

Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS): Community Relations and Partnerships Call Notes (AF Credits 14-19)

October 9th, 2008

AF Credit 14: Community Service Staffing

A caller noted that there might be a wide variety of job descriptions that would fit the designation of a “community service staff.” This caller asked if AASHE had further guidance on what type of staff person might count for this credit. AASHE said staff members in an institution’s community service department might be the best examples of a community service staff position, but that other areas would count.

AF Credit 15: Student Participation in Community Service

A caller asked if a community service project had to be environment-related in order to count for this credit. AASHE responded no; community service projects of all types should be counted for this credit.

A caller suggested that it may be better if this credit measured only full-time students, since most part-time students hold full-time jobs outside of school and tend to be less involved in community service activities. Another caller said graduate students generally have little time for community service. Another participant said gathering data from only full-time students at a community college would be difficult and would prevent part-time students that do participate in community service activities from counting in this credit. Callers agreed that distinguishing between full-time and part-time students would make data gathering more complicated and, in some cases, impossible.

A caller noted that due to differences in institutions’ student composition (e.g., percentage of part-time and graduate students), it would be easier for some schools to achieve high percentages in this credit. However, that difference doesn’t mean the credit should be changed because it’s an accurate measure of the percentage of students engaged in service.

The credit counts service that is “organized or coordinated” by the institution. A participant asked if community service coordinated by student clubs would count. Since the clubs get money through the institution (funded through student fees, have a staff advisor, use institution meeting space, etc.), those activities would count.

AF Credit 16: Student Hours Contributed in Community Service

A caller said it might be hard to get an accurate count of total hours contributed in community service. Another caller said her institution doesn’t track service by hours. A participant noted that the boundary issues that were discussed in the previous credits are similar for this credit.

This normalizing factor in this credit is full-time equivalent students. In the previous credit it is total students. A caller suggested using one common normalizing factor for the two credits to help prevent confusion.

AF Credit 17: Financial Incentives for Public Service Careers

A caller asked if the financial incentives had to come from within the institution’s general fund or if they could be special, directed scholarships facilitated by the institution. AASHE said that all financial incentives that are

facilitated by the institutions count.

AF Credit 18: Community Sustainability Partnerships

A caller asked if the partnership had to be at the institutional level or if partnerships between academic departments or schools within the institution would count. AASHE said that departmental partnerships should count. Other callers agreed they should be included.

AF Credit 19: Public Policy Engagement

A caller said there may not be opportunities to engage in policies each year because sustainability policies may not come up on the legislative agenda. While opportunities for engagement will vary from year to year, institutions could earn credit for work on municipal, county, state/provincial, national, and international policy, so there should be opportunities for some engagement. Writing a letter to a local official about bicycle planning, for example, would count.

A caller mentioned that there might be different opportunities and constraints from institutions to engage in public policy in this way (particularly public vs. private institutions). This caller also noted that because this is a one-point yes/no credit, there is not a great amount of points to be lost on this credit.

Community Relations and Partnerships: Tier Two Credits

1. *Institution includes community service in its mission, vision, and/or strategic plan.*

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

2. *Institution has a campus-wide awards program to recognize community service.*

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

3. *Institution includes community service achievements on student transcripts.*

A caller said he has seen transcript designations for community service achievements in the form of service learning credit or an honors designation. This caller wanted to know if AASHE had other kinds of transcript designations in mind. AASHE responded that it is familiar with a transcript designation for students that have surpassed a certain threshold of community service hours. If there are additional designations that others are aware of, please report on those as well.

4. *Institution has developed tutoring, training, extension, and/or professional development programs for the community.*

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

5. *Institution makes library resources available to the community.*

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

6. *Institution makes technology resources available to the community.*

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

7. *Institution makes cultural and/or athletic offerings available to the community.*

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

8. *Institution makes meeting and/or event space available to local community groups.*
There were no questions or comments on this credit.

9. *Institution hosts a farmers' market for the community.*
There were no questions or comments on this credit.