



The Service Learning SENTINEL



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Emphasis on Student Learning

Taking Community Service to the “Next Level”

The Student Affairs Division is placing increased emphasis on student learning and has taken steps to incorporate community service, experiential learning, and civic engagement components more fully into the work of the division.

“One of our strategic goals is to create unique student learning opportunities, such as fostering innovative programs, academic collaboration, internships, and service learning,” says Vice Chancellor Bob Caruso. “It is important that we help students develop coherent values and ethical standards. We also want to forge educational partnerships that advance student learning, and, as part of our strategic plan, we will document outcome-based assessment of student learning.”

The Service Learning Department is leading the overall effort to promote service learning as a pedagogical approach to be integrated into the University’s academic programs. “It’s time to take community service to the next level,” declares Director of Service Learning Glenn Bowen. “We are encouraging faculty to revise syllabi and develop courses to include a service-learning component. ... Service learning should be linked to academic content and standards; credit should be awarded for learning, and not merely for completing a requisite number of service hours.”

Benefits

Outlining the benefits of service

learning, the Director noted: “Service learning expands the learning environment, extending learning beyond the classroom and into the community. It enriches coursework by providing an opportunity for students to use their knowledge and skills in real-life situations. Furthermore, it helps faculty members gain new perspectives on learning, and increases their understanding of the learning process. It also increases awareness of current societal issues as they relate to academic areas of interest, and provides short- and long-term solutions to pressing community needs. Additionally, service learning fosters civic responsibility and, in the process, helps to improve campus-community relations.”

New Director of Service Learning

Glenn Bowen has been appointed Director of Service Learning in the Division of Student Affairs at Western Carolina University.

Dr. Bowen was Leadership Facilitator with the Center for Leadership Development and Civic Responsibility at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami, where he played a major role in the development of several programs, including the Academy of Leaders, the Collegiate Leadership Development Program, and the ENGAGE series of skill-building workshops. He also taught a senior-level course, Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations, in the FIU School of Social Work.

He earned a B.A. in Communication Arts and an MBA (Interna-

tional Business specialization) from St. Thomas University in Miami, and a Ph.D. in Social Welfare from FIU. In addition, he holds Professional Certificates in Public Relations (University of the West Indies) and Teacher Education (Church Teachers’ College, Jamaica).

Over the years, he has served in various leadership capacities in professional, nongovernmental, and community-based organizations, including the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. As a member of the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO (appointed by the Prime Minister), he was an advisor to the Government of Jamaica and the United Nations agency on matters related to education, science, culture,



Glenn Bowen

and communications. He received professional awards for his work as a journalist and public relations practitioner.

Experience

Bringing energy, enthusiasm, and experience to his new position, Dr. Bowen sees his primary role as “building effective relationships on campus and in the wider community to enhance the service-learning program and make it a hallmark of student life here at Western.”

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WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

learning and serving through SERVICE LEARNING



connecting campus and community

Our Mission

The mission of the Service Learning Department at Western Carolina University is to promote service learning as a special form of experiential education whereby students engage in organized activities designed to enhance their intellectual, social, and personal development while meeting community needs.

As a unit of the Division of Student Affairs, the Department will organize and manage a comprehensive program in collaboration with faculty, administrators, staff, students, and community partners to encourage academic excellence and, at the same time, foster civic responsibility and the scholarship of engagement.

Service Learning Defined

“Service-learning means a method under which students learn and develop through thoughtfully-organized service that: is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience.”

Source: American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), 2000.

what they're saying ...

... About Service Learning

“Service learning is a valuable way to help students draw connections between our course material on politics and policy with the world beyond the classroom.”

– *Dr. Niall Michelsen, Department Head, Political Science & Public Affairs.*

(Editor’s Note: Five faculty members incorporated service learning into 13 separate sections of Political Science and Public Affairs courses during the 2003-2004 academic year.)

“The ... project reinforced student learning by requiring them to teach portions of the [Introductory Macroeconomics] class material. Students also gained experience in written/oral presentation.”

– *Dr. James H. Murphy, Assistant Professor, Computer Information Systems & Economics.*

(Editor’s Note: Dr. Murphy’s students were involved in two projects – teaching modules of the education program for Junior Achievement of Western North Carolina and the Tuckasee River Cleanup.)

... About Community Service

“Through community involvement and leadership, individuals create social change.”

– *Christina Smith, Former Medford Scholar.*

“Community service is important to me because it helps me to give back to a community that has given to me.”

– *Tabitha Taylor, Medford Scholar.*

“The individuals who give of themselves get back the love and great sense of internal accomplishment that builds self-wealth more than money ever could.”

