Service-learning connects faculty, students, and community partners for **MUTUAL BENEFIT**.

**Speakers:**
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**Summary:**
This roundtable was a general introduction to the theory and practice of service-learning. It began with an overview of the definition and motivations behind community engagement. University-community partnerships are most effective when they are based on the goals, assets, and perspective of each partner. Service-learning classes are a specific application of the general community engagement framework. Though there is no universal definition of service-learning, service-learning classes are most often described as traditional, credit-bearing classes that also include:

- **off-campus** experiences where
- students **apply course content** and skills
- for the real, direct **benefit of a community partner**.
- Students then complete one or more **structured reflection activities**.

The conversation also discussed the benefits instructors and students frequently receive from a service-learning course. Based on existing studies, benefits include significant gains in student:

- Attitudes about their own academic abilities
- Attitudes about their college/university
- Civic engagement
- Career preparation and skills development
- Social skills

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Benefits for faculty include:
- Access to unique data
- Opportunity to conduct applied research
- Enhanced student learning/growth
- Opportunity to integrate personal and professional identities

Other key points from the conversation include:
- When developing community partnerships, spend time with the organization on their terms.
  **Participate** in their events and **demonstrate knowledge** and support of their goals.
- Before making their first off-campus visit, students in service-learning classes should **receive information** on the history, social identities, and organizational culture of their community partner.
- There are **many types of structured reflection activities** that students may benefit from, including journals, reflective essays, group discussions, and creative/expressive exercises.
- Reflection activities are most effective when they are **structured; integrated** into course content; related to students’ **recent, off-campus experiences**; and are **more than a simple report** of their actions.