

Developing a Community Engagement Operational Framework for De La Salle University Ramon V. del Rosario College of Business

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Abstract

Proactive concern for the people in the community has recently been an emerging and strong force and is positively influencing the strategic initiatives of higher education institutions locally and abroad. For De La Salle University (DLSU), where the researcher is from, the redefinition in its vision-mission statement emphasizing the poor effective academic year 2012-2013 has resulted in a conscious strategic and operational effort for every academic and support office to take into active consideration the poor sector in their everyday activities. Among a number of strategies employed by DLSU to institutionalize this is the creation of an external affairs office in every college effective academic year 2011-2012. One of the tasks of the office is the coordination of community engagement projects among and within the colleges and academic departments. This research study focuses on the Ramon V. del Rosario College of Business (RVRCOB). For more than a year now, though the external affairs office of the RVRCOB has been effective in coordinating and delivering tangible community engagement projects to the community, it is still undeniable that the insufficiency of scientific and scholarly documentation on the creation of this office puts into question the appropriateness of community engagement projects for a particular academic department, the alignment of community projects among the academic departments, and the overall impact of these projects to the community. As such, this research study aims to develop a community engagement operational framework which the external affairs office can use to evaluate its existing community engagement strategy and map out future strategies in the hope of creating greater impact to the community. To do this, the researcher conducted a literature review of the available community engagement frameworks and identified frameworks that are applicable to the existing DLSU community engagement framework. Thereafter, the researcher analyzed how total quality management (TQM) can be fitted in the resulting framework. From this, a community engagement operational framework anchored on the service-learning framework of Vickers et al. (2004) and community connectedness framework by Brown and Keast (2003) with two of the key dimensions of TQM (continuous improvement and competitive benchmarking) comprehensively articulated all throughout resulted. At the center of this proposed community engagement operational framework is the community engagement framework of DLSU.

Keywords: community engagement, competitive benchmarking, continuous improvement, service-learning component, total quality management.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The creation of the External Affairs Office in the Ramon V. Del Rosario College of Business (RVRCOB) of De La Salle University (DLSU) last academic year 2011-2012 has served as an enabling platform in articulating the concern for the poor in the new vision-mission statement of DLSU. Though this was already present in the previous vision-mission statement, it was indirect that a redefined vision-mission statement is necessary to provide for a conscious reinforcement of the original motivation why St. John Baptist de La Salle founded the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. This motivation was service and concern directed especially for the poor. As such, the DLSU vision-mission has been reworded as “a leading learner-centered research university, bridging faith and scholarship in the service of society, **especially the poor.**”

As set in the mandate on the creation of the External Affairs Office, the office is expected to help ensure the successful and effective implementation of college programs for visiting scholars, service and experiential learning, community engagement, and quality assurance and accreditation. But with regard to this paper, the primordial emphasis is being set on the task of putting together projects on community engagement for the RVRCOB.

Given such awareness, it is just high time for the RVRCOB to re-examine its community engagement commitment, choose a specific advocacy, and come up with operational framework on how to put together the expertise of the different academic departments of the RVRCOB. This operational framework, to be implementable, is expected to have considered the best practices in doing community engagement projects and the key elements of total quality management (TQM), specifically continuous improvement and competitive benchmarking.

1.2 Statement of the problem

How can universally acceptable community engagement frameworks and continuous improvement and competitive benchmarking, *two of the key elements of total quality management*, be utilized to develop a community engagement operational framework for De La Salle University Ramon V. del Rosario College of Business?

1.2 Objectives of the study

In line with the main problem identified, this study also seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the existing community engagement frameworks that are used internationally?
2. What is the existing community engagement framework that is embraced by DLSU?
3. What are the current community engagement projects of RVRCOB?
4. What are the key strengths of the six academic departments in RVRCOB that can be leveraged for community engagement projects?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 DLSU community engagement framework

Last November of 2011, DLSU issued its most recent Community Engagement Framework. As presented in Figure 2, this framework “espouses that all community engagement interventions by DLSU are anchored on a social reality or a combination thereof such as social disintegration, poverty and ecological degradation. Community engagement interventions, under this premise, are guided by the option for the poor lens. The process for these interventions should ideally follow the suggested progression phases from awareness and partnership building to actual community engagement and then to the personal and structural transformation. However, it is also acknowledged that these interventions may start from any of the identified phases (Primer on the DLSU Community Engagement Framework, 2011).

