

Service Learning or Learning to Serve?

*Maximizing Student Efficacy during
Short-Term International Service Projects*

Drs. Casey Love and Myke Yest, Tulane University

Co-Directors, Altman Program in International Studies and Business



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Efficacy in International Service Learning (ISL)

How do we define “success” in short term international service learning programs, and how do we cultivate a sense of efficacy among student participants?

Year 1: “I believe that my personal impact on the village of Mai Chau was minimal at best. My volunteer work had no effect... it’s not as if my presence was vital to the success of the project.”

Year 3: “The lessons of the service trip went beyond service itself. This experience will fundamentally change how I will look at challenging situations for the rest of my life.”

Agenda

- Overview of Altman Program
- Overview of Rising Sophomore Study Abroad Experience
- Goals of International Service Learning (ISL)
- Challenges faced during Altman ISL
- Tools for maximizing student efficacy
- Cohort Comparison – Student Reflections
- Audience feedback, questions

THE ALTMAN PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND BUSINESS

ALTMAN PROGRAM

in International Studies & Business

The Altman Program: *An Overview*

- Dual degree program: BSM and BA
- Altman Core: cohort classes with international
- Cohort Model: 20 students per year
- Jeffrey Altman: \$8.3 million gift

Internationalized Curriculum: *Dual Degrees*

<u>Liberal Arts</u>		<u>Business</u>
Africana Studies	History	Finance
Anthropology	Int'l Relations / Int'l Development	Legal Studies
Asian Studies	Language (non-English)	Management
Communication	Latin American Studies	Marketing
Economics	Political Economy	
Environmental Studies	Sociology	

Internationalized Curriculum: *The Altman Core*

	Fall	Spring	Summer
Freshman	NOLA: The Global in the Local	Management Communication & Study Abroad Pre-Departure	Globalization/Finance (in Vietnam)
Sophomore	Organizational Behavior	Perspectives on Global Citizenship	Internship
Junior	Study Abroad	Study Abroad	Internship
Senior	Altman Senior Seminar	Approaches to Global Dilemmas	

Internationalized Curriculum: *Language Training*

Approved Target Languages:

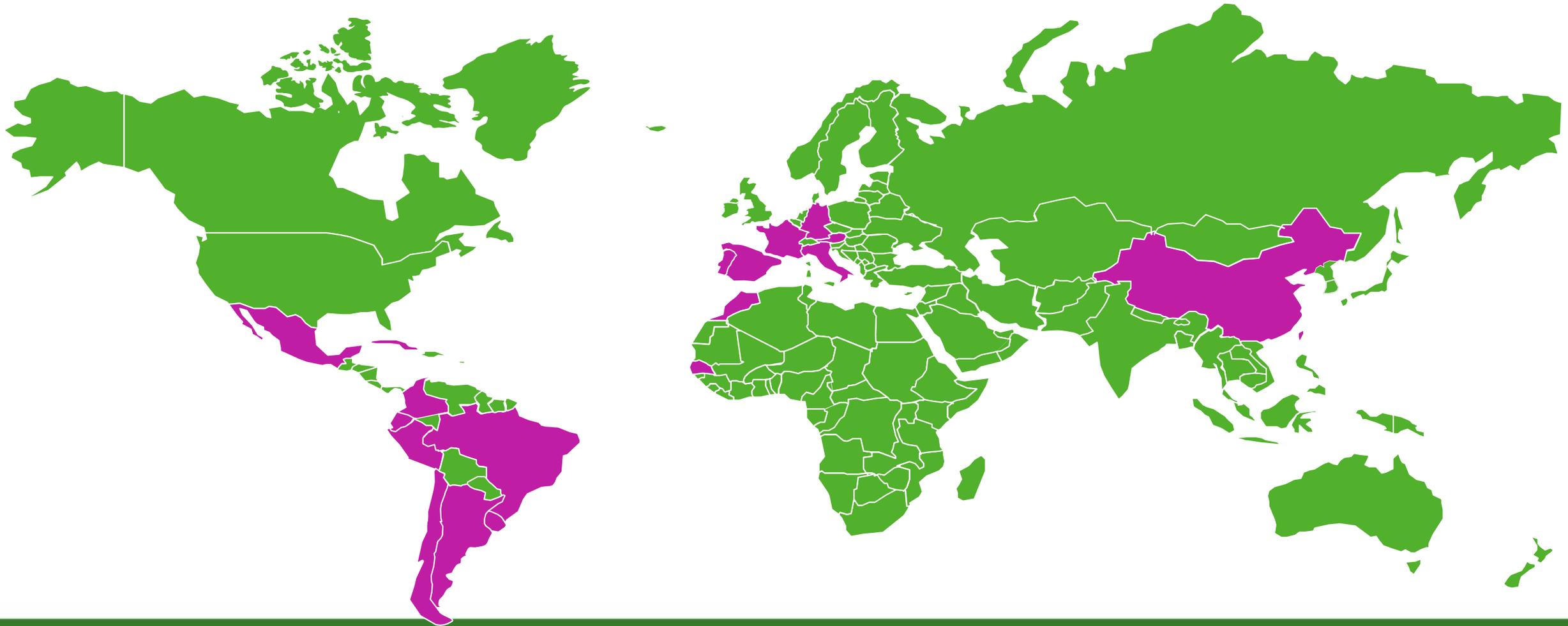
- *Spanish*
- *Portuguese*
- *French*
- *German*
- *Italian*
- *Mandarin Chinese*

