

Learning by Doing?: Experience and Service- Based Education

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Missions and Goals



■ Brown

- “The values that Brown teaches its students are manifest in...the value the University places on **commitment to community involvement...**” (President Simmons)
- “Faculty members create original teaching models which facilitate the synthesis of knowledge” (Brown Student Guide)

■ Center for Environmental Studies (CES)

■ Guiding Principles

- “the integration of teaching, research and service”
- “applied approach to environmental education and problem-solving”

So What?

- Service-learning is increasing in universities around the country
- Brown's Center for Environmental Studies offers service-learning opportunities
- Some controversy exists over the value of this type of learning
- Where to go from here? And why?

History of Service-Learning^[1]

- John Dewey (early 20th century)
 - Eliminate dualisms of doing-knowing, feeling-intellect
- 1960s & 1970s
 - Era of widespread institutional innovations
- Recent growth
 - Addressing gap between universities & “real world”
 - Rise of interdisciplinary fields
 - Reduce parochialism – demonstrate civic responsibility
 - Demand for curricular relevance – reduce isolation
 - Make teaching more appealing to faculty

[1] Kezar, Adrianna and Robert A. Rhoads. “The Dynamic Tensions of Service-Learning in Higher Education.” *Journal of Higher Education*. 2001.

What is Experiential Learning?

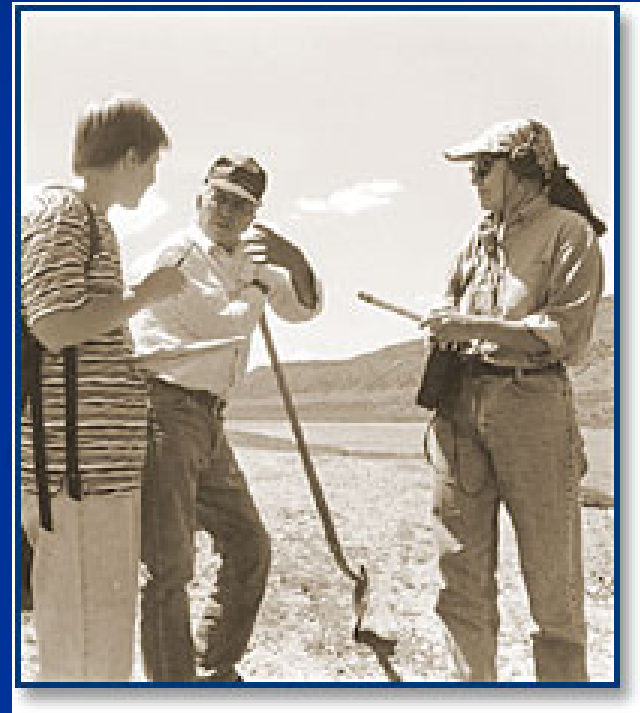
- Direct, hands-on experience
- Addresses an issue
- Real consequences (as opposed to a simulation)

- Many types of experiential learning exist

- Direct experience addressing a real issue

Some Types of Experience-Based Learning

- Service-based learning
- Internships
- Co-op
- Field Trips
- Fieldwork and Labs
- Extracurricular Programs
 - Leadership Roles
 - Student Publications
 - Trip-based programs



What is Service-Learning?

- Community-based project as a vehicle for learning
- One of most widely adopted forms of experiential learning at the university level. ^[2]
- Direct, hands-on experience
- Collaboration with a community
- Reflection
- Real results and consequences
- Service-learning is **NOT** merely credit for community service!

[2] Kielsmeier, J., & Willits, R. "Growing hope: A sourcebook on integrating youth service into the curriculum." St. Paul: University of Minnesota, 1999.

Benefits of Service-Learning ^[3]

- Integration of knowledge, especially from varied disciplines
- Teamwork and communication skills
- Concrete experience
- Confidence, satisfaction & motivation
- Better academic performance ^[4]
- Benefits to communities and organizations
- BUT... Challenges certainly exist

^[3] Harold Ward. "Acting Locally: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Environmental Studies." 1999.

^[4] Markus, Howard, & King. "Integrating Community Service and Classroom Instruction Enhances Learning." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 1993.

