Service-Learning as a University-Wide Program: Rationale and Issues

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at Second Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on
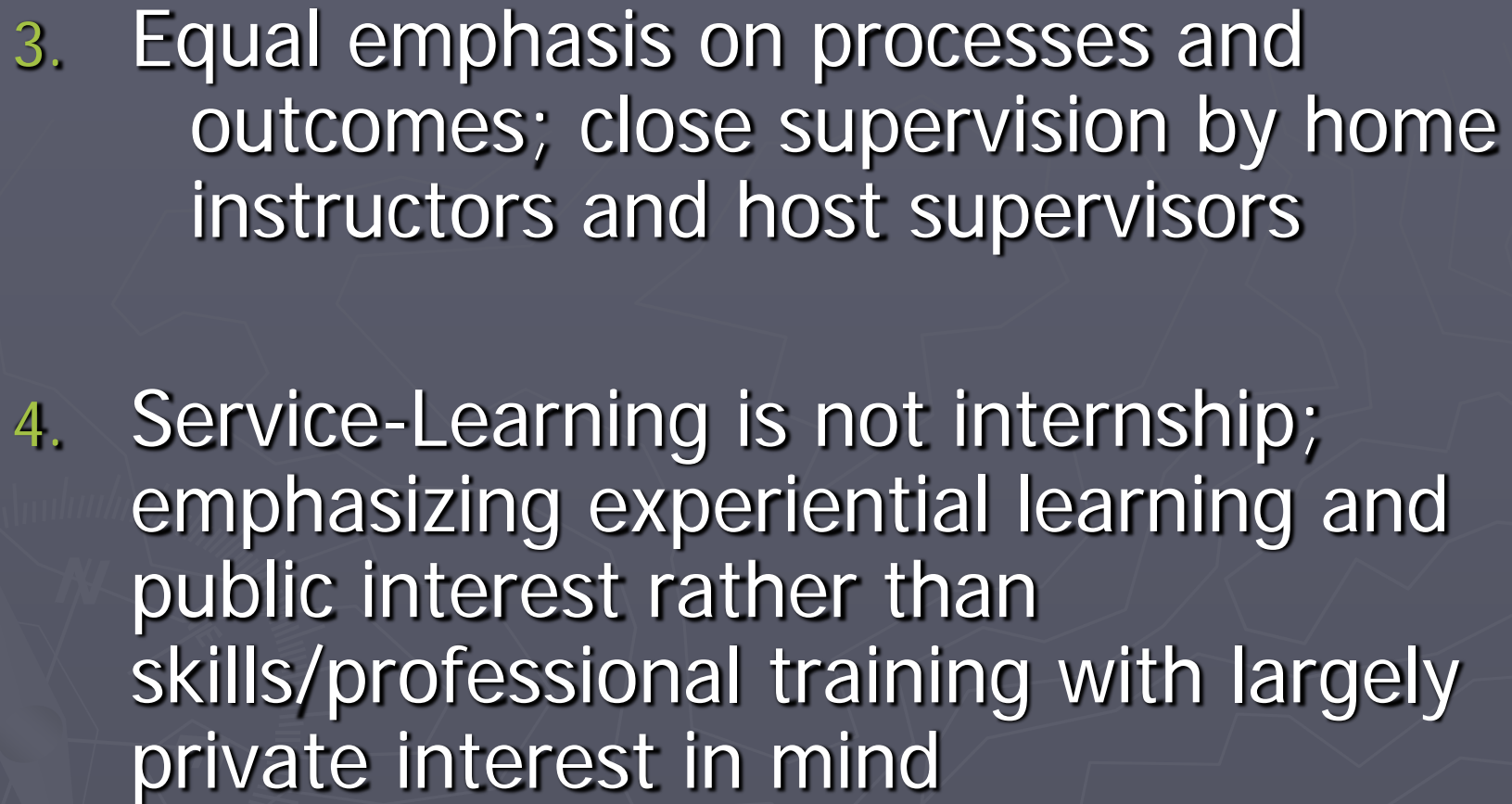Service-Learning, 1 June 2009, Hong Kong

What is Service-Learning

1. Integrated into and enhances the Curriculum

   Not general voluntary work/community service; credit-bearing/part of course assessment/attainment of specific academic goals/structured time

2. University-wide participation

   Applicable to all majors/disciplines;

   not confined to social work nor taking place only in social service organizations

