The Impact of High School Mandatory Community Service Programs on Subsequent Volunteering and Civic Engagement

Principal Investigators:

Steven D. Brown, Ph. D.
S. Mark Pancer, Ph. D.
Ailsa Henderson, Ph. D.
Kimberly Ellis-Hale, M.A.

Laurier Institute for the Study of
Public Opinion and Policy (LISPOP)
Wilfrid Laurier University

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Introduction

In 1999, the province of Ontario, Canada, joined a number of other jurisdictions in requiring its high school students to complete a period of community service as a condition for graduation. All students entering high school in Ontario must now complete 40 hours of community service before they graduate.[1] The primary objective of this program and others like it around the world is to address declining civic engagement within society. Civic engagement is a multi-dimensional concept reflecting people's psychological and associational attachment to their communities. It incorporates such aspects of good citizenship as a sense of civic responsibility, a network of social connectedness, attentiveness to public life, and a willingness to contribute to achieving society's collective goals. It is believed that mandating community service in adolescence will develop these civic orientations and motivate young people to continue volunteering after they have graduated. But to what extent or under what circumstances do mandatory community service programs accomplish these goals? In this research report, we venture preliminary answers to this question.

Using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, we examined the high school community service experiences of the first cohort of students to complete Ontario's mandatory community service program in 2003. To do this, we interviewed a sample of these students in the fall of 2004 to capture their experiences and to assess their levels of civic engagement at that time. We also surveyed students who graduated in the same year but who had not been mandated to volunteer.[2] Using this non-mandated group for comparison, we assessed the apparent impacts of the mandatory program 15 months after graduation. We then conducted follow-up interviews with a sub-sample of the mandated cohort to attempt to identify features of the high school volunteer experience that seem to influence students' overall evaluation of and perspectives on volunteering.

Our findings suggest that Ontario's mandatory community service program has introduced a significant number of university-bound students to the voluntary sector who would probably not otherwise have had that experience. Moreover, the fact that these students were mandated to volunteer appears to have had no negative impacts on the quality of their high school experience, on their subsequent civic engagement, or on their attitudes concerning philanthropy. Our findings also suggest that volunteering in high school has positive impacts on a student's subsequent civic engagement but that those impacts are largely conditional on two features of the volunteering experience: high school volunteering makes a difference when the student has made a sustained commitment to one volunteer placement and especially when the volunteer placement provides a positive experience to the student.

What the Literature Says

An increasing number of secondary school jurisdictions around the world have introduced mandatory community service programs as one means of combating declining levels of civic engagement in society (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1997; Keith, 1994; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). In Canada, the 2000 National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating found that 32% of high school students aged 15-19 had participated in a mandatory service

program during that year (Hall, McKeown, & Roberts, 2001).

Advocates for such programs tend to base their case on three premises. First, they argue that orientations and patterns of engagement acquired in adolescence are important harbingers of civic engagement in adulthood. On this, few disagree. A voluminous body of research has documented the importance of experiences in adolescence for understanding subsequent orientations and behaviour (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999; Beck & Jennings, 1982; Hall, McKeown, & Roberts, 2001; Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, & Snyder, 1998; Pancer & Pratt, 1999; Planty & Regnier, 2003; Sundeen & Raskoff, 1994).

Second, advocates point to a well-established relationship between volunteer activity and a syndrome of dispositions and behaviours reflective of responsible citizenship. Again, the evidence is strong and has been replicated in numerous studies (Eley, 2001; Janoski, Musick, & Wilson, 2000; Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, & Snyder, 1998; Johnson-Kirkpatrick et al., 1998; Perry & Katula, 2001; Quall, 2001; Verba et. al., 1995).

Third, and perhaps most contentiously, proponents of mandatory programs suggest that this relationship between volunteering and dispositions is not simply the conventional one in which attitudes shape behaviour but is one involving reciprocal causation. As Janoski and his colleagues (1998) summarize this position, "people acquire the habit of volunteering because they are routinely placed in social situations and social relationships where the social skills and dispositions requisite for volunteer work are developed" (Janoski, Musick, & Wilson, 1998, p. 498). Hence, if the practice of volunteering has these effects, then mandating such practice will bring benefits to those most in need of them – that is, those who would not engage in community service of their own accord (Avrahami & Dar, 1993; Barber, 1992; Campbell, 2000; Giles & Eyler, 1994; Sobus, 1995).

As empirical research on the effectiveness of service learning and community service programs[3] accumulates, proponents of these programs can certainly cite supportive evidence for their position. For example, Hamilton and Zeldin (1987) found that a semester-long service learning experience in a local government internship program significantly increased participants' knowledge of local government. Niemi, Hepburn, and Chapman (2000) also report a significant "political knowledge" effect for some of their participants. Service learning or community service programs have also been associated with improved civic responsibility (Blyth, Saito, & Berkas, 1997), political efficacy (Niemi et al., 2000; Marks, 1994 as cited in Niemi et al., 2000), "civic inclusion" (Reese, 1997 as cited in Niemi et al., 2000), commitment to future volunteering (Giles & Eyler,1994), and enhanced civic skills (Niemi et al., 2000). As well, Melchoir's (1997) review of the Learn and Serve America Programs in the U.S. reported a change – albeit a modest one – in attitudes of personal and social responsibility among participants. In Canada, Locke, Rowe, and Oliver (2004) conclude that a student community service program in Newfoundland and Labrador produced a climate of volunteerism and civic engagement among its participants. Finally, a study by Janoski, Musick, and Wilson (1998) found that, although pro-social attitudes were much the stronger predictor of subsequent volunteering behaviour, involvement itself – even if it is mandated – also has an independent impact on that behaviour.

While these findings suggest that community service programs – both mandated and voluntary – can have positive effects on participants, the process would seem to be a complex and conditional one. For example, Niemi and his colleagues (2000) caution that the effects they detected were limited almost entirely to volunteers whose community service was "regular and sustained." Community service programs had no effect on infrequent or one-time-only volunteers. Similarly, Riedel (2002) found that the impact on civic responsibility of four programs at Minnesota high schools depended on the nature of the program in question. Only programs that offered broad opportunities for public action increased the political engagement of participants. Boyte (1991) echoes this view, arguing that political engagement is promoted only by student community service that provides "experience with power." For Morgan and Strep (2001), it is student service "with voice" that is important in building citizenship. The same kinds of contingencies have been cited for effects at the adult level (Arain, 2000; Brown, Kenny, Turner, & Prince 2000). A number of investigators have reported that effective service learning programs were ones that were integrated into the school curriculum and directed by faculty (McCarthy & Tucker, 2002; Primavera, 1999). Still others have suggested that significant "sustaining factors" associated with the initial volunteering experience – factors such as the amount of enjoyment, support, respect, and appreciation students encounter in their placements – are very important in promoting a commitment to subsequent volunteering (Melchior, 1998; Morgan & Streb, 2001; Pancer & Pratt, 1999; Taylor & Pancer, 2001).

In what Warburton and Smith (2003) describe as a "developing theoretical critique" of mandatory service programs, some observers have worried that compelling people to volunteer may actually be counter-productive if the goal is to promote pro-social attitudes and encourage socially responsible behaviour (Bessant, 2000a; Brock, 2001; Brown, Kenny, Turner, & Prince, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 1987; Goodin, 2002; Turnbull & Fattore, 1999).

There is some evidence to warrant such concern. For example, Warburton and Smith (2003) report a strong theme among their focus group participants that "compulsory programmes are not the same as volunteering" (p. 780); these students reported feelings of exploitation, negativity, and little enthusiasm for future volunteer involvement. Other researchers have argued that mandatory community service may well reduce interest in such activities by undermining the self-perception that tends to sustain future volunteering. That is, those coming to see service as something done only when required or rewarded will be less likely to continue to volunteer when the requirement or the reward is removed (Batson, Jasnoski, & Hanson, 1978; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998; Kunda & Schwartz, 1983). Along these lines, Stukas, Snyder, and Clary (1999) report that mandatory volunteer programs had the greatest negative effect on students who had previously been active volunteers. They argued that these participants tended to devalue the exercise once they were required rather than inspired to contribute their time. Stukas et al. also found that the perception of choice in mandatory programs significantly enhanced the likelihood of subsequent volunteering for those who initially were not inclined to volunteer freely.

However, the most common critique of mandatory community service programs is that they fail to have any impact at all. Niemi and his colleagues (2000) and Keeter et al. (2002a, 2002b) report from separate studies that, compared with schools that do nothing, schools with community service requirements do not achieve significantly greater levels of student

volunteering, but schools that help students to find volunteer placements are significantly more successful in this regard. Along the same lines, Padanyi, Meinhard, and Foster (2003) suggest from their study of an Ontario university sample that the Ontario mandatory program had no independent impact on students' likelihood of volunteering in future. That is, students who would probably not have volunteered in high school without the mandated requirement exhibited no differences in pro-social dispositions compared to students who were not required and did not volunteer in high school. This conclusion echoes that of Planty and Regnier (2003) who surveyed mandated high school volunteers eight years after they graduated and found no differences in volunteering rates from a comparison group which did no volunteering in high school.

