

Developing a Campus-Wide Service Initiative at BYU-Idaho: A Deep Dive

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Introduction: Implementing a campus-wide service program at BYU-Idaho can boost student engagement and strengthen school unity by involving the entire campus in meaningful service. Below is a deep dive into key areas: implementation strategies, case studies, student engagement research, success metrics, and sustainability.

1. Implementation Strategies for a Large-Scale Service Initiative

Developing a Campus-Wide Service Initiative at BYU-Idaho

Introduction

A successful university-wide service initiative requires thorough planning, strategic execution, and ongoing assessment. Colleges and universities that have implemented similar programs provide valuable insights. At BYU-Idaho, such an initiative aligns with the university's mission of fostering discipleship and community engagement. This paper examines best practices for implementing a large-scale service event, drawing on relevant research and case studies from other institutions.

Implementation Strategies for a Large-Scale Service Initiative

Launching a university-wide service initiative requires extensive planning, coordination, and student involvement. Best practices from other institutions and student affairs experts emphasize the following:

- **Early Planning and Clear Organization:** Planning should begin well in advance to avoid scheduling conflicts with major campus events (NobleHour, 2023). Large service events involve multiple logistical components, including volunteer recruitment, community partnerships, and marketing (NobleHour, 2023). Establishing a steering committee comprising student leaders, staff, and faculty advisors ensures effective coordination.
- **Student Leadership Involvement:** Engaging student leaders early enhances participation. At Nazareth College, upperclassmen serve as site leaders for their Day of Service, receiving training to coordinate projects and facilitate reflections (NobleHour, 2023). BYU-Idaho can similarly empower disciple-leader volunteers to take charge of subcommittees.
- **Community Partnerships:** Collaborating with local organizations ensures that service projects address genuine community needs (NobleHour, 2023). Establishing long-term relationships with schools, nonprofits, and city services in Rexburg can enhance project sustainability.

- **Meaningful and Safe Projects:** Providing students with a clear understanding of their impact increases buy-in. For example, explaining that clearing trails enables disabled children to access therapeutic horseback riding emphasizes service significance (NobleHour, 2023). Additionally, implementing safety protocols ensures participant well-being.
- **Effective Communication and Publicity:** A robust communication plan utilizing social media, campus email, digital signage, and word-of-mouth is crucial for recruitment and engagement (NobleHour, 2023).
- **Logistics and Support:** Planning essential logistics early, such as transportation, materials, and contingency plans, ensures smooth operations. Transportation is a common barrier; arranging shuttles for off-campus projects will improve participation (News and Events, 2023). Additionally, preparing for weather contingencies and unexpected cancellations ensures flexibility in execution (NobleHour, 2023).
- **Student Training and Reflection:** Incorporating a reflection component maximizes student learning and unity. Training student project leaders to guide reflections enhances the impact of the service experience (NobleHour, 2023).
- **Recognition and Thanks:** Providing T-shirts, thank-you luncheons, or a celebratory rally boosts morale and reinforces a culture of service (NobleHour, 2023). Recognizing volunteers in a campus devotional can further institutionalize service as part of BYU-Idaho's identity.

By following these implementation strategies, BYU-Idaho can design a well-structured initiative. In practice, this might look like establishing an "I-Serve Day" committee under Student Activities (building on the existing I-Serve program) with student directors for projects, logistics, publicity, etc., all working months in advance to deliver a seamless, inspiring day of service.

Case Studies of Successful Campus Service Initiatives

Examining service initiatives at other universities highlights key success factors:

- **Nazareth College's Orientation Day of Service:** This program integrates service into new student orientation, engaging 500+ students annually in meaningful projects (NobleHour, 2023).
- **George Washington University's Freshman Day of Service:** This large-scale event mobilizes 2,400+ freshmen for a day of community engagement (NobleHour, 2023).
- **University of Pittsburgh's Make a Difference Day (PMADD):** PMADD attracts over 3,500 students, coordinating transportation to various service sites (NobleHour, 2023).
- **The Big Event (Nationwide):** Originating at Texas A&M University, this student-run service day fosters school spirit and civic engagement (WJKK WJKF, 2023).
- **Faith-Based Campus Initiatives:** Indiana Wesleyan University integrates service into its Christian mission, fostering ongoing volunteerism (IWU, 2023).

Student Engagement Research: Motivations, Incentives, and Barriers

Understanding student motivations and barriers to participation is essential for maximizing engagement:

- **Altruism and Social Connection:** Studies indicate that students are motivated by a desire to help others and build relationships (Lander University Honors College, 2023).
- **Professional and Personal Development:** Volunteering enhances leadership skills, resumes, and personal fulfillment (Lander University Honors College, 2023).
- **Invite Culture:** Direct invitations from peers or faculty significantly increase participation (Lander University Honors College, 2023).
- **Time Constraints and Flexibility:** Offering short-term projects or shifts accommodates busy student schedules (Lander University Honors College, 2023).
- **Logistical Barriers:** Transportation solutions, such as shuttles or carpools, remove participation barriers (News and Events, 2023).
- **Incentives and Recognition:** Providing free T-shirts, food, and certificates enhances participation without detracting from service's intrinsic value (Daily Bruin, 2023).

