

**A GUIDE TO THE SCOTT/ROSS
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**SIMMONS COLLEGE
THE OFFICE OF SERVICE LEARNING**

Simmons College is a nationally recognized small, private, predominantly women's university with undergraduate programs for women and graduate programs for women and men. Simmons has approximately 1,300 undergraduate female students with 40 states and 39 countries represented, and nearly 2,500 male and female graduate students. Simmons is known for graduating students who have a sound liberal arts base.

Scott/Ross Center Overview

The Scott/Ross Center was established in 2000 as a result of a generous gift from Simmons College Alumna, Emily Scott-Pottruck ('79). The support that Emily provided enabled Simmons to establish a formal center for community service on campus. The center advises, supports, and organizes service learning, community service, and community outreach efforts on campus. The Scott/Ross Center collaborates with students, staff, faculty, and community agencies to create and manage service experiences that benefit the community while contributing to the education of Simmons students. The Scott/Ross Center consists of five staff members: Stephen London, faculty director; Jennifer McKee, director of service learning; Carolyn Grimes, director of graduate service programs; Jeremy Poehnert, associate director of service learning; and Meaghan Fosbury, AmeriCorps VISTA.

Scott/Ross Center Programs

Simmons Community Outreach (SCO):

SCO is a student-run community service organization led by a diverse group of strong committed women. Through organized volunteerism, SCO is dedicated to engaging Simmons students in meaningful experiences in their community. SCO serves their community through eight areas of outreach: Best Buddies, Education/Youth, Elderly, Environment, Arts and Humanities, Health, Homeless, and Women Issues.

Service Learning:

Service Learning combines community service with academic instruction. In 2002 the Scott/Ross Center placed approximately 300 students in service learning placements. The center places students from many different fields of study in community organizations. The Scott/Ross Center mainly places undergraduate students, but has recently expanded service learning at the graduate level. Students translate their experiences from service to the classroom by reflecting through journals, readings, discussions, and presentations. The students choose a service project that interests them and perform approximately 20 hours of service a semester. The model that Simmons typically uses is 2 hours a week of service for 10 weeks.

Alternative Spring Break:

Simmons will participate in its second annual Habitat for Humanity Alternative Spring Break trip in the spring of 2003. A team of twelve students and two staff members dedicate a week of service to a Habitat for Humanity project.

Community Service Work-Study: The Scott/Ross Center assists students with financial aid in finding work study positions within community organizations.

Resources

The Scott/Ross Center is a great resource for community organizations interested in working with college students, from service learning placements to one-day service events. The center works with faculty to incorporate service learning into courses in addition to working with Simmons community members to engage in community service projects. The office serves as a resource for students and faculty seeking field placements, independent study, or internships in the community.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is service learning? Service learning is a teaching method that combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Service Learning programs involve students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community (Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges).

My organization requires volunteers to commit more than two hours a week, how can we work with Simmons? We advise students to commit to one shift per week at an organization.

How long will students be available to volunteer at my organization? The spring semester begins the first week of February and ends at the end of April.

What about holidays that the school has off but my organization does not? Generally, students will not be available to volunteer during spring break or other such breaks. The organization and student should agree to a schedule at the beginning of the semester.

What kind of opportunities best fit the students? The opportunities with the most structure best fit our undergraduate students. Special projects and more creative work better fit graduate students and third and fourth year students.

My organization requires training, how long will the students volunteer? Students are advised that they must volunteer 20 hours per semester in addition to any training.

What if the students are not fulfilling their commitment? The center will do its best to work with students and organizations to make the right fit. In the case that a placement or project is not working out, all parties are encouraged to contact the center for assistance.

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