Our Research Questions

As noted in the Introduction, our research addresses the general question of whether, or under what conditions, mandated community service in high school has an impact on students' subsequent civic engagement. Our review of the literature indicates that there is little consensus on this issue. Therefore, our research was designed to address the following specific questions:

1. Did the mandatory community service program introduce high school students to the voluntary sector who would not otherwise have been exposed to it?
2. Did a mandated high school volunteering experience differ from a non-mandated one? For example, did mandated students choose different activities, use different avenues to find their placements, commit with different levels of intensity, evaluate the experience differently, or extend their commitment beyond high school at different rates?
3. Does the mandatory feature of the Ontario program have unique negative effects on the perspectives of participants in the year following graduation?
4. Does volunteering in high school have effects on various dimensions of civic engagement in the year after graduation?
5. To what extent are the effects of high school volunteering conditional on qualitative aspects of the experience? In particular, is a positive or negative assessment of the experience important in this respect, and is the length of the high school volunteering commitment a significant factor in explaining variations in effects?
6. What was the nature of students' involvement with the mandatory program?
7. What qualitative features of the high school volunteering experience contribute to a positive or negative assessment of that experience?
8. How do students feel about the principle of volunteering and about mandatory community service programs?

Methodology

In 2004, we designed a quasi-experimental study involving university students in the so-called Ontario "double cohort." Now in their second year at Wilfrid Laurier University, the double cohort students had been subject to different high school regulations concerning volunteering. About half of the students had been required by the province to complete 40 hours of community service in order to graduate; the other half had not been subject to this requirement, although some individual school boards and schools had their own mandatory service programs. In an

effort to determine whether mandatory community service has an impact on the civic engagement of these young people, we devised a two-stage research project.

The first stage of the research involved a survey of approximately 1,500 second-year students at Wilfrid Laurier University. The second stage consisted of follow-up in-depth interviews with a smaller sub-set of the students surveyed. Combining these two methodologies into one project gave us the best of both worlds: the mass survey allowed us to use statistical techniques to detect patterns and linkages between prior volunteer experience at school and subsequent civic engagement; the in-depth interviews allowed us to explore possible reasons for those linkages.

We administered the Volunteering and Civic Engagement Survey to second-year classes with large enrolments at Wilfrid Laurier University in the first month of the September 2004 semester. The classes were selected to ensure that the sample included students from a wide range of programs at the university. The survey (see Appendix A) included locator information, such as date of birth and postal code, which allowed us to ensure that individuals did not complete the survey more than once.

The Volunteering and Civic Engagement Survey of second-year students was designed to determine what impact, if any, mandatory volunteering has had on the civic engagement of these young people. The questionnaire contained sections probing prior volunteering activity and levels of civic engagement, as well as demographic sections that allowed us to describe the social and demographic background of the student respondents.

We explored three dimensions of civic engagement: community volunteering, social group activities, and political engagement:

> **1. Community Volunteering.** We explored whether high school community service had an impact on attitudes and behaviours with regard to volunteering after graduation by asking students:
> - how much they had been involved in "community service" activities and in "informal helping" activities over the past twelve months.
> - to what extent they had been involved in a "university-associated service or charity."
> - whether they had offered their services in any of six volunteer sectors (nonprofit sector, health service, school, sports, community or service club, and religious organizations) and, if they had, for how long.
> - about their attitude toward volunteering and philanthropy.
>
> **2. Social Group Activities.** In literature on social capital,[4] participation in voluntary associations is thought to promote a greater awareness of one's responsibilities to community and a commitment to shared interests. The goal of the high school mandatory community service programs is to promote this type of awareness and commitment. To assess whether or not these programs succeed in doing this, we examined whether students were more socially engaged in their home and university communities in the year after leaving school by asking them about their involvement over the past 12 months in:

- religious and cultural activities;
- organized community sports programs;
- university sports programs; and
- university social groups.

3. Political Engagement. We explored whether mandatory volunteering in high school increased the likelihood of a student's engagement in civil society and governance issues and whether it promoted greater political awareness among students and a desire to discharge their citizen obligations or see themselves as effective political actors. We asked students about their level of involvement in:
- political activities (e.g., if they had attended political party meetings or worked in a political campaign);
- social activism (e.g., if they had attended a demonstration, collected signatures on a petition, etc.);
- political and governance activities at university (e.g., student government, student political groups, student publications); and
- voting in the 2004 Federal election.

We examined students' perspectives on political engagement by assessing the degree to which they expressed interest in Canadian and international politics, claimed to follow politics in the media, and discussed politics with their friends. We also asked questions about their perceived role in public affairs and their perspective on the responsiveness of political authorities.

We used a preliminary analysis of the survey results to identify a suitable pool of prospective interviewees for the in-depth interview stage of the research. The pool included students who had participated in a mandatory high school community service program and had consented to be contacted for this second stage. In selecting from this pool of about 400 students, we deliberately sought to include interviewees who had indicated positive experiences and interviewees who had had negative experiences in the high school program. Their scores on a "Quality of Experience" scale in the survey instrument served as the criterion for this selection process.

A team of graduate and senior undergraduate interviewers completed 100 interviews with survey respondents. All interviewers received one day of training that was delivered by the research team. We examined the initial interviews by each of these student interviewers to ensure quality control. Interviewers recorded their sessions with students on audio cassettes from which we produced transcripts.

We designed the interviews to tap the observations and attitudes held by individuals about their volunteering experiences. In particular, the interviews provided an opportunity for students to indicate what they liked most and least about volunteering, what they felt they took from the experience, and how they assessed their encounter with the mandatory community service program. We also provided them with a chance to identify possible changes they thought might improve the mandatory volunteering program. See Appendix B for the interview schedule used for this research.

Before presenting our analysis of the survey and interviews, we should acknowledge four limitations that arise from our research methodology.

1. We sampled from a population that is probably not representative of Ontario's general high school graduate population in terms of variables relevant to civic engagement. Students entering university from high school tend to be from backgrounds that are more supportive of high achievement and motivation, and, in turn, of strong civic engagement. Therefore, it would be imprudent to generalize conclusions drawn from this study to high school graduates in general.
2. Wilfrid Laurier is not a typical school by Canadian standards. Located in south-western Ontario, it has a relatively small undergraduate enrolment of about 10,000 students and is a predominantly liberal-arts university. The ethnic composition of the student population is more homogeneous than the province as a whole. Therefore, we should be cautious in generalizing our findings to other larger, ethically-diverse universities in Ontario.
3. Potential interviewees, in the second stage of the research, had two opportunities to decline to take part in the in-depth interviews, first, by refusing consent at the end of the initial survey stage and, second, by declining to participate when later invited to take part in the second stage. While we have no reason to suspect that participants in the second stage are unrepresentative of the larger pool within the university, we should acknowledge the possibility.
4. Given our research design, we were limited to examining only the short-term impacts of mandatory high school community service – that is, impacts that were apparent within 15 months of high school graduation. Whether our findings generalize to the longer term cannot be answered through this study.

Descriptions of Respondents

Our survey of second-year classes produced 1,464 completed surveys.. After removing respondents who were not from Ontario and respondents who, although enrolled in a second-year course, were not second-year "double cohort" students, we had a useable sample of 1,293 respondents.

The sample includes students from the university's three main faculties. About half (49%) were enrolled in the School of Business and Economics, about a third (32%) were in the Faculty of Science, and the remainder were from the Faculty of Arts. Respondents were mostly born in Canada; less than 15% reported that they had been born elsewhere. Forty-four percent were raised in communities with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants, and one fifth were raised in a city with greater than half a million people. Nearly two thirds (64%) of respondents were women. The average age of respondents at the time the survey was done was 19.7 years. Almost half of the respondents were from households where the total family income exceeded $100,000 per year.

We had initially planned to divide the students into cohorts defined by whether they had graduated from the old five-year or the new four-year high school program. However, we found that some students within the five-year cohort had done mandatory community service for their

diploma because their schools – mainly private and Catholic schools – had required it before it became mandatory for the whole province in 1999. Therefore we split the sample by exposure to mandatory community service. This allowed us to test the impact of a mandatory requirement more directly, even if the mandatory requirement in question was not entirely uniform across the cohort.

A little less than half of respondents (602) had been subject to a mandatory community service requirement, and a little more than half (691) had not been. To check that other differences between the two groups would not influence our analysis, we measured the average age, income, religion, and general activity levels prior to arriving at university for each group.

The most consistent differences between the two cohorts concerned religion. Because Catholic school boards tended to require community service from students even before the Ontario government acted, a significantly larger proportion of our mandated cohort was Catholic (over 40%); less than 30% of the non-mandated cohort were Catholic. Perhaps as a consequence, the mandated cohort attended religious services more frequently than the non-mandated cohort and came from households where religion was given more emphasis. For example, 58% of the mandated cohort indicated that religion was stressed 'a great deal' or 'somewhat' in the home, while only half of the non-mandated cohort indicated so. The age differences between the two cohorts were predictable. The average age for those who had been required to volunteer was 19.2 years; the average age of those who had not been required to volunteer was 20.2 years. The younger cohort was significantly richer and somewhat less rural in their origins; over half were from families with annual incomes of over $100,000 per year, and over half were from larger towns. There were no significant differences between the two cohorts in terms of their exposure to family discussions about politics or their first-year employment status.

Analysis

Comparing Mandated and Non-Mandated High School Volunteering Experiences

Our initial question in this analysis is whether mandated service programs succeed in introducing more high school students to the volunteer sector than would be the case in a non-mandated school environment. Table 1 compares the high school volunteering rates of our mandated and non-mandated cohorts. Three measures of service exposure are presented in this table.

Table 1. Compariing the Extent of High School Community Service Between Mandated and Non-Mandated Cohorts.