Critiques of Service-Learning

- Less “academic”
- Neglects acquisition of knowledge ^[4]
- Promotes certain values
- Distraction from basic academic subjects
- Lack of “rigor”
- Organization tensions

Goals of this Project

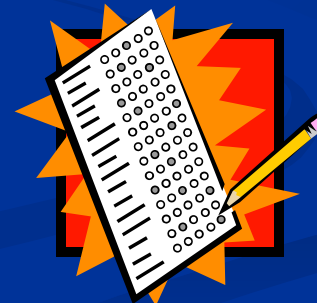
- To explore the role of applied service-based learning at Brown, and particularly at CES
 - To **characterize** the current status of service-learning in the curriculum
 - To **evaluate** current service-based opportunities, both curricular and extracurricular
 - To make **recommendations** regarding the implementation of service-learning

Guiding Questions

- Who participates in service-learning? Are certain concentrations or genders more represented in service-learning courses?
- How do Environmental Studies students and alumni/ae perceive the value of service-learning experiences?
- What factors contribute to a successful service-learning program in Environmental Studies?

Methods

- Registrar's Information
 - Averaging data from different concentrators from 1999-2002
- Survey
 - Survey distributed to current ES juniors and seniors and to alums



Case Study: CES (Center for Environmental Studies)

- Why Environmental Studies?



History of Service-Learning at CES

- Founded in 1978 by collaboration of students and faculty
- Service-learning courses (ES 192, ES 11) around for decades
- Guiding Principles
 - “the integration of teaching, research and service”
 - “applied approach to environmental education and problem-solving”

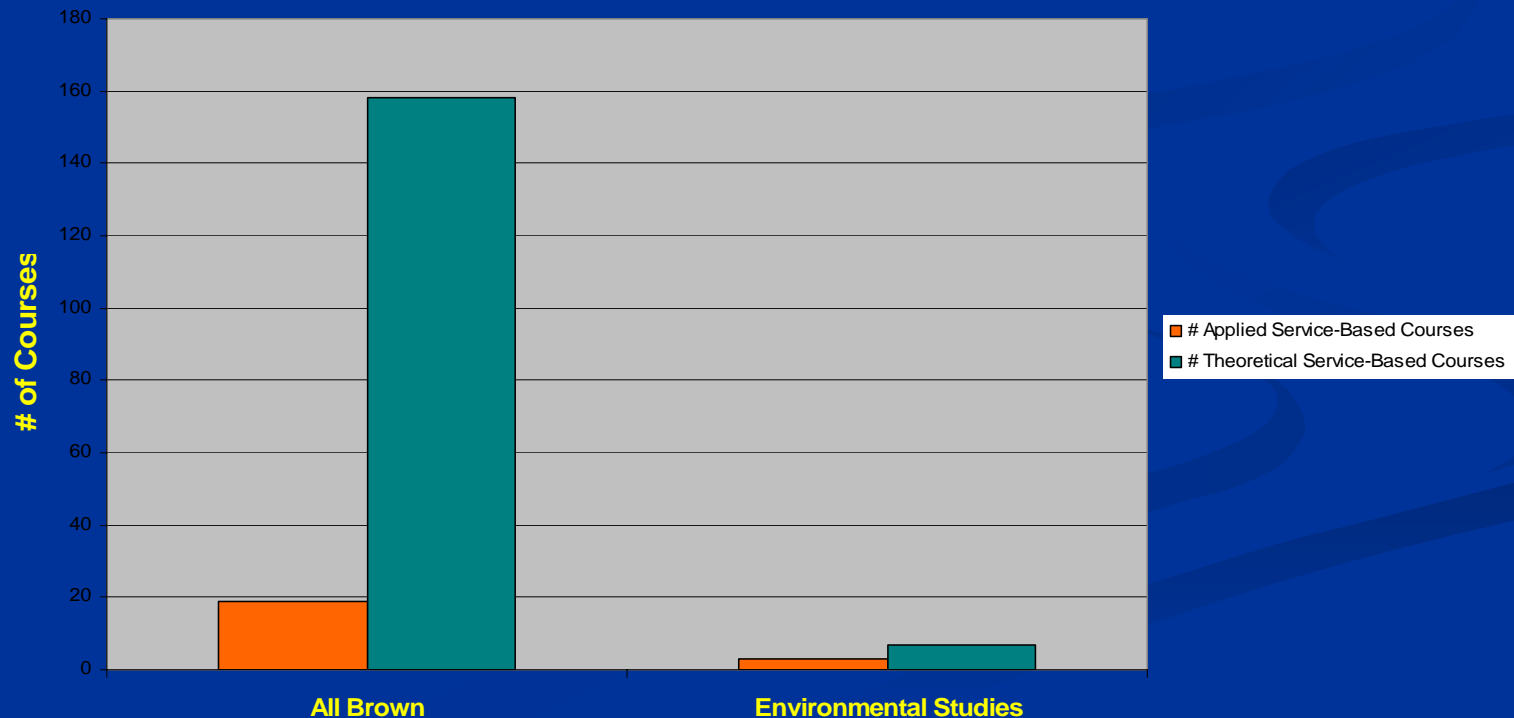
Community Connections...

