

SMU Service House (SMUSH)

The purpose of the Southern Methodist University Service House is to develop and nurture a community focused on cooperative responsibility, experiential education, and social action in order to promote self-awareness and community understanding. Over the course of the semester, students are required to attend a house retreat, volunteer 30 hours, and attend two reflection sessions. They also learn responsibility through a week-long kitchen duty, cooking a dinner for housemates, and attending weekly House meetings. Membership in SMUSH is based on an application and interview process as well as completion of the contractual requirements outlined in the House Constitution.

Outline of Student Responsibilities:

- a. **House Retreat:** This weekend retreat will occur during the first or second weekend after classes begin and will include a group activity for residents to get to know one another, a group service project at a local agency, learning about a social issue or group of people, and a group reflection about what was learned on the retreat and the upcoming semester. (SLO: a, b, c, d)
- b. **House Meeting:** Students will choose a day and time for all residents to meet weekly (a maximum of two absences are allowed). A House Facilitator will lead the meeting and keep track of attendance. Resident Assistants, House Committee Chairs, Residence Hall Association representatives, and the House Treasurer will provide updates to members and the House Secretary will take notes and email them to all residents and partners. (SLO: a)
- c. **Service Hours:** Residents must obtain 20 individual hours (volunteer opportunities coordinated individually) at one local non-profit agency and 10 house hours (volunteer opportunities with at least three residents that are coordinated by the Service Committee). Hours will be recorded online by midnight on Reading Day each semester and the Residential Community Director will ensure students have met the requirement. (SLO: a, b, d)
- d. **Reflection Sessions:** Residents must attend two reflection sessions each semester. Reflection sessions are coordinated by Resident Assistants (RAs) with the assistance of the Residential Community Director (RCD). One reflection session must be in a group as planned by the RAs and the other may be with the RCD or on an individual level and approved by the RCD. Reflection session may include reading and discussing an article, watching an informational video, or discussing social issues with a faculty/staff member. Through these reflection sessions, students will better understand how social issues affect their community engagement activities, integrate academic learning into their reflection on service and understanding of social issues, and gain support for their volunteering efforts. (SLO: a, b, c, d)
- e. **Kitchen Duties:** Residents will be jointly responsible for cleaning the house kitchen. Students will sign-up for one week of kitchen duty with their roommate each semester and must fulfill the cleaning requirements stated in the House Constitution. Additionally, each roommate pair will cook a House Dinner once a semester. (SLO: d)
- f. **Committee/Leadership Role:** Each student must take a position on a Committee, Residence Hall Association representative, or House Facilitator. Additional responsibilities as House Treasurer, House Secretary, and Committee chair are also available. (SLO: a, d)

Method of assessment:

- a. **Written Reflection** – Residents will complete a three-page essay at the end of the year relating their service experience, social issues they've learned about, and their field of study
- b. **Essay Response Comparison** – Comparison will be drawn from application essay responses from residents' initial application to their reapplication paperwork
- c. **Pre- and Post-Test** – Residents will complete a pre- and post-test to evaluate their knowledge of social issues, skills