Measuring Success: Metrics and Evaluation

Evaluating the initiative's impact involves both quantitative and qualitative measures:

- **Participation Rates:** Tracking student involvement provides insights into engagement levels.
- **Service Output:** Measuring total volunteer hours and completed projects quantifies the initiative's impact.
- **Follow-Up Engagement:** Monitoring ongoing student participation in service opportunities assesses long-term influence.
- **Surveys and Reflections:** Pre- and post-event surveys gauge changes in students' sense of community and engagement.
- **Community Feedback:** Partner organizations' evaluations help refine future initiatives.

Gaining Administrative and Faculty Support

Institutional backing is critical for sustainability:

- **Aligning with BYU-Idaho's Mission:** Positioning service as "Discipleship in Action" reinforces alignment with university values (BYU-Idaho, 2023).
- **Building a Coalition of Supporters:** Engaging administrators, faculty, and student leaders enhances program legitimacy.
- **Securing Funding and Resources:** Proposing a dedicated budget, pursuing grants, and leveraging community sponsorships ensure financial stability.
- **Integrating into Campus Culture:** Embedding the initiative into orientation or Homecoming enhances institutional commitment.

Sustainability: Ensuring Long-Term Impact

To establish the initiative as a lasting tradition:

- **Institutionalize the Program:** A Service Initiative Council can oversee planning and execution annually.
- **Develop Leadership Succession Plans:** Training underclassmen as future leaders ensures continuity.
- **Secure Ongoing Funding:** Establishing a dedicated budget line supports program sustainability.
- **Embed in Traditions:** Naming the event and incorporating it into major campus events fosters a lasting legacy.

By following these implementation strategies, BYU-Idaho can design a well-structured initiative. In practice, this might look like establishing an “I-Serve Day” committee under Student Activities (building on the existing I-Serve program) with student directors for projects, logistics, publicity, etc., all working months in advance to deliver a seamless, inspiring day of service.

2. Case Studies of Successful Campus Service Initiatives

Looking at how other universities have implemented campus-wide service programs can provide inspiration and proven tactics. Below are a few case studies highlighting success factors and impact.

Nazareth College – Orientation Day of Service

Nazareth College (NY) has run an Orientation Day of Service for over 20 years, making service a staple of welcoming new students (NobleHour, 2023). Each fall, more than 500 incoming students, along with faculty and staff mentors, volunteer at approximately 25 sites in the community, contributing around 1,700 service hours in a single day (NobleHour, 2023). The program introduces students to the college’s mission of service and local needs from the start. A key outcome is long-term engagement: about 93% of participants are expected to volunteer again with those community partners, many through work-study or service-learning positions (NobleHour, 2023; NobleHour, 2023).

Takeaway: Tying a service event to freshman orientation can establish service as a core aspect of campus identity and encourage sustained volunteerism. BYU-Idaho could adapt this by integrating a service project into its “Get Connected” new-student orientation week, leveraging the enthusiasm of freshmen eager to meet peers and serve.

George Washington University – Freshman Day of Service

George Washington University (GWU) in Washington, D.C. hosts an annual Freshman Day of Service every September, engaging first-year students in community projects. The scale is impressive—over 2,400 freshmen, along with faculty and staff, collaborate with dozens of D.C. organizations, contributing more than 8,000 service hours in a single day (NobleHour, 2023). Projects address a wide range of causes, including environmental conservation, veteran support, neighborhood clean-ups, and health education (NobleHour, 2023). The event enjoys

strong institutional support, often featuring opening remarks from university leaders and coordination by the GWU Center for Civic Engagement.

Takeaway: High participation can be achieved by making the event a widely advertised, expected part of the campus calendar with broad institutional backing. A proportional goal might be to engage several thousand students (e.g., aiming for 50% of the student body) in a single day of service.

University of Pittsburgh – Pitt Make a Difference Day (PMADD) and Orientation Service

The University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) has cultivated a culture of service through multiple large-scale events. During freshman orientation, the university added a service afternoon where approximately 667 new students performed over 2,000 hours of service with 20 local organizations before classes began (NobleHour, 2023). This early exposure “acts as a catalyst” for ongoing community involvement and introduces students to their new city in a meaningful way (NobleHour, 2023).

Later in October, Pitt hosts “Make A Difference Day,” a campus-wide day of service open to all students. PMADD now gathers more than 3,500 student volunteers annually to assist 115+ organizations across the region, amassing over 13,000 hours of service in a single day (NobleHour, 2023; NobleHour, 2023). The university coordinates buses to transport volunteers to service sites across Pittsburgh.

Takeaway: Hosting both an orientation service project and a fall community service day can engage different student cohorts (new and returning students) and build momentum for campus-wide service initiatives. Additionally, large public universities illustrate the importance of logistics—Pitt’s hundreds of sites and bus routes require careful coordination. BYU-Idaho’s initiative can begin with fewer service sites but should ensure transportation is provided for off-campus projects.