3. Equal emphasis on processes and outcomes; close supervision by home instructors and host supervisors

4. Service-Learning is not internship; emphasizing experiential learning and public interest rather than skills/professional training with largely private interest in mind

Rationale of Service-Learning

1. Service-Learning enhances the nurturing of whole-persons and hence plays a vital part in liberal arts education

2. Liberal arts education is the best form of undergraduate education in today's creative/new economy

3. For large universities, service-learning plus a core curriculum could be a second best practice

The New Economy

The Emergence of a New/Creative Economy since the early 1990s

Characterized by

* **Digitization**
* **Globalization**
* **Monopolistization of Capitalism**

Digitization

★ **Predominance of ICT**
★ **Rapid, Pervasive and Incremental Technological Change**
★ **Economies of Scope vs Economies of Scale**
★ **De-industrialization**

$\Rightarrow$ **Importance of Creativity, Adaptability and Life-long Education**
The only thing we can predict is CHANGE

Globalization

Arising from

★ **Advancements in Transportation and Telecommunication**

✶ **Trade and Investment Liberalization**

Resulting in

✶ **Capital and Labour Mobility**

✶ **Global Sourcing and Zero Inventory**

⇒ **Importance of Coping with Diversity**

Monopolistization of Capitalism

From Competitive Capitalism to Monopolistic Capitalism

Arising from
- ★ **Concentration of Capital (M&A)**
- ★ **Imperfect and Asymmetric Information**
- ★ **Rapid Expansion of Financial Services**

Resulting in
- ★ **Digital Divide in Predominance**
- ★ **Core Values at Stake**

⇒ **Importance of Ethics, Civility, Social Responsibility**

Implications for Education

1. Undergraduate Education

   To nurture whole persons

2. Graduate Education

   To train professionals

3. Life-long Education

   For survival of changes

What is Liberal Arts Education

► It is distinctive because of its teaching and learning processes; it is not defined by disciplines or courses offered

► It is characterized by

Small

Residential

Student-oriented

Teaching and Learning Processes

► The distinctive teaching and learning processes of liberal arts education are embedded in the 4 Is

Individualization of students

Interdisciplinary approach

Intra-curricular activities

International exchange

Individualization of Students

* Interactive and close student-student, student-faculty relationship

* Small class teaching

* Academic advisers, Mentors

Interdisciplinary Approach

* Issue/problem-based teaching and learning

* Seminar courses; reading and writing

* Presentation; narrative evaluation

Intra-curricular Activities

* Campus life; Residence

* Community service; Service-learning

* Integrated Learning Program (ILP)

International Exchange

* Not Study Abroad

* The Three Es

  Experience; Exposure; Excitement

  To understand foreigners and to know how foreigners see us

Liberal Arts Education Outcomes

To nurture whole–persons for meeting the challenges of the new economy

Specifically –

To achieve the ABC objectives of liberal arts education: Adaptability, Brainpower, and Creativity

To acquire Cognitive, Communication and Community skills (3Cs)

To revive traditional core values

Service-Learning and Liberal Arts Education

► Service-Learning has the same objectives as liberal arts education – coping with change, diversity, and revival of core values; nurturing adaptability, brainpower, and creativity; acquiring cognitive, communication and community skills

► Service-Learning should also adopt the teaching and learning processes of liberal arts education – individualization, inter-displinarity, intra-curricular activities, and international exposure

► Service-Learning adds values to liberal arts education and liberal arts education facilitates the implementation of service-learning and the achievement of its goals

Factors for Success

1. Strong Support and Commitment of the Senior Management
2. University-Wide Endorsement

    with reference to Mission/Vision
3. Staff's strong Commitment and Students' active Participation

Factors for Success

4. A dedicated Service-Learning Office

    for promotion, liaising and co-ordination, matching, training, monitoring, research

5. Funding – Long-term commitments, Earmarked

Issues/Problems

1. Methods of Assessment and Evaluation
    Importance of structured feedbacks through reflection

2. Identifying Interested and Effective Partners
    Local and International

3. Matching – Partners, Programs and Courses, Students

Issues/Problems

4. Monitoring and Ensuring Students' participation and Progress;

   Developing Code of Best Practice/

   Manuals/Protocols

5. Debriefing and Sharing – Maximizing spill-over effects

THANK YOU AND

BESH WISHES