The ideal community intervention should comply with all the phases of the community engagement process which are: (1) awareness building and analysis of social realities; (2) partnership building; and (3) social/community engagement. As such, all output of community engagement interventions should be leading towards the following vision of society: empowered, sustainable and disaster resilient communities; socially aware and active Lasallians; and good governance” (Primer on the DLSU Community Engagement Framework, 2011).

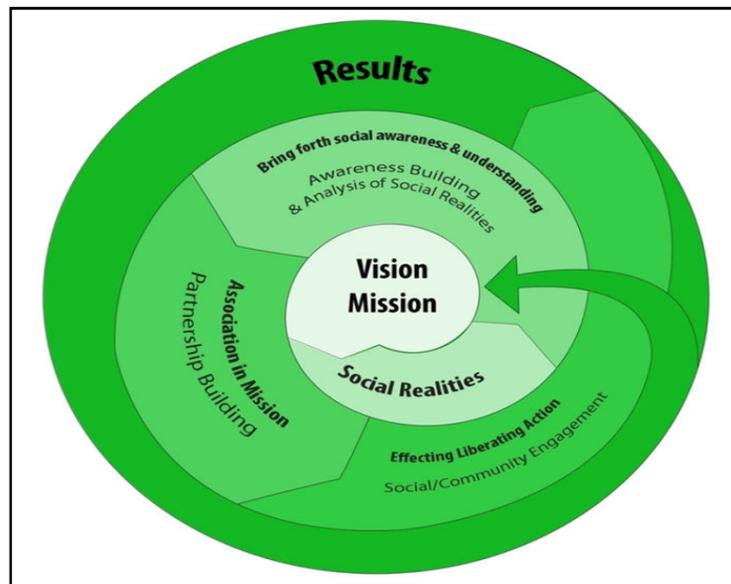


Figure 2. The DLSU Community Engagement Framework

2.2 Service learning component framework

One of the many frameworks used to concretize community engagement in educational institutions is the framework of service learning. According to McCarthy (2003), service learning has become increasingly popular among educational institutions in many countries, including Asia over the last two decades. As cited by Vickers, Harris, and McCarthy (2004), among its many advocates, it is variously perceived as a means of energizing classroom curricula (Battistoni, 1995; Hesser, 1995; Rama et al., 2000), re-engaging students in their own learning, and prompting forms of social and civic development (Markus et al., 1993; Parker-Gwin, 1996; Eyer & Giles, 1999; Frederickson, 2000; Roschelle et al., 2000) or establishing linkages among universities and schools with their local community agencies (Gardner, 1997; Hollander & Saltmarsh, 2000; Benson et al., 2000; Gronski & Pigg, 2000; Evenbeck & Kahn, 2001). As such, it was posited by McCarthy (2002) that service learning links academic instruction with community service guided by reflection. Reflection is considered the critical piece in service learning as without it student’s involvement in service remains as some form of volunteering or a “feel-good” exercise without linking students’ experiences with curriculum content, or with more considered analysis of the social conditions giving rise to service needs in the first place (Artz, 2001 as cited by Vickers et al., 2004).

Vickers et al. (2004) conceptualizes basic components of service learning using mutual interdependencies and connections among that exist among experience, knowledge, and reflection. As depicted in Figure 3, experience is usually linked to action that can lead to knowledge. But a major constraint with this is that, unless experience is actively considered and analyzed, it is not certain that learning occurs. As such, learning from experience is not guaranteed; it is only when thought is linked to action that knowledge or learning may occur.

