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PROJECT BRIEF

Community Colleges Broadening Horizons through Service Learning, 2003-2006

by Gail Robinson

The goals of *Community Colleges Broadening Horizons through Service Learning*, supported by the Corporation for National and Community 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 on service learning and civic responsibility, 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.

Eight colleges were selected in a national grant competition in 2003 to become *Horizons* Mentee Colleges. They represent rural, suburban, and urban areas; include tribal and Hispanic-serving institutions; and have student populations as small as 600 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. Each college works with a service learning advisory committee comprising students, faculty, administrators, staff, and community partners.

Experienced practitioners from four other colleges serve as a mentor team, providing hands-on assistance and advice. The *Horizons* service learning programs involve more than 35 different disciplines and reach community members ranging from pre-school children to senior citizens.

Horizons Mentee Colleges

- Chattahoochee Technical College, GA
- Hudson Valley Community College, NY
- Kingwood College, TX
- Northern New Mexico Community College, NM
- Northwest Indian College, WA
- Prince George's Community College, MD
- Sinclair Community College, OH
- Western Wisconsin Technical College, WI

Horizons Mentor Colleges

- Anne Arundel Community College, MD
- Orange Coast College, CA
- Richland College, TX
- Southern Maine Community College, ME

Chattahoochee Technical College

Poised for Service Learning

As Georgia's first technical college to introduce service learning, Chattahoochee Technical College focuses on both general education and technical/occupational courses. The first students to participate come from three educational programs: English, early childhood care and education, and allied health. Cooperating with Cobb County's program for senior citizens, students in English classes conduct

research and collect oral histories as part of an immigration project. Early childhood education students design brochures and resources for parents. Allied health students plan a week-long health fair for the college community. The college's primary community partner brings together a range of services that will eventually provide placements in areas such as housing, nutrition, youth mentoring, and adult education. Chattahoochee's service learning team considers faculty, staff, and student training to be a priority, and also focuses on promotion and dissemination of service learning through publications and a Web site.

Contacts

Chattahoochee Technical College
980 South Cobb Drive
Marietta, GA 30060
www.chattcollege.com

Lucyille Shelton

Director of Career Services
770/528-4520
lshelton@chattcollege.com

Sean Brumfield

Lead English Instructor
770/528-4571
sbrumfield@chattcollege.com

Project Highlights

- Oral histories
- Service learning library
- Faculty and staff development

Hudson Valley Community College

Beyond Boundaries: Redefining Neighborhoods and Enhancing Educational Achievement

Hudson Valley Community College's service learning program is designed to enrich the educational experiences of elementary school students in New York's capital region by connecting them to the college and connecting the college to the community. Service learning creates opportunities for Hudson Valley students to work in after-school programs and to help organize events that bring disadvantaged youth to the

college. Students also serve in a variety of other agencies and organizations that support the social network of the surrounding community. These connections are strengthened through academic program presentations, Career Day, and National Youth Service Day. On this day, community leaders, politicians, area college administrators, and students discuss the needs of the community and the possibilities of community problem solving through service. Hudson Valley Community College—one of 30 community colleges in the State University of New York system—offers service learning in several courses including sociology, psychology, political science, cultural diversity in American society, American history, and the history of New York state.

Contacts

Hudson Valley Community College
80 Vandenberg Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
www.hvcc.edu

Peter Sawyer

Chair, Department of History, Philosophy,
and Social Sciences
518/629-7690
sawyepet@hvcc.edu

Lori Latrice Sykes

Instructor, Department of History, Philosophy,
and Social Sciences
518/629-7749
sykeslor@hvcc.edu

Project Highlights

- K-12 collaboration
- Faculty training
- Community and college engagement

Kingwood College

Learning Alternatives through Service

The goals of Kingwood College's service learning initiative were designed to fit the institution's mission by providing resources for faculty, learning opportunities for students, and departmental infrastructure for curricular integration. Faculty workshops on service learning provide a forum for discussing the implementation of possible projects in suburban Houston. A collection of resources including literature,

referrals, syllabi, and Web sites is available to all college employees. Projects include a history class working to preserve the legacy of a poor African-American mill town that may disappear to commercial development. Kingwood biology students partner with high school students using hands-on activities to teach K-6 children the principles of everyday biotechnology. Graphic arts students assist nonprofit organizations in designing informational brochures and advertisements. Business communications students practice their international business relations skills by serving as conversation partners with ESL students improving their English-speaking skills.

