

# Sustaining service-learning and maximizing its benefits: The perspectives of community and academic partners

Amanda L. Vogel, PhD, MHS

Sarena D. Seifer, MD

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# Citation for this Presentation

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# Presenter Disclosure

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Amanda L. Vogel

- (1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

# Goals for this Talk

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- Introduction to service-learning (SL)
- Describe study of ten-year sustainability and impact of SL in a cohort of health professions schools
- Share selected findings that highlight community and academic perspectives on:
  - Contributors to sustaining SL
  - Benefits of SL
  - Challenges and responses

# What is Service-Learning?

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- Experiential learning
- Collaborative community-academic partnerships
- Reciprocity
- Balance of service and learning
- Reflective practice
- Immediate goals: student learning, service to community agency
- Long-term goals: capacity building, greater institutional engagement, town-gown relations

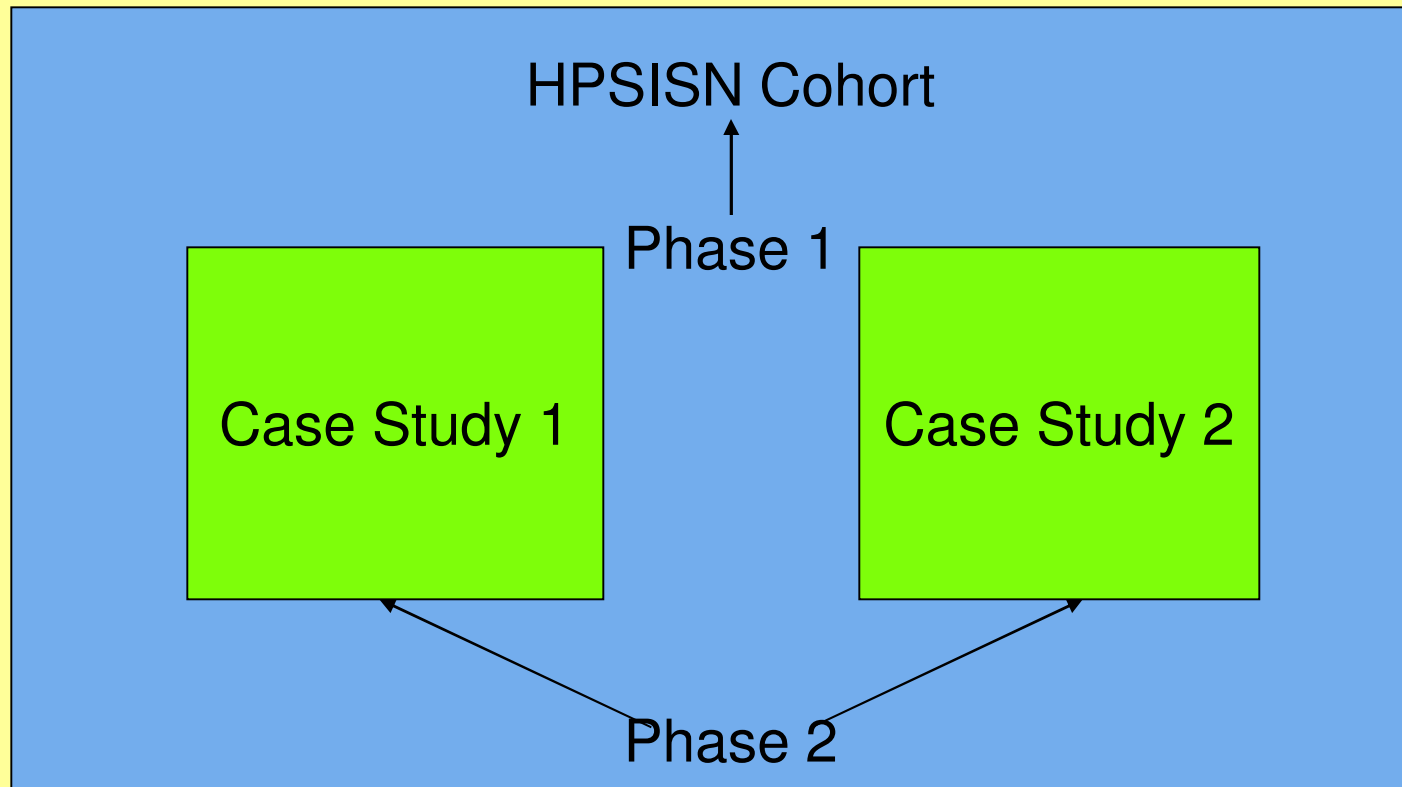
# HPSISN

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- 1995-1998
- National demonstration program for SL in health professions education
- Sub-grants, technical assistance, and professional development to 17 health professions schools/programs
- Goals:
  - Create community-academic partnerships for SL
  - Integrate SL into the curriculum
- Supported by: Pew Charitable Trusts, CNCS, HRSA
- Administered by: Center for the Health Professions, UCSF