Measure	Mandated Cohort N=598[2]	Non-Mandated Cohort N=682[2]
A. % Who Volunteered in High School	95%[1]	77%
B. Breadth and Intensity of Involvement of Those Who Volunteered (mean scores)[3]	13.2	13.3
C. % Who Volunteered with an Organization "regularly for a year or more"[3]	51%	43%

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Notes:
1. Statistically significant differences are in bold font.
2. Because of missing data on specific questions, some cases are not included in this table.
3. Only students who indicated that they had volunteered during their high school years were included in the computation of these percentages.

Almost all of the students who had been mandated to do community service – 95% – recalled that they had volunteered during high school compared to 77% of those who had not been mandated to volunteer. It is difficult to compare this "voluntary" volunteering rate to other populations because our time frame was "during your high school years," whereas the time frame for most research on this question is typically "during the past twelve months." What evidence there is suggests that this rate (77%) is likely higher than the norm for *all* high school graduates, but may approximate the rates at which non-mandated *university-bound* students volunteer. For example, data from the National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) suggest that about 35% of all Ontario youth aged 15-24 volunteered during 1997 but that the rate for those with university degrees was much higher at 62% (Febbraro, 2001). Egerton (2002) and Langdon and Jennings (1968) credit the university experience itself for encouraging volunteering, but they also acknowledge that university-bound students tend to have higher levels of civic engagement to begin with. Students entering university from high school tend to be among the more active, the more motivated, and the more achievement-oriented of their graduating classes. Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests that university-bound high school students are encouraged by some guidance counselors to establish a record of community service in order to give them "an edge" in the university admissions process.

We also asked about the breadth and intensity of students' volunteer experiences. We asked students about their involvement in each of six volunteer sectors -- the nonprofit sector, health sector, school system, sports programs, community/service clubs, and religious organizations. For each of these sectors, students were assigned a rating between "0" (reflecting no involvement in a sector) and "4" (indicating that the respondent "volunteered regularly for a year or more" in that sector). We then added up the students' scores for each of the six volunteer sectors, resulting in scores ranging from 0 (no involvement in any of the six sectors) to 24 (involvement of a year or more in all six sectors). We found that there were no cohort differences in the breadth and intensity of students' volunteer engagements; the mandated cohort scored an average of 13.2 on this 0-24 scale, and the non-mandated cohort scored an average of 13.1.

As indicated in the last row of Table 1, there was a significant difference in the longevity of involvement, i.e., whether students volunteered regularly for a year or more in at least one of the six volunteer sectors. Just over half (51%) of those in the mandated program reported that they had volunteered for a year or more compared to 43% of non-mandated volunteers.

If mandated community service programs are mobilizing a greater proportion of students to volunteer their time, can we assume that a mandated experience is comparable to one freely chosen? We have already found that mandated commitments tended to be longer, but was the experience different for the two groups in other ways? Table 2 suggests that, on the dimensions we explored with our survey, the two group experiences were not very different. For example, in

terms of the kinds of volunteer activities the two cohorts chose, the non-mandated students were somewhat more likely to have volunteered at school (78% vs. 68% of mandated students) and with community or service clubs (61% vs. 55% of mandated students), but, overall, the pattern for the two cohorts is similar. As well, with one notable difference, both groups tended to use the same avenues to secure their placements. Non-mandated students were more likely to use the school as their placement facilitator (48% vs. 35% of non-mandated students).

We asked students a battery of questions designed to assess the quality of their volunteer experience.[5] Based on their responses, we then computed a "quality of experience" scale score for each student. The scale has a range of 1-5 with a higher score indicating a more positive assessment. Both groups had almost identical perspectives on their high school volunteer experience: they did not differ in their average "quality of experience" scores (2.8 for each group), roughly equal proportions of both groups had continued to volunteer with their high school placement organization while in university (21% of mandated students and 20% of non-mandated students), and equal proportions indicated that they would be "extremely likely" to volunteer again with that organization if the opportunity arose (35% of mandated students and 37% of non-mandated students).

Table 2. Comparison of High School (HS) Volunteering Experience for Mandated and Non-Mandated Cohorts.

Volunteering Items	Mandated Cohort	Non-Mandated
Sector Involvement for Those Who Volunteered -- % Volunteering in	N=598[2]	N=682[2]
Nonprofit Sector	66%	62%
Health Sector	33%	33%
School System	**68%**[1]	**78%**
Sports Programs	58%	61%
Community/Service Clubs	**55%**	**61%**
Religious Organization	35%	32%
Continuity of Commitment: % Who have continued to volunteer with their high school placement	21%	20%
Likelihood of Recommitting: % Who indicated they would be "extremely likely" to volunteer again with their high school placement if the opportunity arose	35%	37%
Quality of Experience Score: Mean scores with standard deviation in parentheses[4]	2.8 (.7)	2.8 (.7)
Origins of Placement Contact: % who indicated that high school placement was mediated by . . .		

School	**35%**	**48%**
Friends	23%	21%
Immediate Family	19%	20%
Extended Family	4%	4%
Religious Organization	8%	7%
Contacted Personally	11%	13%
Contacted by Organization	3%	4%

Notes:
1. Statistically significant differences are in bold font.
2. Because of missing data on specific questions, some cases are not included in this table.
3. Only students who indicated that they had volunteered during their high school years were included in the computation of these percentages.
4. The "quality of experience" scale has a range of 1-5 where a "5" indicates the most positive score possible.

Assessing the Impact of High School Volunteering on Subsequent Civic Engagement[6]

We took a two-stage approach to assessing the impact of high school community service on subsequent civic engagement. In the first stage, we looked for preliminary evidence that factors associated with the student's high school service experience were related to his or her attitudes and behaviour in the year following graduation. Specifically,

- We compared the civic engagement of those who had *volunteered* in high school with those who had *not volunteered* in high school (regardless of whether the service was mandated or not);
- We compared those who had been *mandated* to volunteer with those who had *volunteered on their own* initiative;
- We compared those who assessed the volunteer experience as *positive* with those who were *less positive* about their experience; and
- We compared those who had committed to one organization for *at least a year* with those who had committed for *less than a year*.

As explained above (see *Methodology*), we assessed the effects of these factors on three dimensions of subsequent civic engagement: community volunteering, social group activities, and political engagement. For each dimension, we had a number of different measures.

Our analysis indicated that all but one of these high school service factors were indeed related to measures on all three dimensions of civic engagement Specifically, students who volunteered in high school (whether mandated to do so or not) compared to those who did not volunteer, volunteers who recalled the experience as positive rather than as negative, and volunteers who committed to an organization for at least a year were significantly more likely to engage in

subsequent volunteering, to be involved in a number of social and political activities, and to have a relatively more positive attitude toward volunteering. For two of the high school service factors, they were also more likely to score higher on political efficacy. Political efficacy refers to the respondent's sense of effectiveness as a political actor in his or her community and reflects both an assessment of the responsiveness of political authorities and of one's personal capacity.

On the other hand, the comparison between mandated and non-mandated students yielded only one significant difference across our all of measures of civic engagement: mandated volunteers were more likely than non-mandated volunteers to be involved in religious or cultural activities. On all of the other measures, they were no different from non-mandated volunteers.

It appears from this analysis that three of the four factors associated with high school community service -- whether students volunteered in high school in any way, whether they had a positive volunteer experience, and whether they committed to one organization for at least a year -- are related to students' subsequent civic engagement. However, these findings are suggestive only at this stage of the research. This is because the independent effect of each factor is difficult to sort out when the other factors are not controlled at the same time and when we have not controlled for possible group differences in social backgrounds among students.

The second stage of our research involved re-examining the impact of each of these factors on subsequent civic engagement after statistically controlling for the effects of potentially confounding variables such as those cited above. The results of this multivariate analysis are summarized in Table 3.[7] It confirms some, but not all, of the conclusions from our first stage analysis.

Table 3. Summary of Impacts of High School Volunteering Factors on Measures of Subsequent Volunteering, Social Engagement. and Political Engagement[1].

Measures of Subsequent Civic Engagement	High School Service Factors			
	Did the Student Volunteer at all?	Was the Service Mandated?	Was the Experience Positive?	Was the Commitment for a Year or More?
Subsequent Volunteering				
Index of Volunteering Breadth / Intensity[2]			X	X
Any Community Service Activity?			X	X
Any Informal Helping Activity?			X	
Any University Service Activity?	X		X	
Attitude Towards Volunteering	X		X	
Subsequent Social Engagement[7]				
Any Religious/Cultural Activities?				X
Index of University Social Activities[3]				
Any Organized Sports Programs?				

Any University Sports Programs?				
Subsequent Political Engagement[7]				
Any Political Activities?				X
Any Social Activism?		X	X	
Summary Index of University Political Activities[4]			X	X
Summary Index of Political Interest[5]	X			X
Summary Index of Political Efficacy[6]			X	X

Notes:
1. This table shows whether any of the four high school community service factors are significantly related to each of our measures of subsequent civic engagement. An "X" indicates that the high school factor represented in that column is significantly related to the civic engagement measure cited in that row.
2. Students were asked whether they had volunteered in any of six service sectors in the past twelve months. The "Index of Volunteering Breadth / Intensity" summarizes both the number of community service sectors in which the student served in the year after high school graduation and the duration of that service. The six volunteer sectors were the same as those cited in Table 2.
3. The "Index of University Social Activities" summarizes the degree to which the student has been involved in one or more of the following university social groups: a fraternity or sorority, university religious group, academic club, society or team, cultural or social club or society, and/or a university performing group.
4. The "Index of University Political Activities" summarizes the degree to which the student has been involved in one or more of the following political activities: student government, student political group and/or student publication
5. The "Index of Political Interest" summarizes the degree to which the student follows Canadian and international politics, discusses politics with friends, and/or follows politics through television, radio or the daily papers.
6. The "Index of Political Efficacy" summarizes the degree to which students agree with four statements about their ability to understand and affect government, to have their vote count, and to trust their political representatives.