Contacts

Kingwood College
20000 Kingwood Drive
Kingwood, TX 77339
www.kc.nhmccd.edu

Brian Shmaefsky

Professor of Biology and Service
Learning Coordinator
281/312-1609
brian.shmaefsky@nhmccd.edu

Cora Ann Williams

Associate Professor, Speech Communication
281/312-1593
cora.a.williams@nhmccd.edu

Project Highlights

- District-wide faculty development
- Multi-disciplinary efforts
- Board presentations

Northern New Mexico Community College

En Servicio

Northern New Mexico Community College serves the city of Española as well as small rural villages and pueblos over a 5,900 square-mile area. The college's service learning team is identifying and developing processes within the college to establish service learning as a teaching pedagogy. These processes include campus and public awareness, faculty and department chair training, and implementation.

NNMCC promotes service learning in campus newsletters, brochures, and handbooks. Students in an abnormal psychology class learn about the complexities of mental disorders while serving at an agency for children, youth, and families. Chicano history and humanities classes gather oral histories of local elders, focusing on the influence of outside groups on the environment, ecology, landscape, and lifestyles of northern New Mexico and its people. Students in a family systems class create booklets featuring services, opportunities, and agencies that meet local families' needs. The college also partners with the juvenile probation office, state police office, and local cultural organizations.

Contacts

Northern New Mexico Community College
921 Paseo de Oñate
Española, NM 87532
www.nnmcc.edu

Bernadette Chavira-Merriman

Director, Developmental Studies
505/747-2197
bernadette@nnmcc.edu

Mellis Schmidt

Faculty Chair, Humanities, Social Sciences,
Language and Letters
505/747-2213
mschmidt@nnmcc.edu

Project Highlights

- Community-identified needs
- Service learning in developmental courses
- Increasing student retention rates

Northwest Indian College

Project Service Learning

Northwest Indian College is committed to serving the educational needs of tribal communities

throughout the Pacific Northwest. Located on the Lummi Indian Reservation near Bellingham, NWIC's Center for Service Learning began its first formal year of operation in 2003. The center is creating a strong foundation by focusing on faculty, staff, and student training and building quality community partnerships. Environmental science

Contacts

Northwest Indian College
2522 Kwina Road
Bellingham, WA 98226
www.nwic.edu/subtopics/servicelearning.html

Michelle Vendiola

Native American Studies/
English Faculty
360/392-4300
mvendiola@nwic.edu

Emma Spenner-Norman

Environmental Science Faculty
360/392-4330
enorman@nwic.edu

students participate in service learning projects focused on native plant and stream restoration. Education and science students teach Head Start preschoolers at science education fairs. A special project over the course of the grant will address unique Native American community needs. Northwest Indian College students will look at Native peoples' history, including how other ethnic and political groups have affected tribal communities. Students will also work on wellness issues for the future.

Project Highlights

- First-year-experience student involvement
- Pre-K-12 school collaborations
- Impact of colonization on Native peoples

Prince George's Community College

Connections through Service

Located in the suburbs of Washington, DC, Prince George's Community College serves a diverse student body, of which more than 70 percent are

minorities. International students come from at least 100 different countries. To promote and expand service learning throughout the college, a coordinator and program liaison direct a new Office of Service Learning. The office sponsors service learning conferences, workshops, and individual training for faculty, students, and community partners. Service learning

is incorporated into such disciplines as English, history, international studies, speech, business, accounting, engineering, and nursing. Prince George's Community College students work with middle school students to study the history of immigration in the area since 1900. The college also partners with a nonprofit organization that promotes engineering, science, and computer fields among African-American youth. Campus projects include America Reads, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, and a veterans oral history project. Other service activities include a community engagement conference, a service learning leadership program, and a campus-wide service celebration.

