

### **33. Description of Summer Internship**

Service Opportunities in Leadership (SOL) is an intensive twelve-month leadership program for Duke undergraduates that combines academic study, community service, mentoring, and leadership training. It is part of the Hart Leadership Program in the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University. SOL includes a preparation course in the spring, a community-based internship in the summer and a research seminar in the fall.

Service work is at the heart of SOL. Interns work with community development initiatives, organizing efforts, refugee and immigration issues, clinical health programs, and a range of service projects. Critical reflection, community-based research, documentary writing, and small group discussions support the learning process throughout the year.

Since 1994 students have served in community organizations across the United States and in Central America, Eastern Europe, and Southern Africa. SOL is carefully designed so that students receive intensive support from faculty, program staff, and field supervisors throughout the learning process. The interns participate at every stage by raising funds for their internships, designing their summer community-based research projects, and contributing to the evaluation and development of SOL from year to year.

The pedagogy of SOL is guided by three overarching principles: 1) provide students with a demanding, powerful immersion experience in a cross-cultural context; 2) show students how to utilize multiple processes of critical reflection throughout the year; 3) help students “go public” with what they are learning and bring their questions and insights to larger audiences for discussion and debate.

The core of the critical reflection process involves writing “letters home” during the summer

internship, and point-of-view essays, policy memos and leadership analyses in the fall follow-up course.

The SOL program is designed to integrate experiential learning and academic study from start to finish. All students are required to complete not-for-credit service internships over the summer, with the option of also undertaking a community-based research (CBR) project for their community partner. In 2004, 10 of 16 SOL students completed CBR projects. In order to do this they had to participate in two intensive research methods training sessions, apply for approval to conduct human subjects research through Duke's Institutional Review Board, provide weekly updates to their faculty mentor about their research, and reflect critically about the intellectual, ethical and civic issues raised by their research experiences. (They incorporated these reflections into two of their "letters home" (When SOL students choose the CBR option, they become part of a larger research service-learning initiative at Duke called Scholarship with a Civic Mission, which is co-directed by the Hart Leadership Program and the Kenan Institute for Ethics.)

The component parts of SOL are structured to help students develop a progressively deeper understanding of the social issues they confront in their summer experiences. In the follow-up course they explore concepts of democratic participation, politics, and leadership. They are trained in advanced electronic database research skills and conduct a semester-long research project about a social issue of their choice. They present their research to the class for a critique. They also submit weekly drafts of the component parts of their research portfolio to the instructor for detailed feedback.