Cardinal Quarter Evaluation Report  
Part II: Quality of Student & Community Partner Experiences  
October 30, 2015

This is the second part of a two-part report that summarizes the impact of the 2015 Cardinal Quarter expansion, which was led by the Haas Center in collaboration with 14 partners campus-wide. This report summarizes our findings related to the quality of experience for students and host organizations. The outcomes were overwhelmingly positive and consistent with feedback that we have received in previous years. Findings demonstrate a capacity to scale at a rate of more than 50 additional fellowships in a year without impacting the program quality. Students delved into meaningful, fulfilling and, for some, even life-changing experiences which proved to be of “greater service to the public.” Our conclusion is that Stanford is positioned to engage more students in immersive public service experiences while maintaining high levels of program support.

Both students and placement supervisors were asked to provide feedback to understand the impact of Cardinal Quarter experiences on students and host organizations. In addition, students were invited to a post-summer debriefing event to share their experiences with one another. Of the 408 students who participated in a Cardinal Quarter experience, 332 students completed their work during the summer of 2015. Among the summer Cardinal Quarter participants, 65% of all summer student participants (N=215) responded to surveys regarding their summer public service opportunity. Among community partners who were asked to complete a survey, 70% of summer host organizations (N=100) responded to a survey regarding their impressions of and contributions by students.

A few noteworthy outcomes from the survey results include:

- 93% of student respondents rated their Cardinal Quarter experience as “excellent” or “good”
- 94% of host organization respondents rated their experience hosting students as “valuable” or “extremely valuable”
- 99% of host organization respondents reported they would host a Stanford student again

Our efforts to understand this summer’s Cardinal Quarter experiences combine student self-reports with host organization feedback, which collectively provide a baseline for future assessments across different participating fellowship and internship opportunities. In addition, our assessment explored concepts ranging from the quality of preparation to serve ethically and effectively, supervision and support, impact on student civic identity formation and development
of leadership capacities. Rather than cover each of these topics in detail, we present highlights and key lessons learned from both the student and host organization perspectives.

**Student Feedback on Cardinal Quarter Experience**

Among students who completed a 2015 summer public service experience, 93% of survey respondents (n=197) rated their Cardinal Quarter experience as “excellent” or “good” (Figure 1).

This positive response is consistent with past student feedback and demonstrates Stanford’s ability to scale the number of opportunities while maintaining the quality of program outcomes. For example, 94% of students who reported some involvement in Haas Center for Public Service programs when completing the 2014-2015 Senior Survey (n=380) indicated that they were either “generally satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the experience.

Student impressions of various aspects of their Cardinal Quarter experience were consistently positive (Figure 2). Experiences with host organizations and support from Haas Center staff were rated as “good” or “excellent” by 94% (n=197) and 85% (n=161) of respondents, respectively.

**Figure 1: 2015 Cardinal Quarter Program Evaluation**

**Figure 2: Student Rating of Cardinal Quarter Elements**
The students’ overall service experience and the quality of supervision were also rated positively. Integrating social media as a way for students to stay connected with other students and share their experiences was a program element that was piloted over the summer; two-thirds of students rated the integration of social media as “good” or “excellent” (n=81).

Students indicated that the Cardinal Quarter experience had a strong influence on their future career plans and, to a lesser extent, their future major or academic studies. Among respondents, 91% (n=193) indicated that the Cardinal Quarter was a valuable influence on their future career plans, while 75% (n=158) indicated the experience was a valuable influence on their major or academic plans. The relative drop in influence on future major or academic study is likely due to the number of respondents who were nearing the completion of their undergraduate studies, as 80% of respondents had already declared a major. In open-ended responses, students indicated that the Cardinal Quarter experience influenced them in the following areas: personal growth and development, opportunity for self-reflection on service and values, and learning more about the workworld.

In terms of the nature of work students engaged in during their Cardinal Quarter experience, respondents overwhelmingly reported they were given ownership of assigned projects and engaged in substantive work. Students also reported being provided with the resources to complete project goals (Figure 3). Students were sometimes confronted with plans or goals that changed once they arrived on site, which created opportunities to learn and demonstrate adaptability. This may well be the reason why “project goals were clear” was rated somewhat lower than other aspects of the work experience (though the mean score was still nearly 4.0 on a five-point scale). Hence, we plan to improve how staff work with students and host organizations to ensure that project goals are clear.
In preparation for their Cardinal Quarter experience, students participated in various orientation and training activities. Student feedback on the orientation and preparation activities was generally positive (Figure 4). Academic mentoring, host organization orientation, and Haas Center staff orientation were very highly rated, whereas the data suggests that improvements are possible in the International Public Service & Research Preparation (IPREP) workshop and the development of learning plans. While not all students participated in a pre-field course, the positive feedback from students suggests that this option may warrant future expansion.

