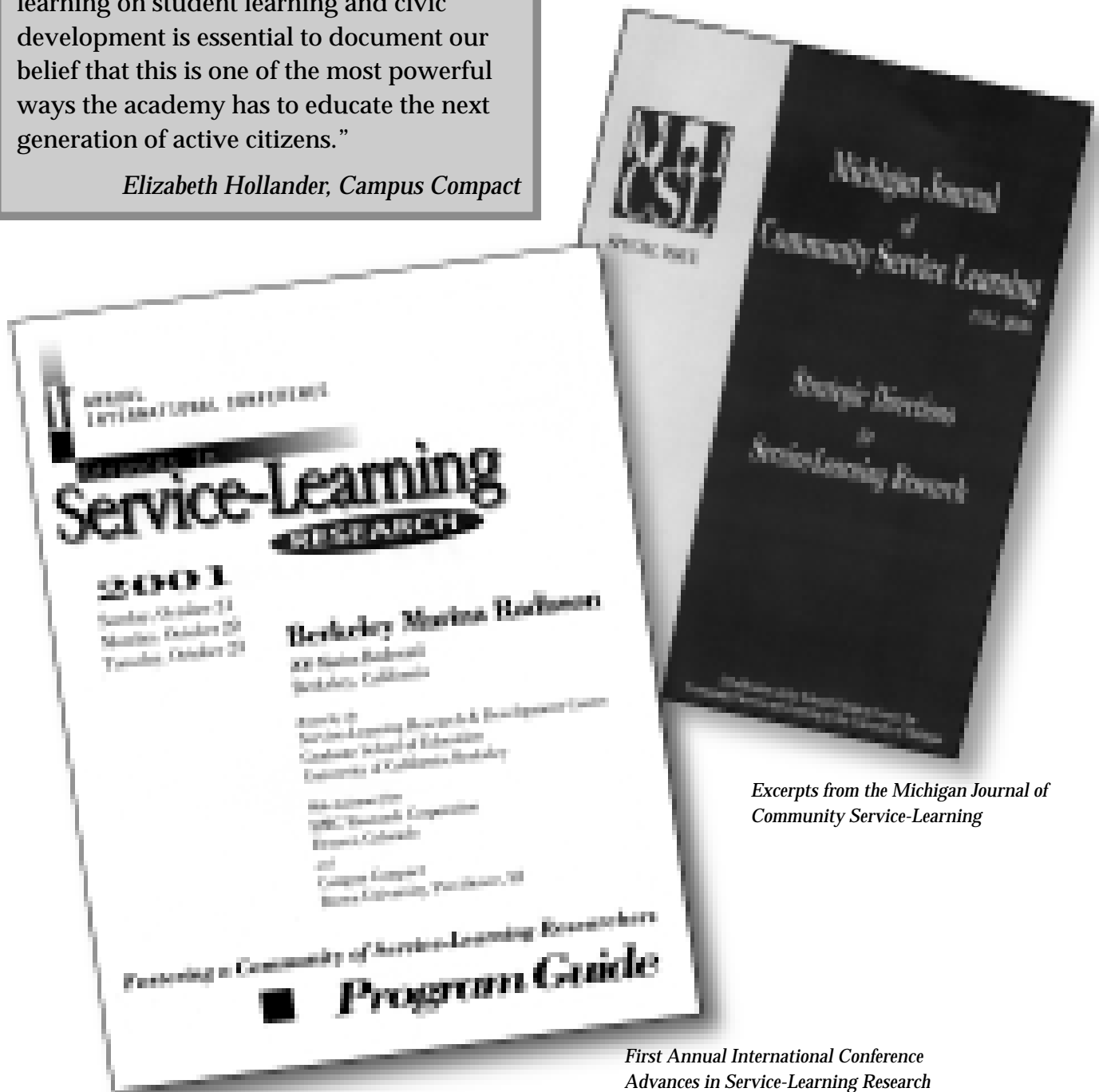


# RESEARCH & SERVICE-LEARNING

“Research targeting the impact of service learning on student learning and civic development is essential to document our belief that this is one of the most powerful ways the academy has to educate the next generation of active citizens.”

*Elizabeth Hollander, Campus Compact*



*Excerpts from the Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning*

*First Annual International Conference  
Advances in Service-Learning Research*

RESEARCH & SERVICE-LEARNING  
 FIRST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
*Advances in Service-Learning Research*  
 2001

*The first International Service-Learning Research conference was held October 21-23 in Berkeley, California*

**Andy Furco**, Director, Service-Learning  
 Research and Development Center



"I was honored to serve as host of this inaugural event involving colleagues representing a variety of research issues related to service-learning in K-12 (primary and secondary education), teacher education, and higher education. The conference was structured to provide opportunities for researchers throughout the world to meet and discuss findings from recent studies on service-learning, build new service-learning research networks and partnerships, and identify new directions for the advancement of service-learning research."

Hosted by the  
 Service-Learning Research and  
 Development Center  
 Graduate School of Education  
 University of California

*With assistance from*  
 RMC Research Corporation  
 Denver, Colorado  
*and*  
 Campus Compact  
 Brown University  
 Providence, RI

**Shelly Billig**, Director, RMC Research Corporation

"Our chief goals were to provide a forum that would allow sharing research, promoting more and better quality research, building networks, and starting to bring more cohesion to the field so that evidence could accumulate and a research foundation

could be built. We believe this conference made a good start at doing that. The conference evaluations were very positive.

