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PROJECT BRIEF

Community Colleges Broadening Horizons through Service Learning, 2000–2003

by Gail Robinson

The goals of *Community Colleges Broadening Horizons through Service Learning*, supported by the Corporation for National Service and administered by the American Association of Community Colleges, are to build on established foundations to integrate service learning into the institutional climate of community colleges, and to increase the number, quality, and sustainability of service learning programs in colleges nationwide. The *Horizons* project features model programs, national data collection and dissemination, and an information clearinghouse. In addition, *Horizons* provides professional development opportunities and technical assistance through regional workshops, chief academic officer summits, mentoring, presentations, publications, a Web site, and a consultant referral service.

Service learning combines community service with classroom instruction, focusing on critical, reflective thinking as well as personal and civic responsibility. Service learning programs involve students in activities that address local needs while developing their academic skills and commitment to their communities. The *Horizons* project promotes the value of service learning not only to students and faculty, but also to college administrators and community members.

Ten colleges were selected in a national grant competition in 2000 to become *Horizons* Mentee Colleges. They represent rural, suburban, and urban areas, and have student populations as small as 1,500 and as large as 25,000. Working in the areas of education, public safety, human needs, and the environment, the *Horizons* Mentee Colleges are developing service learning programs that can be replicated at other institutions. Experienced practitioners from

four other colleges serve as a mentor team, providing advice and hands-on assistance. The *Horizons* service learning programs involve 40 different disciplines and reach community members ranging from senior citizens to kindergartners.

Horizons Mentee Colleges

- Anne Arundel Community College, MD
- Bellevue Community College, WA
- Broome Community College, NY
- Doña Ana Branch Community College, NM
- East Central Community College, MS
- Fergus Falls Community College, MN
- Malcolm X College, IL
- Orange Coast College, CA
- Southern Maine Technical College, ME
- Virginia Highlands Community College, VA

Horizons Mentor Colleges

- Community College of Aurora, CO
- Gadsden State Community College, AL
- Richland College, TX
- University College, University of Cincinnati, OH

Anne Arundel Community College

Service Learning Institute

Located near the Chesapeake Bay, Anne Arundel Community College began its service learning program in 1996 as an AmeriCorps program. For four years, service learning was offered primarily in sociology, psychology, biology, and nursing. In 2000, the college administration provided funding to support two full-time staff to manage the program and oversee student placements and agency partnerships. To strengthen the program

and expand into new disciplines, the college developed a three-day faculty service learning institute to increase the number of faculty participants from 11 to 26. The workshops included an introduction to service learning, national trends and outcomes, roles and responsibilities, reflection, curricular integration, and a three-hour service learning assignment with a local agency. Anne Arundel also celebrates National Volunteer Week by inviting its agency partners to participate in the college's service fairs to educate students on community needs, recruit volunteers, and share resources.

Contacts

Anne Arundel Community College
101 College Parkway
Arnold, MD 21012
www.aacc.cc.md.us

Cathy Doyle

Project Coordinator, Office of Service-Learning and Volunteerism
Phone: 410/777-2902
E-mail: chdoyle@mail.aacc.cc.md.us

Richard Faircloth

Professor, Biology
Phone: 410/777-2272
E-mail: rfaircloth@mail.aacc.cc.md.us

Project Highlights

- Faculty serve at agencies
- Service learning office
- Well-developed partnerships

Bellevue Community College

Serve, Learn, and Lead

Bellevue Community College, located 15 miles east of Seattle, serves more than 20,000 students and is the largest community college in Washington.

Faculty from each of BCC's academic divisions began offering service learning in fall 2001. Science faculty create gardens for the elderly and teach botany to both students and senior care residents. Educational development faculty and students develop English skills in non-native speakers by serving at a

variety of community-based agencies. Media and technology students provide agencies with technical assistance in information technology, while learning valuable IT skills. Business accounting students learn introductory skills while helping nonprofit organizations set up accounting systems. Project team members support faculty as they integrate service in their curricula through a summer institute, quarterly celebrations for program participants, and a community service fair. BCC is also developing a leadership and citizenship course and expanding its community contacts.

Contacts

Bellevue Community College
3000 Landerholm Circle SE
Bellevue, WA 98007
www.bcc.ctc.edu

Toni S. Hartsfield

Director of Student Programs
Phone: 425/564-6151
E-mail: thartsfi@bcc.ctc.edu

Shairose Gulamani

Business Faculty
Phone: 425/564-4083
E-mail: sgulaman@bcc.ctc.edu

Project Highlights

- Multi-disciplinary efforts
- Student leadership
- Faculty development events

Broome Community College

Project Hope

The service learning program at Broome Community College (part of the State University of New York system) encourages students to seek

placements at agencies that are related to their career interests, including the Broome County Office for Aging and a local nursing home.

