

The background image shows a construction site with wooden framing for a building. Several workers are visible, some wearing tool belts and reaching up to work on the structure. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

AUDITING THE SERVING SOCIETY CREDIT REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WESTMONT DECISION LAB
JANUARY 28, 2020



OUTLINE

1. Project background
2. What does it mean to serve society effectively?
3. Comparing values with reality
4. Characterizing the space of alternatives
5. Considerations and final remarks

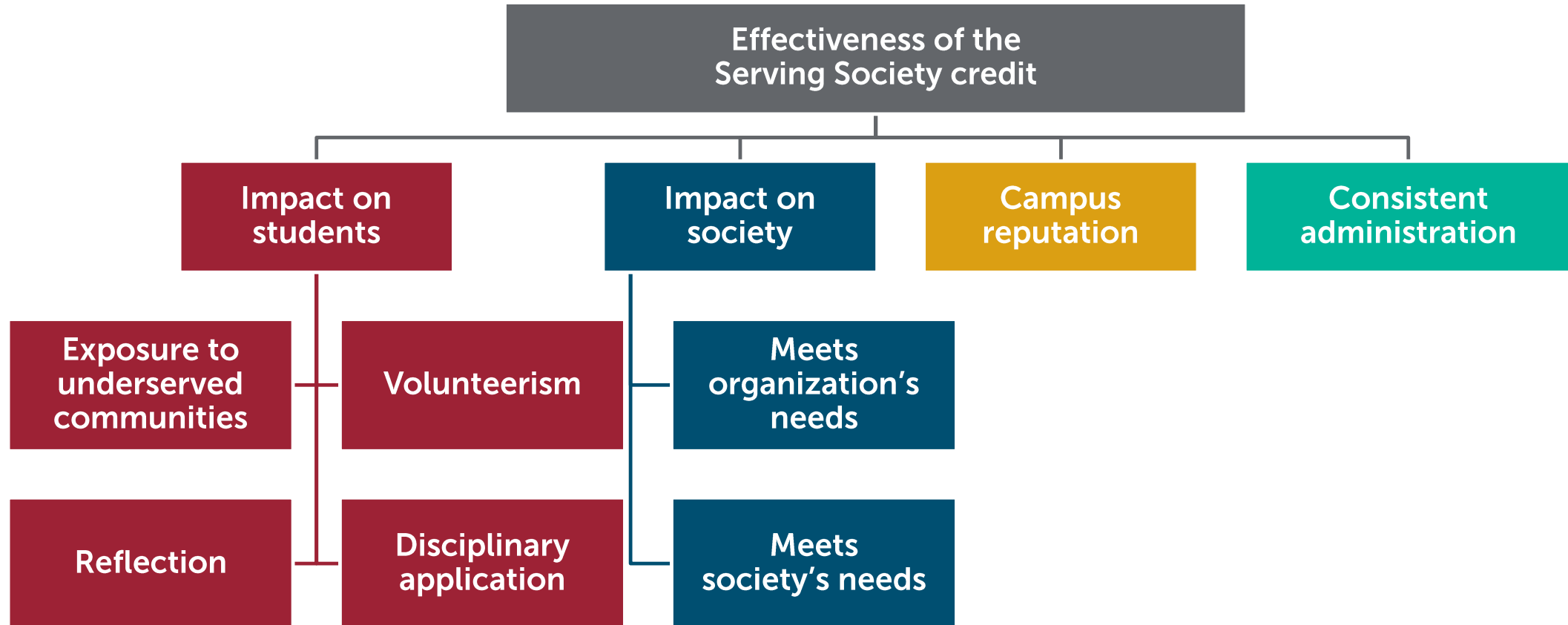


PROJECT BACKGROUND

- Drs. Angela D’Amour and Mark Sargent asked Enrico Manlapig and the Westmont Decision Lab (D-Lab hereafter) to conduct an audit of the Serving Society credit
- Anecdotal observations suggested inconsistent administration of the credit and students’ experiences with it
- The D-Lab interviewed the initial architects of the credit and a sample of instructors to understand the college’s values as they relate to Serving Society
- The D-Lab also reviewed registration data related to understand how the credit is satisfied