– *Joel Stroot, Medford Scholar.*

“Community service allows individuals to give back to the community. Doing community service also helps build character.”

– *LaRonda Dowdell, Medford Scholar.*

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Community service promotes positive human experiences

●
By Molly C. Murtola
●

Many aspects of life are important, enjoyable, and meaningful to me, but I know in my heart that the act of volunteering does something indescribable. Compassion, tolerance, generosity, and respect are undoubtedly key aspects of community service, but also necessary traits of any prosperous, peaceful community. As an active volunteer for the past four years, I have witnessed the power of altruism in a very pure sense. The path of my life has been changed by my service experiences, and the importance of community service presents itself ever more clearly.

The importance of community service is established in its win-win characteristics. My volunteer experiences have been with various homeless shelters, nursing homes, campus events, foreign and domestic mission trips, Habitat for Humanity, and schools; and with each encounter there is a unique result. I am forever grateful for the joy, humbleness, love, and simplicity that I have witnessed in those people I have interacted with, in service experiences. I receive immense gratitude and witness

In this way, community service provides a way for people to connect with, share, and practice those qualities that are often diminished in society.

Contagious

One of the beautiful aspects of service is that it is often contagious and can spread in unknown directions, changing lives for the better. I am reminded of the movie *Pay It Forward*, in which 11-year-old Trevor pursued

simple and common as the laughter of a child.” The little things, like letting a person go ahead of you in traffic, making a donation, holding a door open, saying hello with a smile, praying for or sending a letter to someone, make a difference in the lives of others and are, clearly, aspects of community service that promote positive human experiences.

Community service is important. It guarantees a win-win experience in

‘Community service provides a way for people to practice those qualities that are often diminished in society. ... The benefits are truly enormous.’

the relief when individuals gain a sense of hope, receive warmth, food, and shelter, or share time with a comforting friend. It is such an awesome encounter to share blessings with others and, at the same time, receive blessings. This kind of exchange promotes strong community ties and interconnectedness among people of various backgrounds and circumstances.

The greatest part of service is that it is not measured in monetary terms. There is no scale that measures the degree of how much was accomplished or what the success was. Any service act – great or small, any encounter with one person or 100 people, is a meaningful occurrence. I am drawn to service because of how intimate it really is and how much it supports and depends on the genuine, core aspects of my human nature, such as patience, cooperation, generosity, consideration, and love. In our fast-paced, materialistic culture, it is a relief to find these values and be reminded of their true power and our need for their presence.

the idea of altruism in a very serious and passionate attempt to change the world. He attempted to create a ripple effect in the sense that one single action could inspire other altruistic deeds and, therefore, go far beyond affecting the initial person. Indeed, during the course of the movie, Trevor’s idea traveled across the United States, touching the lives of hundreds of individuals.

Like Trevor, I wholeheartedly believe in a rippling or contagious effect when it comes to doing kind things for other people. There is no telling how far one considerate, selfless act can go or what kind of effects such an act can have. Community service is important in how it filters into the actions of everyday life. Involvement in service promotes an attitude of kindness, consideration, and other altruistic characteristics. I have been inspired by my volunteer experiences to look at every day as an opportunity to make a difference in some way, no matter how small or insignificant an act may seem. Mother Teresa said, “What I do is as

which people work together to build self-esteem and support for a common goal and benefit. Service reminds us of our humanness and promotes a lifestyle that is not self-centered, but rather promises sensitive, heartfelt relationships. In addition, service is a significant way for people to connect and put into action a contagious kindness. The benefits of community service are truly enormous. Wherever I am, I will work to support experiences that build and share compassion, tolerance, generosity, respect, and, most importantly, love with everyone. Finally, community service is a step towards transforming our world and its inhabitants into something more ... something more humane.

Molly C. Murtola is a Nursing student (senior class) and a former Medford Scholar.

Sentinel Scenes



MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

Western Carolina University marked Make a Difference Day with a series of projects on September 30. The projects benefited children (pediatric patients and young readers), flood victims, and a social service agency and its clients. Full story, page 6.





Sentinel Scenes

Four projects completed on Make a Difference Day

Three groups of WCU students “made a difference” on October 30. While one group remained on campus and knocked on doors to ask for donations, another pounded the pavements in Sylva, and the third lent a hand on a building renovation project on the outskirts of the town.

It was Make a Difference Day for Western Carolina University. The University marked the day with four service projects to benefit social programs in Jackson and Haywood Counties. Make a Difference Day is considered “the most encompassing national day of helping others” – a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors.

The day was observed nationally on October 23. However, because it coincided with major Homecoming events (which were planned earlier), the WCU observance took place one week later.

The campus-based projects were *Stuffed Animal Round-Up* (with the donation going to Harris Regional Hospital) and *We Can Make a Difference* (donation to a relief center for flood victims in the Canton area). Among students who participated in these projects were **Taleka Reid** and **Christina Spatharos**. Service Learning Graduate Assistant **Lincoln Walburn** was the campus coordinator.

In the local community, the projects were *A Prescription to Read*, promoting an early-learning project, and *REACH to Assist* – renovation of a building on Browning Street in Sylva, to house the REACH offices and counseling center. (REACH is the acronym for Resources, Education, Advocacy, Counseling, and Housing.)

A Prescription to Read

The WCU Service Learning Department collaborated with the Region A Partnership for Children (RAPC) in *A Prescription to Read*, a project designed to be a catalyst to action. Students involved in this service project were **Meredith Silas**, **La Rhonda Dowdell**, **Jason Marshall**, and **Jonathan Wright**.

The mission of RAPC is to improve the quality of life for young children and families in western North Carolina by encouraging collaboration and funding services that focus on prevention and early intervention. RAPC is dedicated to ensuring that all of Region A’s children (up to age 5) arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed. One major project at RAPC is Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD), a quality improvement initiative with medical practices that serve very young children.

Thirty-two practices in Region A have indicated interest in improving child and family literacy. During the “well-child check-up,” the medical provider will educate parents about the importance of reading in school and seeking success in life. Upon the presentation of a multi-cultural board book in English or Spanish to the child, the medical provider will give a “prescription to read” and information about community-based literacy resources, such as libraries and family resource centers.

WCU volunteers distributed a project-specific flyer to businesses, community organizations, and individuals in Sylva and Dillsboro. As ABCD Project Coordinator **Emma Miller** explained, one side of the flyer is educational and outlines the benefits of reading to young children. The other side is a call to action; existing community resources are listed with a menu of potential involvement. Options include donating funds for the purchase of new books for the ABCD project; donating used books to the Loving Readers Program or a local child-care center; and volunteering with GED, ESL, or reading programs for children in the hospital or community settings.

Dr. Miller, the Early Learning Specialist at Region A Partnership for Children, spent Make a Difference Day with the student volunteers. She thanked them for their enthusiasm and valuable service.

REACH Project

Sandy Frazier, Director of Development at REACH, expressed satisfaction and appreciation for the services rendered by six students – **Robert Alden**, **Laurie Pardo**, **Phillip Patton**, **Jake Setzer**, **Nicholas Tucker**, and **Kristen Wilson**. The students worked alongside REACH Executive Director **Jean Bockstahler**.

In a letter to the Director of Service Learning, Mr. Frazier said the students’ help in moving furniture, cleaning, and painting was “most invaluable.” He explained: “We were ‘fighting’ a deadline to get the building cleared out and cleaned up in order for the carpeting people to install carpeting [on November 1]. If we had missed the deadline it would have been three additional weeks before we could get back in the queue. The students worked very hard at helping us to stay on schedule and they are greatly appreciated.”

According to Mr. Frazier, “the new offices will play a very important role in the delivery of services to men, women, and children who have been harmed by interpersonal violence. First of all, the new building is being purchased as an asset of the agency for much less than we currently pay in rent. That savings will be used for direct client services. Secondly, the new counseling offices provide a much quieter setting for clients than our present ‘on-the-highway, noisy’ offices. And thirdly, the move will eliminate the danger we all face when we enter or exit onto Highway 107.”

Mr. Frazier noted that “the issue of domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault has gained a greatly heightened awareness on the WCU campus.” He hoped that each time a student interacts with REACH, the awareness will continue to grow. “Toward that end we did spend some time during the work period talking about the issue of interpersonal violence and explaining the programs and facilities ... and how each of their labor ‘fit into’ the larger picture.”

Students awarded Medford Scholarships

Five undergraduates were recently awarded \$1,000 scholarships under the Jacob Medford Service Learning Scholarship Program for the 2004-2005 academic year. They are LaRhonda Dowdell, Jason Marshburn, Meredith Silas, Joel Stroot, and Tabitha Taylor.

Jacob (Jake) Medford was a sophomore at Western when he lost his life tragically in a hit-and-run car accident in the summer of 2002. He was committed to developing friendships and serving those in need. His twin brother, Zack, and parents, Sarah and Ronnie Davis, decided that contributing to endowed

service scholarships would be a fitting memorial to Jake.

Scholarship recipients are required to serve as peer educators in the service-learning program, making presentations and engaging students in discussions about community service and civic responsibility.