The Big Event – Nationwide Student-Run Service Day

The Big Event is a student-run day of service that originated at Texas A&M University in the 1980s and has since spread to dozens of campuses nationwide. It is promoted as “the largest one-day, student-run service project in the nation,” mobilizing thousands of students to express gratitude to their local communities through volunteer work (WJJK WJKF, 2023). For example, Virginia Tech’s Big Event engages around 3,500 student volunteers in 450 community projects in a single day, while Florida State University’s Big Event involves students from multiple colleges in the city working together.

Takeaway: Establishing a tradition of a large annual service day, led by a student committee, can promote school spirit and strengthen town-gown relations. BYU-Idaho could create its own signature “Big Service” day, potentially branded with a unique name tied to BYU’s mission, to unite students in serving Rexburg and surrounding communities each year.

Faith-Based Campus Initiatives

Many faith-based institutions integrate service directly into their spiritual missions. Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU), for example, emphasizes “campus-wide service initiatives designed to bring the entire community together to support a common cause,” such as donation drives or community improvement projects (Indiana Wesleyan University, 2023). These initiatives provide students with opportunities to “live out the mission of Christ” through daily acts of service (Indiana Wesleyan University, 2023).

This mirrors BYU-Idaho’s ethos of “discipleship in action” through service (BYU-Idaho, 2023).

Takeaway: Framing service as a form of discipleship or living out one’s values can be a strong motivator for students at faith-based schools. BYU-Idaho should leverage its Latter-day Saint (LDS) culture—where service is a fundamental principle—by emphasizing that participating in the initiative is a way to build Zion-like unity on campus and follow Christian teachings of charity.

Each of these examples demonstrates high student engagement and positive outcomes (from immediate impact in the community to long-term student development). Common threads are strong institutional support, integration into campus traditions (orientation or annual events), and student-led execution. BYU-Idaho can draw on these models to design a program that fits its scale and values. For instance, an “I-Serve Day” during Homecoming week or at the end of each semester could become a BYU-Idaho tradition that students anticipate, much like other schools anticipate their Day of Service.

3. Student Engagement Research – Motivations, Incentives, and Barriers

Understanding Student Engagement in Service

To effectively engage BYU-Idaho students in service, it is crucial to understand both their motivations for participating and the obstacles that may prevent them from getting involved. Research on college student volunteerism provides several key insights.

Altruism and Connection as Key Motivators

Studies consistently show that college students are strongly motivated by a desire to help others and form social connections. One campus survey found that students were “strongly altruistic, motivated by gratitude and a desire for connection rather than by external affirmation” (Lander University Honors College, 2023). Volunteering provides students with a sense of purpose, an opportunity to belong to a community, and personal fulfillment. Research indicates that sharing a social identity as volunteers can “promote feelings of belonging” and improve well-being—an important factor in fostering campus unity (Lander University Honors College, 2023). Many BYU-Idaho students, influenced by Latter-day Saint (LDS) values of service and past mission experiences, likely resonate with these altruistic and social motivations.

Secondary Benefits

Students also recognize and seek out the personal benefits of service. In one analysis, college volunteers noted career and skill development (practicing leadership, gaining experience for resumes) and stress relief as key perks of volunteering (Lander University Honors College, 2023; Working with College Student Volunteers, 2023). Serving can be a healthy break from academic demands and a chance to learn new skills or apply classroom knowledge (Working with College Student Volunteers, 2023). Highlighting these benefits in recruitment messaging can attract students who might initially be more drawn to professional or personal growth aspects. For example, BYU-Idaho could advertise that participation in the initiative not only contributes to the community but also helps students build leadership skills and enhance their résumés.

“Invite Culture” – The Power of Asking

A significant barrier for many students is not unwillingness but rather not being directly asked. Research at one university found that many students were simply “awaiting an invite to volunteer,” and targeted personal invitations helped convert interest into action (Lander University Honors College, 2023). This is particularly relevant at BYU-Idaho, where a close-knit campus community makes word-of-mouth recruitment highly effective. The initiative could incorporate personal outreach, such as church group leaders, professors, and peers individually encouraging students to participate. Additionally, making volunteer sign-ups easily accessible—such as booths at the MC, quick online registration, and announcements in classes and ward meetings—can minimize common deterrents such as students feeling uninformed or not personally invited.

Time Constraints and Flexibility

The number one barrier reported by college volunteers is lack of time (Lander University Honors College, 2023). Busy class schedules, employment, family responsibilities, and church callings can make it difficult for students to find time for service. To address this challenge, the service initiative should be designed with flexible, time-efficient options. For example, offering short-duration projects or shifts (e.g., two- to three-hour projects between classes) can accommodate students with limited availability (Lander University Honors College, 2023). Many students prefer one-time or brief commitments that fit into their schedules. BYU-Idaho’s current “Stop and Serve” model, which provides quick drop-in service activities between classes (BYU-Idaho, 2023), already caters to busy students. Expanding this concept during the campus-wide event—such as offering morning and afternoon shifts—could encourage greater participation from students unable to commit to an entire day.