Internationalized Curriculum: *Study Abroad*

Two Study Abroad Experiences:

- Rising-Sophomore Summer Study Abroad in the Developing World: 2 courses and service-learning
- Junior Year Abroad

Internationalized Curriculum: *Immersive JYA*



OVERVIEW OF RISING SOPHOMORE STUDY ABROAD SERVICE EXPERIENCE

The Service Component

- Community Partner: Na Chao Village, Mai Chau Valley, Vietnam
- Projects and location determined by Academic Experiences Abroad (AEA) in consultation with local community leaders
- Information presented today based on service learning completed in the same rural village in Northern Vietnam during the summers of 2016, 2017 & 2018

Year 1: Summer 2016



Year 2: Summer 2017



Year 3: Summer 2018



Homestays – All 3 Years



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING Theory

International Service Learning: What is it?

Structured academic experience in another country in which students:

- 1. Participate in a service activity meets identified community needs and that it meaningfully tied to academic learning*
- 2. Learn from direct interaction and cross-cultural dialogue with host community*
- 3. Engage in structured critical reflection to enhance academic, intercultural, intrapersonal, and civic learning*

(Bringle & Hatcher, 2011)

Benefits of ISL for Community Partner

- Provide valuable human resources necessary to achieve community's most urgent needs
- Build trust between diverse members of community and students

Benefits of ISL for Students

- Academic learning outcomes
- Inter-personal / social outcomes
- Intra-personal outcomes

Academic Learning Outcomes

- Service enhances academic learning outcomes
- Enhances contextualized understanding of course theory
- Enhances academic understanding, problem analysis, problem-solving, critical thinking, and cognitive development

Interpersonal / Social Outcomes

- Reduced stereotypes
- Intercultural Communication
 - *Cross-cultural competence*
 - *Cross-cultural communication skills*
 - *Cross-cultural empathy and understanding*

Intra-Personal Outcomes

- Enhanced emotional resilience
- Improved ability to handle ambiguity
- Communication, collaboration, leadership skills
- Civic education: socially responsible citizens, participatory citizens, justice-oriented citizens
- Enhanced sense of global citizenship
- Effect on career goals/long-term goals

Theory: Challenges of ISL

1. Reciprocity / Lack of equitable collaboration
2. ISL seen as “volun-tourism”
3. Ethnocentrist & Neoimperialist mindsets
4. Colonial Students / Student frustration with discomfort
5. Feelings of inadequacy
6. Need for immediate gratification
7. Lack of intercultural communication skills

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING CHALLENGES

Empirical Findings, Year 1, Altman Program

Methodology

- Post-ISL survey conducted each of our three years
- Prompt: “Reflect on the nature of your service and your perceived impact of the service”
- Reflection coded as either “positive,” “negative” or “neutral”
- Cohort size each year: 18, 19 and 20 students

Year 1 Assessment

Student Program Evaluations, 2016



Challenge #1: *Lack of Equitable Collaboration*

“Oftentimes, I felt like a hindrance to the locals as they continually had to teach me what to do and occasionally had to redo my work. While I do feel we made a difference in completing this project with the locals, I wonder if we created more trouble than help.”