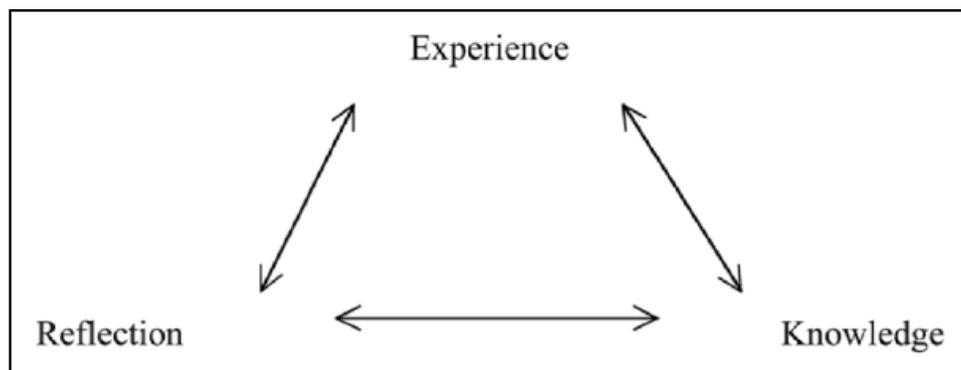


Figure 3. Basic components of service learning

Vickers et al. (2004) further puts that the interdependencies among the central partners in service learning activities require the development of reciprocity and trust among faculty, community agencies, and students. The inherent strengths of these stakeholders make up a strong service learning program. It is important to take note that string service program requires consciously working to develop “authentic help” wherein those providing “help” don’t assume their superiority over those being helped. Moreover, Artz (2001), as cited by Vickers et al. (2004), believes that authentic help requires that learning occurs among all the partners, especially by students and faculty from community members and agency staff. This overlapping interplay is represented in Figure 3.

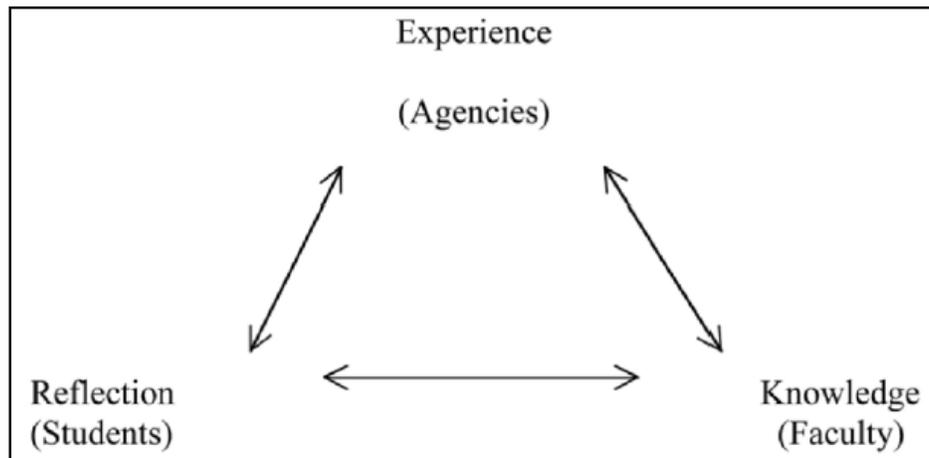


Figure 3. Interplay among central partners in service learning activities

2.3 Community connectedness framework

A number of literature discussing integration structures and integration relationships have been available over the last five decades. Different authors have used different terms or categories to denote the types of relationships that can occur between organizations. As cited by Brown and Keast (2003), among which are Hogue (1994), Cigler (2001), Leutz (1999), and Szirom et al. (2002) who set out five categories or levels of integration. These are informal, cooperative, coordinative, collaborative, and integrative. Out of these, Brown and Keast (2003) just chose three most common horizontal relationship categories as a mean of distillation and simplification. These three categories are cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

2.3.1 Cooperation

In the writings of Brown and Keast (2003) which considers the researches of Hogue (1994), Cigler (2001), and Lawson (2002), it is very reflective that the key element of cooperation is the establishment of short-term, often informal and largely voluntary relations between organizational entities. According to Winer and Ray (1994), Cigler (2001), Mulford and Rogers (1982), and Melaville and Blank (1991), as cited by Brown and Keast (2003), in cooperative relationships participants may agree to share information, spacer or referrals, however no effort is made to establish common goals and each agency remains separate, retaining their own autonomy and resources. Thus, as a process it is essentially about taking others into consideration, compromising, and being accommodating without necessarily adjusting individual goals.

2.3.2 Coordination

With respect to coordination as the second C, for Brown and Keast (2003), citing the works of Litterer (1973), Mulford and Rogers (1982), Alter and Hage (1993), Daka-Mulwanda (1995), Alexander (1995), Peters (1998), and Lawson (2002), this implies the use of mechanisms that more tightly and formally link together different components of a system. Coordination is argued to involve strategies that require information sharing as well as joint planning, decision-making, and action between organizations. Therefore, coordination essentially occurs when there is a need to align or “orchestrate” people, tasks, and specialized interventions in order to achieve a predetermined goal or mission. Since coordination moves beyond information sharing to the pooled use of resources and joint planning and operation, it requires a higher level of commitment as well as the agreed loss of some autonomy (Brown & Keast, 2003).

