

Letter of Understanding

A letter of understanding acts as a contract between students and the community organization that they will be working with. Based on conversations with students and community organizations, the letter of understanding details project expectations for both parties.

It should include:

- A brief explanation of the purpose of the letter
- A statement of project(s) objectives and how students propose to meet them
- A request for anything students need from the community partner
- A timeline for drafts or key parts of the project, meetings, and/or completion dates
- Methods for communicating
- A closing that invites response and expresses professionalism and warmth

Sample from Deans, Thomas. *Writing and Community Action: A Service-Learning Rhetoric with Readings*. New York: Longman, 2003. 353-354.

Sample Letter of Understanding

October 20, 2001

Cheryl Jackson, Volunteer Coordinator
4th Street Shelter
1832 4th Street
City, ST 12345

Dear Ms. Jackson:

This letter is to follow up on our October 18 meeting, at which we discussed the writing project we will be doing in the coming weeks. As we understand it, we will create a three-fold brochure that will be used to help recruit more student volunteers for the shelter. Our group is excited about the prospect of helping 4th Street Shelter in its work with the homeless.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The brochure will aim to recruit college student volunteers, especially at volunteer fairs such as the one held on our campus. We think that in order for the brochure to work, it needs to not only include basic information but also make volunteering at the shelter appealing to students. Therefore, the brochure will probably do things like feature a current volunteer, include photos, include facts about possible work-study pay, emphasize the flexible hours, and let the potential volunteers know what they would do and why it is important work.

Because of the limited budget, we understand that the brochure will need to be in black and white. Still, we hope to make it visually appealing in a way that college students will respond to.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

In order to create the brochure, we will need a few things from you, including

- Basic information on hours of operation, volunteer guidelines, etc.
- The name of at least one current college volunteer who we might contact to feature in the brochure
- The shelter logo, in digital format, if you have it
- Photos, if you have them
- Your preferred software format, if any, so that you can revise the brochure in the future
- Your constructive feedback on drafts

Hopefully, we can get most of these things at our October 29 meeting

TIME LINE

As we discussed, it makes sense for each of us to volunteer at the shelter for at least a week so that we can understand how 4th Street Shelter works. (Some of us plan a longer commitment.) During that time, we can also start gathering information. Here is our current project schedule:

Oct 21–29	Volunteer at shelter/gather information
October 29 (3:30pm)	Meet at your office to pick up information and plan
Nov. 7	Have rough draft ready for review and feedback
Nov. 8–15	Revise the draft and resubmit another draft, if needed
Nov. 16–25	Share the draft with other students for feedback and finalize the draft
Nov. 25	Submit a final draft on paper and disk

In order to keep in touch, we have included our phone numbers and email addresses below. Tim will serve as the main contact with you for the project.

This is our understanding of the project. Please share with us your thoughts on our plans, especially if they don't match your intentions. We look forward to working with you on this project and to seeing you at our October 29 meeting.

Sincerely,

Tim Mitchell
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tmit@college.edu

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warr@college.edu

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