“I felt as though some of the cultural activities created more of a burden for the village than was necessary.”

Challenge #2: *Voluntourism: Pay to Play*

“At times, it seemed our work was more ‘voluntourism’ than anything.”

“I think what helped the community the most was our monetary donation to the village fund.”

“I felt like an outsider experiencing the culture for my own amusement rather than a visitor who was actually helping the village... I felt almost selfish and exploitative as I took over half of my host family's house and watched a woman cook for me during the "cooking class.”

Challenge #3: *Ethnocentrism*

“My biggest peeve is that the households receive a donation for the homestays, but no salary is given to the workers. I understand that that policy fits with the communist ideal of equality, but I feel like an hourly wage would improve efficiency by encouraging more people to work, and it would allow the workers to improve their daily lives....I also think that it's selfish for us to prioritize saving their culture over helping them improve their standard of living, such as getting indoor plumbing. Throughout our manual labor, I kept getting distracted by that issue, and it still deeply troubles me.”

Challenge #4: *Intercultural communication challenges*

“I felt that the local people were uncomfortable with us being there and hesitant to interact with us.”

“Without language skills, I felt awkward. I was not able to fully express my gratitude to the villagers or to exchange friendly conversation while working side by side with them.”

Challenge #5: *Need for immediate gratification / completion*

“Our hard physical labor barely made a dent.”

“I helped dig the pond, but I feel that the work did not benefit the community very much.”

“I believe that my personal impact on the village of Mai Chau is minimal at best. My volunteer work had no effect... it's not as if my presence was vital to the success of the project.”

TOOLS FOR MAXIMUM EFFICACY DURING ISL

Tool 1: Establish Desired Outcomes

Altman Scholars should...

- *Build relationships with partner community*
- *Enhance intercultural communication skills*
- *Use the ISL experience to reconsider their world view, consider post-ISL life plans*
- *Recognize and reduce feelings of ethnocentrism and cultivate their sense of global citizenry*
- *Enhance understanding of processes and outcomes of globalization (i.e. academic learning)*
- *And... provide a valuable service!*

Tool 2: Pre-departure Training

- Pre-departure training is key
- 1 credit Pre-Departure Course
 - *Pre-trip host country education*
 - *Comfort zone exercises*
 - *ISL Pedagogy*

Tool 3: Structured Critical Reflection

- Multi-faceted, structured, and layered reflection
- DEAL Model for Critical Reflection
 - *Describe SL experience in detailed manner*
 - *Examine that experience in light of specific learning objectives*
 - *Articulate Learning: What did I learn? How did I learn it? Why does it matter? What will I do now?*

(Ash, Clayton & Moses, 2009)

Tool 3: Structured Critical Reflection (cont.)

- Multi-faceted, structured, and layered reflection
 1. Preflection
 2. Reflection: shifted reflective examination on intra-personal learning outcomes
 3. Discussion
 4. Final Reflection: link to academic learning outcomes

Tool 4: Fortify Community Partner Relationships

- Involve locals as co-educators
- Offer student opportunities to engage with community partner outside of the service experience
- Multi-year partnership allows for higher levels of interpersonal trust



