

Robert Geary Oral Health Promotion Activity Reflection Paper

For my OHP activity hours I participated in the Global Service Learning class. Dr. Morgan who has extensive experience with service learning and community development directed this class. This class met once a week every other week, and during the in between weeks assignments were given that helped expand our knowledge. These assignments required us to post in a discussion group, online, with the class. We were required to respond to two posts and this allowed us to develop a more coherent knowledge and understanding about what service learning is, how it can be accomplished, and the best methods for implementation.

Thus far we have begun the introductory phase of the global service learning class. We have started our own blogs, and we are documenting our progression through the course. I want to learn how to set up a global service learning trip to Haiti and this program is helping me understand the necessary protocols and best methods to have a successful GSL program. Not only am I learning the skills necessary for setting up a GSL, but I am also learning what it takes to run successful not for profits and service endeavors in general.

Running a not-for-profit and or a service foundation is a goal that I have had for some time. This class is giving me the necessary skills to complete this goal and implement my ideas efficiently and effectively. We are not only learning how to set up a GSL, but we also are learning how to interact with different directors of foundations, how we maximize our role in the process of setting up and partaking in service learning, and how to best contribute to a sustainable project in a certain area. Recently, we were given different scenarios in which there was a breakdown somewhere in the relationship between different parties within an organization or among separate organization. It was interesting and informative to see the varying opinions that people had on specifically where the breakdown occurred, and how best to remedy it.

Currently attempting to implement a GSL and my own not-for-profit has been challenging to say the least. As stated before, even in the beginning first few weeks I have learned the importance of establishing proper contacts for an organization. I have also realized the crucial role that everyone within an organization plays; and the relationships between members of any group or organization need to be defined. The members need to define their intentions, what they wish to accomplish, and what they are willing to contribute. Having this information as a baseline is very important in order to start your project in the right direction and allow you to properly delegate to individuals what their responsibilities are.

Running a GSL is no easy task. I have seen and experienced the difficulty in setting up a GSL first hand. This class has given me the foundation and start of a skill set; that will allow me to promote and establish long lasting improvements to the oral healthcare in underserved communities. I look forward to being able to implement the things I have learned and will be learning in my attempt to start a GSL and in future oral health promotion endeavors.