![Student Impressions of Orientation and Preparation Efforts](image)

Figure 4: Student Impressions of Cardinal Quarter Orientation & Preparation Efforts

Qualitative analysis of responses to open-ended questions provided additional input from students regarding their Cardinal Quarter experience. For example, while orientation and training experiences for students varied across campus programs, several elements were commonly identified by students as being particularly effective for their preparation, including:

- Providing regionally or culturally specific information and resources
- Developing concise and relevant learning plans that can be adapted to onsite realities and can be used with supervisors and mentors as a mid-point check-in
- Providing opportunities to connect with other students who will embark on a similar experience or have worked with the host organization in the past
Future plans regarding preparation of students will take into consideration these factors as well as incorporate greater uniformity across training activities provided by various campus partners, particularly to ensure the inclusion of the Principles of Ethical and Effective Service.

**Host Organization Feedback on Cardinal Quarter Experiences**

Community partners that served as hosts to students during the summer were also asked to provide feedback on the Cardinal Quarter experience and, as stated earlier, about 70 percent of them (n=100) responded to our survey.

An overwhelming majority (94%) of responding organizations described the value of hosting Stanford students through the Cardinal Quarter program as either “extremely valuable” or “valuable” (Figure 5), and satisfaction ratings on a series of survey elements was extraordinarily high (Figure 6). Furthermore, 99% (n=99) of respondents indicated that they would host a Stanford student again in the future.

![Figure 5: 2015 Cardinal Quarter Host Organization Survey](image)

The individuals who supervised students were also asked to rate various characteristics that students demonstrated over the course of the summer (Figure 7). It is noteworthy that the student qualities that were highly rated by host organizations mirror characteristics that students identified as being most emphasized during training and orientation activities. This suggests that the preparation activities provide a solid foundation prior to their Cardinal Quarter experience. No host organization rated students “poor” in the following categories: willingness to learn,
respect for diversity, spirit of collaboration, ability to think critically, attentiveness to safety, willingness to take initiative, leadership skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host Organizations Evaluation of Student Characteristics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to learn, listen and incorporate feedback (n=98)</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for diversity and differing opinions (n=96)</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit of collaboration (n=97)</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to think critically (n=97)</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humility (n=97)</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability and commitment (n=98)</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attentiveness to safety issues as applicable to the work environment (n=80)</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on understanding and meeting the needs of your organization or a particular project (n=98)</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional etiquette (n=98)</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to take initiative (n=98)</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate clearly and effectively (n=98)</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills (n=89)</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Host Organization Evaluation of Student Characteristics

Qualitative Feedback from Students and Host Organizations
Students and community partners gave feedback through open-ended survey questions and students were also invited to participate in two in-person debriefing sessions. These qualitative data were coded and analyzed. Highlights of the findings are summarized in this section.

Student Qualitative Feedback
Within the 197 student survey responses, the following concepts were articulated when asked what they learned through their Cardinal Quarter experience:

- Greater understanding of the context of social problems and issues impacting the community they were serving (n=134)

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1 This number represents the number of students who mentioned a particular concept in open-ended responses.
• Building relationships with the community served and engaging in collaborative efforts fostered their understanding about different cultures, opinions, and perspectives (n=99)
• Developing new skills in oral communication (n=59), writing (n=57), and critical thinking (n=49)
• Developing a greater sense of self-awareness about their strengths and areas for personal improvement (n=41)

Cardinal Quarter experiences also provided students with a wide range of professional development opportunities. Collectively, concepts such as work ethic, patience, flexibility, resilience, taking initiative, etc. appeared 102 times as work attributes students were able to foster.