Students also serve with the New York Office of the Attorney General to handle consumer fraud and protection issues. A large number of students in a public affairs course participate in the

GEAR UP program (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) by serving as English and math tutors in two middle schools in Binghamton. In cooperation with Binghamton University and the Binghamton school district, GEAR UP is intended to improve the quality of public education, raise test scores, and encourage young men and women to consider higher education. The BCC students tutor 36 hours over the course of a semester, maintain reflective journals, and assist middle-school students visiting the college.

Contacts

Broome Community College
PO Box 1017
Binghamton, NY 13902
www.sunybroome.edu

Ben Kasper

Professor of Social Science
Phone: 607/778-5084
E-mail: kasper_b@sunybroome.edu

Margherita Rossi

Chair of Psychology, Education, & Human Services
Phone: 607/778-5216
E-mail: rossi_m@mail.sunybroome.edu

Project Highlights

- Faculty development workshops
- University and public school partnerships
- New faculty recruitment
- Institutional support

Doña Ana Branch Community College

El Milagro Service Learning Initiative

Doña Ana Branch Community College's *El Milagro* initiative focuses on service learning in *colonias* of

Doña Ana County in southern New Mexico. *Colonias* are communities within 150 miles of the US–Mexico border that lack roads, water, sewage, and/or adequate housing. The 37 *colonias* of Doña Ana County comprise 40 percent of the county population. DABCC faculty, staff, students, and administration have teamed up

with *colonia* organizations, local agencies, and community leaders in a service learning advisory council. This group selects certain *colonias* and determines which needs might be addressed through service learning, such as sanitation, water, and a community library. *El Milagro* offers faculty workshops that provide information on and support for curriculum connections to service learning in the *colonias*. All instructional divisions and areas of the college participate. DABCC leaders believe the miracle (*el milagro*) of college–community partnerships is the change in the everyday lives of all who work together to address local needs.

Project Highlights

- Meeting community-identified needs
- Chief academic officer participation
- Curriculum development
- College-wide involvement

Contacts

Doña Ana Branch Community College
MSC 3DA, PO Box 30001
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
dabcc-www.nmsu.edu/dabcc.asp

Kathleen Baca

Associate Professor, English
Phone: 505/527-7626
E-mail: kbaca@nmsu.edu

Elizabeth Ann Gutierrez

Associate Professor/Coordinator,
Legal Assistant Program
Phone: 505/527-7642
E-mail: egutierr@nmsu.edu

East Central Community College

Service Learning Program

Located in rural Mississippi, East Central Community College's service learning program

began in the 2000-2001 academic year with two projects in the sciences and nursing. Biology students built a wildlife habitat in front of the science building. Nursing students presented lessons on health-related topics such as hand washing, breast self-exams, adolescent drug abuse, the dangers of unprotected sex, and proper oral care to elementary

and high schools, churches, day care centers, and community centers. The program is expanding to include gerontology students serving in area nursing homes, and English and sociology students serving in *Mississippi Reads*, an AmeriCorps program through which college students tutor children in the second through fourth grades. Faculty development opportunities include in-service sessions led by a *Horizons* mentor and travel to conferences and other colleges with service learning programs.

Contacts

East Central Community College
PO Box 129
Decatur, MS 39327
www.eccc.cc.ms.us

Mary Hanson

Director, Learning Skills Center
Phone: 601/635-2111 ext. 329
E-mail: mhanson@eccc.cc.ms.us

Melanie Gilmore

Dean, Associate Degree Nursing
Phone: 601/635-2111 ext. 294
E-mail: mgilmore@eccc.cc.ms.us

Project Highlights

- Presidential support
- Elementary school collaboration
- AmeriCorps collaboration

Fergus Falls Community College

Community Connection Center

Fergus Falls Community College's service learning program includes 10 instructors in five disciplines. In the 2000-2001

academic year, 320 students—nearly one third of the student population—provided 6,500 hours to their rural western Minnesota communities. Serving a historically homogeneous region that has recently seen an influx of immigrants, the Community Connection Center provides service learning opportunities

that embrace a wide range of experiences, including diversity awareness. The center has developed more than 50 campus-community partnerships, with a special emphasis on regional K-12 schools. Instructors are vigorous in their academic rigor and innovative in building service learning into their classrooms and community settings.

