February 12, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fiona Liken
               Office of Curriculum Systems

FROM: David Knauft, Chair *David Knauft*
               UGA Service-Learning Curriculum Committee

SUBJECT: "S" suffix for service learning courses

Enclosed is a proposal from University of Georgia faculty requesting that the Office of Curriculum Systems create a suffix "S" that would be assigned to courses offered with a service-learning component.

UGA's Family and Consumer Sciences Guide to Service-Learning characterizes service-learning as "a philosophy and methodology involving the application of academic skills to address or solve real-life needs or problems in the community, in collaboration with community partners." http://www.fcs.uga.edu/newfacs/college/sl_definitions.html. The University has major efforts to expand service-learning, coordinated through the Office of Service-Learning (OSL) (www.servicelearning.uga.edu). Many courses, or portions of courses, offer students a service-learning experience. Assigning a suffix to these courses would benefit students, as the designation would be reported on their transcripts. It would allow straightforward inventory and tracking of courses, faculty, and students participating in service learning. This would provide additional exposure to service learning, it could be used in the recruitment of students to specific courses, it would benefit the university in completion of various inventories and surveys, including the National Survey of Student Engagement, and it could provide assistance to the documentation of student outcomes mandated by the recently adopted general education requirements.

Instructors of currently existing as well as newly proposed service-learning courses would request, through CAPA, to include the "S" suffix after their four-letter and four-number course designation (e.g., ELAN 4620S). When the course is edited in or loaded into the CAPA system the originator/instructor of the course would request the "S" suffix. When this option is selected, faculty should indicate the nature of the service-learning activity (or activities) in the topical outline. Faculty would also be directed to the "non-traditional" format section. In this section, the instructor will be asked to indicate what distinguishes their course as one that merits the "S" suffix. They will also be asked to determine the "level" or "degree" of service-learning entailed by the course, based on a four-degree scale (below). These degree scales will only be used

internally and will not appear on student transcripts. However, this information is expected to be used internally by the institution to track more closely the kinds of service-learning that students engage in.

"S" Suffix for Service-Learning Courses: Four Degrees of SL

1. Course includes a service-learning project during the semester that either employs skills or knowledge learned in the course or teaches new skills or knowledge related to course objectives. Student engagement in the service-learning component will be up to 25% of overall instruction time.

2. Course includes a service-learning project during the semester that either employs skills or knowledge learned in the course or teaches new skills or knowledge related to course objectives. Students will be involved in the planning and implementation of the project(s) and may spend time outside of the classroom. Students will be engaged in the service-learning component for approximately 25-50% of overall instructional time.

3. Course includes a service-learning project during the semester that either employs skills or knowledge learned in the course or teaches new skills or knowledge related to course objectives. Students will be involved in the planning and implementation of the project(s) and may spend time outside of the classroom. Students will be engaged in the service-learning component for approximately 50-75% of overall instructional time.

4. Course includes a service-learning project during the semester that either employs skills or knowledge learned in the course or teaches new skills or knowledge related to course objectives. The course uses service-learning as the primary pedagogical tool for teaching course objectives. Students will work on a comprehensive project(s) and may be required to spend considerable time outside the classroom. Students will be engaged in the service-learning component for approximately 75-100% of overall instructional time.

The "nontraditional format" window will also contain a link directly to the OSL website page that provides more detail on the definition of service-learning, service-learning pedagogy and best practices, as well as sample syllabi of existing UGA courses that meet each of the four degree criteria.

Courses requesting this designation will be reviewed by the OSL Curriculum Committee as a part of the CAPA approval process. The most appropriate and efficient method for inclusion of the OSL Curriculum Committee in the process will be determined in collaboration with the Office of Curriculum Systems. The OSL review will primarily be used to assist faculty in defining service-learning within their course and course syllabus, and to assist in the assignment of the appropriate degree of service learning. Within a particular department, there may be both a service-learning and non-service-learning section of the same course (e.g. HORT 2000 and HORT 2000S), and the individual department and instructor would decide which version(s) to offer in a given semester.