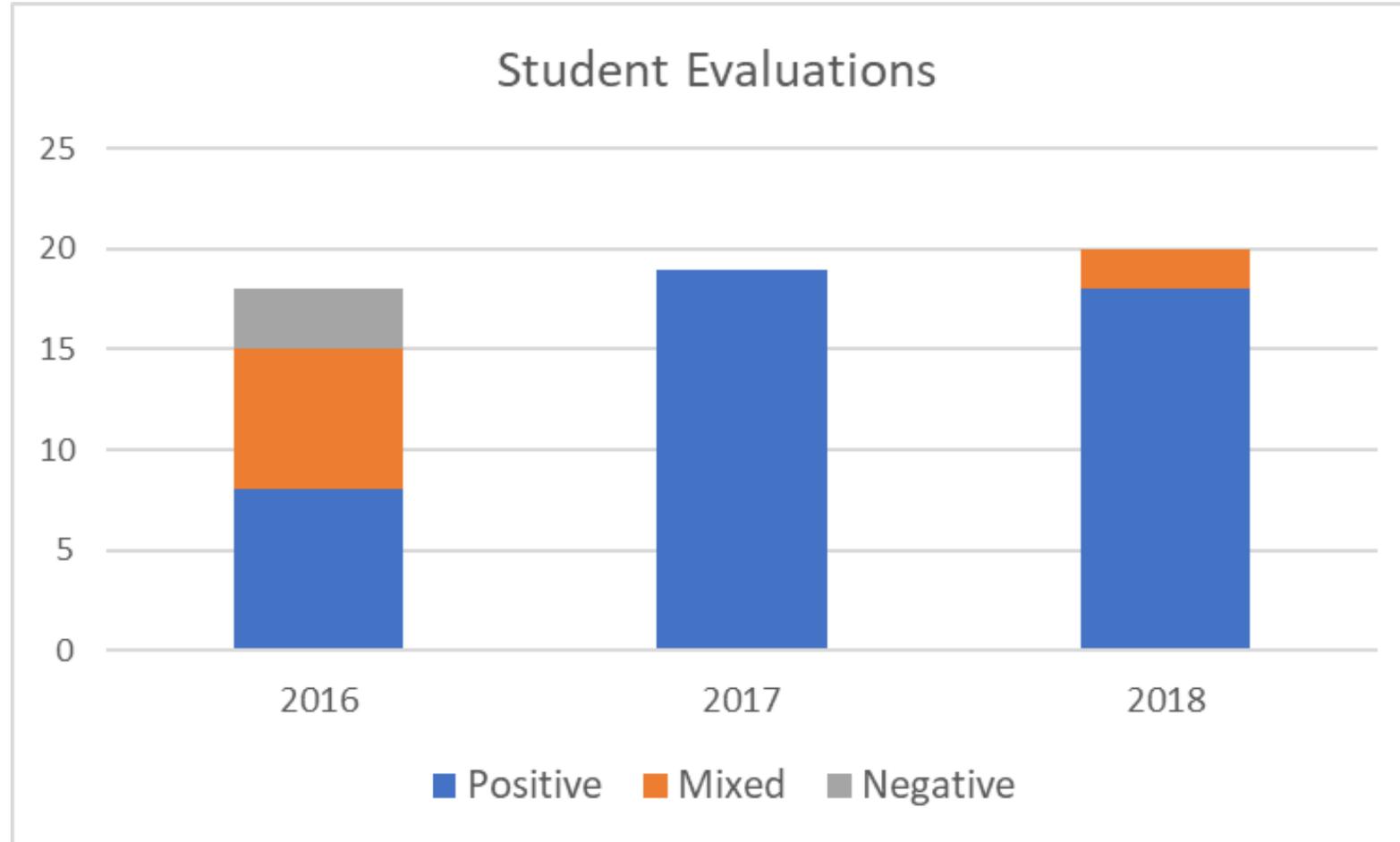
Tool 5: Curricular Integration

- Integrate ISL into course into broader curriculum
 - *Freshman “TIDES” course: NOLA: The Global in the Local*
 - *Sophomore course: Perspectives on Global Citizenship*
 - *Senior seminar: Global Experiential Learning*

IMPLEMENTATION OF TOOLS

COHORT COMPARITONS 2016 vs. 2017 & 2018

Cohort Comparison – Quantitative Analysis



Observations from the Data

- Clear break in the data from Year 1 to the subsequent years
- Structured student preparation key to successful ISL experience
- Student qualitative reflections align with our desired outcomes

Outcome: Enhanced Student Efficacy

“I was challenged to remain positive and keep working despite the lack of gratification (not seeing much progress on the embankment, not making friends quickly, no nice shower at the end of the day, etc.). I think that truly was the biggest lesson for me, and one I will continue to reference as I learn to find credit in my labor, not necessarily the fruits of it.”

“While we were not able to see the finished embankment, I felt that our cohort had a very positive impact on the project and the community.”