Project Highlights

- Partnerships with public schools
- Faculty development
- Service learning office

Contacts

Prince George's Community College
301 Largo Road
Largo, MD 20774
www.pgcc.edu

Randy Poole

Service Learning Coordinator
301/322-0135
hpoole@pgcc.edu

Betty Habershon

Service Learning Program Liaison and
Accounting Department Chair
301/322-0713
bhab@pgcc.edu

Sinclair Community College

Interdisciplinary Service across the Life Span

Recruitment and relationship building are primary goals for Sinclair Community College's service learning initiative.

Faculty receive training and mentoring to incorporate service learning and civic responsibility components into their course syllabi. A Sinclair Service Day and a leadership conference provide students with opportunities to focus on personal and community civic responsibility and leadership.

Service learning provides opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and exposure to diverse economic conditions, environmental circumstances, cultures, and family environments. Community partnership development began with a Dayton community action agency and will include public schools and community nonprofit, government, and faith-based organizations. Long-term institutionalization efforts focus on linking service learning to the college's mission statement and core educational competencies. A Web page and online newsletter are being developed to share reflections and lessons learned with students, faculty, and community partners.

Project Highlights

- Campus and community assessment strategies
- One-on-one recruitment and orientation
- Faculty workshops

Contacts

Sinclair Community College
444 West 3rd Street
Dayton, OH 45402-1460
www.sinclair.edu/about/slearning/index.cfm

Marilyn Rodney

Service Learning Coordinator
937/512-2040
marilyn.rodney@sinclair.edu

Kathy Rowell

Associate Professor, Sociology
937/512-4598
kathy.rowell@sinclair.edu

Western Wisconsin Technical College

Service Matters!

One of Western Wisconsin Technical College's primary objectives is to increase faculty awareness of service learning and provide support for curriculum development via workshops, mentoring, and

mini-grants. The college fosters student commitment to civic engagement through course-based service in different disciplines and in co-curricular service learning activities such as Neighbor Helping Neighbor Day and Make a Difference Day. WWTC is assessing the impact of service learning on student learning, attitudes, and

motivation toward continued service in the community. The college's project team is also developing and assessing community partnerships based on principles of reciprocity, trust, and respect. As part of a communications skills course, WWTC students work with members of La Crosse's Hmong population to document the immigrant experience and ensure their language, history, and customs are acknowledged and honored by young people. Student reflections on this project indicate an increased self-awareness of cultural bias and misunderstanding, leading to greater tolerance and acceptance.

Project Highlights

- Student-led projects
- Online newsletter
- Student and community orientation, recognition, and celebration

Contacts

Western Wisconsin Technical College
304 North 6th Street
La Crosse, WI 54602
www.wwtc.edu/servicelearning

Mary Ann Herlitzke

Associate Dean, Human Services Division
608/785-9538
herlitzkem@wwtc.edu

Sheila Allard

Instructor, Communications Skills
608/789-4782
allards@wwtc.edu

Horizons Mentor Team

Anne Arundel Community College

The Center for Learning through Service at Anne Arundel Community College coordinates student orientation and placement, community partnerships, and faculty development. The center is implementing a professional development plan to support the integration of a college-wide social and civic responsibility competency. Workshop topics include planning community service projects, recruiting and mentoring faculty, building stronger relationships between faculty and community partners, developing creative reflection strategies, and encouraging interdisciplinary service learning projects based on community needs.

Contact

Cathy Doyle

Program Coordinator, Center for Learning through Service
Anne Arundel Community College
101 College Parkway
Arnold, MD 21012
410/777-2902
chdoyle@aacc.edu
www.aacc.edu

Orange Coast College

Contact

Jay Yett

Coordinator of Service Learning and
Professor of Geology
Orange Coast College
2701 Fairview Road
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
714/432-5647
jyett@occ.cccd.edu
www.occ.cccd.edu

Orange Coast College's Service Learning Office helps pair faculty with community-based organizations to develop course-based service learning initiatives. OCC designs and implements campus-wide events including Community Science Night and Community Engagement Day. More than 2,500 children and adults attend Science Night, when service learning faculty and students open the college's science and technology labs for the evening. Orange Coast's service learning and visiting scholar programs cosponsor Community Engagement Day, featuring civically active speakers and community agencies that invite students to serve in their organizations.