May	Dr. D’Amour approached Enrico Manlapig with a project proposal
September	Kick-off meeting with Drs. D’Amour and Sargent and preliminary alternatives Interviews begin
October	Interim meeting with Drs. D’Amour and Sargent to align around value hierarchy and candidate alternatives Data review begins
November	Candidate alternatives and data review finalized Final meeting with Drs. D’Amour and Sargent

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SERVE SOCIETY EFFECTIVELY?





OBSERVATIONS FROM THE DATA
COMPARING VALUES WITH REALITY

WE OBSERVED SOME INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN ELICITED VALUES AND LIVED REALITY

Volunteerism

Not all SS opportunities are volunteer; some positions are paid

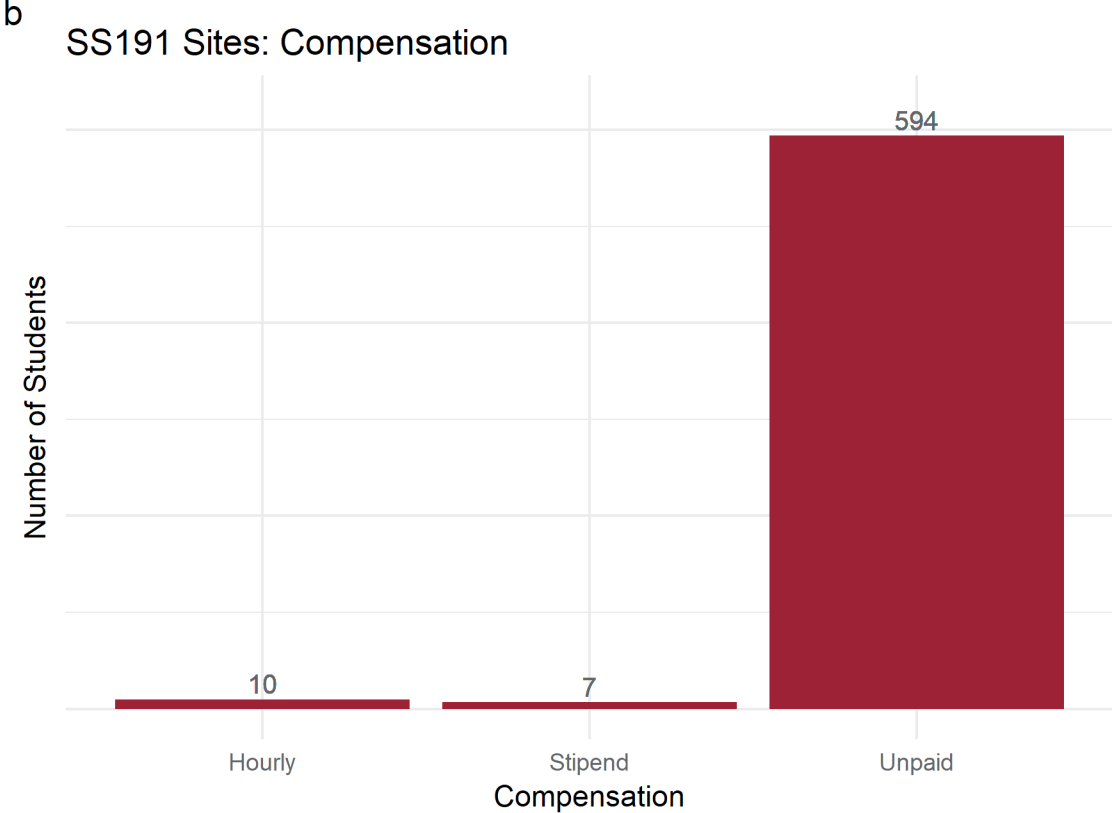
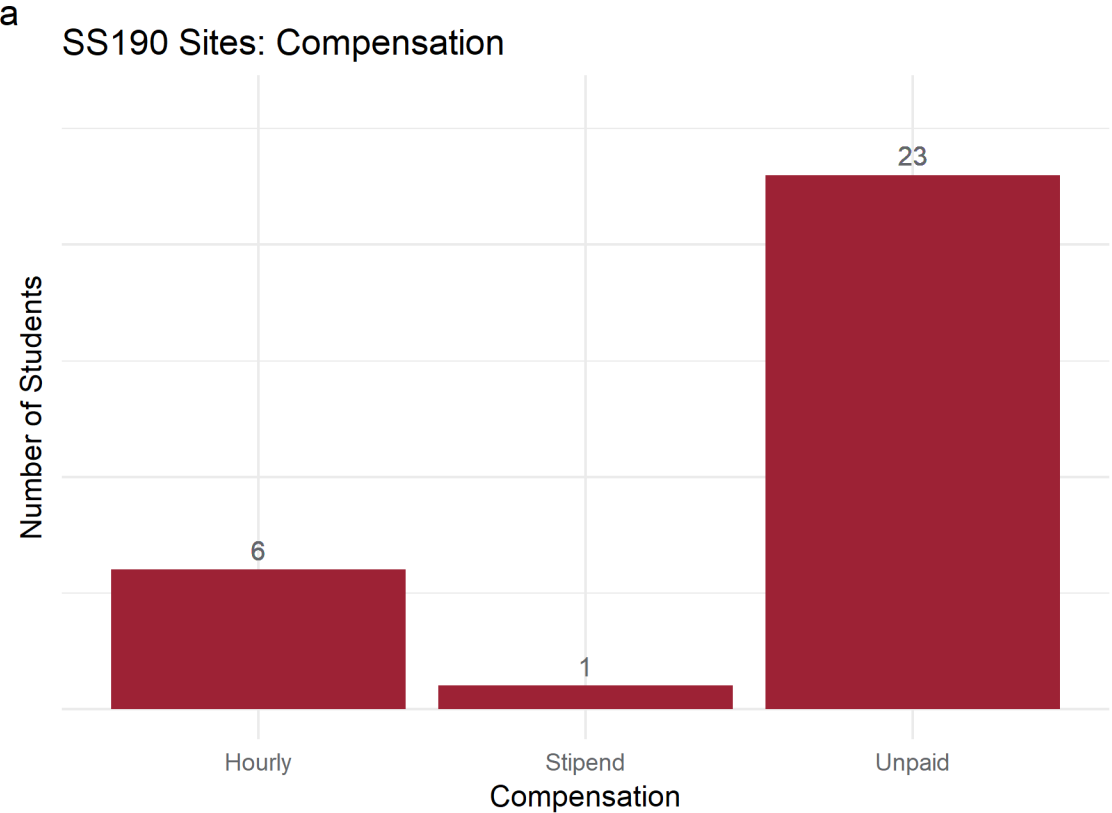
Underserved communities

Not all SS opportunities emphasize underserved communities

Consistent administration

- Qualitative student experiences vary widely
- Different channels vary in their time demands
- Some experiences seem to serve society but do not fulfill the SS credit

VOLUNTEERISM: MOST SERVICE IS UNPAID



VOLUNTEERISM: SHOULD SERVICE BE PAID?