Outcome: Equitable Relationships

“At the work site I felt very welcomed—I was able to participate in several different roles while constructing the embankment and always felt as though I was working alongside the locals as an equal.”

“At the service site I felt especially welcomed. Working right alongside the workers, often doing the exact same jobs as them, allowed us to bond, not through words but through achieving a common goal.”

Outcome: Intercultural Communication

“I had some trouble communicating clearly with the locals, but I found that body language was universal and ... all interactions could be improved with smiles and laughter from both ends.”

“Although the language barrier once terrified me, I soon came to embrace it, as it allowed me to show my emotions without getting caught up in semantics.”

“I was impressed time and again by how we managed to work alongside each other with basically no understanding of each other’s languages. Through hand gestures, body language, and grunts we managed to communicate effectively enough to build a road and coexist for a few days.”

Outcome: Recognition of Privilege

“My experience in Mai Chau definitely changed the way I think and will continue to think into the future. Now that I have become more aware of my blessings, I will try to continue to appreciate the things that I typically take for granted.”

“I think that exposure to a drastically different way of life is a crucial part of checking one’s privilege, and I feel that a short experience like this past weekend helped me grow in that sense.”

Outcome: Students as Agents of Social Change

“This gave me time to step back and remember what is relevant and what I am working towards. I am going to college so I can be in a position with enough power to be able to help the planet in significant ways to contribute to the fight against climate change and ensure that villages like Mai Chau aren’t wrecked by extreme weather and global instability.”

“Although our time in the village was short, it further confirmed my want to do similar work shortly after I graduate college or in the summers to come.”

“I know that I will take this experience with me into my future, and I will use it to become more socially-minded...”

Outcome: Reduced Ethnocentrism

- “As an American student who grew up learning from American textbooks, living a traditional Vietnamese lifestyle made me question everything I thought I knew. I learned that even work we view as unskilled in the U.S. actually requires a lot of skills; it’s a different set of abilities, not an inferior one... It made me think differently about policies dealing with unskilled laborers in our own country and the rest of the world.”
- “I think that prior to this experience I harbored subconscious beliefs lack of modern technology led to discontent with life, but after meeting the people in the Mai Chau village I know this is not the case.”

Outcome: Reduced Ethnocentrism (continued)

“[regarding the Mai Chau villagers]... we have very different lives, but that’s just it. Our lives are *different*. One is not better than the other.

“The community factor was quite distinct from America’s highly individualistic culture, but as a guest, it felt welcoming, like a strong sense of solidarity. This feeling remained pervasive through the work experience, where we were interacting with the locals.”

“Mai Chau has definitely made me appreciative of all that we are given in the United States, but will also make me think twice before assuming the worst of other social or political systems.”

Outcome: Reduced Ethnocentrism (continued)

“Ultimately, this service learning prompted me to think about what makes for a global citizen: an individual who is educated on world issues and cares about personally helping, but is knowledgeable and respectful enough to use caution, research, and consider the best way to assist global injustices. Traveling to do service is not always the most effective way of creating change, but our experience in Mai Chau proved that global citizenship and community can in fact start with the individual.”

Audience Participation

- How can this success in later Altman cohorts be duplicated by other organizations?
- Have any of your organizations experienced the same challenges we faced?
- Have you implemented similar tools to affect your program outcomes?
- Could our process help your students maximize their ISL experience?

Special Thanks

Jamie Montelepre, research assistant,
Program Coordinator, Altman Program

Tulane Center for Public Service





THANK YOU

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Reflection prompts

Reflection: Following project completion, students will reflect on the nature of their service (i.e. what you did), the perceived impact of their service, any aspects of personal transformation. In addition, students will be required to orally reflect on their experiences with their peers in a structured discussion session led by Prof. Love. Your paper should have two parts:

The Experience (Part 1)

What did you learn about the community?

Describe interactions with the locals. Did you feel welcomed at the service site? Why or why not?

Did you feel your actions had a positive impact?

Yourself (Part II)

What have you learned about yourself through this experience?

How has this experience challenged stereotypes or prejudices you have/had? Did the experience change the way you will act or think in the future?

How have you challenged yourself, your ideals, or your comfort zone through this service experience?