Logistical Barriers

Beyond time constraints, practical issues such as transportation can deter student involvement. A common obstacle is access to transportation for off-campus projects. One volunteerism study found that some students, even when they have time, “do not always have access to

transportation to go somewhere” to volunteer (News and Events, 2023). BYU-Idaho should address this by providing campus shuttles or coordinating carpools for off-campus service sites. Alternatively, focusing on projects within walking distance of campus may increase accessibility. Additional barriers may include lack of information about what to expect or apprehension about performing unfamiliar tasks. Clear communication, pre-service training, and grouping volunteers into teams can help alleviate these concerns and improve participation.

Incentives and Rewards

While extrinsic rewards are not the primary motivator for most student volunteers, incentives can help boost turnout by reducing friction or indecision. Offering fun incentives such as free T-shirts, food, or prize drawings aligns with the college culture of valuing free giveaways. For example, UCLA’s Volunteer Day organizers provided free shirts, hats, movie tickets, and lunch to participants, and some students admitted that “the free stuff made a difference” in convincing them to volunteer despite other commitments (Daily Bruin, 2023). At BYU-Idaho, modest incentives such as a commemorative T-shirt or a post-service social event with refreshments could attract students who are on the fence about participating. Additionally, recognizing volunteers through certificates, social media shout-outs, or a letter of appreciation from university leadership could appeal to students who value résumé-building opportunities. However, it is important to frame incentives as gestures of appreciation rather than the primary reason to participate, as research cautions that excessive material incentives can undermine the spirit of volunteerism (Daily Bruin, 2023).

Student Preferences

When given the opportunity, students often prefer service activities that align with their interests or allow them to serve alongside friends. Allowing volunteers to choose from a variety of projects (e.g., environmental clean-up, tutoring children, visiting the elderly) or sign up in groups (so clubs, roommates, or church congregations can serve together) can enhance engagement. Even for large-scale events where individual choice is limited, providing options—such as indicating a preference for indoor vs. outdoor projects or selecting a cause they care about—can increase motivation (NobleHour, 2023). To maximize participation, BYU-Idaho’s initiative could offer a mix of service opportunities, including physically active projects (trash cleanup, landscaping), interpersonal engagements (hospital or nursing home visits), and skills-based contributions (family history indexing, free tutoring sessions).

Limitations

One of the biggest limitations of the proposed campus-wide service initiative is the lack of direct connection with both the school and the students. Without strong ties to the student body and the campus culture, the initiative risks being seen as an external event rather than an integral part of the BYU-Idaho experience. Many students are motivated by personal invitations and social connections, yet if the initiative does not create a structured way to integrate service into student life—such as through academic programs, student organizations, or ward communities—participation may remain limited. Additionally, students may not see the initiative

as directly tied to the school and campus culture. A successful initiative would need to go beyond one-time service events and foster a sustained culture of giving that is embedded within campus traditions and student networks. Without this integration, the program may struggle to achieve long-term engagement and impact.

Conclusion

BYU-Idaho students are naturally inclined toward service but face common barriers associated with college life. Emphasizing the intrinsic rewards—helping others, living faith through service, and forming meaningful connections—while addressing practical concerns such as time constraints and transportation will encourage broad participation. The initiative should foster a culture of personal invitation, ensuring that every student feels that their contribution is valued. Creating a fun, social atmosphere around the service event—with music, group unity, and shared purpose—while celebrating the altruistic values that BYU-Idaho students hold will help maximize engagement.

4. Measuring Success: Metrics and Evaluation of Impact

To ensure the service initiative is meeting its goals of increasing student engagement and campus unity, BYU-Idaho will need to define metrics of success and evaluation methods. Both quantitative and qualitative measures are important.

Participation Numbers: Track the number of students, faculty, and staff who take part. A high turnout indicates strong engagement. This can be measured as an absolute number (e.g., 2,000 participants) and as a percentage of the student body. Many successful programs boast large involvement – for example, Pitt’s Make a Difference Day drew 3,500 students (NobleHour, 2023), and GWU involved over 2,400 freshmen (NobleHour, 2023). BYU-Idaho might set targets such as “X% of on-campus students participate in at least one service project during the initiative.” Participation can further be broken down by demographics to ensure broad appeal across freshmen, seniors, different majors, etc. If certain groups (such as international students or online track students) are underrepresented, additional outreach can be planned.

Service Output: Quantify the collective impact through metrics like total service hours contributed and count of community projects completed. These numbers provide a tangible gauge of effort. For instance, logging over 8,000 service hours in one day (as GWU did) or 13,000 hours (Pitt) is not only a great soundbite but also demonstrates to administrators and stakeholders the magnitude of student contributions (NobleHour, 2023). BYU-Idaho can require each team leader to report hours and tasks accomplished (or use an online platform to log hours), then sum up the campus-wide totals. Comparing these metrics year over year will show growth or areas to improve.