As mentioned earlier, students were also invited to share their experiences through in-person, post-summer debriefing sessions that were held at the Haas Center. Approximately 50 students participated with great enthusiasm and energy in the sessions. Many were very interested in hearing from peers about their experiences. When asked “What do you wish you knew before you began?” students responded with the following partial list of “How to’s”:
✓ get people to respond in a timely manner
✓ manage youth in a classroom
✓ manage expectations (our own and third parties) in a slow-moving environment
✓ motivate people to increase participation
✓ deal when you disagree with company policies
✓ deal with bureaucracy and approvals delaying work
✓ use Excel

In summary, student reflections below capture the essence and spirit of the Cardinal Quarter experience among those who engaged in public service this past summer [emphasis added]:

_I don’t know how to say this without sounding cliché… but this fellowship might have been the most transformative Stanford experience I’ve ever had._ Living alone in a new country with a new language pushed me to grow personally and challenged me to connect with people in different ways. It made me incredibly curious about other parts of the world – both within and outside of Eastern Africa. It made me feel empowered to seek out other similar opportunities, which might have seemed too difficult or out-of-reach before. _Living in [Dar es Salaam] and working for a social enterprise taught me so much more than one class could…I feel so strong, confident, humbled and invigorated by this fellowship experience._

Class of 2015 Public Policy Major
African Service Fellow
I had the unique opportunity to connect my passions for social sciences, law and the arts in order to pursue the organization’s mission of ‘Transforming the nation’s consciousness on race.’...My summer experience had a great impact on my life and future career trajectory because I can say with confidence that I want to continue the work that I began at [community-based organization].

Class of 2017 Psychology Major
Stanford in Government Stipend Recipient

This summer was hugely influential for both my career and academic path. I learned a lot about the inner workings of city government, both the positives and the negatives. I gained a refined sense of the kinds of questions I want to explore and hopefully solve, both in school and beyond...

Class of 2017 Civil Engineering Major
Urban Summer Fellow

I had a chance to develop a dashboard for the main computer system monitoring the status of refugees in the Middle East and North Africa. My project...bring[s] aid packages to the people who need it most...the most vulnerable groups of refugees across many countries in these regions. At a time when the difficulties of properly addressing ongoing refugee crises make the news almost daily, it has been immensely fulfilling and satisfying to... make a small contribution to help out this relief effort...as terrible as it must be to face destruction and hardship caused by the disasters in our world, with help and time, our species has a... tremendous capacity to move on and rebuild. This theme...left an impression on me... and it has become a goal of mine to help as many people as I can through trying times and into greener pastures.

Class of 2016 Symbolic Systems Major
Stanford in Government Fellow

**Host Organization Qualitative Feedback**

Community partners across the globe reported that Stanford students made valuable contributions to their respective organizations. According to community partner responses to open-ended questions (n=97), the following themes emerged as areas where students made their greatest contributions:

- Completion of project deliverables (n=45)
- Personal attributes: positive energy, professionalism, positive attitude, resilience, work ethic, initiation, being a team player, and having a sense of responsibility to serve (n=32)
- Skill sets: writing (n=21), research (n=20), and critical thinking and analysis (n=17)
- Conceptual contributions, such as “creativity,” “knowledge,” “fresh ideas and suggestions” (n=17)
Furthermore, host organizations repeatedly characterized students as “outstanding,” “amazing,” “phenomenal,” “exceptional,” “extraordinary,” “incredibly competent and helpful,” and “incredibly efficient.” The following quotes capture sentiments shared by a majority of the community partners regarding the contributions made by Stanford students and the structure of the Cardinal Quarter program:

[Our student] was very hard working and worked to help us achieve some of our mandate. She developed a project that helped our patient introspect and learn about themselves in the process. All participants in her project reviewed her highly and benefitted from her services. She worked well with everyone and was fully committed. I think the setup [of the fellowship program] compared to other U.S.-based institutions is much more conducive for both learner to be free to innovate while meeting the objectives of the host organization.

Supervisor from Bostwana-Baylar Children’s Clinical Centre of Excellence, Bostwana
Donald Kennedy Public Service Fellow, B.A. 2015 Internl Relations & M.A. 2016 African Studies

[Our student’s] work this summer was exemplary, both in terms of quantity and quality. He brought the highest level of professionalism to the tasks he was assigned, always completing them thoroughly, thoughtfully and in a timely fashion. When given an assignment, he invariably went the extra mile, providing more insight, input and detail than was asked for. The degree of enthusiasm with which he would pursue assignments and creative thinking he brought to them often helped our staff broaden their view of a problem and/or envision a solution heretofore unimagined.

Supervisor from National Institute on Aging, Washington, D.C.
Roland Longevity Fellow, Class of 2018 Human Biology Major

[Our student] was an amazing help to our organization. She brought a fresh perspective, great work ethic and wonderful attitude – and helped us learn many new things while she was also learning from us…We wish she could stay longer! … In fact, [our student’s] great attitude and critical thinking, as well as her initiative and self-motivation, really rubbed off on our team.”

