



University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

2022-23 Community Engagement Report

The Center for Student Experience and Talent (SET) works to ensure UWM graduates career-ready and community-minded students. Further, through SET's community engagement efforts, UWM partners with the community to inspire students, faculty, and staff to engage in activities that foster enduring personal and social change. This document is updated annually and provides data related to this work, as well as to the broader community engagement efforts at UWM. This report covers fall 2022, spring 2023, and summer 2023. If you do not find the information you need in this report, please contact Ben Trager at bwtrager@uwm.edu.

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Introduction and at-a-Glance Information

Through partnership with 100 nonprofit, government, and educational organizations, the Center for Student Experience and Talent (SET) offered a diverse range of community engagement and service opportunities for UWM students, faculty, and staff during 22-23 academic year. This report provides a summary of community engagement and service activities affiliated with SET.

During 22-23, SET focused on diversifying the range of service-learning courses offered. With the changing demographics of the state population and enrollments at UWM, SET must expand the reach of service-learning opportunities to continue reaching a broad range of students. In the past, GER courses with high enrollments such as CES 210, SOC WRK 100, and the Multicultural America 150s made up a significant portion of the service-learning enrollments. This is no longer the case, as fewer sections of the courses are offered, or the courses have lower enrollments than in years past. In response, we expanded our reach into new programs by adding new service-learning courses in Architecture, Criminal Justice, Nursing, and Philosophy. We also added new graduate-level project-based service courses in Communication and Criminal Justice. Overall, SET supported ten new service-learning courses in the 22-23 academic year.

Co-curricular service continues to evolve as we reshape our programming post-2020 and in the context of our realignment as SET. For example, Alternative Spring Break (ASB) brought 16 more students in 2023 than in 2022. Additionally, for the second year, we collaborated with the Student Success Center to offer a series of outdoor volunteer experiences for the incoming MKE Scholars cohort. We also grew our summer Habitat for Humanity build trip to Door County to include eight students versus 5-6 in previous years.

Goals for the upcoming year include reinvigorating co-curricular service and continuing to develop new service-learning courses. We plan to expand SET's episodic volunteer and service opportunities to offer at least two events per month and to intentionally connect these events to [Career Communities](#). We also intend to grow our service trips by adding a new trip or growing the size of the summer Habitat for Humanity build in Door County. SET will continue building relationships with faculty and staff to increase the reach and diversity of service-learning course offerings at UWM. We will also work with existing service-learning instructors to strengthen pedagogical practices in their courses and prepare them for a new vetting process that aligns with the framework outlined in the Experiential Learning Graduation Requirement proposal.

Below is a summary of service hours completed through SET.

Figure 1: Summary of unpaid service hours

| Program or Initiative | Hours |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Service-Learning | 34,303 |
| Make a Difference Day | 2,250 |
| Adopt-A-River* | 684 |
| Student Service Record Program* (SSR) | 1,486 |
| Alternative Spring Break (ASB) | 720 |
| Panther Response Team (PRT) | 319 |
| Total | 39,762 |

The dollar value of an hour of service in Wisconsin is \$29.97**. UWM tracked 39,762 hours, making the value of UWM student service to the community valued at \$1,191,667.14.

*Total hours reported do not include service-learning hours.

**As reported in 2022 by the independent sector (most recent year of data available). For more information see: <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>.

Academic Service-Learning

Service-learning is a credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs. Students also reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

There were 27 UWM academic departments and programs (listed below) that had courses with a service-learning component tracked through PAWS in fall 2022, spring 2023, or summer 2023. This includes 66 courses and 84 class sections with a service-learning component. For specific course listings for any semester, contact [Ben Trager](#).

Students engaged in service-learning opportunities, while still down from the peak in 2015, are now climbing in relation to overall enrollments (see Figure 4). As expected, students who have enrolled in a service-learning course during their first year are more likely to graduate within four, five or six years than students who did not take a service-learning course. For the fall 2021 cohort, 76.1% of students who took a service-learning course had satisfactory performance rate, 5.1 basis points higher than students who did not take a service-learning course. There was a 6% retention rate gap between targeted and non-targeted students in the group that took a service-learning vs a 10% retention gap between targeted and non-targeted in the group that did not take a service-learning course. [We'd like to note that we advocate for updating the language of "targeted vs non-targeted" to something more student success oriented.]

