

## *Using Service Learning To Unite Your College's Mission Statement and Strategic Goals*

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Like many sport management departments, SUNY Cortland executes numerous service learning activities throughout the year. Many of these events offer practical event management experience for the students. However, many of these activities can be extended to incorporate and reinforce your college's mission and strategic goals.

*Lose The Shoes* is a student managed barefoot soccer event that creates awareness for the issue of HIV/AIDS in Africa. The authors will present a case study detailing the Sport Management Club run small-sided soccer tournament, which features real world parallels of the college mission and strategic goals of excellence in service to the community. In accordance with the aforementioned mission, students will acquire fundamental life skills and an eagerness to make a difference in their own community, as well as an awareness of the important positive role they must play in an increasingly global society.

*Lose The Shoes* presents the students with an example of a Sport for Development strategy in Africa. This organization communicates HIV/AIDS information directly to soccer players and coaches, who pass the information along to local communities. In Africa, because of the stature placed upon soccer players and coaches by their communities, the health information is better accepted. This inspirational transference is a powerful message to the students.

The authors discuss how this event could be used to connect the campus community among diverse organizations including, but not limited to, the Institute of Civic Engagement, Team Darfur, AIDS prevention and awareness, and the International awareness clubs. This creates a pedagogical interface with the college's strategic mission and goals, the UN Millennium Development Goals (combat HIV/AIDS, global partnership), and corporate social responsibility.

SUNY Cortland has developed and maintained a number of strategic goals, including one of service to the community. *Lose the Shoes* is an example of how a sporting event can make a positive change in society. By incorporating other student groups, awareness of social issues in Africa is spread throughout campus. The joining of multiple student organizations behind a common goal is a great initiative to connect people who otherwise might not meet. This event creates an action plan to help support the mission of other student organizations.

Next, students are challenged to acquire fundamental life skills. One of these life skills is the ability to affect others. This illustrates CLM Keyes's concept of flourishing. The practical skills gained in the development of a project in service to others will be integrated in the student beyond his/her college years. Other life skills attained include leadership, fair play, and creativity.

Finally, this event contains a global perspective with Africa. *Lose The Shoes* is based on a communication of health information to at-risk communities. By hosting the event, the participants, spectators and organizers learn the issue and a creative method to solve it. The event also serves as a catalyst to raise funds for an international organization.