"Volunteerism is an essential component to this GE...the course is about taking what we learn in our major and employing it to the benefit of society. It should be then, volunteer work, no compensation necessary" - Beth Horvath

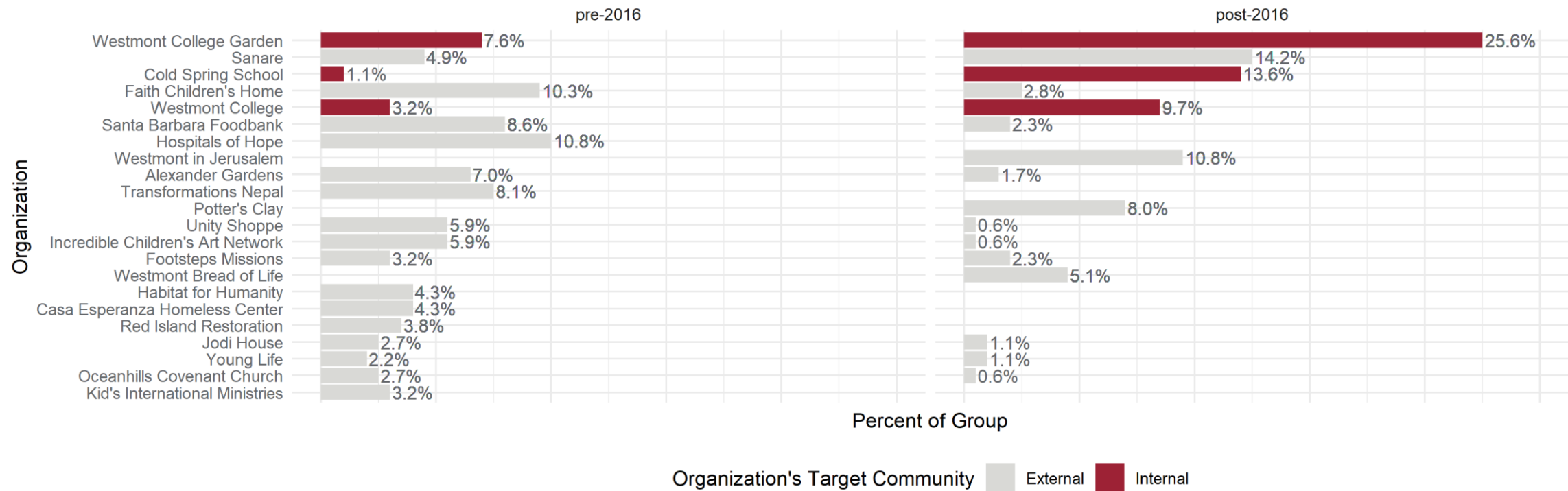
"Internships need to be the emphasis, paid or unpaid" - Paul Bradford

*"In our course, students may take an internship, either paid or unpaid, with any variety of organizations, so long as they are related to the Poli-Sci major"
- Tom Knecht*