Follow-Up Engagement: One of the ultimate goals is sustained engagement—ensuring that students continue serving beyond the single event. A key metric, therefore, is post-event volunteerism. BYU-Idaho can monitor how many participants sign up for future service

opportunities, such as joining the ongoing weekly I-Serve programs or volunteering again next semester. In the Nazareth College case, 93% of Day of Service participants went on to volunteer again with community partners (NobleHour, 2023), indicating the event successfully funneled students into long-term service. BYU-Idaho could administer a short survey or use sign-in data to see what percentage of students in the big event pledge or follow through with another service activity in the following months. An increasing percentage would mean the initiative is truly sparking a culture of service rather than a one-off experience.

Surveys of Student Impact: To assess changes in student attitudes and campus unity, use pre- and post-event surveys or reflections. Before the initiative, participants can be surveyed about their current sense of connection to campus, their understanding of the university's mission, or their baseline volunteer activity. After the event (or at semester's end), surveying them again with the same questions can help measure impact. Positive changes in statements like "I feel a sense of belonging at BYU-Idaho" or "I have formed friendships through this program" or "I plan to continue serving" would suggest increased unity and engagement. Qualitative feedback is valuable as well—open-ended questions about what students learned or how their view of BYU-Idaho changed can offer deeper insights. Often, students report feeling more connected to peers and school after working together on service projects, which aligns with research linking volunteerism to belonging and well-being (Lander University Honors College, 2023).

Campus Unity Indicators: Unity is somewhat abstract, but there are proxies to measure it. One could be intergroup participation: did the event attract students from a wide range of social circles (different societies, majors, church congregations)? For example, if dorm floor A and floor B never interacted before but now partner on a service project, that's increased unity. Tracking the number of different campus organizations involved (clubs, departments, church wards) can indicate bridging of groups. Additionally, reduced reports of campus cliques or higher ratings on campus climate surveys about "students care about each other" could indirectly reflect improved unity. BYU-Idaho might also look at retention rates—students who feel connected are more likely to stay enrolled. While many factors affect retention, a rise that correlates with the expansion of service programs could be a positive sign.

Community Feedback: Measuring the external impact and relationships is also important. Gathering feedback from community partners on the quality of work done and the reliability of BYU-Idaho volunteers is a valuable metric. Positive community testimonials (e.g., a local nursing home reporting that students continue to visit residents after the big service day) show the program's broader value. It also helps maintain campus unity by fostering a shared pride in representing BYU-Idaho to the community. The number of returning community partners each year can be another metric—if organizations eagerly want to host BYU-Idaho volunteers again, it indicates a successful partnership.

Reflection Events and Stories: Consider hosting a post-event forum or devotional where students share experiences. The turnout at such reflection events and the anecdotes of personal growth can be qualitative measures of success. For example, if a student testifies that through the service initiative they "felt the Spirit of service and made friends from different walks

of life,” that story illustrates increased unity and fulfills the university’s purpose in a way numbers alone cannot.

In practical terms, BYU-Idaho should create an evaluation plan at the outset of the initiative. This could include designing a quick survey for participants (perhaps distributed via the BYU app or email right after the event), tracking statistics via sign-in sheets or an online system like GivePulse—which many campuses use to log service hours and produce impact reports (Community Engagement Best Practices, 2023)—and compiling a report each year. These metrics will not only demonstrate success to administrators and potential funders but also highlight areas to refine. For example, if participation from upperclassmen is low, the team can strategize new outreach to seniors next time. If student feedback indicates they didn’t feel the projects were useful enough, the committee can vet project sites more carefully or include more education about community needs.

Metrics Summary: To illustrate, BYU-Idaho might report after Year 1 of the initiative: “500 students (10% of campus) participated in the inaugural service day, contributing 1,200 volunteer hours to 15 community projects. 85% of surveyed participants agreed that they met new people and felt more connected to BYU-Idaho as a result of serving. Additionally, 60% have already signed up for another volunteer activity on campus. Community partners rated their experience 4.8/5, and several are planning follow-up opportunities for students. Areas to improve include increasing participation among married students and providing more training on-site (per student comments).” Such data-driven insights will help the program grow and continually align with its goals of engagement and unity.

5. Sustainability: Ensuring Long-Term Impact and Continuity

Launching the program is just the beginning—the goal is for the service initiative to remain impactful and continue for years to come, becoming a lasting part of BYU-Idaho’s culture. Here are approaches to achieve sustainability:

Institutionalize the Program: Making the service initiative a permanent fixture rather than a one-off campaign ensures continuity. This could mean establishing a dedicated Service Initiative Committee or Council that operates every year. For example, BYU (Provo) has a Service Council of student leaders who oversee dozens of programs with guidance from a full-time director (BYU Service Council, n.d.). They train new leaders annually and ensure continuity in program administration (BYU Service Council, n.d.). BYU-Idaho can create a similar structure: a Service Initiative Council comprising students (perhaps selected through an application process each year) and an advisor from Student Life. This council’s responsibility would be to plan the annual service day/week and manage ongoing service events. By having an official council or organization, knowledge and experience can be passed down each year through training and documentation rather than starting from scratch. It also signals that the initiative is here to stay, with a formal place in the university’s organizational chart.