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Anthropology | Film |
| Architecture | Geography |
| Art and Design | Healthcare Administration |
| Art Education | Kinesiology |
| Biomedical Sciences | Nursing |
| Business | Nutritional Sciences |
| Communication | Philosophy |
| Communication Science Disorders | Political Science |
| Conservation & Environmental Sciences | Occupational Therapy |
| Criminal Justice | Social Work |
| Dance | Teaching and Learning |
| Educational Policy & Community Studies | Theatre |
| English | Urban Studies |
| Exceptional Education | |

Figure 2: Number of class sections at UWM with a service-learning component by semester

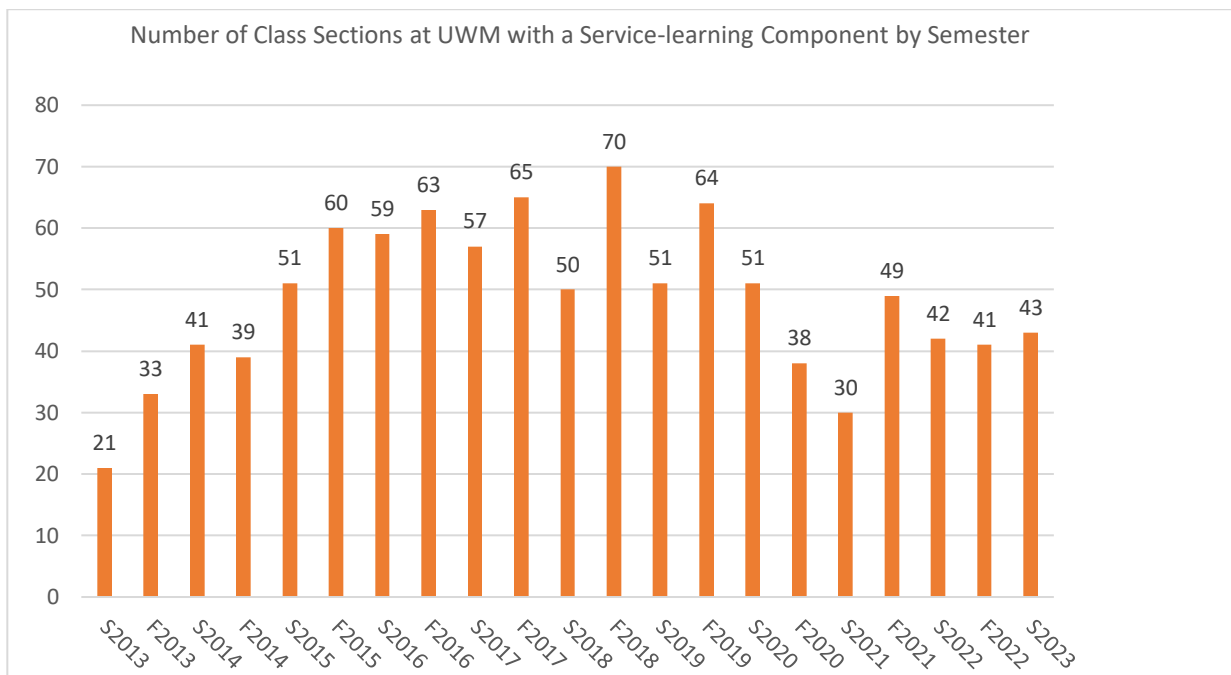


Figure 3: Number of students enrolled in service-learning classes

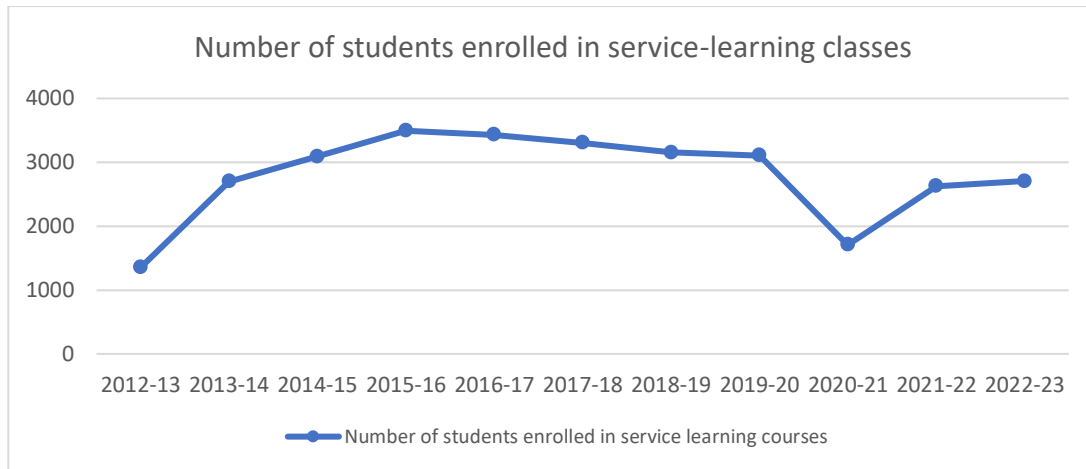


Figure 4: Service-learning course enrollments as percentage of overall enrollments