1. The impact of the high school experience on *subsequent volunteering*:

- The findings strongly reinforce our original finding that the *quality of the high school volunteering experienc*e increases the likelihood that a student will volunteer after high school? For all five of our measures of subsequent "volunteering," the more positive the assessment of the high school experience, the more likely the student had volunteered after high school. Moreover, among the four high school factors and nine social background variables used to predict subsequent volunteering in this analysis, "quality of experience" is the most strongly related to each of our subsequent volunteering measures.
- The re-analysis reinforces the conclusion that mandating community service had no negative effects – indeed it had no discernible effects at all – on the likelihood of a student volunteering in the year following graduation.
- The re-analysis qualifies our initial estimate from stage one that community service of any duration in high school was related to subsequent service activity. As Table 3 shows, having done any volunteering in high school increased the likelihood of volunteering *in a university-associated service or charity* and of having a positive attitude to volunteering.

However, having volunteered in high school increased the likelihood of volunteering *in the community* only if the high school volunteering had been done with the same organization for at least one year. Further, high school volunteering of any duration appeared to have no effect on the likelihood of engaging in informal helping after high school.

2. The impact of the high school experience on *subsequent social group activity*:

- Our re-analysis shows that, contrary to our initial findings, volunteering in high school had little or no impact on subsequent social group activity.[8] Indeed, there was only one significant relationship: students who had been involved in an organization for at least a year in high school were more likely to be involved in religious or cultural activities after high school?

3. The impact of the high school experience on *subsequent political engagement*:

- Our re-analysis indicated that students who volunteered for any duration in high school did tend to have a higher level of interest in politics, but for the other measures of subsequent political engagement, *volunteering of any duration* had little or no effect.
- On the other hand, our re-analysis showed that having *a sustained volunteering commitment of at least a year* while in high school generally enhanced the likelihood of subsequent political engagement – specifically, it increased the likelihood of engaging in political activities at university and in the community, enhanced political interest or involvement, and enhanced a student's sense of political efficacy.
- Our re-analysis showed that having a *positive high school volunteering experience* significantly enhanced the likelihood of engaging in social activism and university-related political activities and it positively affected one's sense of political efficacy.[9]

We posed a number of questions in this study about whether, or under what conditions, high school community service might affect a student's subsequent civic engagement: specifically, does service of any duration have such effects, does the fact that community service in high school was mandated alter such effects, and does it matter whether the community service is of a longer or shorter duration? This analysis of our survey data suggests the following tentative answers.

First, our analysis suggests that simply volunteering in high school is not enough. High school volunteering that does not involve a sustained commitment to an organization does not increase the likelihood that a student will volunteer or be socially or politically engaged after high school?

Second, at least in the short term, mandating community service in high school (rather than allowing students to choose for themselves) has no apparent adverse effects on the student's subsequent pattern of community involvement or his or her perspective on volunteering. At least among these university-bound students, mandated and non-mandated high school volunteers are virtually indistinguishable on our dependent measures.

Third, there is a positive impact on civic engagement from high school volunteering, but it is limited largely to those who made a sustained commitment with one organization and to those who remember the volunteering experience as a positive one. A sustained commitment increases the likelihood of several types of subsequent community involvement and most types of political involvement, whereas a positive volunteer experience has less impact on political and social engagement but strongly increases the likelihood that one will volunteer after high school.

If a positive volunteering experience has these kinds of impacts, it would be useful to investigate what makes for a positive or a negative volunteering experience. In the section that follows, we address this question, among others.

Qualitative Data

One of the goals of the research project was to identify not only the relationship between mandatory volunteering and civic engagement, but also to learn more about the experiences of young people who had to undertake community service to receive their high school diploma. Our quantitative data suggest strongly that mandatory volunteering programs do not "poison the well" for civic engagement and that extensive rather than minimal volunteering is a better predictor of future involvement. If we understand why students like or dislike volunteering, we will be better able to fashion successful service programs that encourage future civic engagement.

To find out what students liked and disliked about volunteering, we interviewed 100 students from our original survey sample. During these interviews, we discussed practical information, their views about their own volunteer experience, and their general views on volunteering and its relationship to their future engagement in voluntary service. With regard to practical information, we discussed:
- how students made initial contact with their volunteer placement and
- how they completed their volunteer hours.

With regard to their volunteer experience at school and their views on community service, we discussed:
- whether the volunteer experience was positive or negative and why it went well or not, and,
- based on this experience, students' views on future changes to mandatory community service programs.

Practical Information
a) Contact With Volunteer Placement
We asked students about their initial contact with their volunteer placements. Students identified four main avenues for contact: school or school-related activities; students' own initiative, including finding material in the newspaper, on the Internet, and from friends; family environment, including parents, siblings and church; and prior activities, including previous volunteering experiences or camp.

School. Because the mandatory community service requirements were implemented as part of a change to the educational curriculum, it is not surprising that many students secured their volunteer placement with school assistance. Students mentioned receiving help from teachers, guidance counsellors, and other personnel:

> *Either our teachers would help set us up with phones numbers or call organizations themselves and say they had a student interested in maybe helping out there…the teacher helped out a lot if you wanted them to help out.*

In other circumstances, assistance took the form of announcements about volunteer opportunities, bulletin boards, sign-up sheets posted throughout the schools, and in-house presentations by volunteer coordinators or staff of community service programs

Own Initiative. Students often took their own initiative. Typical avenues included making phone calls, sending e-mails or, in some cases, stopping by the organizations where students wished to volunteer:

> *We just called around to the different food banks in my area and just asked if they needed any help or if I could volunteer and most of them said yes. They all needed a bit of help ... a lot of help actually.*

In addition to approaching the organizations directly, students consulted other sources, such as newspapers or the Internet, the phone directory yellow pages, and friends, to help identify possible places to volunteer:

> *I just wanted to find something, and one of my friends actually volunteered there at the desk, and she put my name there and they called me.*

Family Environment. Students also turned to their families to make initial contact with voluntary organizations. Students with parents who volunteered were well served in their efforts to find volunteer opportunities. Mothers, in particular, appeared to play a central role for those relying on family support. They served not only as a source of ideas, but also as liaisons between students and the organizations:

> *My mother was a nurse, so she suggested it, and then I got into contact with a friend of my mother's, who also worked as a nurse, and she set it up.*

Also related to the family environment was information from a family's place of worship. Students reported that they were able to make contact with volunteer placements either through a priest, minister, Sunday school teacher, or member of a committee at their place of worship. In some cases, the place of worship served as a volunteer placement itself:

> *Well, I went to church, and they just wanted to get their people involved in different things so they were always suggesting different things we could do.*

Previous Activities. Students drew from their own experiences with volunteering. In some cases, former or current teachers, camp counsellors, and coaches provided information about services and also served as liaisons to opportunities with organizations:

> *Well, I guess when I was graduating, I had been there quite a while just, like, doing other stuff, and she* [a teacher] *said if I ever wanted to come back and help out, she said just to come back and say hi. So I dropped in one day to say hi to some of my old teachers, and she asked me if I wanted to help, so I went in to help and just kept going back. I brought in two friends to come back and help me, too.*

Together, these results show that students were able to secure assistance from schools and family members and, when left to their own devices, drew on previous activities, media outlets, and friends. Their responses suggest that students who attended schools that took an active role in securing volunteer placements or who came from families with active parents had an easier time making initial contact with their volunteer placement than did those who attended inactive schools or who had parents with fewer connections within the community.

b) Volunteer Placement

The interviews provided students with an opportunity to describe how they had completed their mandatory 40 hours of volunteering. The range of opportunities here is noteworthy and illustrates that a vision of volunteering in which students donate time to established nonprofit organizations is unnecessarily limited. Students' experiences included volunteering with the following types of organizations and individuals:

Established Organizations in the Community. Students volunteered at a range of established organizations. While volunteering, students helped with administrative tasks as well as with the main activities carried out by these organizations. Student who volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, for example, worked on building sites, helped to set up equipment, and painted houses. Although not working with national organizations, some students volunteering in the wider community helped with the organization of one-off events. These included helping to organize and staff fundraising activities, such as golf-tournaments and dance-a-thons, and assisting with community fairs, picnics, and parades.

Particular Populations. Some students volunteered with specific populations, such as the homeless, the elderly, or young children. They helped to prepare and serve meals at homeless shelters; helped to prepare and serve drinks, snacks, and meals, and talked with seniors at seniors' residences; and served as counsellors at youth groups or volunteered at daycare centres.]

Schools. Many students found the opportunity to volunteer at their own school, a school that they had previously attended, or another educational institution in the community. At their own schools, students were involved in such things as the yearbook committee, providing assistance with athletics, and acting as peer mediators. At elementary schools, they helped children with assignments, assisted in the school office or library, and coached athletics teams.

Places of Worship. Many students who made their initial contact with a voluntary organization through their place of worship also served as volunteers at their place of worship. Activities included serving as youth representatives for their church, planning children's activities, and helping to renovate rooms and buildings.

Sports Clubs. Students also volunteered their time with athletics organizations with which they were already involved. Activities included serving as coaches, setting up equipment, and refereeing or judging competitions.