Develop Leadership Succession Plans: Since student leaders graduate or leave for missions, designing a pipeline for leadership is crucial. One strategy is to involve students from all class years: have freshmen and sophomores serve in committee roles or as project leads, juniors as directors-in-training, and seniors in top coordination roles. This way, underclassmen gain experience and can step up the following year. Mentorship is key—current leaders should mentor their eventual successors. For instance, if a student is logistics coordinator this year, pair them with a junior shadow who can learn and take over next year. Documenting every aspect of planning (budgets, contacts, timelines, checklists) in a shared drive or binder creates institutional memory, preventing loss of knowledge when student personnel changes. An annual debrief report written by the council each year can summarize what worked and what to improve, serving as a guide for the next team.

Secure Ongoing Funding and Resources: If initial funding came from a special grant or donor, planning to transition to a stable source (or cultivating a multi-year commitment from donors) is essential. Additionally, investing in infrastructure that helps continuity—such as a volunteer management platform subscription (like GivePulse or NobleHour)—can streamline participation tracking and organization year over year (Building Campus Unity for Advancing Community Engagement, 2023)

Embed in Traditions and Calendar: As mentioned under administrative support, making the service initiative an annual tradition greatly aids sustainability. Traditions gain their own momentum—students begin to expect them, and even prospective students hear about them. BYU-Idaho could name the event (perhaps something like “I-Serve Day” or a unique title that resonates with campus ethos) and celebrate its anniversary each year. Incorporating it into welcome week, or end-of-semester celebrations ties it to existing campus rhythms. Over time, the service day could become as anticipated as events like concerts or dances. The more it becomes “how we do things at BYU-Idaho,” the less dependent it is on any one person’s enthusiasm. Creating traditions within the event—such as a kickoff prayer or devotional by a General Authority or the University President, a closing social with a slideshow of the day’s service, or a commemorative pin that students collect each year they participate—can also foster a sense of legacy.

Continuous Evaluation and Improvement: A program will last if it continues to be effective and engaging. Using the metrics and feedback (discussed in section 4) each year to make data-informed improvements is crucial. If student interest wanes in certain project types, refreshing the offerings is necessary. If the schedule is an issue (e.g., participants suggest a weeklong flexible format is better than a single day), adapting the model ensures the initiative remains relevant. Showing that the initiative can evolve with student needs will maintain student interest. Additionally, reporting successes back to the campus community will keep buy-in high. Publishing an infographic each year—e.g., “Here’s what we achieved together”—will highlight positive outcomes. When students and staff see consistent impact (such as thousands of hours donated, relationships built, and community projects completed), they will be more likely to continue their support year after year.

Expand Leadership Base: Student government, clubs, honor societies, and church units on campus should be involved. If many groups see a role for themselves in the service initiative, it will not collapse if one group's leadership turns over. For example, the Student Association could handle marketing, the Relief Society and Elders Quorum in each ward could help with volunteer recruitment, and the Outdoor Activities program could assist with logistics for outside projects. This cross-campus collaboration spreads the workload and anchors the program in multiple parts of campus life, which also enhances unity by breaking down silos. The GivePulse case study called this creating a “constellation” of stakeholders across the institution for community engagement (Building Campus Unity for Advancing Community Engagement, 2023).

Long-Term Community Partnerships: Sustainability is not just internal—it is also about maintaining consistent relationships with community partners. Nurturing connections with local organizations by communicating year-round—not just when planning the big event—ensures strong relationships. A Community Advisory Board with representatives from the city, nonprofits, and church charities could provide input on community needs and help ensure that service projects remain meaningful and welcomed. When community partners trust that BYU-Idaho volunteers will show up reliably and professionally each year, they may reserve projects specifically for students and advocate for the program (e.g., writing letters of support, offering resources). In turn, students will have consistent sites they love returning to, building tradition (e.g., “I can't wait to go back to the retirement home next Service Day—I want to visit my friend I met there last year”).

Sustaining Impact on Students: Keeping participants engaged beyond the event ensures long-term impact. One idea is to create a certificate or award for sustained service—such as a “BYU-Idaho Service Fellow” recognition for any student who completes the big service day plus 20 more service hours in the year. This kind of program can motivate students to continue serving and stay connected with the initiative's team. It also institutionalizes the expectation of ongoing service. Another approach is holding reunion or follow-up activities, such as hosting a lunch for volunteers to share experiences or organizing optional “service reunions” where teams return to their sites later in the semester. These efforts sustain engagement and help convert one-time volunteers into habitual volunteers.

Succession of Administrative Support: Just as student leaders rotate, so do administrators and faculty champions. To safeguard the program, integrating it into the university's strategic plans or departmental goals ensures continuity. If it is part of official planning documents—such as Student Life's strategic plan to “increase student engagement through service” with this initiative as a strategy—it will remain a priority even if personnel changes. Keeping the Board of Trustees or Church leadership aware of the program's impact can also help sustain it. If Church leadership sees it as a model program, campus leadership will continue to prioritize it. Given BYU-Idaho's Church oversight, aligning the initiative with broader Young Adult or Welfare objectives could even attract support from LDS Philanthropies or coordination with the local Church Welfare Department for projects.

