Dean William Plater, IUPUI Dean of the Faculties, says that he "came to service learning with great reluctance, doubtful about the long-term viability of what I viewed as a pedagogical fad," but was asked to represent IUPUI at one of the early training institutes presented by Campus Compact. "I went because it was in Boulder in the summer, and Boulder in the summer is a nice place to be." He returned, after many conversations and debates with people like Ira Harkavy and Harry Boyte, committed to the concept of civic engagement and the integration of service learning, convinced of "the importance and seriousness of the work, especially for urban universities." But most importantly, he was persuaded by the commitment of the other IUPUI institute team members.

"Their vision and dedication were contagious," he said. He then set about developing an admittedly ambitious plan "to build a culture of service at IUPUI that not only was implemented within 2 years, but with institutional funding in place." The plan launched IUPUI as a model for institutionalization of civic engagement and service learning, especially in the area of faculty roles and rewards.

Some of Dean Plater’s suggestions for other chief academic officers (CAOs) working to institutionalize service learning are:

• Establish the effort in academic affairs;

• Appoint a well-qualified, committed, enthusiastic person to direct the effort;

• Create a resource center, such as the Center for Public Service and Leadership;

• Expect students to create a demand for faculty work;

• Include graduate students, as many will go on to be faculty members;

• Exploit external resources for funding, information, and training support;

• Build in sustainability with long-term budget commitments;

• Emphasize the importance of reflection;
• Make service visible, with clear roles for the President/Chancellor, the CAO, and faculty leaders.

“Above all,” he says, “involve faculty in planning, and in creating a demand for support and recognition of service work. The criteria for promotion and tenure should explicitly address professional service, which is easily related to teaching and research via service learning.” Dean Plater suggests that the CAO role include complimenting faculty work and offering support via workshops and meeting opportunities for faculty that are new, part-time, newly tenured, and senior “to help them understand where service fits in;” sending faculty leaders to conferences; providing opportunities to speak publicly of their work; and including the work in reports. "Institutionalize the ideas through awards, offices, rules - anything that seems like it might 'stick.' Make it important to enough people and enough funding will be found to support it.”