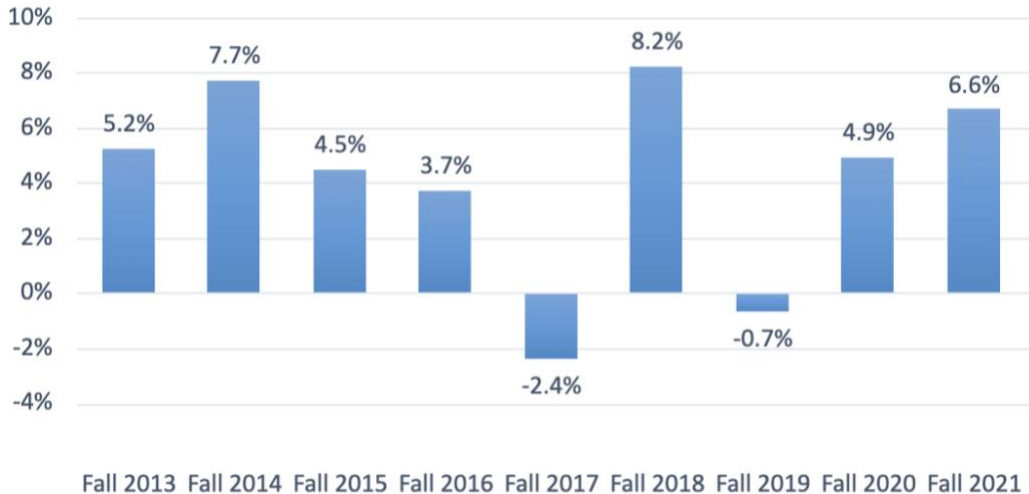
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Enrollment* (TE) | 29145 | 27813 | 28042 | 27156 | 26037 | 25412 | 24995 | 24018 | 23004 | 22592 | 22006 |
| Undergrad. Enrollment* (UE) | 24199 | 23031 | 23108 | 22321 | 21398 | 20777 | 20278 | 19388 | 18404 | 18037 | 17360 |
| Service-Learning (SL) placements* | 1354 | 2701 | 3090 | 3494 | 3429 | 3307 | 3152 | 3109 | 1707 | 2624 | 2707 |
| SL Percentage of TE | 4.65 | 9.71 | 11.02 | 12.87 | 12.17 | 13.01 | 12.61 | 12.94 | 7.42 | 11.61 | 12.30 |
| SL Percentage of UE | 5.6 | 11.73 | 13.37 | 15.65 | 16.02 | 15.92 | 15.54 | 16.04 | 9.28 | 14.55 | 15.59 |

Figure 5: Retention and graduate rates

(a): students who participated in service-learning in first year

| Term | Fall 2017 | Fall 2018 | Fall 2019 | Fall 2020 | Fall 2021 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Cohort | 966 | 1103 | 970 | 315 | 903 |
| Satisfactory Performance Rate | 79.0% | 83.1% | 84.6% | 80.6% | 76.1% |
| Retention Rate | | | | | |
| Enrolled 2 nd Fall | 74.1% | 79.4% | 78.0% | 78.1% | 74.6% |
| Enrolled 3 rd Fall | 62.7% | 71.2% | 69.2% | 68.9% | |
| Enrolled 4 th Fall | 57.6% | 65.6% | 62.2% | | |
| Enrolled 5 th Fall | 26.3% | 25.7% | | | |
| Graduation Rate | | | | | |
| Graduated within 4 years | 31.5% | 38.4% | | | |
| Graduated within 5 years | 47.5% | | | | |

