

FEEDBACK ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Comments on STARS 0.4

Social Responsibility and Community Engagement

Reviewer 5

I think that this section is going to need some serious thought about “engaged scholarship.” The model you have here is very corporate and does not necessarily transfer to the university in an effective manner. There is good work going on in “engaged scholarship” that can be referred to in order to refine this.

Reviewer 22

In the Social Responsibility piece, should be labeled Social/Environmental Responsibility, internally and externally. Also there should be points for working with the local/state/national government, local businesses, K-12, to reduce human suffering, improve quality of life for the surrounding communities (including the poor, wording to be addressed.)

Perhaps collapse some of the Social Responsibility items together.

Reviewer 24

In general the Social Responsibility and Community Service section is focused on student and individual service. There is no credit or tier two indicators listed that address broader partnerships within the community. An example: assisting the local municipality with its sustainability efforts (either through infrastructure or human capital). Is this something that would be for an innovation credit?

Reviewer 25

While it is important that individuals are not subjected to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs, the tiered criteria appear to be too prescriptive on how that is to be achieved. I can easily see where an institution could fair poorly on the STARS social responsibility indicators while actually being a leader in the consideration of social concerns affecting their operations and the planet. In turn, I can also predict that most institutions will score highly in sections B and C with minimal additional effort.

There isn't a quick fix for this section, in that it attempts to simplify complex social issues into a condensed checklist. Maybe the survey should focus on ecological issues, while defining social initiatives more broadly than those presented in this initial draft. Details of security, safety, health, wellness, etc. could easily be incorporated in the survey if the boundaries aren't better defined.

Reviewer 26

Suggested Prerequisite: Higher Education goes on and on about its three part or four part mission. Service is always a component but note in this section only students have that accountability. I think that there should be a minimum hour requirement per faculty member and per staff member for this section to have any credibility.

Additional points:

Service SC 1X----Number of free community presentations given without charge to assist the city, county, and state adapt to the societal implications of climate change.

SC 2X Child Care Facility and Program A recurrent problem for everybody on campus regardless; s,f,or staff.

Reviewer 40

[Why not require a formal policy commitment, a broad recognition of social responsibility?](#)

[This section seems to have a lot of points but never does much to really evaluate Social Responsibility or Community Engagement or relate them to sustainability. Superficial indicators may be worse than none.](#)

SERVICE

Reviewer 1

My one comment relates to Section B, Social Responsibility and Community Engagement (SC), under Service. This section accounts for community service on campus. One other component of Community Service engagement that suggests institutionalization is the existence of a community service office within the campus student government. For example, [at my institution] the undergraduates have an elected officer in charge of a dedicated community service office with nearly 22 projects reporting to it and an overall budget of over \$300,000. The graduate government has an appointed officer who oversees a smaller budget. So, you might want to expand the description of the SC Credit 1 to indicate it can be a student government officer or something along those lines.

Reviewer 30

how about a service learning indicator? Prescott College, Sterling College and a few others are focused on that and if I am correct service learning was a big priority in the recommendations of the President's Council on Sustainable Development.

Reviewer 40

I think institutional policy is a superficial way to look at community service. If students are independently involved in community service/engagement, it certainly can contribute to institutional and community sustainability, and may indicate a stronger commitment than routine placements by the institution. Institutional commitment may show up in areas such as policies, scheduling, or transportation—or just encouragement.

If a college is located in a sparsely-populated area, community service may be very different, especially if a high percentage is required. What types of service would work in these areas—without creating an increase in transportation?

SC Credit 1: Community Service Coordinator

Reviewer 14

The concerns expressed above re a Sustainability Officer also pertain here.

Reviewer 7

Does the position have to be campus-wide?

Reviewer 30

is it realistic to apply so many position criteria in here, as this poses a specific handicap to smaller institutions who cannot reasonably expect to have all of these specific positions given limits of funding at smaller institutional scales. perhaps it would be useful to add in more explicit descriptions of a way that this can be fulfilled if it is part of a job role.

Reviewer 40

This wouldn't be very important in a school of 250 students, nor would one coordinator be very important in a school of 30,000 students.

This approach seems to make large institutions look more sustainable than they really are, while making small schools look worse?

SC Credit 2: Student Community Service

Reviewer 14

This area may not be viewed by all or even most persons on a university or college campus as directly pertinent to "sustainability."