# Study Design

Factors Influencing SL in Health Professions Education Nationally



Adapted From: Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

# Methods

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## Phase 1: HPSISN Cohort (16/17)

- Telephone interviews (n=23) and document review

## Phase 2: Case Studies

- Selection criteria: sustained SL, different institutional settings, guaranteed broad participation
- Document review, site visits, interviews (n = 47)
  - Community partners: 15
  - Academic partners: 32
- Pre-structured case outlines, memo-writing, matrices

Approved by JHSPH IRB

# Research Settings

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## University 1

- Private, faith-based teaching institution
- Nursing, PT, pharmacy, health administration
- 2500 students, all in SL

## Community Agencies

- Elementary school
- High school
- Independent living

## University 2

- Private, secular, AHC
- Medicine, public health, nursing, PA, PT
- 150 students in SL

## Community Agencies

- FQHC
- Homeless services, women
- Homeless services, families

What factors contribute to their institution's/agency's sustained participation in SL?



# Academic Perspectives

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- Align SL with institutional mission, goals
- Support for SL from high-level administrators
- Align SL with programs' educational goals, integrate into core courses
- SL center at high organizational level, full-time staff with specialized skills
- SL partnerships also used for internships, fellowships, faculty research, practice and service
- Support for faculty participation in SL
- Demonstrated ability of SL to achieve educational goals, broader institutional goals

# Community Perspectives

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- Desire to enhance training of future healthcare providers
- Desire to inspire students to go into careers in community health, volunteer in community health
- SL provides beneficial services, products to their clients
- Community-academic partnership could lead to other benefits (professional development, research)
- Personally enriching to agency staff
- Agency director supports SL

# What have been the benefits of SL?



# Academic Perspectives

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- SL provides avenue for institutional service
- SL trains students in skills for quality of care, community health
- SL instills ethic of civic engagement
- SL builds relationships with local agencies/local community
- SL enhances public relations/fund raising
- SL attracts new students

# Community Perspectives

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- SL enhances services for their clients
- SL provides services/products in areas where agencies lack expertise, staff time:
  - Research
  - Health education
- SL leads to permanent new resources (capacity building)
- SL is personally enriching to staff

What challenges have they  
experienced?  
How have they responded?



# Academic Perspectives

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## Challenges to Sustainability:

- Competing educational priorities
- Competing priorities for faculty time
- Turnover in key champions among administration

## Responses:

- Link SL to valued educational, institutional priorities
- Use evaluation to demonstrate success
- Engage in “internal marketing”
- Use data for PR activities

# Academic Perspectives

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Challenge: Maximizing the educational benefits of SL for students

Responses:

- Integrate SL into courses, link to course learning goals and student assignments
- Involve faculty in shaping students' service experiences
- Provide professional development, TA to both academic and community partners

# Academic Perspectives

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Challenge: Maximizing the benefits of SL for community partners

Responses:

- Year-long SL projects
- Aim for capacity building in all SL projects
- Create systems to support partnership process
- Professional development, TA for both academic and community partners
- Regular evaluation

# Community Perspectives

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Challenge: Ensuring that SL contributes to agency priorities, not only marginal projects

Limited Responses/Recommendations:

- SL director and agency director consult annually on agency priorities, how SL can contribute
- Community SL partner consults with development staff about future directions and how SL can contribute

# Summary

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- To support sustainability:
  - Academics: Institutionalization
  - Community partners: Motivation to participate
  - Both: Clear benefits of SL to achieve institutional/ agency goals
- To maximize benefits:
  - Attend to all aspects of SL: Curriculum, service, partnership process
  - Cast a wide net: Include SL staff, faculty, community partners, agency directors

# To Learn More

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- [amanda.vogel@nih.gov](mailto:amanda.vogel@nih.gov)
- [sarena@u.washington.edu](mailto:sarena@u.washington.edu)
- [www.ccph.info](http://www.ccph.info) (search for HPSISN)
  - These slides
  - Prior presentation slides
  - Publications

Thank you