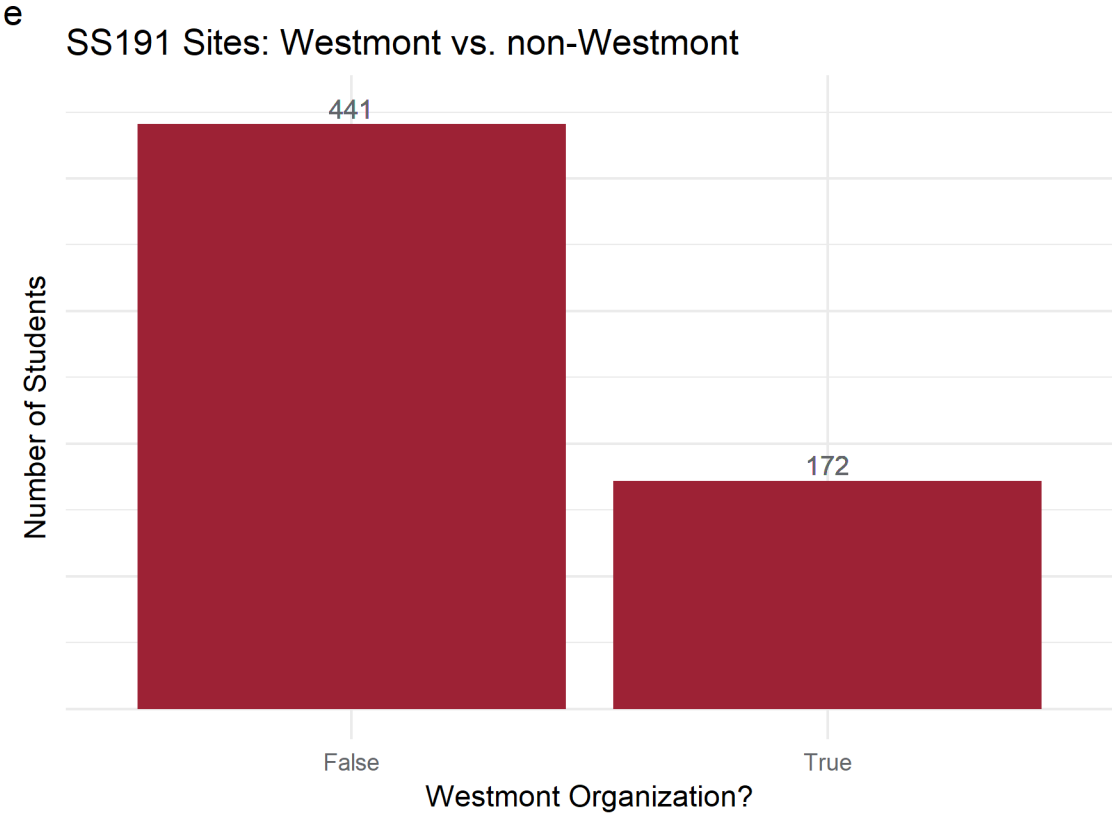
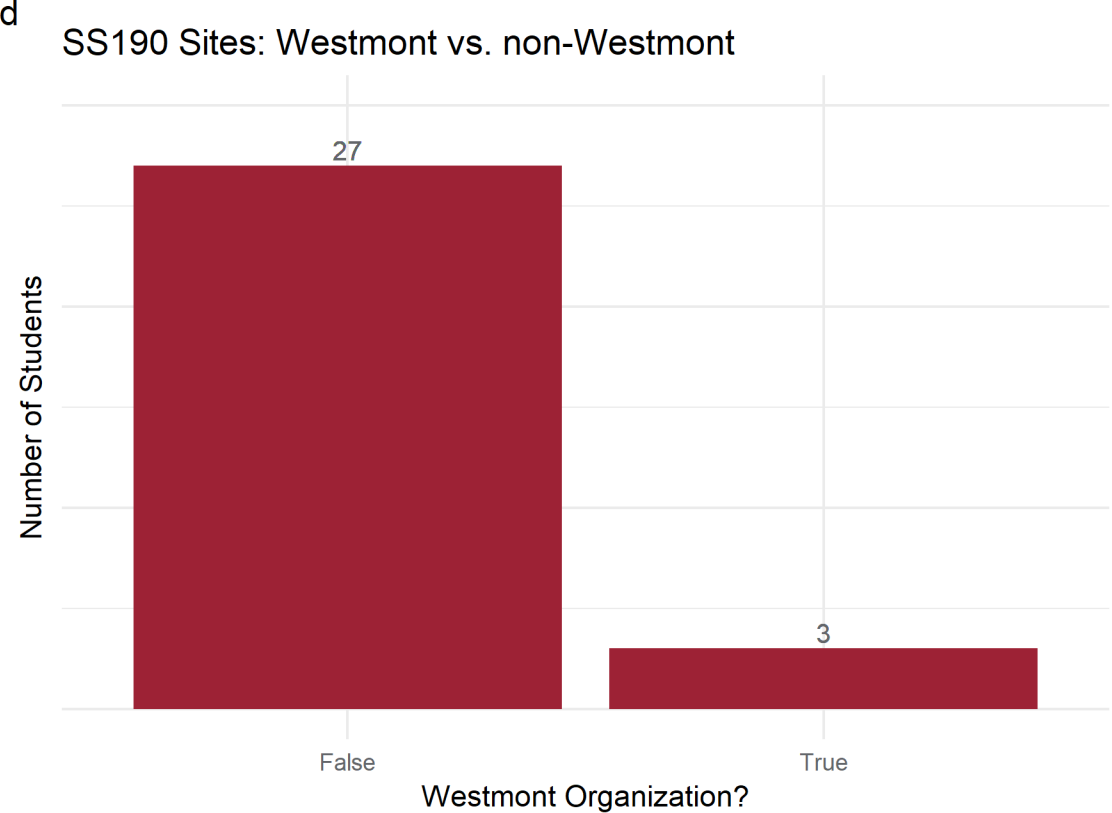
UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES: WESTMONT COLLEGE AND COLD SPRINGS SCHOOL ARE AMONG THE MOST POPULAR SITES AND GROWING