The variety of opportunities pursued by young people demonstrate that a considerable number of students spend time with people their own age or younger. It also suggests that young people are the beneficiaries of mandatory volunteering, not just as volunteers but also as participants in activities run by volunteers.

Student Assessments of Volunteering

The following section catalogues the different ways that students described their own experiences and highlights the factors that have positive and negative impacts on their assessments. It also describes the responses students gave when we asked them to assess the mandatory volunteering program and to make suggestions about how it could be better run.

Positive Experiences

The vast majority of the young people we interviewed had a positive experience when completing their mandatory community service. There are two types of factors that appear to lead to positive experiences. The first is 'altruism': students had positive feelings about their volunteering because they believed they had made a difference in the lives of others or had had a positive influence on the community as a whole:

> *[J]ust the fact that I was getting involved outside of the high school community ... that was I was actually within my St. Thomas community where I am from and I could actually see what I was doing was making a difference ... that was a big deal.* [volunteered as a literacy tutor]

> *It was just really rewarding to see with just a small amount of time for me, to make such a big difference for other people.* [volunteered in a nursing home]

> *It was one of the most positive [experiences] of my life. It was amazing to see the difference you could make in someone's life ... just being there ... just giving them a hug or just making them smile is just big, and the people there are so devoted to each other. It's just amazing to see that.* [volunteered with disabled children]

The second factor that led to positive volunteering experiences was the extent to which students benefited from the experience in any one of three ways: emotional fulfillment, self-improvement, and career development.

Students were happy with their volunteering experiences when they associated them with emotional fulfillment. A sense of fun was integral here, as was the perception that they were appreciated. Appreciation took two forms: tangible recognition (e.g., a gift or other small token of appreciation) and intangible recognition (e.g., respect shown to volunteers, verbal encouragement, etc.)"

> *They respected us a lot, and they made us feel good about volunteering. They didn't just kind of expect us to work really hard and then not get anything for it, I mean, they treated us really well.* [volunteered for Habitat for Humanity]

When assessing activities in terms of their own development, volunteers noted that they enjoyed experiences that made them feel better about themselves. Two factors that helped to make volunteering a positive experience were a greater sense of awareness for the challenges faced by others and a greater connection with members in the community:

> *The homeless shelter was really positive in the fact that it really makes you step back and realize what you have and what all these people don't have.*
> [volunteered at a homeless shelter]

Several respondents indicated that volunteering provided them with an opportunity to connect with people in a way that they had not done before and gave them a chance to work with people from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds:

> *It was definitely a positive experience. You got to know everyone in the community ... if I didn't know them, then I got to know them, and we got to be friends, and I worked in the community too, so I see them around ... its just nice to get to know everyone.* [volunteered in homeless shelter]

Young people had a positive experience when volunteering if they felt they had somehow improved their chances at future employment by developing particular skills. Some of these skills were linked explicitly to employment because students could include them on their resumes or because the opportunity itself provided a direct avenue to paid employment:

> *It was definitely positive because, um, helping with my customer skills and that is a good thing to put on resumes and get jobs, and you can always refer back to how I obtained customer service.* [volunteered at a Salvation Army store]

> *It was definitely positive because now I became a coach, and I got paid for doing it.* [coached skating]

Several of the students we interviewed stated that volunteering allowed them to explore job and career possibilities and to decide whether they wanted to pursue these further. Equally important, some found that the field they were thinking of was not really one they wanted to enter:

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> *I wanted to be a doctor at one point, only to realize that was not the vocation for me.* [volunteered at a hospital]

Negative Experiences

Although many students had positive experiences during their community service, the interviews revealed that some students were more ambivalent about their activities, and still others identified negative aspects of their volunteering. Some students felt they did not have a positive experience because they did not believe that they were doing anything important or worthwhile:

> *I think it wasn't a very worthy cause, but it was a lot of work that I could have been doing for something more that was more worth it.*

This suggests that the task itself is important. Other students provided similar answers, noting that the tasks they were required to complete were difficult, tedious, or unpleasant"

> *Varnishing and sanding for hours on end is not very fun.* [volunteered on boats]

> *I can't say I really enjoyed the receipt writing for the Canadian Cancer Society because it was kind of boring writing receipts all the time.*

> *It was cold when I went canvassing, and I don't like when people go door to door around at my house so I don't like doing it to other people.*

Students who did not enjoy their activities did not feel positively about their experiences. For some, an awareness of the difficulties faced by other individuals appeared to make the experience overwhelming. Some of the students we interviewed worked in situations where people were very ill or in great distress:

> *Sometimes it was quite depressing ... I was put into the specific unit where kids wouldn't typically live past childhood ... sometimes I got scared when, like, someone would, like, started choking or stopped breathing and apparently this was supposed to be very common but, like, I am holding this kid in my arms who just stopped breathing ... it was scary.* [volunteered at a centre for disabled children]

Finally, students identified logistical issues, such as timing, that contributed to negative volunteering experiences. Many volunteer settings required volunteers to commit to be at the placement at specific times and for a specific number of hours each week. This lack of flexibility was a source of frustration for some students and detracted from their volunteer experience:

It wasn't just come when you want; it was, like, you have to come on this-and-this day and you don't really have a choice, like, if you are volunteering, you're volunteering kind of thing. So we had to do two weekends in a month, and it was six hours on a Saturday and a Sunday so I didn't really like that.

Suggested Changes

We asked students, in light of their experiences, to assess the operation of the mandatory volunteering requirement and to suggest changes that could be made to the program. Many of the students we interviewed were happy with the mandatory community service program the way it was and, if anything, thought that 40 hours was a very minimal requirement:

> *It's not difficult at all to get 40 hours in the 4 years. That's, like what, 10 hours a year, so I personally would double or even triple it. You know, it's a really good thing. I definitely would recommend volunteering to anyone at any time.*

Several students suggested changes to the operation of the program. These changes fall into three categories: changes that could be made to the role of schools, changes that could be made to the policy itself, and the elimination of a mandatory volunteering requirement.

Many of the students reported that they or their friends had had a great deal of difficulty selecting a volunteer placement and that their schools could have provided more help. Some called generally for greater involvement, while others suggested specific tasks for schools, including holding volunteer days and information sessions in grade nine. Teachers were seen as possible resources, as were guidance counsellors:

> *I think the teachers could make it easier to find volunteer work, because they just sort of said to us, go volunteer somewhere. … make schools more aware of opportunities out there so they can let the students know what is out there.*

> *At my school, there wasn't a whole lot opportunities out there that they would present to you … I think the guidance counsellors need to realize their goal in this program, and they need to step up and maybe help out the students a little bit more.*

Students also felt that there could be tighter regulations and better monitoring of the completion of volunteering hours. Several said that they knew of many people who had not completed their 40 hours and who had merely fabricated the documentation they submitted. Those who had completed their requirement were upset by this and suggested that schools needed to be more conscientious in monitoring and validating students' volunteering claims:

> *I think teachers should start checking up on the volunteer work. … Because I think there was a lot of people who got away with doing nothing.*

Students had other suggestions. They found the forms complicated and overly difficult to use. They also felt that the requirement should be altered so that the 40 hours are distributed more evenly across the high school experience:

> *You had this, like, yellow page they had to fill out for your volunteer hours and, like, they had to make sure that they followed a very specific criteria like getting signatures from different people, like someone from the organization that actually*

> *watched you ... that's the whole reason why I didn't even record my hours.*
>
> *It should be 10 hours per year of your high school, because I knew a lot of people, like, at the very end because you don't graduate without it, they took a whole week off school or something just to go and volunteer. And that wasn't really the point right?*

Finally, some students suggested the program should not be altered but rather should be eliminated. The act of volunteering, some students argued, should by its very nature be voluntary. Some young people said that students should do community service but that they should do so because they want to, or are encouraged to do so, but not because they are forced:

> *Personally, I think that if volunteering is required, then its not really the same. I think that volunteering is for people that want to be there to help someone, you know what I mean? I just worked at a camp during the summer, and I know that a lot of the kids that were just to graduate from high school were at the camp to get their volunteer hours, and you could tell sort of the people that wanted to be there and the people who didn't want to be there.*

The students suggested that the mandatory nature affects the quality of volunteering in two ways. Those who are unhappy with mandatory volunteering may have a less positive experience while performing community service. Still others, however, may not perform effectively while completing their requirements. This could have an impact on the delivery of services or on the clients of services who depend on volunteers. This leads us to the final theme in the qualitative data.

Views of Volunteering

Much of our report has examined whether the mandatory nature of volunteering "poisons the well" for future community service and whether it ceases to deliver the rewards for civic engagement promised by voluntary activities. The following section deals with respondents' views on the nature of volunteering in general and on the mandatory nature of volunteering.

Volunteering and Helping in the Community. When asked about volunteering in general, most students provided altruistic answers, citing its positive impact on the community and on individuals within the community:

> *I've been to places where the neighbourhood and everyone did volunteer and do stuff, and it's just a better feeling. Everyone is closer and everyone kind of watches out for each other. It's just a better feeling [living in a community where people help one another].*

Still others saw it as a responsibility. If the community provides certain tangible benefits to individuals, then individuals should donate time and energy to the community. In this case, volunteering was positive because of its impact on individuals:

Even if it's something as simple shovelling snow for somebody, I think being a part of the community is you have to look out for each other. It's part of the definition.

