

# Follow-Up

*Follow-Up is a column of current developments and additional resource information on key topics reported in previous issues. This article provides follow-up information on "Setting Up a [College] Student Volunteer Program," which appeared in the last (fall/winter 1987) VAL. The strategies presented below were contained in the report on California's new "Human Corps" bill (see page 5).*

## Strategies for On-Campus Volunteer Management

The challenges that face individual campuses are formidable. Some of the answers must come from system-wide decisions; others demand a more local focus. Most of the following are delineated in AB 1820 (California's new "Human Corps" law), but also apply to privately sponsored initiatives.

- Appoint a group to design campus and campus-community collaboration. Enlist participation from community groups during the planning phase, and make sure the planning task force is representative of the communities where the volunteers will serve.
- Stress that the task is one of the developing partnerships, not a missionary effort; the university must not be viewed as imposing its values upon the community unilaterally.
- Get the strong endorsement of the university/college president.
- Seek partnership with other colleges in close proximity.
- Establish clear definitions of what qualifies as civic service that will hold if students transfer, take a year off, or switch their majors.
- Clarify the roles of volunteers and interns; define precisely when academic or other credit is given.
- Establish a volunteer bureau on campus or very near the campus. Make use of existing Volunteer Centers for specific training. Develop a directory, perhaps computerized, which students and the organizations that they serve can use to find each other.

- Appoint a volunteer coordinator. Ensure staff gives continuity to the volunteer effort between semesters and academic years.
- Involve community agencies in designing the recruitment, selection and pre-training orientation, so that the off-campus experience will benefit both the college students and the agencies' clients.
- Design on-campus orientation to prepare a student for community work; an introduction to community needs and services can explain the role of public and private agencies and their limitations. A course can emerge from this experience.
- Bring the business community in early.
- Include student civic service providers (as differentiated from student politicians) in the program planning.
- Create a reward system to acknowledge civic service work that is well done.
- Utilize recent graduates with a strong volunteer record to be emissaries or "green deans" to other colleges.
- Work with Campus Compact and C.O.O.L.; they have a national perspective and valuable experience.
- Encourage faculties to become involved in community civic service, so they can serve as better mentors to the student volunteers.
- Don't be cynical about students; evidence shows that when they understand that community service is expected of them and that society respects them for it, they will make a commitment to volunteer. Some will even demand that it be part of campus life.

### The Community's Role

Broad-based community support must be developed in the early planning stage. Some general strategies for building a community-wide effort are as follows:

- Identify groups within the community that have something to contribute toward developing a student civic service program.
- Use successful town-grown models to convince community groups of the value and importance of their support and cooperation.
- Enlist their participation in a community-wide committee to identify potential leaders, advisors, resource people and donors.
- Educate community agencies to see the benefits they can derive from collaborative action in order to overcome any existing tendencies to be protective and competitive.
- Get mayors, city councils, county supervisors and political leaders from both sides behind the statewide effort. Identification with the larger program will stimulate more active support within local communities.
- Develop cooperation among community agencies, the business sector and the universities in seeking foundation support, so that funds for direct community service are not diluted.
- Develop and extend computer-based information networks on volunteer opportunities and successful programs.
- Identify legal problems relating to the use of volunteers, such as workers' compensation, safety, transportation and job displacement, and deal with them locally.

### Target Specific Groups

In terms of specific strategies aimed at involving individual groups in active and sustained participation, the conferees suggested:

#### Business:

- Think of business as more than a bank.
- Develop mechanisms for in-kind donations (furniture, equipment, space, etc.).
- Stimulate business groups to sponsor scholarships and other incentives in recognition of student civic service.
- Bring business leaders on campus to talk about the value of civic service.
- Seek help from Kiwanis, Rotary, Private Industry Councils, Chambers of Commerce, corporations and other business organizations in organizing a community-wide effort.

- Develop programs that enable business professionals with special expertise to serve as advisors to nonprofit organizations, public agencies and student volunteer programs.

**Community Agencies:**

- Develop and maintain efficient communications between community agencies and Volunteer Centers.
- Identify large-scale volunteer coordinators (e.g., the Red Cross, YM/YWCAs, Volunteer Centers, hospitals); build on their experience and knowledge by enlisting them as advisors to campus planners of civic service programs.
- Educate agencies on how to use college volunteers in one-shot or short-term projects, adjust to semester schedule demands and give inexperienced students the recognition and support they need to develop commitment.
- Develop ways for larger, more experienced agencies to share their expertise in managing young volunteers with smaller, less experienced agencies. Encourage smaller agencies to get help from community volunteer bureaus in screening, training and evaluation of student volunteers.
- Use experienced students to train their successors. Involve ethnic groups and organizations; their students are vital to the student volunteer movement.
- Call on the religious community; many church-sponsored civic service programs can use student volunteers.

**Schools:**

- Recognize existing school volunteer programs and build on them.
- Stimulate school boards, principals, superintendents, PTAs, teachers and teacher unions to give visible support to college volunteer programs. Bring all these groups into the planning and implementation phases for extending college student volunteerism.
- Use county offices of education for inter-school district ideas on how to develop specific roles for college volunteers. Student volunteers can use their on-site experience to suggest other ways in which they could serve.
- Develop a teacher-student volunteer model to build mutual understanding and collaboration, and to educate teachers to perceive the young volunteers as a resource, not a threat to displace professionals.
- Encourage volunteers to serve as a bridge between parents and teachers.