C

SS191 Sites: Percentage of Student Volunteers at Most Popular Organizations



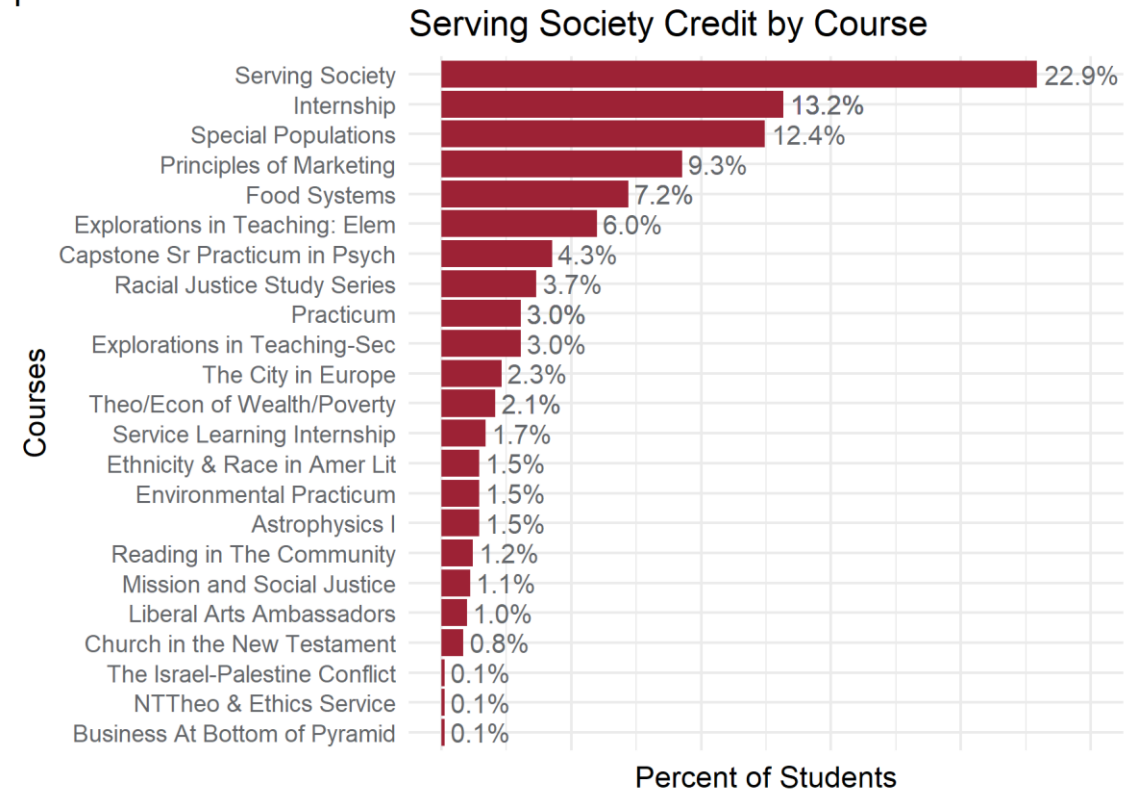
UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES: DESPITE RECENT TRENDS, MOST SERVICE SITES ARE OFF-CAMPUS



