

Quality Enhancement Plan: SALT: Serving and Learning Together

Lipscomb University

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Executive Summary

Service-learning was selected as the focus of Lipscomb University's Quality Enhancement Plan from a consensus of faculty and staff proposals. Since the decision was made to develop a service-learning program at Lipscomb, the entire university community adopted the acronym SALT, Serving and Learning Together, as the standard to guide the service-learning initiative. The idea of integrating the academic contexts of courses, mission trips, internships, etc. with critical reflection on service experiences connected to those contexts fits perfectly with Lipscomb's mission as a private Christian university.

The SALT Project, as the Quality Enhancement Plan is referred to, is a comprehensive plan to integrate service-learning into the educational experiences of traditional undergraduate students. Based on a philosophy of developmentally enhancing student learning, the plan provides opportunities for students to engage in different forums of service-learning that range from service days, to courses, to mission trips, to interdisciplinary experiences called SALT Cooperatives. The SALT Project includes three main components: (1) establish an administrative office, referred to as the SALT Center, to direct the initiative, (2) develop avenues for service-learning opportunities, called SALT experiences, that provide students with distinctive approaches to service-learning, and (3) establish a SALT developmental process that fosters enhanced student learning and provides a path for the service-learning transformational journey that, for some students, culminates in their becoming SALT Scholars.

The implementation of The SALT Project, a five-year process, is supported by several elements. First, the QEP Director, with support from an implementation team, will oversee and monitor the implementation process. Second, professional development for faculty, staff, and community partners will be provided to build capacity for all aspects of the program. Third, a budget that allocates sufficient funding will ensure financial resources that move the implementation forward. Fourth, an assessment plan that measures the effectiveness of administrative processes, as well as student learning, will provide regular feedback for continuous quality improvement. Most importantly, however, The SALT Project is supported by an administration who strongly believes that this initiative is right for our students. The SALT Project positions Lipscomb University to become a more engaged community partner, a leader in the scholarly activity of service-learning, and most importantly a stronger influence in the lives of the students it serves.