...”

What factors in the academic setting influenced sustainability?

- Infrastructure
- Funding
- Leadership
- Institutional culture
- Broader academic trends

Infrastructure: Support from a University Wide Center

“They have really been the major financial supporter [of faculty development around SL]... and they’ve been the ones that have supported the SL coordinators that help the faculty to not be overwhelmed with the SL portion of their course.”

Funding

- Lack of funding was not a complete obstacle. At schools that integrated SL into the curriculum, SL was self-sustaining.
- Funding provided support for SL programs to provide: partnership maintenance, development of related community programs, program evaluation
- External funding provided “instant credibility” which contributed to sustainability
- Diversified funding sources helped to support SL sustainability when institutional funds were tight

Leadership: Program Champions

Q: What do you think have been the most important factors to facilitate sustainability of the [SL] program in particular?

A: The most important [is]... the quality and doggedness of... many of the faculty who got engaged in service learning a decade or so ago. These are people for the most part who are highly respected faculty members, junior faculty members all the way up to some very, very senior people.... You get that core of people who just believe in the value of service learning and they tend to influence others.

* Program champion = someone in a mid- to senior-level position who is an advocate for the program

Leadership: Support of High-level Administrators

“When [the president of the university] is speaking about his priorities and strategies, SL, service to the community, [and] working closely with the community have been in just about every speech and every strategic plan. And so... it behooves the colleges to also have that be a priority.”

Institutional Culture

- Institutional mission to serve the people of their region (land grant, rural focus)
- Religious values related to service
- Commitment to social justice, e.g. eliminating disparities (urban focus)

From the very start of the SL program, “I think there was institutional support. And again, I think that may have something to do with the Jesuit nature of the institution.... I think it’s some of the administration’s philosophy about what they thought was valuable for students to do...”

Broader Trends in Academia

Accreditation

Cited by schools of nursing and pharmacy:

The development of our SL activities “coincided with what was going on with nursing accreditation [in 1999].... Because we had the HPSISN grant, we elected service as an optional outcome.... As a result of that, we wrote a service outcome within our formalized curriculum. That’s a core component of our curriculum [today].”

Carnegie Classifications

Dec 2006 Carnegie Foundation Classifications of Institutions of Higher Learning introduced first elective classification, focused on community engagement. One school identified this as fostering SL sustainability.

Broader Trends in Academia: Changing Attitudes about SL

“There’s been a sea change -- and that’s the right word -- in attitudes about SL since the beginning of the HPSISN grant. And now... the barriers to creating SL courses that we faced so dramatically ten years ago, we don’t see that anymore. ... Chairs and deans... are very supportive of service learning, and that was absolutely not the case a decade ago.... Junior faculty feel a lot freer now than they ever did... to take the time to implement service-learning.... There is at minimum a tolerance of SL that didn’t exist and at... best, in many places on both sides of campus -- academic affairs and health affairs -- there is an active sort of encouragement or sort of rewarding for doing it.”

For more Information...

Amanda L. Vogel MHS

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

PhD Candidate, Department of Health Policy and Management

avogel@jhsph.edu

Sarena D. Seifer MD

Research Associate Professor

University of Washington School of Public Health and
Community Medicine

Executive Director, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

sarena@u.washington.edu

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