Richland College

Service learning began at Richland College under the global studies program, an academic methodology that incorporates into classroom teaching such principles as democratic participation, social and economic justice, and cultural diversity. Current projects include a mentoring program with K-12 schools and partnerships with refugee services and an organization for adult survivors of child abuse. Continued support for service learning at Richland helps incorporate the principles of civic engagement and cultural diversity into classroom teaching. Service learners affirm that they are forming lifelong habits of service and community involvement.

Contact

Fred Martinez

Faculty/Counselor
Richland College
12800 Abrams Road
Dallas, TX 75243
972/238-6902
fxm8320@dcccd.edu
www.rlc.dcccd.edu/enrich/servlern/servlern.htm

Southern Maine Community College

Contact

Linda Gabrielson

Assistant Dean of Enrollment Services
Southern Maine Community College
2 Fort Road
South Portland, ME 04106
207/741-5606
lgabrielson@smccme.edu
www.smccme.edu

Southern Maine Community College is expanding its service learning program through faculty mini-grants to purchase supplies for courses offering service learning for the first time. Mini-grants are awarded twice annually through the college's service learning advisory committee. New and adjunct faculty receive training at summer workshops focused on faculty members who are new to service learning. Experienced faculty have the opportunity to participate in and present at regional and national service learning conferences through college and grant support.

Horizons Mentee Primary Community Partners

Chattahoochee Technical College

Carolyn Bridges
Program Director
The Center for Family Resources
377 Henry Drive
Marietta, GA 30064
770/428-2601
CarolynBridges@TheCFR.org

Northwest Indian College

Linda Madeo
Education Services Manager
Lummi Head Start
2616 Kwina Road
Bellingham, WA 98226
360/384-2255
lindam@lummi-nation.bia.edu

Hudson Valley Community College

Chris Scharnott
Teacher
Carroll Hill Elementary School
112 Delaware Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
518/271-5400
cscharnott@hotmail.com

Prince George's Community College

Joyce Edwards
Principal
Drew-Freeman Middle School
2600 Brooks Drive
Suitland, MD 20746
301/817-0900
joyed@pgcps.org

Kingwood College

Kim Huseman
Service Learning Facilitator
Quest High School
18901 Timber Forest Drive
Humble, TX 77346
281/641-7337
kim.huseman@humble.k12.tx.us

Sinclair Community College

Deborah Ferguson
Director of Outreach and Social Services
Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area
719 South Main Street
Dayton, OH 45402
937/341-5000
deborahf@cap-dayton.org

Northern New Mexico Community College

Eric Rendon
Supervisor
Rio Arriba Juvenile Probation
810-C North Riverside Drive
Española, NM 87533
505/753-7323

Western Wisconsin Technical College

Denis Tucker
Executive Association Director
La Crosse Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association
2613 George Street
La Crosse, WI 54603
608/781-5744
dltucker@centurytel.net

Horizons Project Consultants

Evaluation Consultant

Mary Prentice
Assistant Professor, Educational Management
and Development
New Mexico State University
PO Box 30001 MSC 3N
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
505/646-2962
[mpreptic@nmsu.edu](mailto:mprentic@nmsu.edu)

History Consultant

Carole Lester
Dean of Instruction
Richland College
12800 Abrams Road
Dallas, TX 75243
972/238-6110
clester@dcccd.edu

Select Web Resources

American Association for Higher Education
www.aabe.org/service/

American Association of Community Colleges
www.aacc.nche.edu/servicelearning

Campus Compact
www.compact.org

Campus Outreach Opportunity League
www.cool2serve.org

Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement
www.civicyouth.org

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
www.ccpb.info

Community College National Center for Community Engagement
www.mc.maricopa.edu/engagement

Corporation for National and Community Service
www.nationalservice.org

Educators for Community Engagement
www.e4ce.org

Effective Practices Information Center
www.nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter

International Partnership for Service-Learning
www.ipsl.org

National Service Inclusion Project
www.serviceandinclusion.org

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
www.servicelearning.org

Pew Partnership for Civic Change
www.pew-partnership.org

Points of Light Foundation
www.pointsoflight.org

Service-Learning and Engaged Scholarship
www.engaged-learning.net

UCLA Service-Learning Clearinghouse Project
www.gseis.ucla.edu/slc

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE HORIZONS PROJECT, CONTACT:

Gail Robinson
Manager 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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