2.3.3 Collaboration

Moreover, citing the works of Gray (1989), Mandell (1999), Cigler (2001), and Agranoff and McGuire (2001), Brown and Keast (2003) presents collaboration as the most stable and long-term type of integration arrangement and it requires the strongest linkages and tightest relationships among members. Such relationships require comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels operating at many levels. The requirement for high levels of trust among members means that collaboration can be a very time consuming process. Because collaboration is often used to deal with complex social problems, especially when other integration modes have failed, it can be a highly risky endeavor and its success will depend on members being committed to a common mission and to seeing themselves as part of a total picture and not as autonomous agencies (Brown & Keast, 2003).

Factoring in networking arrangements (which refer to loose connections between players and organizations), networks (which represent more formal and closer connections between people or organizations), and network structures (which are tightly interconnected and highly interdependent constructs that rely on members moving outside of traditional functional specialties to create new ways of working), Brown and Keast came up with a continuum of connectedness (marrying levels of integration and degree of connectedness) as depicted in Figure 4.

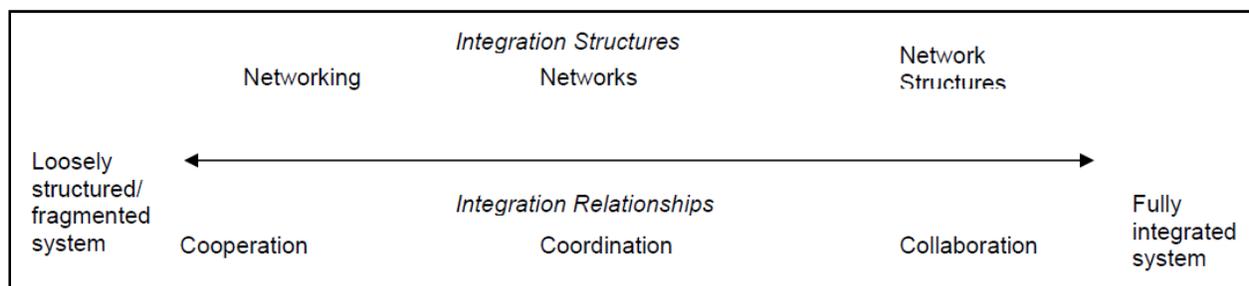


Figure 4. A continuum of connectedness

Moreover, Brown and Keast (2003) developed a table extending the explanatory power of the integration continuum to indicate the differences in outcomes, goals, and objectives, and ways of working together that align with the parallel networked arrangements. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Integration and connectedness matrix

Structure	Relationship	Duration	Goals and Perspectives	Structural Linkages	Formality	Risks and Rewards
Networking	Cooperation	Short term	Independent outcomes, autonomous	Loose, flexible links	Informal	Low
Network	Coordination	Medium term	Joint planning and programming (but members remain autonomous)	Some level of stability of membership, medium links and often central hub	Formal	Increase in benefits and risks to a point
Network structure	Collaboration	Longer term	Systems change, highly interdependent with sharing of power	Members move outside traditional functional areas, tight links	Formal	High risk and high reward

2.4 Total quality management

According to Stevenson and Chuong (2010), the term total quality management refers to a quest for quality in an organization. There are three key philosophies in this approach.

These are the never-ending push to improve, which is continuous improvement, the involvement of everyone in the organization, and the third is a goal of customer satisfaction which is meeting or exceeding customer expectations. Moreover, TQM expands the traditional view of quality which is looking only at the quality of the final product or services to looking at the quality of every aspect of the process that produces the product or service (Stevenson & Chuong, 2010).

With respect to TQM, Stevenson and Chuong (2010) enumerated ten key elements. These are continuous improvement, competitive benchmarking, employee empowerment, team approach, decisions based on facts rather than opinions, knowledge of tools, supplier quality, champion, quality at source, and suppliers. For the purposes of this study, this portion of review of related literature focuses only on the first two elements.

2.4.1 Continuous improvement

For Stevenson and Chuong (2010), continuous improvement is a philosophy that seeks to improve all factors related to the process of converting inputs into outputs on an ongoing basis. This concept is essentially not new as this has been the cornerstone of the Japanese approach to production. The successes of Japanese companies caused other companies to reexamine many of their approaches. This resulted in a strong worldwide interest in the continuous improvement approach (Stevenson & Chuong, 2010).