Volunteering was also seen as positive because of its impact on the community as a whole:

If you do live there and if you are taking things from the community, you should also give back, so I think that in a way it's a responsibility to people to look out for other people and improve the community and make sure that everyone who is living in the community is seeing the benefits.

Some students saw volunteering as a responsibility of everyone within the community. Others saw a distinction between those who are well off and those who are disadvantaged. They suggested that it is the particular responsibility of those who are fortunate to share that good fortune with others:

If you are well off in whatever way, like whether that would be financially or anything like that, and if you have anything that you can give to someone, then why not give it to them? I mean, you're not losing anything from it. You may think you are initially, but in the long run you're probably gaining a lot more than you're losing, and are you really going to miss it? Like are you going to miss an hour of your time maybe once or twice a week?

When discussing the goals of volunteering, a number of respondents felt that, while volunteering had the potential to benefit both the individual volunteer and the community, volunteering would not have as great an impact if it were forced upon people. Also, some felt that time constraints and other factors made it difficult for some people to volunteer:

As a moral obligation, I think it would be great if everybody wanted to volunteer and just help everyone. There isn't really a down side to volunteering. But people may not just have the time or the ability to do it. If they have constraints with money that they have to focus on jobs and stuff like that.

This leads us to a discussion of the mandatory nature of volunteering. In the interviews, students were provided with an opportunity to pass judgement on the mandatory requirement, both in principle and in practice.

The Mandatory Requirement. When examining unfavourable attitudes to volunteering, it is useful to distinguish between those who hold negative views in principle and those whose negative views have been informed by their own volunteering experiences.

Clearly, some students were opposed to the notion of mandatory volunteering. They felt that forcing young people to do community service detracted from the experience:

> *I think it's a good idea in the sense that it does get people involved and you can do things in the community, but at the same time it's forced, so it's not, you know, you're not doing it because you want to; you're doing it because you have to or you're not going to graduate, so it's kind of getting people out into the community but kind of for the wrong reasons at the same time.*

It is worth noting that even while questioning the benefit of mandatory volunteering, students emphasized what they felt were the positive aspects of truly voluntary community involvement. This was not necessarily the case for those whose dim view of mandatory volunteering appeared to be informed by their own experiences. For some, this was a logistical issue:

> *Structure would be good and not just do 40 hours and do what you like.*

> *It's so vague and people are thinking like if they aren't going to check up on it, do I really have to do it? I think there should be more restrictions.*

The great majority of our interviewees, however, had favourable attitudes to the mandatory requirement. Students highlighted themes that suggest that volunteering – even mandatory volunteering – is positive for communities and young people. When discussing the benefits to communities, students felt that municipalities would be able to accomplish more if they had a stable source of volunteers:

> *It helps people ... there is lots of other people who need people ... like volunteer organizations and nonprofit organizations who need lots of help. They need all the help they can get, but they can't pay you for it because they are not getting paid for it themselves, so I think it's a good way they get the help that they need.*

Perhaps most striking, the benefits to young people were almost exclusively described in terms that emphasized emotional development and personal growth. Exposure to new ideas, to different communities, and to more fulfilling ways of spending time were cited as clear benefits of mandatory volunteering:

> *It helps you become a more worldly person because you kind of see what's out there instead of sitting on the couch, which is what most people would do.*

> *It just like opens your eyes to so many different situations that you wouldn't have been exposed to.*

The students we interviewed suggested that this type of exposure was not only beneficial to young people, but it also filled a significant gap in the current education system:

> *I think it teaches you a lot more than what school can teach you.*

In some cases, students made a direct link between mandatory volunteering and future civic engagement. Volunteering at a young age, could, they suggested, lead to life-long engagement in

the community:

> *If you start volunteering, you keep doing it as you get older… and a lot of people find that they really like it after they keep doing it. They don't necessarily start out by thinking they would like it; they have to do it so they do it. But they don't really realize, wow, this is something I really enjoy doing… and hopefully they become better people and improve our community.*

Overwhelmingly, students had positive views of volunteering and of mandatory volunteering programs. Students who held negative views of the mandatory volunteering program most often cited inadequacies with its administration but even then they managed to find positive attributes of the principles of the program and of volunteering in general. Assessments of the mandatory volunteering program focused almost exclusively on benefits to community and personal development. Here, students spoke in terms of ideal communities, where all individuals are engaged, open to new ideas and groups, and contribute to collective life. When asked about the program in general, students appeared to hold views that were closely aligned with the goals of the program and describe those goals in terms that suggest they were aware of the positive link between mandatory volunteering and civic engagement.

Summary and Conclusions

Throughout this report, we have sought to answer our initial questions about the effects of high school mandatory community service programs. For the most part, our answers reflect positively on the program.

First, our research suggests that mandating community service in high school draws students into the voluntary sector who would probably not go there without being required to. With our university-bound population, the magnitude of this effect is significant and substantial: using students who had not been mandated to volunteer as a comparison group, we estimate that about 20% of students would not freely choose this route.

Second, mandating community service in high school does not appear to have "poisoned the well," as some have feared it might. Fifteen months after leaving high school, the students who had been mandated to volunteer in high school were almost indistinguishable from the students who had freely chosen to contribute their time. The high school volunteering experiences of both groups were very similar, and their levels of civic engagement since high school, which we assessed in a variety of ways, were also virtually identical.

Third, our research suggests that the impact of high school volunteering on subsequent civic engagement is conditional. Doing any volunteering at all in high school does not have much effect on future civic engagement. Rather, high school volunteering tends to have strong and consistent impacts when it provides a positive experience for the student volunteer, and almost as consistently, when it involves a sustained volunteering

commitment with one organization.

Fourth, the results from student interviews demonstrate a considerable degree of variety in students' experiences. Students adopted diverse strategies in identifying their voluntary opportunities and pursued a range of activities while volunteering. Students who attended schools that had active teachers and guidance counsellors serving as liaisons for volunteering organizations had not only a beneficial resource at their disposal but one that seemed to positively influence their experience. The same was true for students whose parents were engaged within the community. The availability of these resource to the student appears to affect a student's positive assessment of his or her volunteering accomplishments. Students who had a difficult time securing their placement, who felt cheated by lax administration of the program, or who felt that the tasks they completed were tedious or emotionally overwhelming had lower assessments of their experiences than others.

What is equally interesting, however, is that students, almost regardless of their own experiences, hold volunteering and the mandatory volunteering program in high regard for its positive impact both on communities and on individuals. Even students for whom the volunteering experience was not positive emphasized the importance of volunteering and were not wholly negative in their assessment of mandatory volunteering. Clearly, there were some individuals who were opposed in principle to the notion of mandatory volunteering, but it appears that this did not seriously poison their views of volunteering either in the present or the future.

Finally, our results appear to show that students are almost universal in their assessment of mandatory volunteering as a resource for communities and individuals and cite as positive outcomes the very indicators of civic engagement we have sought to measure: engaged citizens in active communities.

Readers should bear in mind that these findings are based on a study of short-term effects for a select sub-population of the 2003 high school graduating class. While we have no reason to suspect that, relative to the larger Ontario university population, the Laurier student body is distinct in ways that would produce atypical volunteering effects, that possibility should be acknowledged. As we have noted, we *do* have reason to suspect that university-bound graduates have a greater propensity to volunteer in high school (when not mandated to do so) than non-university-bound graduates. If this is so, then the proportion of student volunteers who have been mobilized solely because it was a mandated requirement would tend to be larger in the general high school graduate population than we found by studying a university sample – in that case, our findings may well *underestimate* the positive impact of mandatory community service programs.

There are several implications of our findings for those involved in the mandatory program. First, our study found that the benefits of the program in terms of subsequent civic engagement are much enhanced if students are placed in volunteer positions that deliver positive experiences, however those are defined. This suggests that the placement

process is central to the program's success. Currently, the placement process is handled in a very uneven fashion across the province, a point made by a number of our students who were clearly frustrated by the lack of resources and guidance. This suggests, then, that program administrators (school boards and the Ministry) should focus more attention on this aspect of the program – that is, finding a good fit for each student.

Second, when describing what they found positive in their volunteering experience, many of our student interviewees cited the feeling that they were making a contribution and that they were appreciated by the organization with which they were volunteering. A clear implication of this is that voluntary organizations themselves have an important role to play in making the experience a positive one for these student volunteers.

Finally, we found that the benefits of volunteering were enhanced when students had made a longer-term commitment to one organization. While we know that part of this effect derives from the impact of a positive experience – unsatisfied volunteers are less likely to commit for the longer term – we also found that a longer-term commitment affected subsequent civic engagement independent of whether the experience was especially positive. This raises the question of whether a forty-hour requirement over four years of high school is sufficient to maximize the value of the program. There may well be formidable logistical and practical obstacles to mandating a longer commitment, but our research suggests that the issue is worthy of investigation.

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Appendix A

2004 Volunteering and Civic Engagement Survey

STUDENT OPINION SURVEY 2004-05

Please check the box that best reflects your answer to each question. For any text based answers, please print legibly.

1. The following is a list of different kinds of school, community and political activities that people sometimes get involved in. For each type of activity, please check the box that best reflects how much, if any, you have done of this activity over <u>the past twelve months</u>.

