Virginia Commonwealth University

University Excellence in Service-Learning: Student Award

Award Description
The University Excellence in Service-Learning Student Award is given annually to a current VCU graduate or undergraduate student who has been an outstanding community-engaged student leader and peer educator. This award is open to any graduate or undergraduate student who has served or is currently serving as a Service-Learning Teaching Assistant (SLTA).

Applications are due April 1, 2019

Eligibility: Any current VCU student, graduate or undergraduate, who has served or is currently serving as a Service-Learning Teaching Assistant.

Review Criteria: This university award celebrates and highlights student leaders who support excellence in service-learning pedagogy, practices, and partnerships. Applicants will be reviewed within the following categories of excellence:

- Facilitating successful service-learning projects and ensuring mutually beneficial partnerships
- Enhancing the learning and critical reflection of fellow students
- Personal or professional growth and identity development

Recognition of Winners: The winner of the University Excellence in Service-Learning Student Award will be recognized at an awards luncheon held on campus on May 1, 2019. The winner will be awarded a $500 stipend and an engraved plaque. A letter of recognition will be sent to the winner’s instructor, department chair, and community partners, and a university website story will recognize the winner’s accomplishments.

Submission Guidelines: Current and former SLTAs are encouraged to self-nominate. Applications include two components:

1) Applicants must complete an online application which includes narrative written responses to reflective questions (below).
2) Applicants must include at least one supporting recommendation from either the service-learning instructor they assisted as a SLTA or a community partner with whom they worked as a SLTA. The recommender must complete an online application which includes narrative written responses to reflective questions (below).

Reflective Questions for Applicants:
Responses should be roughly one paragraph each.

1. **Partnership Development.** Describe how you helped to ensure high-quality community-university partnerships in your role as an SLTA. What did you do to facilitate successful service-learning projects? What actions did you take to ensure that the service-learning partnership was beneficial to both the service-learning students and the community partners.

2. **Student Learning.** Describe your role in enhancing the learning and critical reflection of fellow students. What did you do to help deepen students’ learning and investment in the service-learning? How did you help them develop their understanding of civic and social issues through their classroom and service experiences?

3. **Personal Development.** Describe your own personal or professional growth and identity development. How did your identity and/or abilities develop in your semester(s) as an SLTA? What skills, understandings, or insights did you gain, and how do anticipate you will use those as a community-engaged leader in the future?

Reflective Questions for Recommenders:
Responses should be roughly one paragraph each.

1. Describe how the applicant helped to ensure high-quality community-university partnerships. How did they help facilitate successful service-learning projects? What actions did they take to ensure that the service-learning partnership was mutually beneficial for service-learning students and community partners?

2. Describe the applicant’s role in enhancing student learning and critical reflection. How did they contribute to the students’ learning and investment in service-learning? What role did they play in deepening the service-learners’ understanding of civic and social issues?

3. Describe the ways the applicant has grown as a community-engaged leader through their service-learning and leadership role as a SLTA. What do you see as their most significant personal or professional development? In your experience working with the applicant, how have they grown and what skills, understandings, or insights have they developed?

For more information and to apply, visit: