



ACADEMIC SERVICE-LEARNING

IN News

Senate Resolution No. 149: State of New York Commends the New York Campus Compact for Advancing Campus/Community Partnerships and Civic Engagement

St. John's University and Academic Service-Learning are part of the New York Campus Compact. The New York Campus Compact was founded on September 2001, and has served as a catalyst for student community involvement that helps strengthen and renew communities throughout the State and improve the economic and social well-being of the general public. In the State of New York; the mission of higher education involves educating students for life as productive citizens. St. John's University, and thousands of college and university students across the

state are involved in substantive volunteer, Service-Learning, and civic engagement. The Legislative Body intends to commend the students, colleges, and universities that have dedicated their efforts to civic engagement and community renewing. This body urges the state's colleges and universities, to pursue substantive volunteer, service-learning and civic engagement activities as a central method of effective pedagogy that leads to personal and community development. This Legislative Body pauses in its deliberations to commend the New York Campus Compact

“Only a life lived for others are a life worthwhile.” —ALBERT EINSTEIN

Academic Service Learning Essay Winners

During the Fall 2006 semester, the Office of Academic Service-Learning asked the students participating in our program to answer the following question: How has your Academic Service-Learning experience affected you and given you a great understanding of your course work? Four students responded with exceptional essays and each was awarded a gift certificate to Barnes and Noble Bookstore. Each student will have their essay published in the Academic Service-Learning Essay Journal in May 2007 and one essay will be published on the Vincentian Community Web page.

Aliena Shoemaker is a sophomore at St. John's College majoring in English, currently studying abroad. Because her name, Aliena means, alien in Italian, the Italians always look at her strangely as if to say, "...are you sure that's your name?" Though she hails from California, Aliena attests she does not surf or see movie stars. She performed last semester's service learning in Father Bicsko's "Introduction to the Bible" theology course. During that time she worked with children in the Bronx, teaching them about aquatic life and estuaries. Not expecting to learn so much from the children, she remains surprised at how much she did. Now she is more aware that that no matter how chaotic and ridiculous our time seems, there are children who have the rare ability to care about others, no matter the circumstance. This thought is enhanced by two younger half siblings who make days at home in California so much brighter, if not also louder. Some days Aliena takes them to a Poptart factory, with the hope that in the future, her brothers will do the same for someone else.

Kevin Clerkin is a senior at St. John's Staten Island campus. He participated in the service learning program as part of Professor Kenel's honors capstone theology class. For his project he volunteered at On Your Mark, Inc., a local organization dedicated to assisting developmentally disabled individuals. While there, he assisted these individuals to learn basic computer skills. He found this experience challenging at first, yet one of the most rewarding of his life. He was truly touched by the courage and perseverance of these individuals and is happy to have had the opportunity to make a difference in their lives.

Laura Camerlengo is a senior at St. John's Staten Island campus. Laura was involved in the Service Learning program through the Honors Capstone Theology course with Professor Sally Kenel. As part of her project, she volunteered during St. John's Annual Service Day and assisted in the preparation of materials for the yearly Breast Cancer Walk. There, Laura prepared several hundred pink ribbons to help raise awareness about the disease and commemorate the event. In addition to increasing her own awareness about breast cancer, Laura was particularly impressed by the efforts of her fellow members of the St. John's community.

Christopher Dekki is a senior in St. John's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He is a History major with two minors in Political Science and Theology. Mr. Detki's service learning project required him to teach a confirmation class at St. Sylvester's Roman Catholic Church and School in Staten Island. This class opened up many opportunities to him. He is now interning at St. Sylvester's as the assistant to the Director of Religious Education.

Christopher is graduating this May and will be staying at St. John's as a graduate student, matriculating in International Relations.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

—MAHATMA GANDHI (1869-1948)

“One act of beneficence, one act of real usefulness, is worth all the abstract sentiment in the world.”