In essence, sustainability comes from making the service initiative part of BYU-Idaho's identity. A shining example is how some schools have kept programs running for decades: Nazareth

College's Orientation Day of Service has lasted over two decades and is still going strong (NobleHour, 2023), and The Big Event at Texas A&M began in 1982 and continues every spring, now led by new students who were not even born when it started. They achieved that longevity by effectively handing down the torch and securing institutional tradition status. BYU-Idaho should aim for the same: ten or twenty years from now, students should arrive on campus knowing that "service to others" is simply what it means to be a BYU-Idaho student.

Actionable Recommendations for BYU-Idaho

Based on the research above, here is a concise list of actionable steps tailored to BYU-Idaho's context to develop and sustain a campus-wide service initiative:

Form a Service Initiative Council: Establish a committee through the Student Activities or Student Support office that includes student leaders (from I-Serve, ASBYUI, etc.), faculty representatives, and a Student Life advisor. Charge this group with planning and executing an annual campus-wide service event. Begin meeting at least 6 months in advance to set goals, assign roles, and coordinate logistics (NobleHour, 2023).

Leverage "Disciple-Leader" Messaging: Brand the initiative in alignment with BYU-Idaho's spiritual mission (e.g., "Disciples in Action Day" or similar). Use scriptures or church leader quotes about service in marketing to inspire students. Emphasize that participating is a way to live their faith and follow Jesus Christ's example of service on campus (BYU-Idaho, 2023).

Schedule an Optimal Date: Select a date or week each semester (or start with annually) that maximizes availability – for example, a Saturday early in the semester, avoiding midterms and holidays. Coordinate with the University Calendar committee so it doesn't conflict with devotional, finals, or large events. Ideally, integrate it into orientation for new students and have a separate all-campus day later in Fall when everyone is settled (NobleHour, 2023).

Diverse Project Options: Curate a range of service projects that cater to different interests and causes (education, environment, community cleanup, helping the elderly, church service projects, etc.). Ensure some on-campus or within-walking-distance projects for those without transport, and arrange buses for off-campus projects (NobleHour, 2023). Partner with LDS Church charities (like FamilySearch indexing or humanitarian kit assembly) to provide familiar and meaningful options alongside community projects (IWU, 2023).

Intensive Volunteer Recruitment: Launch a multi-channel recruitment drive 1-2 months before the event. Ward meetings could announce the initiative and pass around signup sheets (personal invites in church settings could be very effective). Have booths in the MC, use BYUI Social media, the Scroll newspaper, and digital signage. Encourage clubs, societies, and church groups to sign up together to build excitement. Aim for a specific target (e.g., "Help us get 1,000 volunteers!") to create a rallying cry (Lander University Honors College, 2023).

Student Leadership & Training: Recruit student project leaders (perhaps through the existing I-Serve leadership or Student Association) to supervise each service site. Hold a training

meeting for them covering how to manage volunteers, communicate with site staff, and lead reflection. This builds leadership skills and ensures each site has a point person (NobleHour, 2023). Pair new leaders with experienced student volunteers (like those who served missions and have leadership experience) to bolster confidence (BYU-Idaho, 2023).

Logistics and Safety Plan: Early on, reserve necessary resources: transportation (coordinate with Motor Pool or local charter bus), first-aid kits, water, gloves/tools, etc. Have all volunteers sign waivers if required by Risk Management. Create a detailed schedule and assignment list. Also, set up a communication system (GroupMe or texting tree) to keep in touch with site leaders during the event. This prep will minimize day-of confusion (News and Events, 2023).

Kickoff and Reflection Activities: On the service day, start with a unifying kickoff rally – perhaps a prayer, short devotional thought on service by a faculty member or church leader, and a group photo with everyone in their event T-shirts. This gets everyone energized as one body (IWU, 2023). After projects, invite volunteers to a casual reflection gathering or ice cream social on campus to share experiences. You might display a slideshow of photos from the day set to music (which helps students feel proud and part of something big) (NobleHour, 2023).

Appreciation and Recognition: Provide free T-shirts or wristbands with an initiative logo/scripture, so students feel part of a team and can wear them around campus (visual unity!). Feed the volunteers if budget allows (even if just pizza or doughnuts donated by a local business). At the conclusion, thank volunteers profusely – through a thank-you email from the President, shout-outs on social media, and perhaps a feature in devotional (Daily Bruin, 2023). Such recognition reinforces that the university values their service.

Measure and Share Impact: Right after the event, gather metrics: count volunteers, total hours, and collect any quick feedback. Share these in an infographic or report to campus stakeholders and on social media (e.g., “BYU-Idaho students gave 1,200 hours of service in one day, helping 10 local organizations – and 95% of volunteers said they’d do it again!”) (NobleHour, 2023). Celebrate the impact publicly so that those who participated feel a sense of accomplishment and those who didn’t see what they missed.