While important, I do not think the total points assigned to this indicator is commensurate with the importance of student community service *per se*. I suggest a single point be awarded for a threshold of, say, 50%.

Reviewer 13

not all service is equal, so I suggest a little more detail in the indicator that gets at an FTE type number – perhaps something like #hours/student/semester

Reviewer 24

This credit does not allow for distinction between varying levels of student service. Is a 1 hour community service project equivalent to a masters degree program that requires peace corp/american corps service as a graduation requirement? Perhaps this could be remedied by adding a second credit (that pertains to only Master and Doctorate degree granting institutions) that looks specifically at graduate student service.

Reviewer 30

100% should stand alone, not with a ">" symbol since it is not possible to exceed 100%.

Reviewer 31

Typo with >100% student community service. I'm not sure I agree that a school should get 5 points for this and 1 point for a Sustainability Implementation Plan, as one example. Moreover, I am concerned that the higher scores are most available to privileged schools. At commuter schools or schools with a high proportion of students that work, I am not sure it is fair or appropriate to say you must do community service for free. I'd break into 3 categories and give no more than 3 points

Reviewer 40

Much community service work is not terribly significant, so is rating community service only in terms of the percentage who participate the best approach? Involvement in after-school programs, for instance, is very common, but it may be limited to helping school children with meaningless homework or it could be very creative and inspiring. I'd rather see 20% engaged in creative involvement than 100% in less important ways.

SC Credit 3: Community Service in Job Descriptions

Reviewer 14

This area may not be viewed by all or even most persons on a university or college campus as directly pertinent to "sustainability." Given the diversity of institutional types in the US, the relevance of this particular attribute to the full spectrum of institutions may be highly variable.

Reviewer 31

I'll leave this to others more knowledgeable than I, but I know of a lot of faculty unions in mass that may not agree to this.

Reviewer 40

Having it in Job Descriptions may be desirable, but incorporating it in performance and tenure evaluations is what counts.

SC Credit 4: Work Study and Community Service

Reviewer 14

This area may not be viewed by all or even most persons on a university or college campus as directly pertinent to "sustainability." Given the diversity of institutional types in the US, the relevance of this particular attribute to the full spectrum of institutions may be highly variable.

Reviewer 43

How was the percentage reached? Isn't this affected by size of workforce?

Reviewer 20

SC credit 4: Work Study and Community Service would discourage participation in the program because we have so many disadvantaged students who benefit from on-campus jobs that we would not seek a 25% goal.

Reviewer 27

I have concerns that the federal work study funds for community service allow the work to support the community of the campus. So I believe it is a valid measure but I do not know the government definition and I am concerned that campus internal community maybe impacted.

Reviewer 40

Shouldn't this be based on a scale of percentages, rather than an arbitrary 25%?

SC Credit 5: Work Study and Community Service – Trend

Reviewer 14

This area may not be viewed by all or even most persons on a university or college campus as directly pertinent to "sustainability." Given the diversity of institutional types in the US, the relevance of this particular attribute to the full spectrum of institutions may be highly variable.

Responses to Survey

Social Responsibility and Community Engagement

SERVICE

1. SC2: Should we restructure this credit to take into account the number of hours students are engaged in community service? If so, is sufficient data available about average hours of community service per student per semester (or quarter) to establish reasonable and fair thresholds for achieving each point?

Respondent B

These data should be available.

Respondent C

Such data are unlikely to be available, so don't restructure. I would, however, try to capture sustainability outreach specifically. One means would be to have a credit following SC 1 such as: Community service program specifically encourages and facilitates sustainability projects.

Respondent K

Yes

Respondent M

Accurately documenting community service hours is difficult and does not seem to distinguish between curricular service (e.g., service-learning), co-curricular service (e.g., service requirement of athletic teams or student orgs), and community restitution hours. It's possible that sufficient data exists to compare curricular service hours across some institutions, but not all. Perhaps identifying the existence of programs in these areas would be sufficient for the credit. Another indication may be the presence of community service scholarships or other incentive programs. **Curricular and co-curricular service programs/opportunities are institutionally supported and available to all students each term.**

Respondent I

Yes if the organization is connected to the larger community conversation numbers are closely tracked

2. SC3: Is having community service written into faculty and staff job descriptions the best way to address faculty and staff community service? Is there a better credit that might get at the desired outcome?

Respondent C

It's probably the best way; it's probably unlikely to occur. Released time, recognition in performance and tenure reviews will suffice here.