—ANN RADCLIFFE

Two New Additions for Academic Service-Learning

Hello! My name is Bethany; I am the new Academic Service-Learning site coordinator for the Discover the World program. I work with coordinators abroad to keep in touch with faculty and students participating in service activities. I am very focused on driving St. John's University important service-centered mission toward a global perspective. I am a graduate of the five year B.S./M.A. program in Communication Arts and Sociology. As an undergraduate I was very involved in student activities. I served as president for the St. Vincent de Paul society, a member of V.I.T.A.L. and the President's Society. I was also a student worker in the University Freshman Center for three years and finished as a graduate assistant with Campus Ministry. I am excited about St. John's new Discover the World

program and will work very hard to make sure our students are having a safe, educational and effective experience while abroad.

Hi Everyone!! My name is Louis Saavedra and I'm the new Coordinator for Academic Service Learning. I am new to this position but, have been here at the university for about six years. In my time here, I received my degree in Criminal Justice and am finishing my Masters in Criminology. As for extra-curriculum activities, I was the President of Student Government Inc. and in the President's Society, to name a few. I am so excited to be working here with this great team, who really demonstrates the Vincentian Mission and always has student centered methodology.

SERVICE-LEARNING ESSAY

Contest

Did your students' hand in exceptional papers reflecting on their Academic Service-Learning Project?

If the answer is Yes, submit those papers to the Office of Service-Learning for a chance to win!

Three winning entries will be published in a booklet for the University Community. Winners will receive a \$100 gift certificate to the Barnes and Noble.

All entries are due By May 11, 2007 to the Office of Service-Learning located in the University Center.

Questions? Contact us at ext. 6499 for more information.

For further information, contact the Office of Service Learning (718) 990 – 1364.

Summer Grant Winners of 2006

José G. Centeno, Ph.D., Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Program, Department of Speech, Communication Sciences, and Theatre, developed a service-learning (SL) experience for graduate students in speech-language pathology. Based on his SL proposal (i.e., Centeno, 2007) and supported by an award from St. John's Academic Service Learning Office, Dr. Centeno included an optional SL activity in his course SPE 381, Bilingualism and ESL Issues in SLP, this spring. The main purpose was to enhance students' integration of classroom discussions, sociocultural knowledge, and clinical practices with minority elders in a socially-based, reflective fashion. Specifically, by participating in SL in culturally diverse senior environments, students were encouraged to examine, analyze, and reflect on the various factors (i.e., socio-cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, societal, etc.) that have an impact on the daily lives of minority, elderly individuals. Students were expected to keep journal records of their reflections on their interactions with the minority elders for class discussion and for a final term paper. The purpose of the paper was three-fold: to consolidate the journal entries, to link those thoughts to the concepts on minority individuals discussed in class, and to discuss how their SL experiences may have encouraged them to revise classroom information and their own personal attitudes to minority individuals, particularly the elderly.

Reference:

Centeno, J. G. (2007). From theory to realistic praxis: Service-learning as a teaching method to enhance speech-language pathology services with minority populations. In A. J. Wurr & J. Hellebrandt (Eds.), *Learning the language of global citizenship: Service-learning in applied linguistics* (pp. 190-217). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishers.

In June 2005, **Professor John Conry** developed and commenced a new academic service-learning course within the College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions. This experiential course is offered to 5th and 6th year doctor of pharmacy students of the College and is offered off campus at a non-profit organization known as Project Renewal. Project Renewal is dedicated to the homeless and indigent of NYC. It has provided medical care to this patient population for more than 37 years and currently provides medical services to more than 15,000 people each year. Project Renewal is nationally recognized for their grass roots attempt to provide healthcare to the indigent, with a mobile clinic that travels around NYC to provide free healthcare to the poor.

Students spend 4-week blocks (full-time- 40 hours/week) working beside Professor Conry, the staff and patients of Project Renewal. Pharmacy students are able to work directly with the patients and

“Some people give time, some money, some their skills and connections, some literally give their life’s blood... but everyone has something to give.”