Where are They?

Applied service-based courses: include direct work in the community

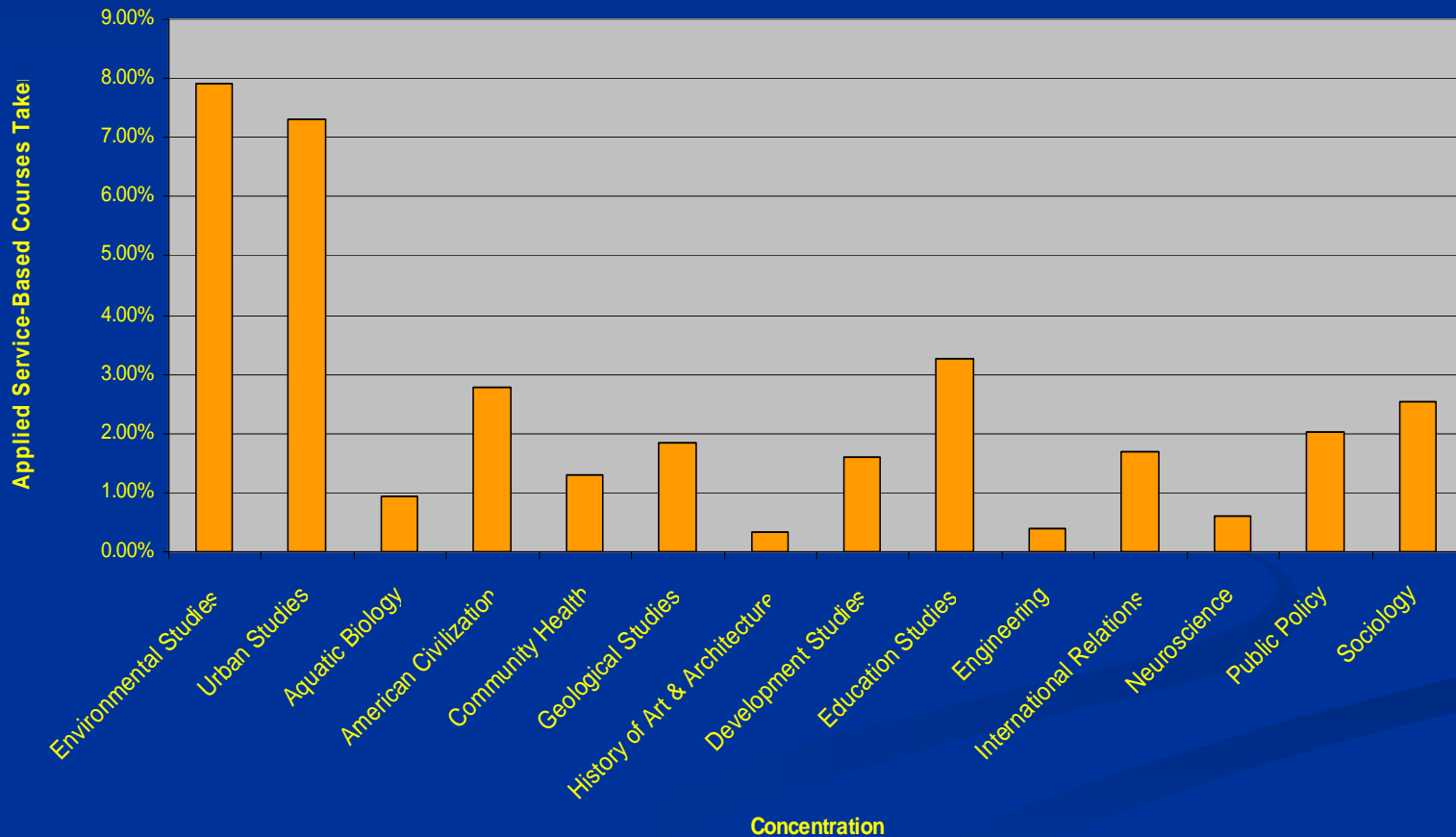
Theoretical service-based courses: address issues related to community