Contacts

Fergus Falls Community College
1414 College Way
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
www.ff.cc.mn.us/campserv/ccc/

Connie Payson

Coordinator, Community Connection Center
Phone: 218/739-1341
E-mail: cpayson@ff.cc.mn.us

Roberta Egersdorf

Instructor, Communications
Phone: 218/739-7512
E-mail: regersdorf@ff.cc.mn.us

Project Highlights

- Multiple partners in changing rural area
- Transcript notations
- Online reflection
- Replicable projects featuring diversity

Malcolm X College

Developing Student Leadership Skills through Service Learning

"It's Your Serve!" is the slogan for Malcolm X College's service learning program, which is expanding by adding six new courses, 10 community partners, and doubling the number of student participants. The pilot freshman learning community will use service learning in a college survival course to enhance group identity through shared experiences. A new service learning student organization brings together

students from all disciplines to facilitate reflection, mentoring, and the development of ethical leadership. Essential to the continued growth of the program is the active participation of committed faculty and valued community organizations. Professional development remains a priority, as MXC faculty and staff continue to share their experiences with colleagues locally, regionally, and globally. Student outcome measurements, including the general education portfolio, are being developed to provide meaningful data on attitudinal, behavioral, and cognitive changes experienced by service learners.

Contacts

Malcolm X College
1900 West Van Buren Street
Chicago, IL 60612
www.ccc.edu/malcolmx

Cecile Regner

Dean of Arts and Sciences
Phone: 312/850-7301
E-mail: cregner@ccc.edu

Antonio Lopez

Professor of Sociology
Phone: 312/850-7339
E-mail: alopez@ccc.edu

Project Highlights

- Freshman learning community
- General education portfolio development
- Faculty development
- Student leadership skills

Orange Coast College

Westside Science Project

Service learning at Orange Coast College has expanded over the last several years to include more than 50 faculty members and projects in over 60 courses. OCC has formed numerous partnerships with agencies and organizations and concentrated on developing long-term relationships that benefit both college and community. The focus of the service learning program has centered on K-12 education in the

Orange County area. Faculty members in astronomy, geology, biology, chemistry, marine sciences, computer sciences, mathematics, physical anthropology, art history, dance, education, and Spanish have developed teaching modules that can be delivered to K-12 children by OCC students. These teaching modules were designed by the college faculty, K-12 teachers, and service learning students, and are aligned with state curriculum standards. Service learners in the sciences regularly present "science nights" at local elementary schools and organize annual "science days" at the college campus for local K-6 students.

Contacts

Orange Coast College
2701 Fairview Road
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
www.occc.cccd.edu

Jay Yett

Professor of Geology and
Coordinator of Service Learning
Phone: 714/432-5686
E-mail: jyett@occc.cccd.edu

Betil Kunzler-Yett

Assistant Professor of Anthropology
Phone: 714/432-5810
E-mail: byett@occc.cccd.edu

Project Highlights

- K-12 partnerships
- Strong science components
- Teaching modules

Southern Maine Technical College

Portable Service Learning Modules

Southern Maine Technical College is expanding and enhancing its service learning program by developing a strong campus infrastructure.

Community connection in the greater Portland area has been a long tradition for the campus, but a strong formal curricular presence was missing. The *Horizons* project enables intensive faculty training in service learning. SMTC hosted three national service learning leaders on campus to con-

duct a training for SMTC faculty as well as faculty members from other area campuses. New stand-alone modules for implementing service learning and problem-based learning will assist faculty who cannot participate in training. Project coordinators will field-test the process, successes, and problems encountered by faculty who implement under both the training and module methods of introduction. Through the modules, SMTC hopes to create a tool that can help campuses enhance their service learning programs even on very limited budgets.

Contacts

Southern Maine Technical College
Fort Road
South Portland, ME 04106-1698
www.smtc.net

Linda Gabrielson

Liberal Studies Chair
Phone: 207/767-9606
E-mail: lgabriel@smtc.net

Jack Ney

Marine Science Instructor
Phone: 207/767-9509
E-mail: jney@smtc.net

Project Highlights

- Campus infrastructure development
- Faculty training
- Curriculum infusion
- Replicable modules

Virginia Highlands Community College

Expanding Horizons through Service

In rural southwestern Virginia, Virginia Highlands Community College's community service and service

learning program was developed through an initiative that encouraged student participation in the community. With the support and enthusiasm of community agencies, the program has expanded to include the involvement of student clubs and organizations in short-duration service activities. Interested faculty have incorporated service in their courses with stu-

dents addressing local needs, and a "learning about community through service" program during spring break has developed into a student leadership activity. An outgrowth of this program is the positive relationship of local agencies as community partners in creating opportunities for service and civic engagement for VHCC students.