Respondent K

Yes

Respondent M

I'm not convinced that there is a better way, but perhaps the wording here is important; it doesn't seem that all institutions could easily require service of all personnel, but the requirement could be on Human Resources to incorporate service language into hiring and literature. **Community service is encouraged in all faculty and staff, opportunities are presented and support given for its completion, and community service is promoted through the orientation of all new hires and in employee literature (i.e., handbook).**

Respondent J

Here – and I would guess at many institutions - that would take many years to implement. It would need to go before the unions, the various councils, the administrators and the governing boards.

Respondent I

Not sure, written in as part of the promotion and tenure process will be the best motivator

3. SC4+5: Is the percent of federal work study funds used for community service jobs an appropriate measure of an institution's commitment to community service?

Respondent B

No. Some colleges provide institutional funds for student workers.

Respondent C

This is much easier for urban than rural institutions. I'd vote for "institution encourages and facilitates use of WS funds for community service."

Respondent K

No

Respondent G

No, Service learning should be more than just the FWS required hours.

Respondent M

I don't think it is. Here location and size of institutions make this kind of commitment difficult to address. Lowering the percentage may be good (10 or 15 rather than 25, e.g.), but some institutions may simply be unable to increase community service work-study positions.

Respondent J

No. We use no federal work study funds for community service jobs – they can only use the funds for on-campus jobs. Our community service jobs are volunteer or paid by the organization.

1. Should we create a credit (or multiple credits) for "engaged scholarship"? How would such a credit be defined? Are there specific actions an institution can take to encourage and support engaged scholarship?

Respondent B

Has promise but I don't know how you'd measure it.

Respondent C

No. We'll have challenge enough dealing with sustainability-oriented research.

Respondent I

Yes- might look at my university's Scholarship in Action as a start to the engaged scholarship piece – Chancellor's inaugural speech

2. Should we create a credit (or multiple credits) for "campus partnerships with local/state/national government, local businesses, and K-12 institutions"? If so, how should we define the credit to ensure that such partnerships are meaningful and significant?

Respondent B

Yes.

Respondent K

YES

Respondent F

Possibly according to # of person hours spent in collaboration with the partner? Also could take into account any reports/ docs generated.

Respondent I

Yes- this is the economy, social justice and environmental piece

4. Should we create a credit (or multiple credits) for "service learning"? If so, should it be in the Social Responsibility and Community Engagement category, or the Education and Research category? How could such a credit be worded?

Respondent B

Possibly.

Respondent C

No.

Respondent M

Yes. And the service-learning credit should be in Social Responsibility and Community Engagement section; offering service-learning courses reveals a community engagement and Ed. & Research section rightly focuses on sustainability-specific offerings. The criteria could include a percentage of faculty involved in s-l courses, the percentage of depts/programs offering s-l, etc. **The institution supports service-learning, denotes service-learning course offerings in registration materials, and service-learning courses are tracked to assess impact on community and student learning.**

Respondent I

Not sure how to do this besides on the amount of hours vs the quality of the experience of both the wisdom makers and the knowledge makers

5. Should we create a credit for campuses that have received the Carnegie Foundation's "Curricular Engagement" and "Outreach & Partnerships" classifications"? (See <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/index.asp?key=1213>)

Respondent B

Assume this applies to four year schools??

Respondent K

Yes

Respondent M

I think this could be rightly offered as a Tier Two credit, but not Tier One. Additionally, it's an elective classification and can be voluntarily applied by the institution itself.

Respondent I

Yes- that is a process that should be embraced- many of the other things that you are potentially asking for are part of that process

6. Are there any other credits related to service that should be considered for inclusion in STARS? Please be as specific as possible – write out the criteria if you can.

Respondent C

I'd propose a credit for a community-oriented institutional outreach program in sustainability (e.g., lectures and workshops to which the public is explicitly invited, energy audits, model building tours, faculty consulting). I'd do another for percentage of faculty and staff who are involved in community-oriented sustainability activities.

Respondent M

A Tier One credit that recognizes community outreach that specifically addresses environmental sustainability would be valuable. This could perhaps recognize ecological restoration work, environmental education outreach, or general conservation and awareness and/or capacity building activities. It could also recognize the influence of local communities on the environmental sustainability of the institution. **Outreach activities and partnerships increase awareness or capacity for addressing environmental sustainability issues in the local community.**