As editor of *Successful Service-Learning Programs: New Models of Excellence in Higher Education*, Edward A. Zlotkowski set out to provide ten case studies in service-learning. The volume was published as a primer for other academic leaders interested in developing such programs. Each chapter presents the service-learning program of a particular institution and is written by someone associated with that unique program. Each essay provides key information concerning the history of the program, its organization within the institutional structure, partnerships and basic funding patterns.

Zlotkowski is a leader in service-learning and author of one of the institutional chapters. As a Professor of English and Director of Service-Learning at Bentley College, Zlotkowski serves as an accomplished mentor. However, one of the greatest assets of this text is the diversity of its contributors. The different cases represent schools small and large, public and private, liberal arts and research-focused, historically black and Ivy League.

In addition to the diversity of institutional types, another great feature of *Successful Service-Learning Programs* is that each chapter ends with a bibliography and the books ends with appendices of documents from represented programs. Often, the chapters were so brief they were rather superficial. Each case presented just enough information to praise the program, yet not enough information to extend transferability to readers’ organizations. The bibliographies and appendices provide readers places to proceed after reading this text.
The first case presents Augsburg College, a religious institution whose mission is “to develop future leaders of service to the world...shaped by the faith and values of the Christian church, by the context of a vital metropolitan setting, and by the intentionally diverse campus community” (Zlotkowski, pg.27). In other words, although service-learning is a new buzzword, the concept is what Augsburg had in mind from its 19th century beginning. The early college leaders set out to make a college in which students were sent out into their world, particularly into urban Minneapolis.

Augsburg’s current system of service-learning developed out of a course on Crime and Society, in which students worked with inmates and correctional officers to understand and apply what they were learning. The program spread to encompass the entire school in deliberate service efforts. Scholarships of $2,000 are awarded to entering students with demonstrated commitment to service. Resident Assistants are required to organize service projects for residents each semester. Ongoing partnerships have developed with community agencies. For example, students work with a local charter school each semester. Some students tutor at the school. Management Information Systems students developed more efficient network applications for the school. The Augsburg music department involved faculty and students in developing the charter school’s music curriculum.

Even in this first highlighted case, it is easy to envision the academic and personal gains students experience from service-learning. The MIS students at Augsburg who developed a network gained invaluable practical experience while fostering a better environment for neighborhood children. However, readers may wonder how they could
possibly create a similar program if their school was not created with such an outward urban mission.

The greatest weakness of *Successful Service-Learning Programs* is that each example shown is the result of significant executive leadership. In some case, such as Augsburg’s, the leadership originated in the founding mission. In other cases, such as at Brevard Community College, the leadership came with a new president. However, since not all readers will be working at evangelical missions-oriented schools or be new presidents ready to change their schools, the text would have benefited from advice for faculty simply looking to change their own classes.

In each case, including Augsburg and Brevard Community College, faculty members were integral to the successes of service-learning. Faculty willing to integrate service-learning into curricula are absolutely necessary. However, in those cases, the institutional mission and leaders promoted the faculty interest. At Brevard, the institution joined Campus Compact, a national effort to promote service-learning. The president funded a service-learning center. As of the writing of the book, more than 90 BCC instructors were using service-learning in well over 100 different courses. The service-learning center, a key component in each case, worked with faculty to develop community relationships for service-learning. Unfortunately, Zlotkowski’s text provides little information on the process of developing such relationships, especially for faculty who do not have access to a service-learning center.

One example of an institution whose service-learning was begun by faculty is Bentley College. From a personal perspective, the Bentley case was the most interesting because Bentley College is the largest all-business college in the Northeast. The Bentley
Service-Learning Project began as the Bentley Homeless Project, with one professor taking students to a Boston homeless shelter. One year later, three more professors partnered to integrate the Homeless Project into their courses. Each faculty member found ways to bring the academic and practical together in his or her courses. Some professors made the Project the major feature of a course. In such cases, the Project could require significant time, detailed reports and presentations, or other academic work. In some instances, faculty saw the Project as a small component of their courses and required less commitment.

Within another year, the Project had grown to include nine professors. In the fourth year, a new provost, hired largely because of his service-learning background, helped the Project become an academic center with a staff and budget. The provost promoted the program as “capitalism with a human face” and an effort to ensure students were “doing good and doing well” (pg. 67). Three years later, the center had grown to be the largest source of grant money at Bentley. In every institution highlighted, the mission of the service-learning program was tied with the institutional mission. The same was true at Bentley, where the Service-Learning Project mission is “To make Bentley a national model for a new kind of business education—one that combines traditional academic excellence with social service” (pg. 69).

Bentley has demonstrated the tremendous opportunities for business education to become more than classes. While the Bentley program began as an effort to understand homelessness, the program now adds other important business work. The college has created its own Junior Achievement for students to teach economics in local schools.
Students work in economic development, marketing of non-profit organizations and provide many other professional services.

Amazingly, many members of the Bentley community were initially skeptical such a program could work at a business school. Freshmen surveys had consistently shown Bentley students volunteered less and were less interested in social and political issues than the national averages for freshmen. Further, Bentley freshmen were more likely than average to be attending college primarily for financial gain. As it turned out, those factors may have been a benefit to Bentley’s program. The author noted, “Most community groups with which our students have worked explicitly noted [the students’] refreshing lack of intellectual arrogance and academic pretense” (pg. 77).

Gaining the interest of such students required the program to appeal to self-interests. Students were attracted to the opportunities to gain experience and build networks. The college even created work-study opportunities and scholarships for service-learning, further attracting students. Similar tactics were used to attract those faculty who were not naturally interested. Faculty members were shown how service-learning worked to instill professional responsibility and develop practical experience. The result of these efforts has been that professors are incorporating service-learning and students are competing for Project jobs and internships.

It would be tempting to claim service-learning is especially important in this era of corporate scandals and public distrust. However, these situations are not really new. Capitalism and its leaders have often borne the brunt of criticism from the socially-minded crowd. The problem is that while economic reality consistently demonstrates capitalism and capitalists are good forces in the world, the masses will always fail to see
the invisible hand. Just as academics have, often rightfully, been criticized for living in
ivory towers, perhaps it is time for business students and business leaders to step out of
the art deco skyscrapers. If life is about more than power ties and power lunches, perhaps
our business schools should develop more to their curricula.

*Successful Service-Learning Programs* provides several inspirational case studies
for anyone interested in the concept of service-learning. The book suffers from the flaw
of superficiality, with each chapter repeating many of the same basic ideas. However,
what the book does well is demonstrate that service-learning can fit into any mission and
any curricula. Once that basis is established, the reader can move on to explore other
resources for developing his or her own program. In such a case, the bibliographies
provided in *Successful Service-Learning Programs* would provide ample assistance.