Activity Type	Never Did This	Did This Once or Twice	Did This a Few Times	Did This a Fair Bit	Did This a Lot
Political activities (e.g., attended meetings of a political club or party, worked in a campaign)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community service (e.g., worked as a volunteer, helped organize neighbourhood or community events)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social activism (e.g., attended a demonstration, collected signatures on a petition, contacted a public official about a social issue, attended meetings of an organization devoted to social change)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Informal helping (e.g., visited or helped out people who were sick, took care of other families' children on an unpaid basis, helped people who were new to country)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Religious or cultural activities (e.g., participated in a church-connected group, an ethnic organization, participated in a choir, band or theatre group)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organized sports (e.g., participated or officiated in a league or club)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Below is a list of different university groups or organizations that students sometimes get involved in while at university. <u>Again thinking of the last twelve months</u>, please check the box that best reflects how much, if at all, you have been involved in each of these.

Groups and Organizations	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
Fraternity/sorority	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University religious group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University-associated service or charity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Governance (student government)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Intramural or inter-university sports team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Academic club, society or team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural or social club or society	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student political group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student publication (e.g., newspaper, yearbook)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University performing group (e.g., choir, drama production)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. In a typical month over the academic year, approximately how many hours, in total, were you involved with these groups or organizations?

_____ hours in typical month

4. In general, would you say you follow Canadian politics very closely, fairly closely, not very closely or not at all?

☐ Very closely　　☐ Fairly closely　　☐ Not very closely　　☐ Not at all

5. In general, would you say you follow international politics very closely, fairly closely, not very closely or not at all?

☐ Very closely　　☐ Fairly closely　　☐ Not very closely　　☐ Not at all

6. Please check the box that best reflects how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

a. When raising children, it is very important to teach them obedience and respect for authority.

Strongly Agree　☐　　☐　　☐　　☐　　☐　　Strongly Disagree

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b.   This country would have fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties.

        Strongly Agree ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   Strongly Disagree

c.   People have a fundamental right to voice their views even if those views are extreme or offensive.

        Strongly Agree ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   Strongly Disagree

d.   Consenting sexual relations between two adults of the same sex is no different than consensual relations between couples of the opposite sex.

        Strongly Agree ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   Strongly disagree

e.   People who don't get ahead should blame themselves, not the system.

        Strongly Agree ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   Strongly Disagree

f.   The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behaviour to those changes.

        Strongly Agree ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   Strongly Disagree

g.   We should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards even if they are very different from our own.

        Strongly Agree ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   Strongly Disagree

h.   Newer life styles are contributing to the breakdown of our society.

        Strongly Agree ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   Strongly Disagree

i.   In our society, you should be responsible for your own welfare, and others should be responsible for theirs.

        Strongly Agree ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   Strongly Disagree

j.   I believe my attitudes have changed since starting university.

        Strongly Agree ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   Strongly Disagree

k.   Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to marry.

        Strongly Agree ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   Strongly Disagree

7.   Sometimes in Canada people use the labels "left" or "left-wing" and "right" or "right-wing" to describe political parties, politicians and political ideas. When you think of your own political opinions, where would you place yourself on the following left-right scale?

        Left   1☐   2☐   3☐   4☐   5☐   6☐   7☐   Right

8.   We are interested in any <u>volunteer work</u> that you have done <u>in the past 12 months</u> – that is, work to help others that is not paid. Please indicate below what kinds of organizations, if any, you volunteered with and how regularly. Indicate as many as you can recall.

Types of Organizations	Did <u>not</u> volunteer with this type	Volunteered once or a couple of times	Volunteered regularly for less than a year	Volunteered regularly for the entire year or more
Nonprofit organization (e.g., humane society, foodbank)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health service sector (e.g. hospital, retirement home)	☐	☐	☐	☐
School system (e.g., tutoring, clean-up)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community sports programs (e.g., coaching, refereeing, organizing)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Local community or service club projects (e.g., clean-up, fundraising)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Church organization	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

9.   If you had to choose, which one of the things from the following list would you say is most important? And second most important?

Most Important		Second Most Important
☐	Maintaining order in the nation	☐
☐	Giving people more say in important government decisions	☐
☐	Fighting rising prices	☐
☐	Protecting freedom of speech	☐

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10. If you had to choose, which one of the things from the following list would you say is most important? And second most important?

Most Important		Second Most Important
☐	Maintaining a high level of economic growth	☐
☐	Making sure this country has strong defence forces	☐
☐	Seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities	☐
☐	Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful	☐

11. If you had to choose, which one of the things from the following list would you say is most important? And second most important?

Most Important		Second Most Important
☐	Move toward a friendlier, less impersonal society	☐
☐	Fight against crime	☐
☐	Maintain a stable economy	☐
☐	Move toward a society where ideas count more than money	☐

12. Please check the box that best reflects how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

a. Everybody should volunteer some time for the good of the community.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

b. People have a responsibility to help those who are less well-off than themselves.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

c. Gay male couples should be allowed to marry.

Strongly agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

d. People who are well off should share their wealth by giving generously to charity.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

e. I feel a very strong attachment to the province of Ontario.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

f. I feel a very strong attachment to my local community at home.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

g. I feel a very strong attachment to Canada.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

h. I feel a very strong attachment to the world as a whole.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

i. I feel a very strong attachment to Wilfrid Laurier University.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

j. Consensual sexual relations between same-sex adults are equally valid to consensual sexual relations between opposite sex adults.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

13. When you get together with your friends, would you say you discuss political matters frequently, occasionally or never?

☐ Frequently   ☐ Occasionally   ☐ Never

14. How often do you follow politics through television, the radio or in the daily papers?

☐ Every day   ☐ Several times a week   ☐ Once or twice a week   ☐ Less often   ☐ Never

15. Did you vote in the any of the following elections? Indicate which answers apply to you.

☐ 2004 Federal   ☐ 2003 Provincial   ☐ 2003 Municipal   ☐ None   ☐ Not eligible

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16. **Please check the box that best reflects how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.**

a. Those elected to Parliament soon lose touch with the people.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

b. People like me don't have any say about what the government does.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

c. We could probably solve most of our big national problems if decisions could be brought back to the people at the grass roots.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

d. It is important to vote, even if my party or candidate has no chance of winning.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

e. Lesbian couples should be allowed to marry.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

f. So many people vote that my vote hardly counts for anything .

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

g. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

h. Television is my most important form of entertainment.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

i. My first year at university was a very stressful experience.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

j. All things considered, I am quite satisfied with my academic performance in my first year.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

k. I believe I have adjusted well to university.

Strongly Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly Disagree

17. **Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted <u>or</u> that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?**

☐ Most people can be trusted   ☐ Need to be very careful

18. **Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, <u>or</u> would they try to be fair?**

☐ Would take advantage   ☐ Would try to be fair

19. **Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, <u>or</u> that they are mostly just looking out for themselves?**

☐ People try to be helpful   ☐ Just looking out for themselves

20. **Have you ever done <u>any</u> of the following to protect yourself from harassment or aggressive and violent behaviour at WLU?**

	YES	NO		YES	NO
Changed your daily routine activities	☐	☐	Carried something to defend yourself (i.e., keys) or alert other people	☐	☐
Taken a self-defence course	☐	☐	Stayed home at night because you were afraid to go out alone	☐	☐
Changed your phone number/email	☐	☐	Attended any voluntary crime prevention /awareness seminars or programs	☐	☐
Used foot patrol OR called campus security	☐	☐	Avoided specific areas of campus at night	☐	☐
Walked with another individual	☐	☐	When returning to your parked car alone, you have checked the back seat for intruders before getting in	☐	☐
Planned your route with safety in mind	☐	☐	When walking alone, you avoided walking past strangers	☐	☐
Contacted the University Harassment Officer	☐	☐			

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21. When completing high school, were you required to volunteer to get your diploma? ☐ Yes ☐ No

    a. IF YES - What was the nature of the requirement? For example, was there a set number of hours that you were required to volunteer? Please be as specific as you can.

    _____

    _____

22. Thinking back to your high school years (not your time in University) do you recall during those years any volunteer work that you did -- required or otherwise, either in your community or in your school? By volunteer work, we mean helping others at no pay.

    ☐ Yes   ☐ No (skip to question 29)   ☐ Don't Recall (skip to question 29)

23. Please indicate which types of organizations you volunteered with during your high school years and how regularly. Indicate as many as you can recall.

Types of Organizations	Did not volunteer with this type	Volunteered once or a couple of times	Volunteered regularly for less than a year	Volunteered regularly for a year or more
Nonprofit organization (e.g., humane society, foodbank)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health service sector (e.g., hospital, retirement home)	☐	☐	☐	☐
School system (e.g., tutoring, clean-up)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community sports programs (e.g., coaching, refereeing, organizing)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Local community or service club projects (e.g., clean-up, fundraising)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Church organization	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

The next several questions deal with the organization that, in your opinion, you volunteered with most during your high school years.

24. What was the name of that organization? _____

25. Have you continued to volunteer with this organization? ☐ Yes (skip to question 26) ☐ No

26. If the opportunity presented itself, how likely would you be to volunteer with this organization again?

    ☐ Extremely likely   ☐ Somewhat likely   ☐ Not very likely   ☐ Not at all likely   ☐ Don't know

27. Did you count the hours you spent volunteering with this organization towards any mandatory requirement?

    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

28. Please indicate how you came into contact with this volunteer organization.

    ☐ Through school   ☐ Through friends   ☐ Through immediate family
    ☐ Through extended family   ☐ Through religious organization ☐ Contacted personally
    ☐ Contacted by organization   ☐ Other _____

29. Thinking about your experience, please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

In thinking about the organization I volunteered with most ..	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
I became friends with new people through my volunteer activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I didn't really get to do anything meaningful/interesting in my volunteer work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My friends thought that my volunteer work was worthwhile.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt a part of the organization I volunteered with.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I didn't really learn any new skills through my volunteer experience.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt that my volunteer work helped to make a difference	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My volunteer experience led me to explore new career possibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I had a lot of fun volunteering.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

30. During high school, how involved were you in school activities? ☐ Heavily ☐ Moderately ☐ Not very much

31. What is your religious affiliation?

    ☐ Protestant   ☐ Catholic   ☐ Jewish   ☐ Muslim
    ☐ Hindu   ☐ Sikh   ☐ Other   ☐ None

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32. How often do you attend religious services?

