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2015

Innovating the 21st Century: Developing a Mobile App to Collect Student Service Activities to Assess Impact

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Keywords

student, service, student service, community, engagement, community engagement, student affairs, civic engagement, volunteer, volunteerism, higher education

Disciplines

Higher Education

VCU

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What is RamServe?

RamServe is a mobile app where students can enter & track their community service

Fun & Simple to Use

- Register organizations in your Service Profile
- Enter hours in real-time

- View & download your service record
- Desktop version available

Getting Started is as Easy as 1-2-3

1 Download App

2 Set Up Service Profile

3 Enter hours as you go!

Defining Community Service

President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll

The President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, launched in 2006, annually highlights the role colleges and universities play in solving community problems and placing more students on a lifelong path of civic engagement by recognizing institutions that achieve meaningful, measureable outcomes in the communities they serve.
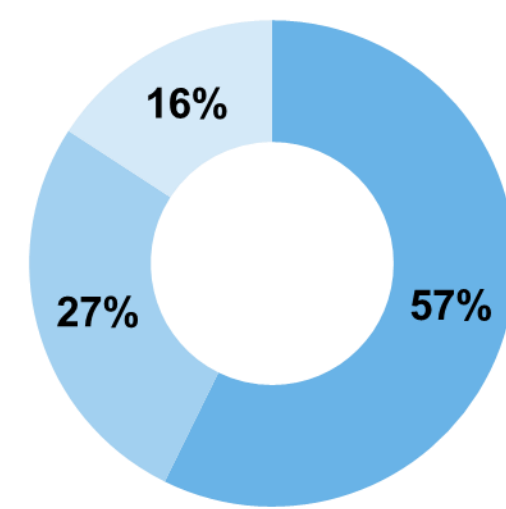
Community Service means activities designed to improve the quality of life of off-campus residents, particularly low-income individuals.

Why RamServe?