CONSISTENT ADMINISTRATION: SAME CREDIT, DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS

- Students report hour requirements between 12 and 40 hours depending on the channel
 - The type of program dictates the hours worked and the nature of the service experience
- Some existing experiences seem to serve society but do not fulfill the Serving Society credit (Potter's Clay and Decision Lab, for example)
 - This inconsistency creates confusion for students and faculty about what the College sees as valuable service
 - The confusion (Potter's Clay, for example) may actually reflect insufficient resources more than competing values and/or criteria

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A group of students are working on a roof, likely as part of a community service or construction project. In the foreground, a young man wearing a dark baseball cap with 'WAC' on it, a white t-shirt, and denim overalls is kneeling and using a hammer. To his left, another person in a blue cap and light-colored jacket is also kneeling and working. In the background, two more people are sitting on the roof, and a residential neighborhood with houses and trees is visible under a clear sky. A semi-transparent white box with text is overlaid on the center of the image.

CHARACTERIZING THE SPACE OF ALTERNATIVES **RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO VALUE TRADEOFFS**



ALTERNATIVE CRITERIA 1: FOCUSING ON VOLUNTEERISM

1. The service component should be preceded by a service proposal which addresses the context in which the work will be done and the specific goals of the activity
2. **The service component may take place in any context as long as the hours worked are unpaid**
3. At least 12 hours of service should be performed over the course of the semester
4. The service component should be embedded in or connected to an academic context (discussion, readings, writing, and supervision) which will enable student to process the experience beyond a casual level
5. In addition to the hours worked, the student is obligated to submit a reflection

ALTERNATIVE CRITERIA 2: FOCUSING ON UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

1. The service component should be preceded by a service proposal which addresses the context in which the work will be done and the specific goals of the activity
2. The service component should take place in **a context where the student will have significant exposure to issues specific to underserved communities outside of Westmont's campus. For the purposes of the credit, an underserved community is one that faces issues related to:**
 - **economic disparity and class**
 - **social or political disenfranchisement**
 - **disability**
 - **gender, racial, and ethnicity discrimination**
 - **health and wellness**
3. **The service component may be either unpaid or paid**
4. The service component must include a minimum of 12 hours, but may vary depending on the needs of the community
5. The service component should be embedded in or connected to an academic context (discussion, readings, writing, and supervision) which will enable student to process the experience beyond a casual level
6. In addition to the hours served, the student is obligated to submit a reflection



ALTERNATIVE CRITERIA 3: FOCUSING ON CONSISTENCY

1. The service component should be preceded by a service proposal which addresses the context in which the work will be done and the specific goals of the activity
2. **Students can fulfill the Serving Society requirement either through a GE Committee approved Serving Society course or through an Academic Senate Review Committee Approved student proposal**
3. Students must complete their unpaid service at any of the approved sites pre-approved by one of said Committees
4. At least 12 hours of service should be performed over the course of the semester
5. **Departments must either identify or offer Serving Society courses and service contexts that support their Program Learning Outcomes. As such, departments will ensure that the service component is embedded in or connected to an academic context (discussion, readings, writing, and supervision) which will enable the student to process the experience beyond a casual level**

THE “RIGHT” SERVING SOCIETY CRITERIA NEEDS TO STRIKE A BALANCE ACROSS THE INSTITUTION’S VALUES

Values

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

- Exposure to underserved communities
- Volunteerism
- Reflection
- Disciplinary application