Contacts

Virginia Highlands Community College
PO Box 828
Abingdon, VA 24212
www.vh.vccs.edu/studentdevelopment

Quintin Doromal

Coordinator of Student Development and Service Learning
Phone: 276/739-2402
E-mail: qdoromal@vh.vccs.edu

Julie Little

Biology Instructor
Phone: 276/739-2516
E-mail: jlittle@vh.vccs.edu

Project Highlights

- Community partnerships in rural areas
- Curriculum development
- Student leadership
- Alternative spring break

Horizons Mentor Team

Community College of Aurora

The Service Learning Center at the Community College of Aurora provides experiential learning opportunities for students to strengthen their academic preparation as they pursue their educational and career goals. Students work on a variety of projects appropriate to their needs and designed to fit their schedules. Since 1992, the program has developed strong and lasting partnerships with the Aurora public schools and local community and government agencies. An interdisciplinary capstone course focusing on service learning concepts is CCA's latest initiative.

Contact

Paula Bonell

Service Learning Coordinator
Community College of Aurora
16000 E. CentreTech Parkway
Aurora, CO 80011
Phone: 303/340-7519
E-mail: paula.bonell@cca.cccoes.edu
www.cca.cccoes.edu

Gadsden State Community College

Contact

Beryl Odom

Service Learning Coordinator
Gadsden State Community College
PO Box 227
Gadsden, AL 35902-0227
Phone: 256/549-8386
E-mail: bodom@gadsdenst.cc.al.us
www.gadsdenst.cc.al.us/pr/lrnsrv.htm

Gadsden State Community College's Service Learning Center, with its full-time coordinator and central location, underscores the college's commitment to service learning. Faculty in several academic and technical areas offer service learning options in their classes. Students are involved in an oral history project, National Youth Service Day, Web site development for community service agencies, and tutoring students participating in Neighborhood Network and GEAR UP programs. An information/training workshop for community agency partners expanded GSCC's role as a service learning mentor to local school systems.

Richland College

Richland College's Service Learning Office provides student orientations and faculty development workshops, and acts as a liaison to community agency partners. Each year approximately 50 instructors offer classes that include service learning for more than 600 students serving in nearly 90 community agencies in the Dallas area. Project sites include elementary school reading programs, immigrant community centers, a hospital for children with orthopedic illnesses, community gardens, and a camp for physically challenged adults and children. In campus-wide reflection sessions, service learners reveal that they are forming lifelong habits of service and community involvement.

Contact

Carole Lester

Associate Dean, Academic Enrichment
Richland College
12800 Abrams Road
Dallas, TX 75243
Phone: 972/238-6110
E-mail: clester@dcccd.edu
www.rtc.dcccd.edu/enrich/servlern/servlern.htm

University College, University of Cincinnati

Contact

Barbara Wallace

Program Director, University College
University of Cincinnati
PO Box 210047
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0047
Phone: 513/556-2021
E-mail: wallacbl@ucmail.uc.edu
www.ucollege.uc.edu

Since its inception as a small language arts pilot in 1998, service learning has expanded into all departments of University College, an open-access, two-year college located on the main campus of the University of Cincinnati. An action team—led by a local United Way manager and comprising community partners, administrators, and faculty from across the institution—has facilitated this successful initiative. University College considers service learning an integral part of other campus initiatives, including general education, problem-based learning, learning communities, and university/high school partnerships. Great emphasis is placed upon ongoing training and continued growth into Cincinnati public schools.

Select Electronic Resources

America Counts

www.ed.gov/americancounts

America Reads

www.ed.gov/americanreads

American Association for Higher Education

www.aabe.org/service/srv-learn.htm

American Association of Community Colleges

www.aacc.nche.edu/servicelearning

America's Promise

www.americaspromise.org

Campus Compact

www.compact.org

Campus Compact National Center
for Community Colleges

www.mc.maricopa.edu/academic/compact

Campus Outreach Opportunity League

www.cool2serve.org

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

www.futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph.html

Corporation for National Service

www.nationalservice.org

Educators for Community Engagement

www.selu.edu/orgs/ic

Effective Practices Information Center

www.cns.gov/resources/epicenter

International Partnership for Service-Learning

www.ipsl.org

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

www.servicelearning.org

National Service-Learning Exchange

www.nslexchange.org

Points of Light Foundation

www.pointsoflight.org

Service-Learning on the World Wide Web

csf.colorado.edu/sl

UCLA Service-Learning Clearinghouse Project

www.gseis.ucla.edu/slc

Horizons Mentor/Consultant

Carol Jeandron

Director of Service Learning
Loyola University, Box 115
6363 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70118

Phone: 504/865-2283

E-mail: cajeandr@loyno.edu
(formerly Vice Chancellor of
Academic Affairs, Nunez
Community College, Chalmette, LA)

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE HORIZONS PROJECT, CONTACT:

GAIL ROBINSON

Coordinator of Service Learning
American Association of Community Colleges
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20036-1176
Phone: 202/728-0200 ext. 254
Fax: 202/728-2965
E-mail: grobinson@aacc.nche.edu
Web: www.aacc.nche.edu/servicelearning

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