Theory vs. Practice



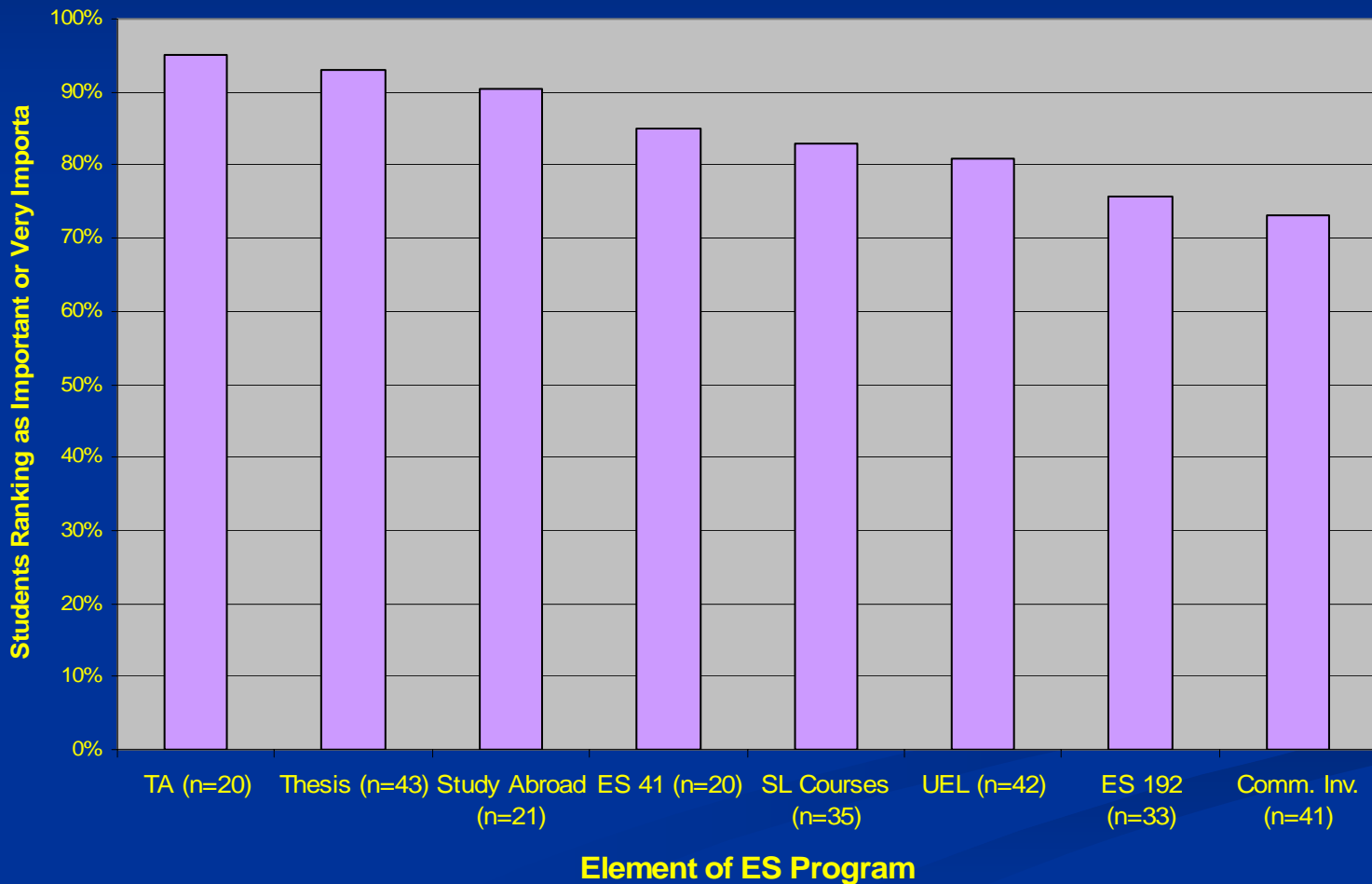
Who participates?

