

IDEAL COLLEGE CAMPUS

by Wayne Meisel, 1994

A student is admitted to college in part because of his commitment and involvement in community service while in high school. The student accepts the school's offer because of the community service program. Since he was accepted, students from the school, through phone calls and letters, have encouraged him to come and be a part of their service program.

During the summer, information comes regarding the different community service activities that go on and the student is asked to fill out a card identifying his interest in community service. A week before freshmen orientation begins, he arrives at school to take part in a freshmen service plunge, a one week intensive service project where he, along with other freshmen and under the supervision of upperclassmen and local leaders, becomes familiar with the community and the service opportunities available. During freshmen orientation, the mayor addresses the entire class, and symposiums on community issues and what students are doing about those issues are held. The upperclassmen, who are the key leadership for the service program, are present and visible for the entire orientation. By the time school starts, every freshman has been encouraged to think about doing some kind of service and shown how they could get involved.

Over the course of the next four years, the student becomes involved in a number of activities. First, he serves as a regular volunteer for three to four hours a week. (where?) The next year, he takes on a leadership position within the program, and the year after that he becomes the program head for all youth work and sits on the student governing board for the public service center, where each of the 17 program heads of the different areas sit. (what are some of the other areas?)

His work with children encourages him to pursue a double major in political science and sociology. He first takes a course which allows him to write about his experience volunteering. Then later, he takes a class where part of the curriculum includes work on the issue of education. Through his department, he learns of an internship with the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, DC, and takes a semester off. He makes sure that while he is gone his assistant director of youth education takes over the program. He writes a paper on his experience at CDF and uses that as the basis for his senior thesis. He decides on a career in public policy with a focus on elementary education.

When he returns to school after his internship, he runs for and is elected the Vice-Chairperson in charge of all programming at the public service center. In that role, he works to coordinate all volunteer activities, and ends up engaging 75% of all students on

that campus. Half of them are involved on a weekly basis. As his career as a student comes to a halt, he turns to the career service office. A full-time staff member in charge of public service careers counsels him, and he attends several symposiums on careers in the non-profit sector. While at a career fair, he meets a recruiter from VISTA and learns of an adult literacy program in a nearby town(maybe ESL instead? - for the child issue). He applies for a teaching position in the literacy program and is accepted, but decides to defer it for a year because the school has asked him to stay on for an additional year to act as the Green Dean, a person who just graduated and stays on for a year to champion and support community service on campus through the administration.

You will probably say, what an incredible campus - where is there such a commitment to public service? The reality is that this campus does not exist in this country. That is not to say that there are not a number of wonderful programs where many of these activities take place. Yet in my travels to over 200 college campuses throughout the US, I have yet to see such a program.