A similar term being used to describe continuous improvement is kaizen. Kaizen is a long-term approach to work that systematically seeks to achieve small, incremental changes in processes in order to improved efficiency and quality. If a work environment adopts kaizen, continuous improvement is the responsibility of every worker, not just a selected few (Rouse, 2009).

Kaizen can be roughly translated from Japanese to mean "good change." The philosophy behind kaizen is often credited to Dr. W. Edwards Deming. He was invited by Japanese industrial leaders and engineers to help rebuild Japan after World War II. He was honored for his contributions by Emperor Hirohito and the Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers (Rouse, 2009).

2.4.2 Competitive benchmarking

For Stevenson and Chuong (2010), competitive benchmarking involves identifying other organizations that are the best at something and studying how they do it to learn how to improve your operation. The company need not be in the same line of business.

Robert Camp (1989) developed a 10-step model moving sequentially through for phases. Kearns and Nadler (1992) alongside, as cited by Moriarty (2008) defined benchmarking as the continuous process of measuring products, services, and practices against toughest competitors or those companies recognized as industry leaders. Moreover, Watson (1993), as cited by Moriarty (2008) views benchmarking as a continuous process that searches for and applies significantly better practices for the purpose of achieving superior competitive performance. Further, Watson (1993), as cited by Moriarty (2008), provided another perspective on benchmarking. This unconventional perspective approaches benchmarking as a process of organizational adaptation, not adoption – not simply a question of copying others, but learning how to improve by sharing ideas.

Benchmarking takes place in two phases: (1) it begins as the search for best practices; and (2) culminates with mapping of current practices to these established best practices. According to Camp (1989), the process of benchmarking is divided into 10 steps, as depicted in Figure 5, which progress through four phases.

Phase 1 – Planning
1. Identify what is to be benchmarked. 2. Identify comparative companies.
Phase 2 – Analysis
3. Determine data collection method and collect data. 4. Determine current performance levels.
Phase 3 – Integration
5. Project future performance levels. 6. Communicate benchmarking findings and gain acceptance.
Phase 4 – Action
7. Establish functional goals. 8. Develop action goals. 9. Implement specific actions and monitor progress. 10. Recalibrate benchmarks.

Figure 5. Ten-step benchmarking model developed by Camp (1989)

Furthermore, Yu, Rogacion, Perez & Lichengyao (2006) defined benchmarking as a comprehensive technique that can be used to identify operational and strategic gaps, and to look for best practices that eliminate such gap. Benchmarking has an “internal dimension” whereby the organization critically examines itself searching for best practices and an “external dimension” whereby the organization explores its industry and other relevant areas outside of its own industry in order to identify those best practices that may be applicable in its own operating environment (Yu, Rogacion, Perez & Lichengyao, 2006).

2.5 Academic departments of RVRCOB

The RVRCOB has six academic departments. These are Accountancy, Commercial Law, Decision Sciences and Innovation, Financial Management, Management and Organization, and Marketing Management.

2.5.1 Accountancy

The Accountancy program prepares students for careers in accounting and related fields, and makes them ready to deal effectively with the problems they will face as professional accountants and responsible citizens. The program aims to develop the qualities that enhance the student's professional competence, awareness of his responsibilities to society and appreciation of an accountant's high standard of integrity and objectivity (DLSU website).

2.5.2 Commercial law

Intended to provide employment opportunities and at the same time be an ideal preparation for admission to the College of Law, the Commercial Law program introduces students to the many facets of Philippine Law, substantive and procedural, with Civil Procedure, Criminal Procedure, Labor and Social Legislation such as fields of concentration, complemented by basic subjects in Business Management designed to equip students with general principles of management and business policies. The program offers students in business as they are to undergo Legal Internship in their last term. In essence, Commercial Law approximates a paralegal academic program (DLSU website).

2.5.3 Decision sciences and innovation

This department focuses on the applications of management science techniques, innovation through entrepreneurship and interdisciplinary business studies. It prepares individuals to become competent innovative leaders and future successful entrepreneurs by realizing their full potential. They are taught to be adaptive to technological advances and changing business and social conditions for sustainability. Through its various programs, innovation is emphasized and acts as a catalyst for creating and reinventing quantitative tools and techniques that will be used in today's dynamic business environment. Equipped with the knowledge of techniques and tools used by business, students would be able to craft strategies and decisions that would make them serve God and country. Its programs also instill future LaSallian leaders with values and skills in research, opportunity seeking, analysis, and decision-making in the area of management, entrepreneurship and interdisciplinary business studies (DLSU website).