Applied Service-Based Courses



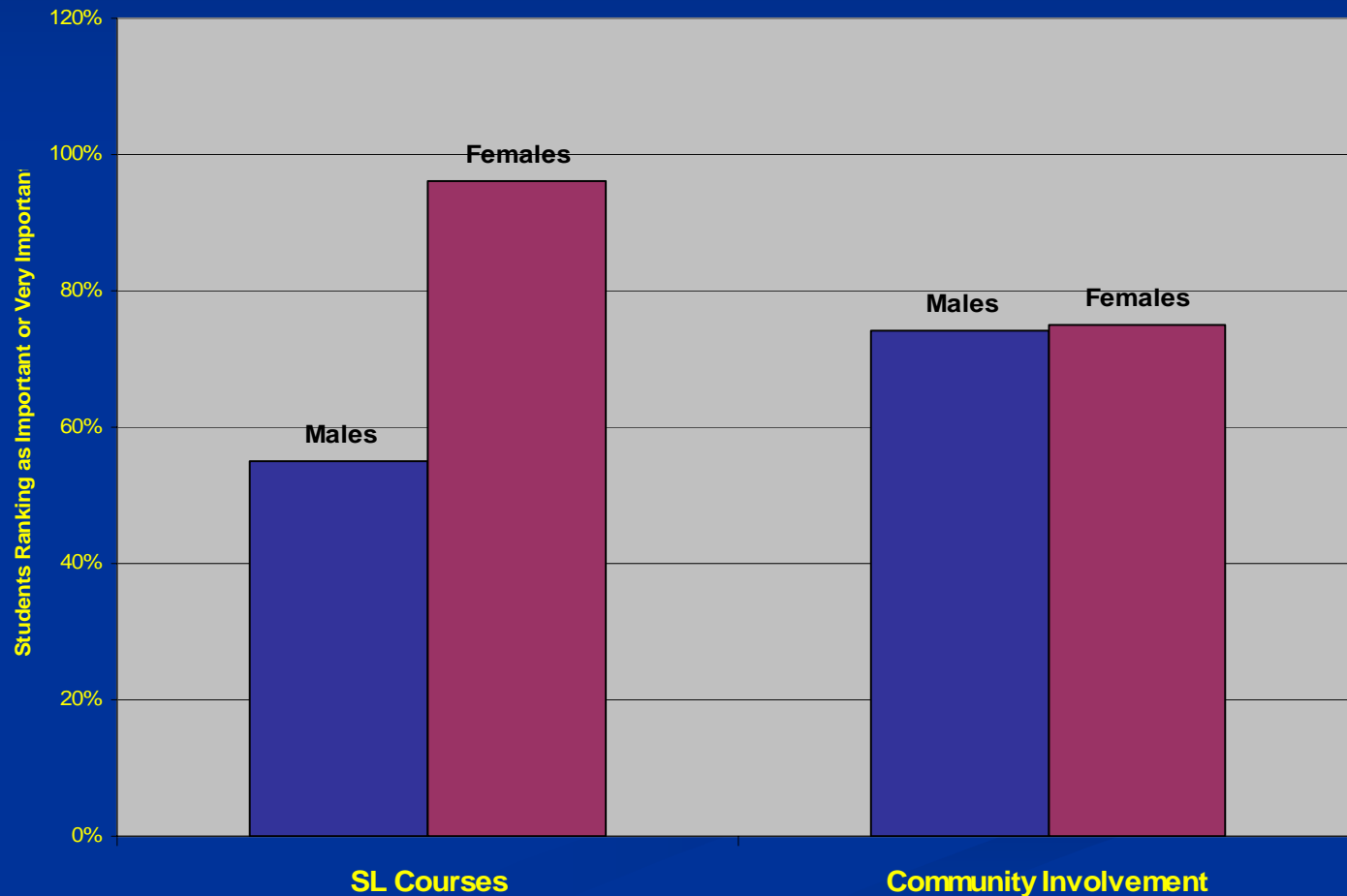
What's Important?