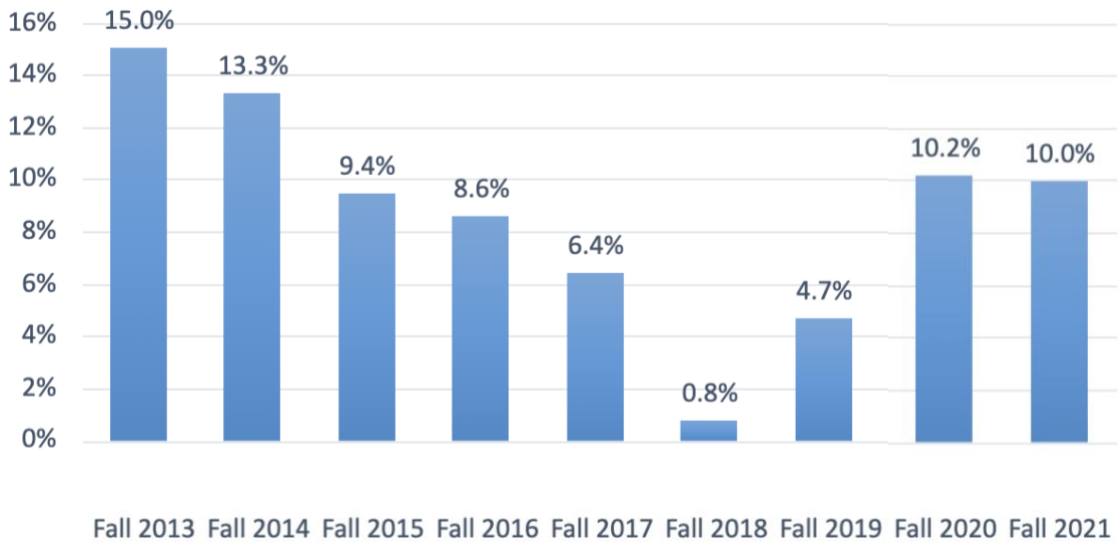
Gap in 1 Year Retention Rate Targeted vs. Non-targeted Students



(b): students who didn't participate in service-learning in first year

| Term | Fall 2017 | Fall 2018 | Fall 2019 | Fall 2020 | Fall 2021 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Cohort | 2,262 | 2,102 | 2,179 | 2,365 | 2,034 |
| Satisfactory Performance Rate | 75.2% | 76.5% | 79.4% | 72.8% | 71% |
| Retention Rate | | | | | |
| Enrolled 2 nd Fall | 72.3% | 73.5% | 72.7% | 74.2% | 70.3% |
| Enrolled 3 rd Fall | 61.7% | 61.7% | 62.9% | 62.2% | |
| Enrolled 4 th Fall | 57.1% | 57.2% | 56.9% | | |
| Enrolled 5 th Fall | 29.3% | 29.3% | | | |
| Graduation Rate | | | | | |
| Graduated within 4 years | 27.0% | 26.9% | | | |
| Graduated within 5 years | 45.2% | | | | |

Gap in 1 Year Retention Rate Targeted vs Non-targeted Students



Virtual Tutoring Program

The Virtual Tutoring Program (VTP) provides academic and social support for elementary and secondary students, professional experience for college students, and an opportunity for the UWM community to support the education of young people in the City of Milwaukee. This is a free service to K-12 children and their families that began in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The VTP seeks to combat the educational equity gap that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic with trained volunteers and interns. Guardians can register their children for this free program and select the type of tutoring support to best meet their children's needs.

During the 2022-23 academic year, 89 tutors assisted 146 tutees. Of the 146 "tutees," 143 live in Wisconsin, and 120 attended schools in the City of Milwaukee. Over the course of the year, the 89 tutors engaged in 1,169 hours of tutoring and instructional prep work through VTP. These are hours are included in the total service-learning hours.

Student Service Record Program

Through the Student Service Record (SSR) Program UWM students track their regular volunteer hours with the goal of logging at least 75 hours to obtain a certificate. Students who log over 100 hours of service obtain graduation cords to honor their service at the graduation ceremony.

In the 2022-23 academic year, 29 students participated in the SSR program. These 29 students completed 1,847 hours of community volunteer service work; 361 of those hours were from service-learning courses.

During the 2022-2023 school year, SET and the Nutritional Sciences program collaborated to create an SSR requirement for incoming Nutritional Sciences Students that will start with students enrolled in NUTR 101 in fall 2023. Through their course of studies, Nutrition majors will accumulate over 75 hours of service through service-learning and earn an SSR certificate. The SSR requirement shores up a culture of service and experiential learning in the program and provides multiple opportunities for students to engage in applied learning.