2.5.4 Financial management

The Management of Financial Institutions (MFI) program was launched in 1976 to answer the financial management needs of Philippine financial intermediaries and other Philippine businesses. While the major focus of the original program which seeks to develop graduates with excellent decision making, problem solving and analytical abilities remain basically unchanged, the present program aims to support the MFI vision in response to the formidable challenges of the financial services industry (DLSU website).

2.5.4 Management and organization

The Management and Organization Department (MOD) is a synergy of two significant historic streams in business education in De La Salle University. The first stream emerged from the former Graduate School of Business which first offered the Master of Business Education Program in 1960 and the Doctor of Management Program in 1981 (which was later renamed as the Doctor of Business Administration). The GSB became one of the country's leading business schools in the country by providing relevant professional and scholarly business education characterized by a strong practitioner orientation to working managers and employees, entrepreneurs and academics. It made itself more accessible to working professionals by establishing extension campuses near the business districts in La Salle Green Hills in Mandaluyong (1996) and in RCBC Plaza in Makati (2001). GSB established a leadership role in Philippine management education when it required business ethics courses for its DBA (1981) and MBA (1998) students. This was further followed through with Sustainable Business in the DBA program in 2003 and Family and Work-life Harmony and Human Rights, Social Responsibility and & Sustainable Development in 2004. The GSB formally joined the international community of business schools committed to educating socially responsible managers when it signed up for the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education in 2009 (DLSU website).

2.5.4 Marketing management

Marketing Management is designed to develop students for entrepreneurial or corporate work in marketing management and for them to be trainable for higher responsibilities in the same firm. The students are taught the theories and concepts in the classroom, and then they are given training on the practical aspects of the various areas of marketing by exposure to actual work situations through assignments in organizations (either for profit or non-profit) (DLSU website).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research approach

This research study is both exploratory and qualitative in context and in approach. It is exploratory in the sense that the researcher found no published literature concerning community engagement and service-learning component framework with touch points on operational feasibility and implementation in the Philippines. More so, it is a qualitative research in the sense that it aims to gather an in-depth understanding of community engagement and service-learning frameworks that have gained universal acceptance to facilitate continuous improvement and competitive benchmarking against the existing community engagement framework embraced by DLSU and the current community engagement direction of RVRCOB.

3.1 Research procedures

For this research study, the following procedures were performed:

1. Identified and reviewed existing community engagement frameworks that are used internationally;
2. Reviewed existing community engagement framework of DLSU;
3. Identified and reviewed current community engagement projects of RVRCOB;
4. Profiled the six academic departments of RVRCOB in terms of their expertise;
5. Identified applicable key elements of total quality management; and
6. Integrated identified frameworks and concepts to come up with a community engagement operational framework for RVRCOB.

4. Analysis and Resulting Framework

4.1 International community engagement frameworks

As discussed in the review of related literature part of this research study, the following frameworks are applicable:

1. **Service-learning component framework of Vickers et al. (2004).** This highlighted the triangular interplay between experience, knowledge, and reflection. Moreover, this also highlighted the interdependencies among the central partners. Experience is being provided by the target or host community, wherein knowledge can be provided or supplemented by the faculty (or the university), and reflection has to happen for students to experience learning.
2. **Community connectedness framework of Brown and Keast (2003).** This emphasized the continuum of connectedness that can exist in any community engagement project. It identified a gradation or hierarchy which captures the looseness or the tightness of the integration of connectedness. The weakest is being identified as networking which takes cooperation as the functional relationship. Projects that are short term and autonomous belong to this category. For networks, it takes into account coordination as the functional relationship. Projects that are medium term belong to this category. With respect to goals and perspectives, projects belonging to this category require joint planning though individual members can remain autonomous. Lastly, for the network structure, it takes into account collaboration as the functional relationship. Projects that are longer term belong to this category. Very often, these projects are highly interdependent with sharing of power becoming evident which most of the time results in high reward but entails high risk.
3. **Total quality management (TQM).** Among the ten key elements of TQM, continuous improvement and competitive benchmarking are the most applicable. In the presence of many scholarly outputs on community engagement, the RVRCOB is at the middle of the vast sea of best practices it can concretize. But results don't happen overnight. Continuous improvement will always remind Lasallians that high-impact projects for the community are the results of consistent review, monitoring, and evaluation. The more important thing is that the system is in place. With respect to competitive benchmarking, RVRCOB must leverage on the membership of the University with the ASEAN Learning Network (ALN). RVRCOB can learn from the experiences of other universities belonging to ALN that have successfully implemented high impact community engagement projects. From those experiences, RVRCOB must ensure that its system provides a mechanism to surpass the success of those projects.

