Sophomores-Serve is a two-semester program that provides CHC students with hands-on learning and practical skills for engaging with the public. This program focuses on the links between science and public policy.

Using the food environment as a stepping stone, students explore the questions:

- How does where we live influence what we eat?
- What determines the availability of healthful foods in our communities?
- What options do we have as engaged scholars to facilitate changes in a local community and beyond?
Students work individually or in small groups to explore connections between service, research, and public policy. The service sites and service projects provide experiences that have a connection to the food environment, such as housing, transportation, food marketing or farming practices. Current examples of service sites are Amherst Survival Center, Amherst Senior Center, and Not Bread Alone.

Students will complete 30 hours of community service in the fall semester of their sophomore year.

Eligibility

The program is offered to current first-year CHC students of any major. This program is a great match for students interested in public policy, science, and issues related to the food environment.
Application

The application can be found here. The deadline for applying is Friday, March 2, 2018.

Questions?

Please contact Melissa Woglom, director of student programs at Commonwealth Honors College, at melissa@honors.umass.edu or 413.577.3909.

The Courses

“Soph-Serve” courses are led by Lisa M. Troy PhD, assistant professor in the School of Public Health and Health Sciences and Commonwealth Honors College professor in nutrition, who draws upon her experience in the U.S. Senate and with public health programs. Students enroll in the following course sequence:

- Learning through Community Engagement: A Focus on the Food Environment
  - (4 credits, Honors Gen Ed course - Social and Behavioral World and US Diversity, CHC sophomores) This is the first of two courses in the Sophomores-Serve program. It prepares and places students with a community partner. Each student participates in a weekly service placement with a community-based organization that works to improve the quality of life for its constituents. Preparing for and learning from these experiences are a major component of the course. Student experience in service placements are brought into conversation with readings and other course materials as a source of their learning. Students apply observations from their service-learning to discuss the process of public policy, and why research findings often don’t translate to policy decisions.

- Honors 391AHH Sophomores-Serve Seminar
  - (2 credits) This course is the second of two courses in the Sophomores-Serve program and investigates the larger contexts and interconnectedness of individual service placements. A major component of this course is learning to present service-learning experiences and research findings to multiple audiences such as peers, community organizations, and policy-makers to effect change. Written and oral communication is strengthened through development of infographics, policy briefs, or white papers. Students reflect upon the service-learning experience, summarize lessons learned to share with the incoming group of Sophomores-Serve students, and consider building upon the service placement to become an honors thesis or project.

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