New Director continued from page 1

In welcoming the new Service Learning Director, Dr. Robert Caruso, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, noted: "Glenn's experience as both a faculty member and administrator ideally position him to make great contributions to the Service Learning Department. His work with Florida International University's Center for Leadership Development and Civic Responsibility will be particularly valuable to us as we attempt to incorporate community service opportunities for students into the learning goals of our various curricula."

The Director of Service Learning reports directly to Jane Adams-Dunford, Assistant Vice Chancellor, who expressed delight in having Dr. Bowen on her team. "Glenn brings the experience and qualities we were looking for in a Service Learning Director. He has a solid background facilitating with the Social Change Model for Leadership, coupled with his faculty experience, which will assist in enhancing collaborative partnerships with faculty and staff. Glenn is a welcomed addition to the Student Affairs team."

Dr. Bowen has been appointed to the Advisory Committee of the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and will co-chair a University-wide Committee on Student Learning. He will also serve as the Student Affairs Division's Liaison to the Center for Regional Development.

Faculty Fellow for Service Learning

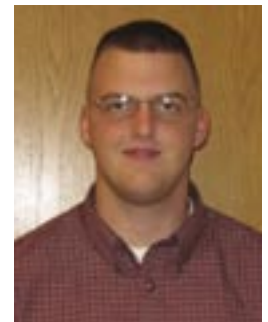
Dr. Joe McDonald, a faculty member of the Anthropology and Sociology Department, has been appointed a Service Learning Faculty Fellow for the current academic year. He will assist the Service Learning Department primarily in creating and organizing resources for faculty, coordinating orientation and in-service training sessions, and conducting service-learning research.

This is Dr. McDonald's second year at Western. Previously, he taught sociology at Newberry College in South Carolina and at Mercer University in Georgia. He has been using service learning in his classes for more than 10 years and has found it "valuable as a teaching tool and as part of a student's education for active civic engagement."



New Graduate Assistant

Lincoln Walburn is the Service Learning Graduate Assistant. Currently a student in the Master of Education program, with a concentration in College Student Personnel, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from WCU in May 2004. As an undergraduate, Lincoln was "very involved" with the Last Minute Productions, the Wesley Foundation, and the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.



Workshops for Faculty

The Service Learning Department recently presented two introductory workshops for faculty on the use of service-learning methodology in university courses. Each workshop consisted of two one-hour sessions.

The first session introduced service learning as an approach to teaching and learning. The session included a brief history, goals and principles of effective use, along with examples of service-learning

activities in different disciplines, helpful Web sites, and a worksheet to use in planning the integration of service learning into a course in the faculty member's discipline.

In the second session of each workshop, the focus was on discussing ideas generated by participants as they considered how they might include service learning in various courses.

Faculty Fellow Joe McDonald led the workshop sessions.

Survey underway

A survey is underway to gather data from faculty about the use of service learning, or community service, in courses that they teach. The information will improve the ability of the Service Learning Department to provide services and resources. Faculty have been asked to indicate whether they have used service learning or have given their students a community service assignment at WCU or at other institutions.

Homecoming Week Service Project



For Homecoming Week, students spent two days (October 21-22, 2004) working on a building project on the A.K. Hinds University Center Lawn. They built two Habitat for Humanity playhouses. Students later reflected on the significance of the project by answering a set of questions provided by the Service Learning Department.

Advisory Committee appointed

A 16-member Service Learning Advisory Committee has been appointed for the 2004-2005 academic year. The committee, which includes faculty, staff, students, and community representatives, will assist in promoting service learning on campus and in building quality relationships between the University and community agencies.

Committee members are **Dr. Alan Altany**, Professor and Director of the Coulter Faculty Center; **Mardy Ashe**, Director of Career Services/Cooperative Education; **Phyllis Bolick**, Budget & Finance Officer, Center for Regional Development; **Carla Catalan**, Student; **Maggie Donahue**, Assistant Director of Talent Search; **Carol Douglas**, Harris Regional Hospital; **Ron Huff**, Director of Upward Bound;

Dr. Karen Lunnan, Associate Professor and Department Head, Physical Therapy; **Jason Marshburn**, Student/Medford Scholar; **Jackie Carr McHargue**, Director of Student Judicial Affairs; **Dr. Emma Miller**, Early Learning Specialist, Region A Partnership for Children; **James Stewart Payne**, Executive Director, Community Table; **Susan Smith**, Director of Advising & Pre-Professional Programs, Honors College; **Sara Stoltenburg**, Director of Women's Programs and the Women's Center; **Walter Turner**, Assistant Director for Residential Life; and **Dwaun Warmack**, Associate Director for Programs, Hinds University Center.

The committee, which will be chaired initially by the Director of Service Learning, will also include the Service Learning Faculty Fellow and Graduate Assistant as ex-officio members.