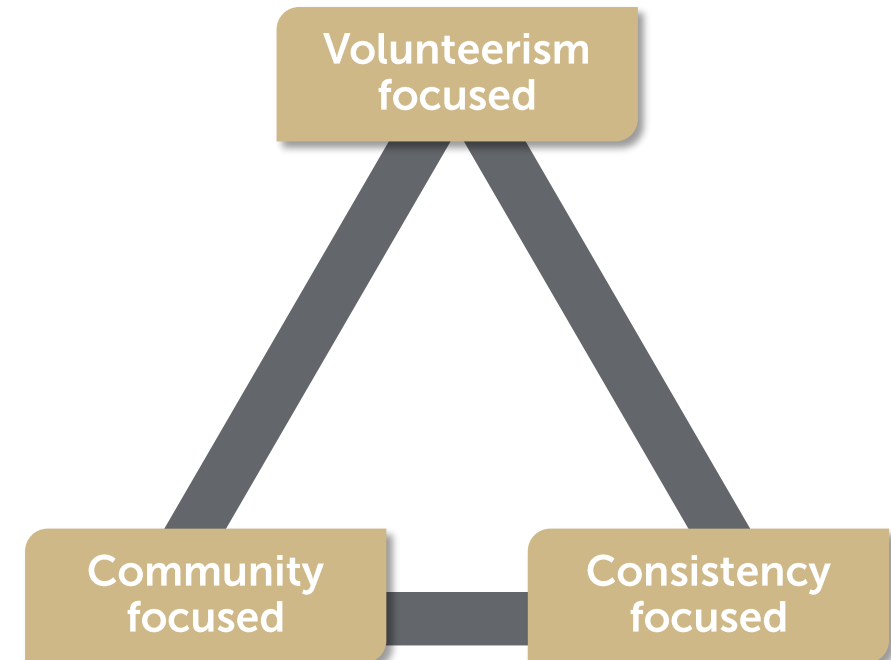
IMPACT ON SOCIETY

- Meets organization’s needs
- Meets society’s needs

CAMPUS REPUTATION

CONSISTENT ADMINISTRATION

Alternatives



THE “RIGHT” SERVING SOCIETY CRITERIA LIKELY FALLS SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE

1. The service component should be preceded by a service proposal which addresses the context in which the work will be done and the specific goals of the activity
2. The service component should take place in **a context where the student will have significant exposure to issues specific to underserved communities outside of Westmont’s campus. For the purposes of the credit, an underserved community is one that faces issues related to:**
 - **economic disparity and class**
 - **social or political disenfranchisement**
 - **disability**
 - **gender, racial, and ethnicity discrimination**
 - **health and wellness**
3. **Students can fulfill the Serving Society requirement either through a GE Committee approved Serving Society course or through an Academic Senate Review Committee Approved student proposal**
4. Students must complete their **unpaid service** at any of the approved sites pre-approved by the GE Committee
5. At least 12 hours of service should be performed over the course of the semester
6. **Departments must either identify or offer Serving Society courses and service contexts that support their Program Learning Outcomes. As such, departments will ensure that the service component is embedded in or connected to an academic context (discussion, readings, writing, and supervision) which will enable the student to process the experience beyond a casual level**

CONSIDERATIONS AND FINAL REMARKS

Implementation

- What about Compassionate Action?
- Can a program simultaneously remain properly co-curricular but yield to curricular requirements, faculty oversight and input?
- The requirement would benefit from regular assessment and review
 - While departmental reviews are a natural vehicle for this kind of accountability, they may not be equipped to maintain relationships with community partners
 - The program would benefit from an office within Student Life dedicated to the administration of the Serving Society credit

Key risks

- Generating “buzz” is difficult
- Generating “buzz” is especially difficult when inconsistencies in experience, payment, and hours are evident
- The presence of non-departmental, service-courses, differing definitions of “service”, and an inconsistent focus on communities may prevent faculty buy-in and suppress incentives to innovate
- Without further administrative support, definition creep seems inevitable
- It is unclear whether payment for service undermines students’ appreciation for the Serving Society credit

PREPARED WITH THANKS

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