Image: Service Learners and Professor from NUTR 305 "Hunger at Home"

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Big Brothers Big Sisters is an independent affiliate of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, the nation's oldest and largest youth mentoring organization. For over 110 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has implemented, developed, and perfected its unique, evidence-based, professionally supported one-to-one mentoring model across the country.

Each week K-12 students meet with volunteer mentors during or after the school day at one of our partner elementary or middle school locations. Through the support of their mentors, children develop positive attitudes toward school, achieve higher grades, become more confident, and improve relationships with adults and peers.

Mentoring matches participate in a variety of activities, such as reading together, going to the school library, working on homework, participating in group activities, or playing on the playground. All interaction between children and mentors is overseen by Big Brothers Big Sisters' professional staff to ensure child safety, coach matches through difficult situations, and monitor progress toward goals.

Figure 66: Big Brothers Big Sisters “bigs” and students served

| Returning “bigs” | New “bigs” | K-12 Students Served |
|------------------|------------|---|
| 22 | 36 | 64 served in 2022-2023. Students were at MPS Maryland Avenue Montessori, MPS Hartford University School, MPS MacDowell Montessori, MPS Cass Street School, and Catholic East School (all K-8 schools) |

Alternative Spring Break

Participation in the Alternative Spring Break trip returned to pre-pandemic levels. This year, 36 students traveled to Asheville, North Carolina, to participate in a week of service and outdoor adventure activities. Through a partnership with Asheville Buncombe Christian Community Ministries, Manna Food Bank, Black Mountain Children’s Home, and Asheville Greenworks, students engaged in service with organizations that focus on issues of food insecurity, environmental sustainability, veteran rehabilitation, and homelessness. In total, students completed 720 hours of service on the trip.



Image: Students landscaping with Greenworks



Image: Sorting and packaging rice with MANNA Food Bank



Image: Students at the entrance of ABCCM Transformation Village



Image: UWM students at Black Mountain Home for Children

Panther Response Team

The Panther Response Team (PRT) continues its work in the Greater Milwaukee Area and throughout the State of Wisconsin to support individuals and communities in times of acute and chronic crisis. PRT programming integrates episodic events and service trips and connects the UWM community to a variety of independent service and training opportunities. In all, PRT tracked a total of 319 hours of service in the 2022-2023 academic year.

The PRT participated in food sorting at Feeding America, building homes with Habitat for Humanity in the Harambee neighborhood, providing free home repairs to low-income families with Revitalize MKE in the Muskego Way neighborhood, and connecting homeless and at-risk veterans to resources through the MKE Stand Down event. The total hours of service for these events were 193 hours.



Image: Students sorting food at Feeding America warehouse



Image: Group of students who volunteered at Feeding America



Image: Students working together at a Habitat for Humanity build site



Image: Students framing a house with Habitat for Humanity

In summer 2023, UWM students from the Panther Response Team engaged in service with Door County Habitat for Humanity, completing a total of 126 hours of service at a home build in Sturgeon Bay and at the Door County ReStore. UWM's Outdoor Pursuits joined the volunteers on their day away from the volunteer sites for a day of outdoor adventure that included hiking and kayaking.



Image: Students at Habitat Build



Image: Students kayaking in Door County



Image: ReStore in Door County



Image: Students at Habitat Build

Adopt-a-River Program

UWM continues to partner with Milwaukee Riverkeeper with our adoption of four sections along the Milwaukee River. These sections are Lincoln Park, Gordon Park, Kern Park, and Caesar's Park. More than 20 of the river cleanups have been at Lincoln Park, and the Friends of Lincoln Park group, a longtime community partner, has played an integral role in the success of this program.

Students from the service-learning courses BUS ADM 100, PHILO 337, and CES 210, along with students and staff from Undergraduate Admissions, the Office of Undergraduate Research, MKE Scholars, and WaterMarks participated in cleanups throughout the 22-23 academic year. In total, the Adopt-a-River program tracked 2,562 hours of service.



Image: BUS 100 Service-Learning River Clean Up

BUS ADM 100 and Expanding Service-Learning Opportunities

During fall 2022, 502 BUS ADM 100 students participated in 31 Adopt-A-River events. Each event was a total of three hours, resulting in a total of 1,506 service-learning hours. In spring 2023, 109 BUS ADM 100 students participated in nine Adopt-a-River events, each event was a total of three hours resulting in 327 service-learning hours. The events were held at five locations along the Milwaukee River Basin, including Kern Park, Gordon Park, Caesar Park, Lincoln Park, and UWM campus.