—BARBARA BUSH

“Blessed are those who give without remembering. And blessed are those who take without forgetting.”

—BERNARD MELTZER

healthcare providers at Project Renewal and use the knowledge they have gained from school to optimize the healthcare of their patients. Just as the patients benefit from this relationship, so do the pharmacy students. The provision of this service to the indigent allows the pharmacy students numerous learning experiences, including to: practice and enhance their pharmacy skills and knowledge; improve their communication skills; to better understand the unique barriers to providing care to an indigent patient population and develop creative ways to overcome these barriers; and to further understand and reflect upon the Vincentian Mission of our University and how their unique skills and knowledge can help them with this in the present and future. Based on end of course student surveys, 60% of students had never spoken to a homeless person prior to their course work but by the end of their experience 80% stated that they would like to volunteer to help the homeless in the future. The following are quotes taken directly from student evaluations:

“You are able to speak with these patients and they are not the way the TV and public have so negatively displayed them to be. These are patients that require healthcare and much more social support”

“I think it’s a great experience for pharmacy students. It shows another side of pharmacy that is often not seen and it makes you feel that you made a difference. It really shows how fortunate we are to have what we have. Besides learning pharmacy and medical issues, it also has a lesson about life.”

My name is **Gladys El-Chaar**, Ph.D. I am a full-time Associate Professor of Clinical Pharmacy Practice at St John’s University College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions in Jamaica, New York. I teach

principles of pharmacy in the classroom, and also train Pharmacy students in the clinical application of pediatric pharmacotherapy at Schneider Children’s Hospital in New Hyde Park, New York. This hospital is part of the North Shore-LIJ health system on Long Island. Pharmacy students who are in their fifth and sixth years of study sign up for a rotation in pediatrics with me at the children’s hospital. Here, they gain experience in how to choose and adjust a child’s medication and dosages for a wide variety of diseases. They learn to detect adverse effects and drug interactions related to a child’s diseases and treatments. They also learn how to search for, synthesize, and apply drug information from the medical and pharmacy literature to their patient. In this hospital setting, they spend their day with doctors, nurses, and children in various wards and help educate health professionals, patients, and families about medication use in children. While at the hospital, we treat the acute manifestations of the child’s disease. However, some children are diagnosed with a lifelong disease and when they return home, they must adjust to their illness and learn to cope with it.

Children with lifelong diseases often attend summer camps with other children who have the same condition. Meeting other children who are going through the same experience helps them become more comfortable with dealing with their own illness.

My interest in spending time with children at camp was the result of my own experience during my Doctor of Pharmacy program. I served as a camp counselor at Fisher’s Camp for Diabetes in South Carolina. This was 17 years ago, and to this day, my experiences at the camp and my memories of the children I helped supervise have left an incredible impact on me as a

*“People don’t
know how much
you know, until
they know how
much you care”*

—UNKNOWN

person and as a health care professional. I wish to offer to my students the same opportunity I had, to help them become compassionate pharmacists who understand the deep impact of lifelong disease on a child’s life. The purpose of this experience is to provide the student with a personal understanding of a child’s experience of disease, so that they will develop compassion for their patients. I feel this will help them become better students and, ultimately, better practitioners. It is intended to give the students a window into the lives of children with lifelong diseases, in a camp setting that provides activities and fun for the children. To date, there are two camps that are very interested in having the St John’s University Pharmacy students participate during the summer of 2007. One is a camp for children with diabetes mellitus, and the other is a general camp for children with disabilities. It is my hope that students who do attend camp will gain an understanding of the social and emotional impact of disease in children, knowledge of the various methods that children use to cope with their disease, and a wider view of the role of pharmacists and other health care professionals in improving children’s health.

—Gladys Elchaar, Pharm.D.