Student Value of Program Elements



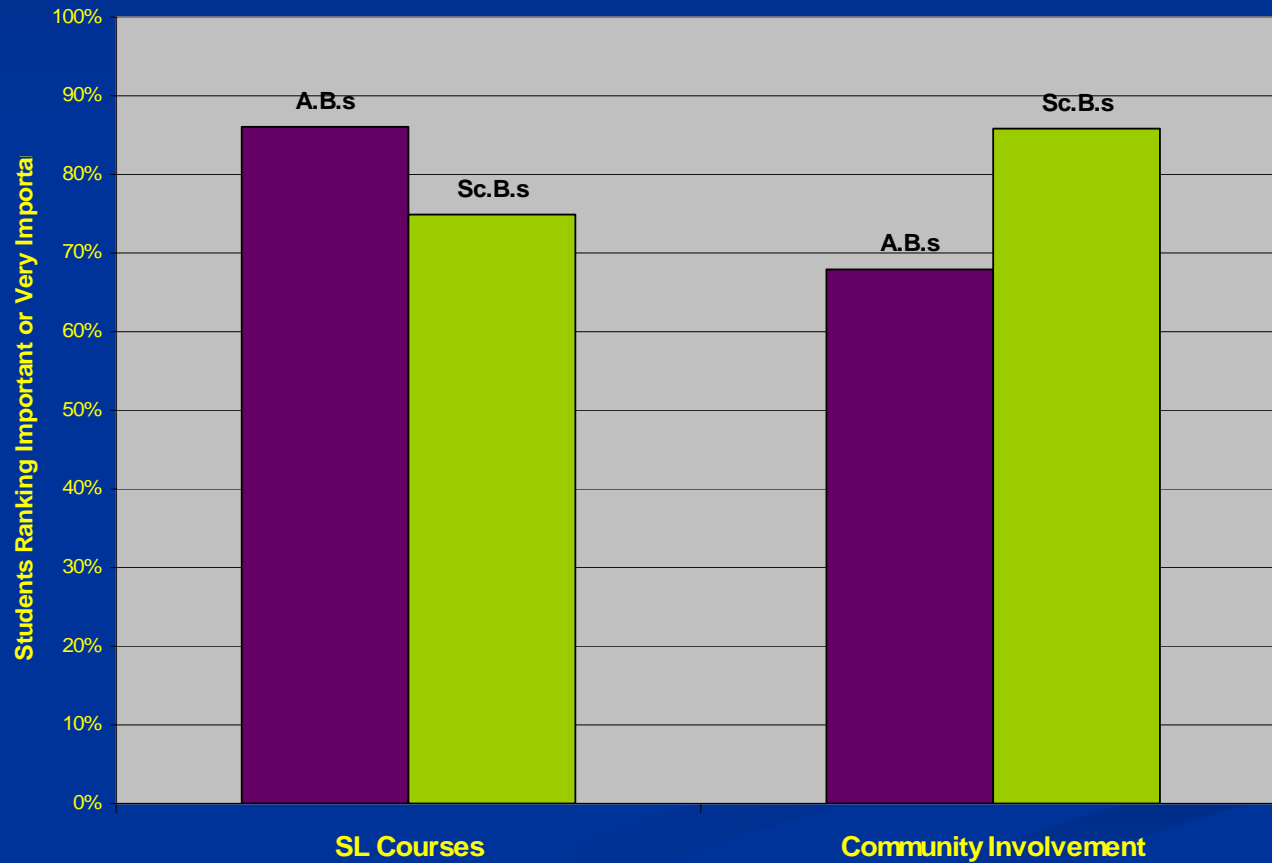
Who Values What?