4.2 DLSU community engagement framework

The DLSU community engagement framework is a moving and powerful framework that takes into account the three stages of Lasallian reflection. These stages are *masid-danas* (see-experience), *suri-nilay* (analyze-reflect), and *taya-kilos* (commit-act). All throughout the community engagement experiences, every Lasallian is expected to become fully aware and to have a comprehensive grasp of the situation. After those have been satisfied, a Lasallian is expected to perform a reflection and introspection appealing to his or her innermost core values. This core can be supplemented by the Lasallian values of *religio*, *more*, and *cultura*. Finally, every Lasallian is expected to concretize various resolutions, thereby separating the action from the thought. Using this framework, a Lasallian is expected to treat every community engagement project with a reflective and examined disposition conscious of what a Lasallian should be, an active resource for God and country.

4.3 Current community engagement projects of RVRCOB

The RVRCOB adopted social entrepreneurship as the platform of its community engagement projects. Currently, it is venturing on the following college-wide community engagement projects:

1. **Social enterprise for economic development (SEED) program in Bagac, Bataan.** The program has the following objectives: (1) to promote dialogue, understanding and deep appreciation on the importance of SEED towards curriculum and co-curricular integration; (2) to identify possible areas of cooperation, collaboration and partnerships in implementing high impacts projects through SEED for the promotion of social/community engagement of DLSU; (3) to come-up with a commonly acceptable and feasible theoretical/conceptual and operational framework in pursuit of interdisciplinary curriculum and co-curricular integration between COSCA and the RVRCOB and SOE; (4) to develop implementing mechanism and guidelines on how to proceed with the SEED implementation towards Curriculum and Co-curricular Integration involving COSCA and the RVRCOB and SOE; and (5) to document the community engagement initiatives of COSCA and the RVRCOB and SOE promoting SEED program for curriculum and co-curricular integration.
2. **Social entrepreneurship in Enchanted Farm, Angat, Bulacan.** A socio-civic project that engages students in business planning and the community for sustainable livelihood development. It is a year-long sustainable activity that kicks-off 1st Term of AY 2012-2013. It has the following objectives: (1) to provide access to practical business applications; (2) to empower the community in the spirit of social entrepreneurship; and (3) to provide sustainable livelihood to a chosen community.

4.4 Current community engagement projects of the six academic department of RVRCOB

Each of the six academic departments in RVRCOB has community engagement activities that involve primarily its faculty members. For the service-learning component, the ones involved are primarily the students. Table 2 highlights the key strengths of each department and the community engagement projects and service-learning component activities they are currently having:

Table 2. Key strengths and community engagement projects of the academic departments of RVRCOB

Academic department	Key strengths	Community engagement projects
Accountancy	Accountancy program, preparing and using financial statements	Improving the Accountancy program of De La Salle Araneta University <u>Service learning component:</u> immersion at Enchanted Farm and at Pakil, Laguna
Commercial law	Business and tax laws and regulations	Intellectual property (patent registration)
Decision sciences and innovation	Social entrepreneurship and innovation	<u>Service-learning component:</u> Business consultations with Foundation for Enterprise Management Innovations, Inc. (FEMI)
Financial management	Managing business and personal finances	<u>Service learning component:</u> Financial literacy for public school teachers of Metro Manila
Management and organization	Ethics, corporate governance, strategic management, pastoral management	Working on providing teaching corporate social responsibility training to college teachers in Metro Manila
Marketing management	Marketing program	Improving the Marketing program of De La Salle Araneta University

4.5 Proposed community engagement operational framework for RVRCOB

This research study made use of the blended approach to community engagement. After reviewing and analyzing the identified applicable community engagement frameworks and TQM concepts, the researcher proposes the following community engagement operational framework for RVRCOB (Figure 6):