There's a passion and set of norms in the field of service-learning that is very collaborative in nature. We have a

sense that we all need to work together and support one another if the field is to survive. By the nature of the work, service-learning seems to attract researchers who are collegial. Community building takes nurturing, though, and that is what this effort entails."



**Elizabeth Hollander**, Executive Director, Campus Compact

"Research targeting the impact of service learning on student learning and civic development is essential to document our belief that this is one of the most powerful ways the academy has to educate the next generation of active citizens. If the practice is to hold over the long term we also need to know more about its impact on faculty, higher education institutions and the community itself. Research proof is a deep value of the academy and one that should more often inform our teaching and learning practice."

# Highlights of the Conference

**Conference goal:  
To foster a community of  
service learning  
researchers**



Participants enjoy dinner and hearing about the state of service-learning research.

## ***Conversations About the Relationship between Service- Learning Practice and Research***

Dwight E. Giles, Jr., University of  
Massachusetts and Timothy Stanton,  
Stanford University

## ***Strategic Directions for Service-Learning Research Higher Education***

Dwight Giles, UM; Sherril Gelmon,  
Portland State University; Robert G.  
Bringle, Indiana University-Purdue  
University, Indianapolis; Joseph  
Kahne, Mills College; Robert Shumer,  
University Minnesota

## ***Strategic Directions for Ser- vice-Learning Research in K-12 Education***

Shelley Billig, RMC Research;  
Andrew Furco, UC Berkeley; Susan  
Root, Alma College; and Alan  
Waterman, College of New Jersey

## ***Service-Learning Research as a Source of Scholarship***

Robert Bringle, Indiana University-  
Purdue University

## ***Doing Service Learning Evalu- ation and Research: Practical How-To Guidance and Advice***

Shelley Billig, RMC Research; James  
Kielsmeier, National Youth Leader-  
ship Council

## ***Role of Research in Advancing Public Policy***

Terry Pickeral, Compact for Learning  
and Citizenship

## ***What Next? Research to Im- prove the Quality of Service Learning***

Janet Eyler, Vanderbilt University;  
Christine Kwak, W.K Kellogg  
Foundation

## ***Datesaver***

### ***Second Annual Interna- tional Conference on Advances in Service-Learning Research***

Coming  
Sunday Oct 20 to  
Tuesday October 22, 2002

Hosted by

Peabody College of  
Vanderbilt University  
Nashville, Tennessee

Registration information and call  
for proposals can be found at:  
[http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/  
slresearchconf](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/slresearchconf).

For further information contact  
Janet Eyler at  
[janet.s.eyler@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:janet.s.eyler@vanderbilt.edu)



## Tips on Service-Learning Evaluation

**Alan Melchior**  
Brandeis University

*Individuals may not be able to contribute to the body of formal, accepted research, but we often advise them that there is a lot they can do to learn about the effectiveness of their own efforts.*

### 1. Document Efforts

Look at how to document your efforts, often with an eye towards building support. That is, if you are running a service-learning program, you should think about how to document participants, hours, and projects or activities since these basic numbers are often all you need to demonstrate that you have a substantial program. You can do much of this with information built into the school and program itself--daily attendance records, time sheets maintained by the students as part of a portfolio, reflection exercises that include project write-ups, etc.

### 2. Conduct Simple Evaluation

There are many ways to build simple evaluation into the program design and operations. We suggest that you look at the kinds of records you already collect as part of your broader operations (particularly grades, attendance, test scores in a school setting) and ask themselves whether they can use that information to begin to assess outcomes. Staff might also think about how they can use the reflection process as part of an assessment; for example, using pre- and post-program reflective essays or having participant

homework assignments or worksheets that can show change over time.

Programs can also develop some basic survey materials for use before and after the program with participants (for example, asking about attitudes or involvement in volunteer activity, what they have learned, etc.). They can also develop a basic evaluation form to be used by site supervisors, assessing participant skill gains while providing service, or simply documenting the types of skills participants used. While these "homegrown" tools may produce publishable results (although generally don't involve a comparison group), they can provide valuable feedback to the program and be used locally to make the case that the program is accomplishing its goals.

### 3. Find Local Research Help

Look for help from community partners, particularly local colleges and universities, to develop more formal research and evaluation strategies. It is often possible to find faculty who are interested in using the program as a training site for a research or evaluation course, or who require some type of practicum that could be fulfilled by students conducting a research project. In that way, programs can begin to create a research agenda of their own without having to fund a study with their own limited funds. In the same vein, programs might solicit help on research and evaluation from parents and other community members - this is a great way to involve adults in the program and there are often surprising resources available in the community.

The basic ideas are to start simple and build; to look at what you already

collect as a starting point; and to not try to do it all yourself - get the participants, parents, community members and others to help.



## Tips on Service-Learning Research

**Jim Kielsmeier**  
National Youth  
Leadership Council,  
Roseville, MN

1. Know your knowledge base: what are you doing and why?
2. Work on a common set of metrics. Consult colleagues and how they are measuring.
3. Focus on a particular area and persist. It is difficult to develop a universal system.
4. Move beyond the silo approach and get to know the community, "Let's get more than one name on the study."
5. Rethink your role as researcher. For example, President Kennedy asked a worker at Cape Canaveral what he was doing. "I'm putting a man on the moon," he said.