Supervisor from Ubongo Kids, Tanzania
African Service Fellow, Class of 2015 Public Policy Major

We are quite new in the ways to analyze and visualize information and [our student’s] skills and capability in doing it was a huge help for our project here in the Middle East….He managed to design an interactive map where we can visualize where the most vulnerable refugees are located in the country…[our student] was an excellent team player. Working in a multicultural environment and in the Middle East is not always easy and [our student] adapted without any problem.

Supervisor at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Jordan
Stanford in Government Fellow, Class of 2016 Symbolic Systems Major
[Our student] seemed prepared to enter the work environment more so than other students we have hosted. She has been timely, professional, able to ask relevant questions about assignments, and has adapted to match the pace and culture of our office. She completes projects thoroughly, and has exhibited creativity while doing so, bringing something to our project that otherwise would not have been there.”

Supervisor from Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project, New York Public Interest Law Fellow, Class of 2017 Psychology Major

Challenges and Outliers
While an overwhelming majority of students and host organizations indicated that the Cardinal Quarter experience was positive, there were a small number of circumstances when this was not the case. Stanford program staff communicated with all host agencies and were made aware of these situations and dealt proactively with them. Most involved strained relationships between a student and a host organization supervisor, or changing student motivations.

We offer the following descriptions of these outlier cases, both to highlight the circumstances when the experience was not positive, but also to illustrate the ways in which staff intervened.

A freshman was placed with a local government office in the Bay Area, and contacted Haas Center staff a few weeks into his fellowship because he felt he was receiving insufficient mentorship from his supervisor. Haas Center staff advised the student to take a more proactive role and to set up weekly check-in meetings with his supervisor. Staff also visited with the student and supervisor at the placement site, and the supervisor expressed that he prefers to provide his interns with a lot of freedom with respect to assignment deliverables. At the conclusion of the fellowship, the student told staff that he did not have a good experience overall and the fellowship placement likely will not be renewed next year.

A second example is a situation wherein a student parked his car in the spot assigned to the President of the organization, which prompted a contentious exchange between the President, the student, and the student’s supervisor. The student was ultimately asked to leave. Haas Center staff provided feedback and coaching to the student and assisted in finding an alternative organization. The student served the remainder of his Cardinal Quarter without incident.

Conclusions & Next Steps
The feedback we received from both students and host organizations about their Cardinal Quarter experiences was nearly universally positive. Working with 14 campus partners, we were able to add 56 more Cardinal Service opportunities while maintaining the quality of these experiences.
The evidence suggests that Cardinal Quarter experiences deepen students’ commitment to service and inspire a sense of purpose. Our efforts to strengthen assessment and evaluation have deepened our understanding and provided greater granularity regarding which parts of our training, preparation, in-field support, and reflection processes are strong, and where improvements are needed. Drawing upon our findings, future planning will consider incorporating the following:

- Integrate the Principles of Ethical and Effective Service universally across campus partners involved in preparation and training efforts
- Provide additional support to students and host organizations, as needed, in order to ensure clarity of project goals
- Provide opportunities to connect students with one another to foster “cohort” experiences
- Provide regionally or culturally specific information and resources, when appropriate
- Provide guidance for concise learning plans that can also be adapted to onsite realities
- Proactive and in-depth follow-up by Stanford staff with students who indicate challenges during their service experience to better understand any concerns and how to mitigate similar situations in the future

Furthermore, the data shared in this report will serve as baseline data for longitudinal trend analyses, and Haas Center staff and campus partners will continue to build upon, improve, and expand the use of assessment and evaluation tools and techniques.

When we proposed the expansion of Cardinal Quarter, we cited research (notably that of Stanford University sociologist Douglas McAdam) that indicated that immersive, full-time, summer long experiences had transformative potential. This is further supported by findings from a recent survey by the Freeman Spogli Institute and the Haas Center that captured the experiences of alumni who participated in immersive public service while at Stanford, and who reported that their service experience influenced their careers. Although we cannot make any long-term claims, the data suggest that Cardinal Quarter experiences are an effective means for students to make meaningful public service contributions, and for the University to inspire and prepare them for larger contributions over the course of their lives.

We greatly appreciate the generous support that has been provided to expand the number of Cardinal Quarter opportunities as part of the launch of the Cardinal Service initiative. We also look forward to undertaking future evaluations of this program, including deeper longitudinal analysis of the impact over time.