

Service Learning at the University of Minnesota

University of Minnesota operates service-learning courses in which college students conduct community engagement through an organized credit-bearing experience. All students at the University of Minnesota have the opportunity to enroll in these courses within their different colleges. Dosage and activities of community engagement differ between courses.

This study is conducted to examine the association between service-learning and academic outcomes:

- Cumulative GPAs
- Credits earned
- Enrollment by the end of each academic year (retention)
- Graduation rate at the 4th year

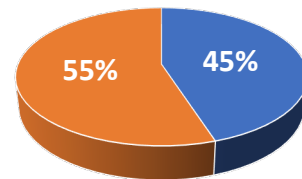
By comparing

- the treatment group (students in 2012 cohort did service learning in their first year) and
- the comparison group (students in 2012 cohort did not do service learning over college years)

*PSM is used to create equivalent treatment and comparison groups.

- Underrepresented students (students of color, first-generation, and/or low-income) is a subgroup of special interest to the researchers.

2012 Cohort (N = 5,514)



■ Underrepresented students
■ Non Underrepresented students

Sample (n = 1,814)

	SL (first year)	Non SL (all years) *through PSM
All students	907	907
Underrepresented students	419	427

Time \ Group	Cumulative GPAs				Retention & Graduation (in brackets)			
	SL	Non SL	SL	Non SL	SL	Non SL	SL	Non SL
year 1	3.30*	3.23	3.23*	3.16				
year 2	3.26*	3.19	3.16	3.12	94.2%*	91.8%	91.6%	89.9%
year 3	3.26*	3.19	3.16	3.12	91.7%*	88.9%	89.5%*	84.7%
year 4	3.27*	3.20	3.16	3.13	89.1%*	[74.2%*] 86.0% [70.0%]	84.1%	[71.4%*] 80.9% [64.9%]
year 5	3.27*	3.21	3.17	3.14	[86.3%*]	[82.7%]	[82.1%]	[78.9%]

Note. * indicates significance, which is $p < .05$; data in red - all students, data in blue – underrepresented students; no significant differences in credits earned between groups (not report); controlling for gender, race/ethnicity, first generation, Pell eligibility, ACT score and citizenship.

In summary, early exposure to service learning (doing service learning in first year here) is associated with several positive outcomes for students in general such as higher GPAs, higher retention and graduation rate. However, more evidences are needed to clarify the effect of SL for underrepresented students.

Song, W., Lopez, I., Yang, W., Maruyama, G., Furco, A. (2019)

Acknowledgements

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