As part of the BUS ADM 100 service-learning project, students conducted brand audits. Upon completion of the brand audits, students wrote reflections connecting their experiences with the river cleanups to the concept of corporate responsibility. The success of this program created expanded service-learning opportunities. CES 210 and PHILO 337 students participated in Adopt-a-River cleanups for the first time. Students from these courses engaged in 27 and 18 hours of service, respectively.

Cross-Campus Collaboration

SET facilitated a river cleanup in partnership with River Revitalization Foundation (RRF) at Gordon Park that provided a service opportunity for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions during their training retreat. RRF's high-level history brief on the land and river where the park resides gave context for the staff members' service work. A total of 40 staff members from Office of Undergraduate Admissions participated in a two-hour cleanup, resulting in 80 hours of service.

In July, 20 students and two staff members from the Office of Undergraduate Research participated in a river cleanup at Caesar's Park. Their efforts resulted in 44 hours of service. That same month, SET collaborated with WaterMarks and Friends of Lincoln Park to coordinate a river cleanup at Lincoln Park. The event drew 10 volunteers and resulted in 20 hours of service.



Image: Office of Undergraduate Admissions



Image: Office of Undergraduate Research

MKE Scholars

Between July 11th- August 9th SET staff collaborated with the [MKE Scholars Program](#) to design and facilitate an Environmental Science Program that met once a week for six weeks. The program encouraged students to maintain an open mind as they left their comfort zone and immersed themselves in parts of the Milwaukee area they may have never noticed or had the opportunity to enjoy. 30 students traveled to six sites, worked alongside eight community partners, and provided 540 hours of service to our community.

Over the course of the program, MKE Scholars:

- partnered with Friends of Lincoln Park, WaterMarks, and MKE Riverkeeper for a river cleanup at Lincoln Park
- engaged in habitat restoration and navigated the Milwaukee River by canoe and kayak with River Revitalization Foundation
- hiked the woodland loop, western meadows, and Nipising Terrace while removing Brittle Stem Hemp Nettle with Schlitz Audubon Nature Center
- removed St John's Wort to help promote prairie growth with the land management team at the Menomonee Valley Urban Ecology Center
- ended the summer with UWM's Office of Sustainability, to learn about UWM's green infrastructure, and explore the night skies at the planetarium.



Image: MKE Scholars at Lincoln Park



Image: MKE Scholars at Schlitz Audubon Cetner

Make a Difference Days (MADD)

Each year UWM leads two city-wide episodic events called Make a Difference Days. These events are held in late fall and mid-spring for UWM students and students from other nearby colleges and universities. The participants do a morning of service helping to prepare the homes of community elders for the coming season. In the fall this can mean raking leaves, putting up storm windows and moving patio furniture to the garage. In spring, students usually rake again, bring patio furniture back out, and weed gardens. The elders who are served on these days are clients of Eastside Senior Services and Eras Senior Network, which is a countywide organization. In fall 2022, there were approximately 400 volunteers, and in spring 2023 there were approximately 350 volunteers. The total service hours completed for these events was approximately three hours per student, or 2,250 hours total.



Image: Students at MADD



Image: Members of the UWM swim team and coach at MADD

Looking Forward

This year we were able to develop new service-learning courses in collaboration with faculty and instructors, and we will continue to work across the university to make service-learning more widely available and increase access to these courses for all students. While we continue this evolution of service-learning at UWM, we also plan to reinvigorate our co-curricular service options to provide additional low stakes, experiential, and meaningful ways for students to engage with SET, learn about our office's mission, and understand how to take next steps in their career and personal development through service-learning, internships, on-campus employment, and career advising.

SET ensures students are ready to be active, community-minded citizens who are prepared for the workforce and builds capacity at local nonprofits, government organizations, and businesses. Our structure facilitates programs and experiences that combine the power of community engagement with career development, adding value for students and stakeholders beyond UWM. Most important, engaged learning is key to student success. This type of learning has positive impacts on retention and graduation rates, especially for students who are historically unrepresented and underserved in higher education. SET will continue to expand opportunities instruction wide to ensure all students have access to engaged learning, while also focusing on making these opportunities accessible to students who are historically underserved.

In a socioeconomic environment that is at best questioning and at times hostile to the idea of a college education, we must demonstrate the value of a UWM degree to the individual and to the public. SET's community engagement efforts are integral to UWM's value proposition to students and to the broader community and places UWM on the leading edge of career development and experiential learning practice in higher education.