☐ Never   ☐ A few times a year   ☐ A few times a month   ☐ Once a week or more

33. Was formal religion stressed at home during your youth and adolescence?

☐ A great deal   ☐ Somewhat   ☐ Not very much   ☐ Not at all

34. When you were growing up, did your family talk about politics and current events often, sometimes, seldom or never?

☐ Often   ☐ Sometimes   ☐ Seldom   ☐ Never   ☐ Don't Recall

35. Have your parents been involved in volunteer community activities over the past five years – that is, working to help others without pay? If so, what kinds of activities were these? Please check as many activities as apply for each of your parents.

Type of volunteer activity	Mother	Father
Service clubs (such as Rotary, Kinsmen)	☐	☐
Sports programs (e.g. coaching or organizing)	☐	☐
Church activities	☐	☐
Political activities	☐	☐
Social services (e.g. hospital visits, Meals on Wheels,)	☐	☐
Fundraising for charity	☐	☐
Other _____	☐	☐

36. To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements as applied to your parent(s) (or the adult(s) you lived with):

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
I can count on them to help me out, if I have some kind of problem.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They keep pushing me to do my best in whatever I do.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When they want me to do something, they explain why.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I get a poor grade in school, my parents encourage me to try harder.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They keep pushing me to think independently.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My parents expect me to act like an adult.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They almost always vote in elections.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They believe it is important for people to volunteer their time for the good of the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

In order to analyze the information you have given us in this survey, we need to know a bit about you.

37. What is your sex?   ☐ Female   ☐ Male

38. What is your sexual orientation?   ☐ Bisexual   ☐ Heterosexual   ☐ Homosexual   ☐ Other   ☐ Don't Know

39. What is your date of birth?   DAY _____   MONTH _____   YEAR _____

40. To better understand the rural/urban composition of WLU students, what is your family home postal code?   __ __ __   __ __ __

41. What is your year of study?   ☐ 1st year   ☐ 2nd year   ☐ 3rd year   ☐ 4th year   ☐ Other, please specify _____

42. What is your major field of study at University? _____

43. Were you born in Canada?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

44. What is the population of the community in which you have lived most of your life?

☐ Under 10,000   ☐ 10,000 - 50,000   ☐ 50,001 - 100,000   ☐ 100,001 - 250,000   ☐ 250,001- 500,000   ☐ Over 500,000

45. To the best of your knowledge, what was your total family income in 2003?

☐ Less than $40,000   ☐ $40,000 to $59,999   ☐ $60,000 to $79,999
☐ $80,000 to $99,999   ☐ $100,000 to $150,000   ☐ More than $150,000   ☐ Don't know

46. If you had a part time job last year at University, how many hours did you usually work per week?

☐ No part-time job   ☐ 8 or less   ☐ 9- 16   ☐ 17-24   ☐ 25 or more

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

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Appendix B

Qualitative Interview Schedule

The Impact of High School Mandatory Service Programs on Subsequent Volunteering and Civic Engagement
Guide to Interview Schedule

1. As we mentioned when we set up this interview, we wanted to talk with you about your involvement as a community volunteer in high school.
    First, was there a requirement at your high school that you do some volunteer work in your community? [If yes]

    What was that requirement?

    How did you complete the requirement? When and with what organizations did you volunteer?

2. (If multiple volunteer activities mentioned, ask the following for each) We would like to find out a little about your involvement.

    What was the organization you worked with most?

    Was that the first organization you've volunteered with?

    How long did you volunteer with them?

    How many hours in total would you say you volunteered with this organization?

    What kinds of things did you do?

    How did you come to volunteer with them – that is, how were you put in contact with the organization – was it through your school, friends, family or some other way?

    In retrospect, how do you assess that experience – was it a positive or a negative experience

    (If positive)
    – what did you like about it?
    – was there anything you disliked about it?

    (If negative)
    – what did you dislike about it?
    – was there anything you liked about it?

    Do you think you would have gotten involved in this organization if it wasn't a requirement?

3. (Repeat #2 for all other involvements)

4. Thinking about the way you completed your volunteer requirement, do you complete it in a fairly short span of time or did you spread it over a long period?

5. Why do you think the government introduced the idea of a mandatory volunteer requirement in high school?

6. In your case, was that goal achieved?

7. Is there anything you would change with that program to make it better?

8. In general, do you think it is a good idea to have a voluntary mandatory requirement in high school?

9. In your high school years, were you involved in any volunteer activities that were not part of your school requirement?

What was the organization you worked with most?

Was that the first organization you've volunteered with?

How long did you volunteer with them?

What kinds of things did you do?

How did you come to volunteer with them – that is, how were you put in contact with the organization – was it through your school, friends, family or some other way?

In retrospect, how do you assess that experience – was it a positive or a negative experience

(If positive)
– what did you like about it?
– was there anything you disliked about it?

(If negative)
– what did you dislike about it?
– was there anything you liked about it?

10. (Repeat #4 for all other voluntary involvements)

11. In your high school years, was anyone in your family involved with community activities or organizations? Who? What kind of things were they involved in?

12. What about your friends in high school – were any of them involved with community activities or organizations? What kind of things were they involved in?

13. Thinking back to your volunteer work during your high schools years, did you meet many people through your volunteer work ? [If yes:] Did you get to know these people? That is, did you make any new friendships through your volunteer work?

14. Since coming to university, have you continued your involvement in any of these community volunteer activities or organizations? (If Yes) Which ones, and how much time to do you spend working there?

Since coming to university, have you gotten involved in any new kinds of community volunteer activity? [If yes] What are they, and how time to do spend working there?

15. What do you like about volunteering? In other words, is there anything you get out of volunteering?

16. Is there anything that you don't like about volunteering? [If yes:] What kinds of things don't you like?

17. Do you feel you've learned anything as a result of your volunteer work? [if yes:] What kinds of things have you learned?

18. Do you feel that you've changed at all, as a person, because of your volunteer work? [If yes:] In what way?

19. Has your volunteer work influenced your ideas about what kind of career you'd like to follow? In what

way?

20. Are there any places that you're considering volunteering with or might like to volunteer with in the future? Which places?

21. How difficult is it to find time to volunteer?

22. Do you think that more people should be volunteering in their communities? Why? What does it achieve?

23. Do you feel that people have a responsiblity to help others in their community? Why? How did you come to feel this way?

24. Is there anything else that you would like to say that you didn't get a chance to say in the interview?

Thank you for your help.

Endnotes

[1] To examine the details of this requirement, see Ontario Ministry of Education, Policy/Program Memorandum No. 124A, April 27th, 1999 at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca:80/extra/eng/ppm/124a.html (retrieved 25/01/07)

[2] The Ontario Ministry of Education shortened the high school curriculum from five to four years at the same time that it introduced the mandatory community service program. As a consequence, the 2003 graduating class was a double-cohort, involving Grade 12 students who were required to complete the mandatory service in order to graduate and Grade 13 / OAC students who faced no such mandatory requirement.

[3] The terms "service learning" and "community service" are sometimes used interchangeably with reference to school programs, but many, if not most researchers now distinguish the two in terms of the degree to which they are integrated into the school curriculum. Service learning programs are well-integrated into course or school curricula while community service programs involve community service commitments by students that are largely stand-alone. By this definition, Ontario's government-mandated program is of the community service variety, although some non-public schools and boards in the province make some efforts to tie the service requirement into the curriculum.

[4] Social capital can be understood as "the process and conditions of social networking among people and organizations that lead to accomplishing a goal of mutual social benefit, usually characterized by trust, cooperation, involvement in the community, and sharing." www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/terminology.htm. (retrieved 25/01/07)

[5] The "quality of experience" measure scores respondents on a 5-point scale reflecting how positive they are about their volunteering experience in high school – the higher the score, the more positive the assessment. The scale has been computed as the respondent's mean rating over 8 Likert items. A Likert item is one which asks respondents to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with a specific assertion. In this case, the response continuum involved five alternatives: agree strongly, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, disagree strongly. See Q.29 of the questionnaire in Appendix A.

[6] The analysis reported in this section represents only a summary of our procedures and findings; it omits the detailed description of our measures and the statistical tables that underlie the analysis and conclusions provided here. For the technical report upon which our summary is based, contact the lead principal investigator.

[7] We employed multiple regression for this analysis, regressing each of our subsequent volunteering measures on the four high school service factors and on nine social background variables. The background variables are: gender of student, level of political discussion in the

student's family, frequency of student's attendance at religious services, degree of student involvement in high school activities, warmth and supportiveness of the family's parenting model, urban-rural residence, total family income, index of mother's community involvement,

[8] Our analysis indicated that differences in subsequent social group engagement between volunteers and nonvolunteers was better explained by differences in their social and demographic makeup. Gender differences, differences in religious observance and differences in high school social involvement emerge as important in this regard.

[99] Our analysis indicated that political engagement is more strongly related to social and demographic background factors than it is to high school community service experiences.