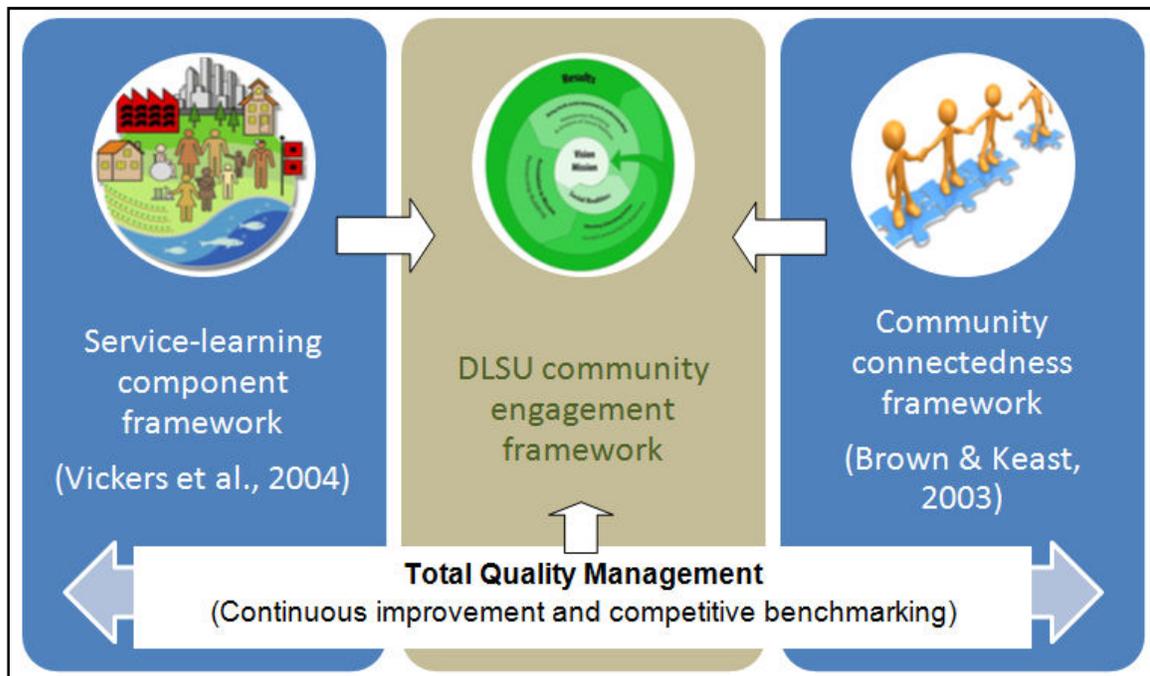


Figure 6. Proposed community engagement operational framework for RVRCOB

At the center of this operational framework is the DLSU community engagement framework. It is being strengthened by the service-learning component framework by Vickers et al. (2004). All community engagement projects of RVRCOB and its academic departments must ensure observance of the interplay among experience, knowledge, and reflection. All community engagement projects must emanate from the college or department expertise. The Lasallian reflection framework shall be used in the reflection process. On the other side, complementing this is the community connectedness framework by Brown and Keast (2003). This shall serve as a compass to ascertain the level of involvement which can contribute to the degree of impact. As much as possible, at least one project with collaboration functionality will be ventured by RVRCOB every year. For the academic departments, their projects may range between cooperation and coordination but majority shall be with coordination functionality. This does not prevent them from venturing into projects that employ collaboration functionality. All projects must be anchored to the expertise of each academic department. Finally, to ensure quality, consistency, and manageability of projects, the continuous improvement and competitive benchmarking elements of TQM, must be comprehensively applied all throughout the articulation of the operational framework.

More specifically, consistent to this proposed community engagement operational framework, the researcher also recommends the plan of action format in Table 3. As an example, the first few items were already filled out.

Table 3. Proposed plan of action

College-wide:				
Community engagement project	Expertise	Service-learning component	Community connectedness	TQM
SEED in Bagac, Bataan	Business development, product marketing, product registration	Student immersions for subjects with service-learning components	Collaboration	Evaluation of every project, every immersion (before-during-after) faculty, student, community
Social entrepreneurship in Angat, Bulacan	Process and product registration, business management, business research	Student immersions through professional organizations	Collaboration	Evaluation of every project, every immersion (before-during-after) student, community
Academic departments:				
Department and Community engagement project	Expertise	Service-learning component	Community connectedness	TQM

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