



Department of Languages and Literature

October 23, 2011

Belle S. Wheelan  
President  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, GA 30033

Dr. Whelan,

I am writing to add my voice to that of Dr. Hull, and want to join her in expressing the importance of recognizing and promoting service-learning in our system of higher education. I have been committed to service-learning and have employed this valuable teaching method since 2001, and I remain convinced that few other teaching tools exceed its influence on student comprehension and engagement with classroom material.

I am one of those faculty members who used to resist implementing service-learning, but once I began to experiment with it, all of my objections vanished. Yes, it takes more time on the part of the instructor; yes, many faculty don't know how to classify it as teaching, scholarship, or community engagement. Despite these difficulties, the effect is clear: students consistently report greater satisfaction and engagement in their learning, and their experiences aid in their retention to graduation.

I have seen, more than once, how service-learning changes student lives. I am also certain that for higher education to thrive through the next decades, we as faculty will need to more deeply engage student experiences than we have usually done. For all these reasons, I believe that service-learning needs to be factored into accreditation and tenure and promotion considerations, and I hope you will take this opportunity to validate the successful work that is already being done in colleges and universities throughout the south.

Of course, if you have questions, I will be happy to answer them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Clark Maddux'.

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