Multiple Ways at VCU for **Students** to **Engage**

2013-2014 Academic Year

16%
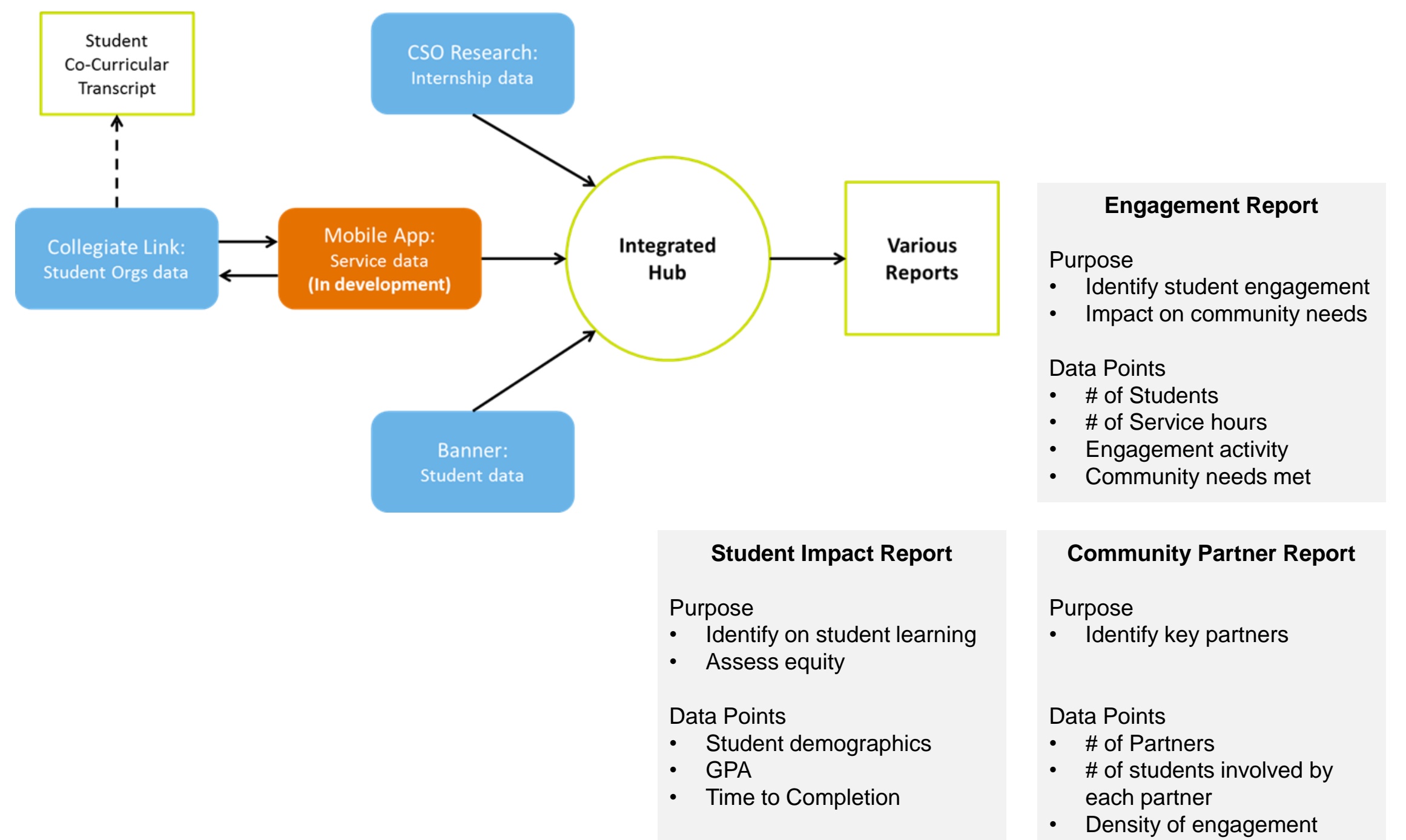
27%

57%

- Community service
- Internships
- Service-learning

17,662 students served

1,316,000 service hours provided

$28 million dollar value

To What End?

Project Overview

Need for university-wide & **individual-level** data to assess **impact** of **service**.
No existing mechanism for collecting **community service** to integrate with other data.

Student Co-Curricular Transcript

CSO Research: Internship data

Collegiate Link: Student Orgs data

Mobile App: Service data (In development)

Integrated Hub

Various Reports

Banner: Student data

Engagement Report

Purpose
- Identify student engagement
- Impact on community needs

Data Points
- # of Students
- # of Service hours
- Engagement activity
- Community needs met

Student Impact Report

Purpose
- Identify on student learning
- Assess equity

Data Points
- Student demographics
- GPA
- Time to Completion

Community Partner Report

Purpose
- Identify key partners

Data Points
- # of Partners
- # of students involved by each partner
- Density of engagement

RamServe Components

Service Profile

Pre-register
- Volunteer Orgs. *(service provided to)*
- VCU Orgs. *(service sponsored by)*
- Service-Learning Classes

Enter Hours

- Hours & Date
- Org. served
- Need addressed
- Skill provided
- Brief description *(tweet)*
- Satisfaction rating
- VCU Org *(if app)*
- VCU SL class *(if app)*

Personal Tracking

- Set personal goals *(semester)*
- Download report
- Co-curricular transcript *(automatic)*

RamServe Pilot Test

Students say…

- Easy to use
- Cheating is a concern if incentives are valuable
- No social media integration

Recommended…
- Word of mouth to promote
- Convenience is key feature
- Satisfaction rating to recognize partners & recommend community organizations

Faculty& Staff say…

- Would promote within unit & classes
- Want instructor-level access & reports
- Verification needs varied; mobile app will not work for all (i.e., internships)

Recommended…
- Include in Honor Code
- Community Engagement Scholarship; include partner in presentation & committee review

Next Steps. Targeted rollout of RamServe starts **Fall 2015**. Evaluation & updates of the mobile app will continue. University-wide reports are in development.