



SERVICE LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

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Beyond the Numbers of Federal Work Study: Building Literacy, Community, and Leadership through America Reads/America Counts

ABSTRACT:

This poster aims to promote conversation about how universities can better integrate academic, professional, and civic outcomes into work study programs while strengthening local communities. The America Reads / America Counts program at Mercer University connects Federal Work-Study students with local schools to strengthen literacy and numeracy skills. This poster highlights the program's structure, training model, and reciprocal community partnerships. Impact data, including student reach and service hours, will be presented alongside tutor reflection statements.

THEMATIC FOCUS:

BLOCKAGES AND CLEARANCE: PHYSICAL, INFRASTRUCTURAL, FINANCIAL, OR ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS OR PORTALS TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

GAUGING THE WATERS: USING RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT TO COURSE COURSE CORRECT OR GAIN DEEPER INSIGHT.

BIO:

Margaret Rooyakkers is a dedicated higher education professional with a B.S. in Public Health and an M.Ed. in Higher Education Leadership from Mercer University, where she now serves as Assistant Director of Service and Civic Engagement. She advises MerServe, Mercer's service programming board, and Mercer Votes, the voter engagement board. Through the Center for Engaged Learning, she actively collaborates on service-learning initiatives. Currently pursuing her PhD in Educational Leadership at Mercer, Margaret is passionate about empowering students through service and civic engagement.