Academic Service-Learning Institute

Kiernan Suite, Kelleher Center, March 13, 2013

Institute on Academic Service-Learning at the St. John’s Staten Island Campus

On January 22, 74 people attended the Institute on Academic Service-Learning, co-sponsored by St. John’s University’s Office of Academic Service-Learning (AS-L) and New York Campus Compact. While the Office of AS-L has hosted many Certificate Programs in the past, this year’s Institute was unique in two ways: It was the first time it was held at the Staten Island campus, and it included 2 distinct groups of educators: K12 teachers, pre-service teachers and administrators, and higher education faculty and administrators.

Photo Gallery

The Institute was co-facilitated by Dr. Edward Zlotkowski, Professor of English at Bentley University, who is known nationally and internationally in the field of service-learning and founded the Bentley Service-Learning Center, and Dr. Julie Carter, Associate Professor and Coordinator of Adolescent Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, at St. John’s University. Dr. Zlotkowski focused on AS-L in higher education, and Dr. Carter focused on AS-L in K12 education. Some parts of the Institute brought the whole group together, while other parts of the Institute had the 2 distinct groups of educators work with their respective facilitators. “This was an important educational opportunity for faculty and teachers because it allowed us to work with multiple strands in education – kindergarten through graduate. Very few educational workshops do this,” said Dr. Zlotkowski.

Institute participants were welcomed by Dr. Jerrold Ross, Executive Vice President for the Staten Island Campus, and Dean of education, and Lynn Stravino, Director of Academic Service-Learning. During the morning session, Drs. Zlotkowski and Carter gave an overview of the Academic Service-Learning pedagogy. The overview included a discussion of the place of AS-L and civic engagement in education. Dr. Regina Mistretta, Associate Professor and Program Coordinator, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, St. John’s University School of Education, then facilitated a session about community partnerships. During
the session, Dr. Sandra Abrams, Assistant Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction and representatives from the non-profit organization, Lifestyles for the Disabled, along with Dr. Julie Carter and a representative from PS 189M, spoke about their partnerships. Dr. Mistretta commented, “The professional learning community atmosphere cultivated at the Faculty Institute provided a means for both the Staten Island campus and neighboring community to collaborate on ways to learn while serving.”

In the afternoon, Dr. Zlotkowski and Jessica Cook, Associate Director of Academic Service-Learning, led a session about the role of reflection, and facilitated a group case study exercise. After the case study, Drs. Zlotkowski and Carter led the group in redesigning courses they currently teach to include AS-L. Individuals or small groups developed ideas for AS-L projects that were in line with course learning objectives, and included the principles of reciprocal community partnerships. During this highly interactive exercise, all Institute participants redesigned courses and then gave feedback to other participants about their own courses.

Finally, Dr. Laurie Worrall, Executive Director of New York Campus Compact, led a wrap up and reflection on the day. Loreta Anderson, Ed.D (St. John’s University, 2011), a teacher at the Staten Island School of Civic Leadership, wrote, “Thank you…for providing us with such a unique and necessary experience. We truly enjoyed learning about AS-L in such an intellectually stimulating and very welcoming environment.”

For any questions regarding the Faculty Institute or the St. John’s AS-L program, please contact Lynn Stravino, Director of Academic Service-Learning, stravinl@stjohns.edu, (718) 990-7902.