Student-Perceived Value



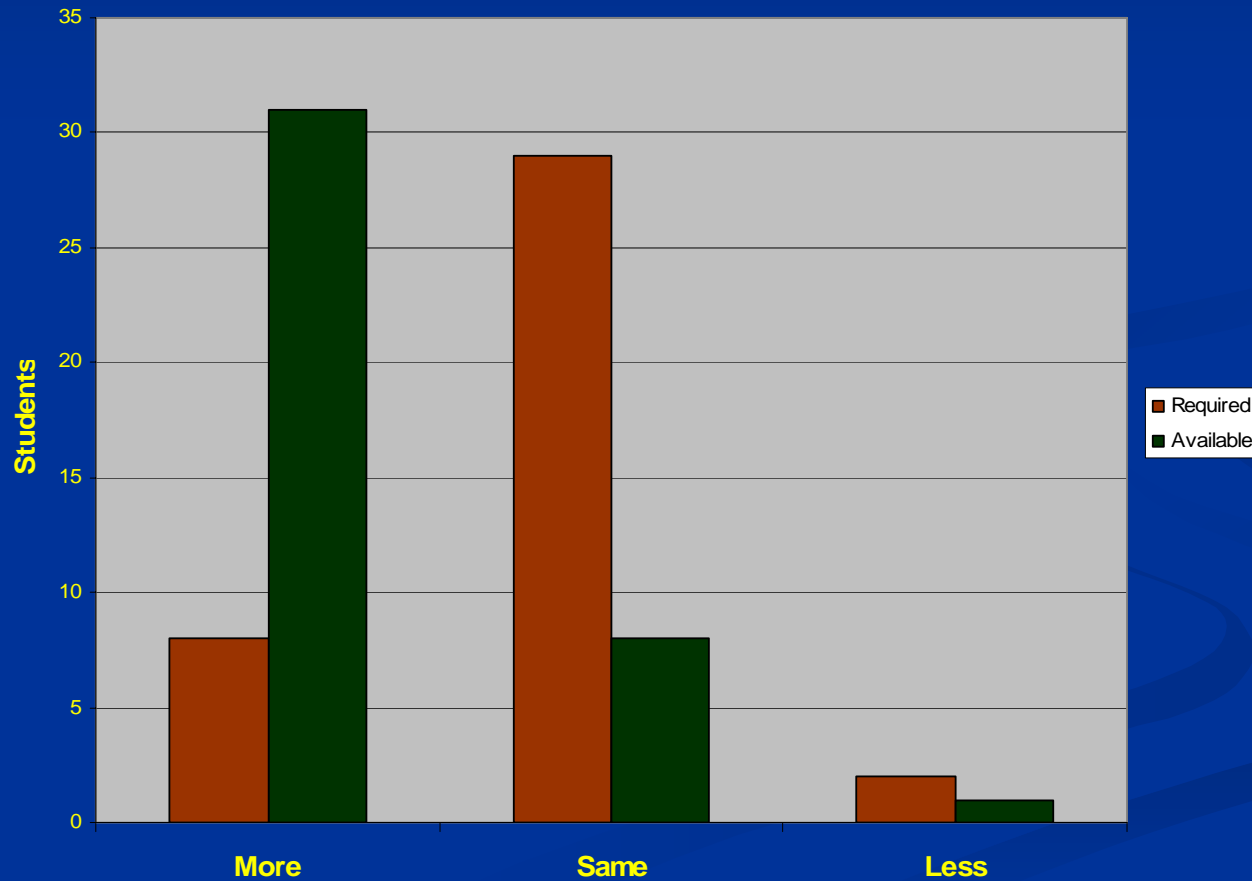
Arts vs. Science?

Student-Perceived Value by Degree



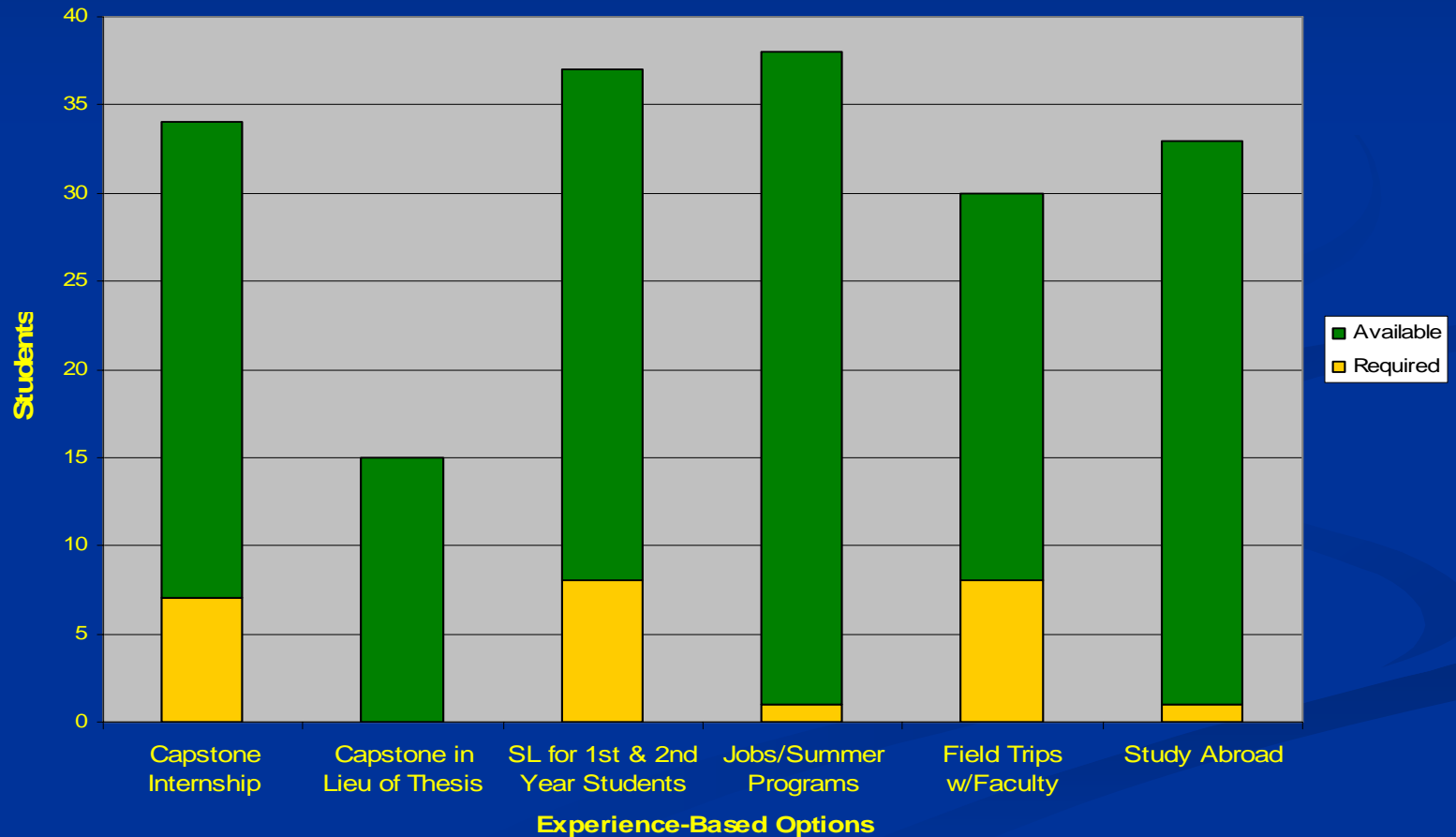
More Service-Learning, or Less?