Integrate with Academics and Co-curriculum: For long-term success, work towards embedding the service initiative into BYU-Idaho’s curriculum and co-curricular programs. Perhaps propose a freshman gateway course module on service that culminates in the service day, or coordinate with the Foundations program to include service as a component (Lander University Honors College, 2023). Encourage faculty to mention the event in class and tie it to coursework where relevant (a sociology class could discuss it in context of community, a business class could volunteer with a nonprofit and then do a case study, etc.). The more service is woven into the educational experience, the more normalized it becomes (News and Events, 2023).

Plan for Year 2 and Beyond: Immediately after the first event, have the Council do a debrief meeting to document lessons learned. Update planning documents. Recruit new members (especially underclassmen) to replace graduating ones. If the event was in Fall, consider a smaller-scale service push in Winter or Spring to maintain momentum. Consistency is key –

avoid a gap where the effort loses steam (NobleHour, 2023). Even if the first year is modest, commit to making it annual. Consistency will build credibility and enthusiasm over time (remember, even the biggest traditions started small) (IWU, 2023).

By following these steps and the research-driven insights provided, BYU-Idaho can create a vibrant campus-wide service initiative that not only engages students in meaningful service but also knits the campus together in unity and love. Over time, this program can become a defining element of the BYU-Idaho experience, showing that at BYU-Idaho, service isn't just something we do – it's who we are (BYU-Idaho, 2023).

Examples of Successful Service Initiatives

1. Every Campus a Refuge (ECAR) – Guilford College

Founded in 2015, **Every Campus a Refuge (ECAR)** encourages colleges and universities to use their resources to provide shelter and support for refugees. Guilford College, the flagship institution, has successfully hosted over 80 refugees, offering housing and integration assistance. Since its inception, ECAR has expanded to 21 campuses, with 18 actively hosting refugees (Every Campus a Refuge, n.d.).

2. Coaching Corps – University-Based Volunteer Coaching

Coaching Corps is a university-based initiative that trains college students as volunteer coaches for underserved youth. With chapters in over 43 universities, the program has engaged more than 1,600 student coaches, positively impacting over 15,000 children annually. By fostering teamwork and mentorship, Coaching Corps enhances both student engagement and community well-being (Coaching Corps, n.d.).

3. Committee of 19 – Auburn University's Hunger Relief Initiative

Auburn University established the **Committee of 19** as part of its War on Hunger campaign to raise awareness and combat food insecurity. The program's name signifies the **daily cost of feeding a hungry child** when the initiative began. The committee leads **fundraising, awareness campaigns, and advocacy efforts** to promote sustainable solutions for hunger, both locally and globally (Committee of 19, n.d.).

4. Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS) – Purdue University

Launched at Purdue University in 1995, **EPICS (Engineering Projects in Community Service)** integrates **engineering and technology-based service-learning**. Students collaborate on engineering projects designed to address local community needs, such as environmental sustainability and accessibility solutions. The program has expanded to 15 universities nationwide, with over 400 students involved in 25 ongoing projects each year (EPICS, n.d.).

5. Community Service Learning – University of Redlands

For over 25 years, the **University of Redlands** has required students to participate in

community service as part of their curriculum. Students engage in a variety of activities, from tutoring at-risk youth to participating in international humanitarian missions. Collectively, Redlands students contribute more than **120,000 hours of service annually** (University of Redlands, n.d.).

6. Green Dot Bystander Intervention

The **Green Dot program** provides bystander intervention training to prevent **power-based personal violence**, including **sexual assault, stalking, and bullying**. Implemented across multiple educational institutions, Green Dot aims to **create a culture of intervention and prevention** through proactive and reactive strategies (Green Dot Bystander Intervention, n.d.).

7. UNC Campus-Wide Service Initiatives

The **University of North Carolina (UNC)** promotes **large-scale campus-wide service initiatives** such as the Week of Welcome, Homecoming, Heritage Month Programming, and the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration. These initiatives aim to foster community engagement and personal development by encouraging students to serve both on and off campus (Carolina Union, n.d.).

8. Mental Health Support & Well-Being Initiatives

Some universities have **expanded mental health support programs** beyond clinical services to help students build resilience and maintain overall well-being. Institutions have implemented **peer support networks, stress reduction programs, and crisis intervention strategies** as part of a holistic approach to student success (Mantra Health, n.d.).

9. Public Health Service Initiatives

Colleges across the U.S. have implemented public health initiatives such as **free menstrual product distribution, food pantries, and harm reduction partnerships** to support students' well-being. These programs aim to address key **health disparities and financial barriers** affecting student success (Reddit Public Health Forum, 2022).

10. Community Service Projects & Engagement Initiatives

Colleges encourage students to **organize cleanup days, conduct food drives, and package meals for homeless shelters** as part of their civic engagement efforts. These community service projects foster a sense of **responsibility, teamwork, and social impact** (SignUpGenius, n.d.).

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