SERVICE LEARNING FACULTY SUMMER GRANT

Want to do something different with next year’s curriculum?

Have you always had a new idea you’re waiting to try with your class?

Here’s your chance!

Academic Service-Learning requests proposals for a summer Service-Learning Development Grant intended to support the integration of service experiences with the curriculum objectives of existing courses. The program is searching to award grants for summer projects to develop effective ways to introduce experiential education by:

- Designing service placements at community agencies that are appropriate to the faculty member’s discipline and address a genuine community need,
- Incorporating student insight and observations into class times,
- Developing meaningful opportunities to reflect via relevant written work, presentations, etc.

All full time faculty are eligible to apply. Submit course syllabus/syllabi along with an outline of initial areas to explore to Bethany Housman, Bent Hall Garden Level, Room Five. All admissions will be reviewed by a Service-Learning faculty committee. The committee selection will be announced June 4, 2007.

Deadline is April 20, 2007!

For more information,
contact Bethany Housman at x6268.

“Love cannot remain by itself—it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action and that action is service.”

—MOTHER TERESA

Academic Service-Learning and Discover the World

A lot can be said about the Spring 2007 Discover the World program. Initiated as being a different program from any other university, St. John's has set up a program that will allow students to literally “Discover the World” by visiting three different countries in one semester while achieving 15 credits. Students participate in many different academic endeavors. Along with service-learning activities offered in classes abroad, students are provided an opportunity to participate in science activities among the countries they visit.

The variety of service experiences is wide. Students can visit local hospitals, attend mass with a patient, serve meals at soup kitchens and even be a teacher's assistant teaching students English.

Discover the World is looking to move forward with plans for the summer in Latin America and Vietnam. Next year Fall 2007 will hold another European trip and hopes to add a program in Africa.

“I do like helping to serve the children at the school just because they remind me that there is a lot of innocence in this world as well. I feel as if they help me see things in another light rather than a situation where I am sole contributor.

discover the
WORLD
europa



I am going back to help every now and then because I really benefit from this as much if not more than they benefit from my service. I feel it's an hour well spent. I take, in memory, each day I leave this place the smiles of children, the noise they make and just the beauty of innocence. Its something I treasure because my childhood is long gone!”

—Benjamin Hong TCB '09

St. John's Goes to Berkeley College

On Friday, February 9, 2007, members of the department of Academic Service-Learning conducted an AS/L workshop for upper administration, faculty and students of Berkeley College, White Plains, NY. Berkeley College is a coeducational college specializing in business with seven locations throughout New York and New Jersey and draws its strength from balancing academic preparation, professional training, and hands-on experience. Alongside Orsete J. Dias, Ph.D., Dean of Academic Affairs, St. John's University Academic Service-Learning Program implemented a workshop designed to educate and promote academic Service Learning at Berkeley College.

Led by Darren Morton and Father Stephen Bicsko, the Academic Service Learning (AS/L) team actively engaged Berkeley College personnel through PowerPoint presentations, group discussions and exercises in course design. Topics included; an overview of St. John's University's Catholic, Metropolitan and Vincentian Mission, theories of Academic Service-Learning, theories of co-curricular service-learning, development of operational standards and partnering with agencies.

In conclusion, the members of Berkeley college administration, faculty and students expressed enthusiasm and a strong desire to move forward with AS/L implementation. St. John's University will continue to provide on-going support.

“Religion is to do right. It is to love, it is to serve, it is to think, it is to be humble.”

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON



MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC SERVICE-LEARNING STAFF

Darren Morton, Associate Dean of Students

Father Stephen Bicsko, Assistant to the Dean of Students and Coordinator of Leadership Program

Janet Mangione, Associate Director of Academic Service-Learning

Melanie Serge, Coordinator of Community Service Site Academic Service-Learning

Louis Saavedra, Coordinator of Academic Service-Learning

Bethany Housman, National and Global Academic Service-Learning Service Site Coordinator