Change in Service-Learning (n=40)



Service- and Experience-Based Options

Additional Opportunities (n=40)



Study Abroad



- Less than half of ES students
- Over 90% of ES students who do study abroad rank it as very important or important (58% rank as very important)
- Strongest response in survey
- Why don't ES Students Study Abroad?
 - ES 192 requirement
 - Lack of specific programs supported by CES

Key Findings

- *Who participates in service-learning?*
- Environmental Studies students
- Students from interdisciplinary concentrations
- Males and females: similar participation BUT different values
- A.B. and Sc.B. degree students
- Participants in extracurricular activities

Key Findings

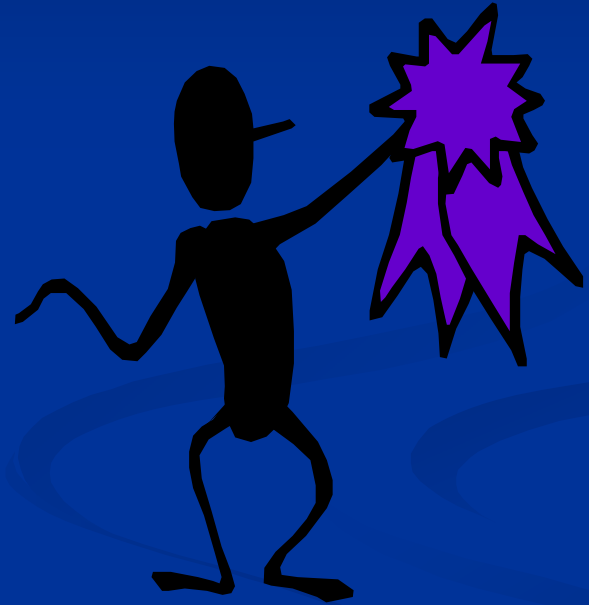
- How do Environmental Studies students and alumni/ae perceive the value of service-learning experiences?
- Males and females value community involvement similarly, but not SL coursework
- Little variation between A.B. and Sc.B.
- Study abroad highly valued, but low participation
- Satisfaction with current requirements
- Desire for more varied opportunities

Recommendations

- Expand various service-learning opportunities
 - Establish internship program
 - Encourage employment and/or summer programs
 - Support extracurricular participation
- Preserve current requirements (Thesis & SL)
- Create CES-approved study abroad programs
 - University of Victoria (British Columbia, Canada)
 - SFS Sustainable Development Studies (Costa Rica)
 - University at Otago (New Zealand)
- Make ES 192 more flexible
 - Available to 2nd-year students
 - Possible alternatives to satisfy requirement
- Explore possible collaboration with Swearer Center (internships, course design, extracurriculars)

Acknowledgements

- Caroline Karp
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Questions?
Comments?
Suggestions?
Ideas?

