



The Service Learning SENTINEL

WESTERN
CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

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Jacoby to speak at Awards Banquet, April 28

Outstanding Service-Learning Scholars, Volunteers to be Recognized

Students and faculty will receive awards in recognition of their achievements in service learning on April 28. At the inaugural Service Learning Awards Banquet, staff and community partners will be honored as well.

It will be “a celebration of learning and service to the community,” according to the organizers. Among the highlights will be a keynote address by Dr. Barbara Jacoby, a service-learning luminary and well-known author.

Dr. Jacoby is Director of the Office of Community Service-Learning at the University of Maryland, where she is also an Affiliate Associate Professor of College Student Personnel. She is the author of two books on service learning, *Service-Learning in Higher Education* (1996)

and *Building Partnerships for Service-Learning* (2003). She has also written and edited books on commuter students.

Dr. Jacoby has held many leadership positions in the American College Personnel Association and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education since 1980. Currently, she serves as Scholar for the National Clearinghouse for Commuter Programs and as an Engaged Scholar (Professional Development) for Campus Compact. Dr. Jacoby consults extensively and makes numerous speeches and presentations across the country. Her institution and professional associations have recognized her outstanding work on behalf of commuter students and service learning.

Nominations

The Service Learning Department is accepting nominations of individual students, student organizations, faculty, staff, and community agency representatives based on specific criteria. These include outstanding achievements in the service-learning component of courses, significant contributions to the work of community agencies, and high impact of service-learning activities on local communities.



Barbara Jacoby

Service Learning Symposium Set for June 9

“Balancing Stewardship and Scholarship to Promote Student Learning and Faculty Engagement” will be the theme of the first Service Learning Symposium at Western Carolina University on June 9. Penny Pasque, a research assistant at the National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good at the University of Michigan, will be the lead presenter.

The day-long symposium will cover such topics as Fundamentals of Course Design and Syllabi Construction, Assessment and Evaluation, and Research and Publication. Ms. Pasque will make a special presentation on Learning Communities, focusing on their role in fostering social identity, leadership, and empowerment through service learning. During the closing session, she will speak on “Higher Education for Civic Engage-

ment and the Public Good: Challenges and Opportunities for Faculty and Administrators.” Other universities will be invited to participate in the symposium and to present service-learning case studies from their campuses.



Penny Pasque will be the Lead Presenter

Higher Education for the Public Good, based in the Center for the Study of

Ms. Pasque currently coordinates strategic communication efforts for the Forum on

Higher and Postsecondary Education at Michigan. She is also the Team Leader for the Provost’s Committee for Diverse Democracy Research. Previously, she was an Institute Faculty Member for PaperClip Communication and a Co-director of the Michigan Community Scholars Program. Her publications include *Engaging the Whole of Service-Learning, Diversity, and Learning Communities* (a 2004 book, which she co-edited); a monograph on Learning Communities and Service Learning (American Association for Higher Education, 2003), book chapters, and journal articles. In addition, Ms. Pasque has made numerous conference presentations throughout the United States and has been a Program Reviewer for the American College Personnel Association.



WESTERN

CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

learning and serving through
SERVICE LEARNING



connecting campus and community

Enhancing Student Learning

Service learning gets students involved in helping to determine and meet real, defined community needs. Although it builds upon the concept of community service, service learning is far more structured, has more documented benefits, and commands a more sustained involvement.

Further, service learning is based on a reciprocal relationship in which the service reinforces and strengthens the learning, and the learning reinforces and strengthens the service. It involves cooperative rather than competitive experiences and thus promotes skills associated with teamwork and citizenship.

The Service Learning Department is encouraging faculty to integrate the methodology into curricula and courses. Research has shown that it enhances student learning. In addition, it fosters the development of important “intangibles” – personal values and attitudes such as empathy, a sense of caring for others, self-esteem, self-confidence, and civic responsibility.

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what they're saying ...

“Students were required to learn research skills along with many other composition and communication skills. Their response to a community question integrated those skills with real-world application. Service learning integrated course skills, providing relevance and motivation. It put an accent mark on thinking about reaching out to the community outside their classrooms. ... I’ve been [using service-learning methodology] for many years and will continue.”

– **Robert S. (Bob) Houghton**, Associate Professor, BK Elem & Middle Gr Educ

Editor’s Note: Dr. Houghton included service learning in Computers in Education (all four sections) during the Fall 2004 semester.

“I explain to all my students just how important community service is in the corporate world. I strongly feel that although service learning is important to the individual – whether for personal or professional gain – as well as the University, it is more important to the people and organizations it serves. ... I imagine since [some of] our students are our future CEO’s, COO’s and CFO’s, they will use their University experiences to help lead their corporations to future success by giving back to the community.”

– **Murat Yazan**, Visiting Lecturer, Department of English

“The assistance from students of Western is greatly appreciated.”

– **Michael Cartwright**, County Library Manager, Jackson County Public Library

“The students that you sent in [recently] were wonderful workers. It sure does help a lot.”

– **Norma McClure**, Manager, REACH Thrift Store & Boutique

“We love to have your students here. ... Keep sending them!”

– **Delores Jones**, Volunteer Services Director, Mountain Trace Nursing Center

“It is good for us here to have students, and the experience has been informative to the students. First, [many of them] had no idea of the level of poverty that exists, and, second, they did not know about the kind of help that’s provided here for people. It is a wonderful thing for us to work together. Connecting Western with the community is one of the best things that could happen to us.”

– **Kathy Cross**, Executive Director, United Christian Ministries of Jackson County

New Faculty Fellow

Leah Hampton, an instructor in the English Department, has been appointed a Service Learning Faculty Fellow for the Spring semester. She will assist the Service Learning Department in its community outreach efforts by coordinating with local agencies to research and address their unique needs. On campus, she will serve as an advocate for service learning to students and other faculty.

Ms. Hampton, who began teaching at Western in 2001, is a native North Carolinian with strong ties to a variety of businesses and charities in the area. She began using service learning in her freshman classes two years ago and believes it to be “the most effective tool for developing a sense of belonging in new students.” Ms. Hampton also serves as the faculty advisor to Western’s chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, a national coed fraternity devoted to community service and civic fellowship.





J. Michael Despeaux

Perspective

A fine educational tool

When I first encountered the term “service learning,” I made some basic assumptions. I thought of volunteerism and serving our community. As a student development professional, I considered other benefits, like learning outside of the classroom and gaining valuable, real-world experience.

Before coming to Western, I oversaw various learning communities, language houses, and residential colleges at the University of Virginia. Students and faculty in these areas worked together to plan a variety of programs, including service-oriented ones. These programs evoke wonderful memories of under-privileged children trick-or-treating, hosted by residents consisting of students, faculty, and senior administrators, all in costume and working together. As a faculty member with a shared interest (cycling), I recall being invited to assist an RA and his residents in their bicycle safety and helmet program at a local elementary school. Some projects were ambitious: one house, La Casa Bolivar, hosted a community-wide fundraiser to aid Venezuela after a natural disaster.

Although I didn’t realize it, because students and faculty collaborated in these initiatives, they did share one major component of service learning. Here at Western, we take this collaboration to the next level; by integrating it into our classrooms, we provide a structure for “learning” to become part of the process and outcome in any student’s community service experience. We guarantee an intellectual component. We teach liberal arts, business, education, or applied sciences, and then we ground or validate these disciplines in the reality of hands-on experience.

Teaching USI 130 provided me with a platform to implement service learning in a way not only compatible but seamless with our class goals. In an effort to help students forge meaningful connections here at Western and also participate in our greater mission, I established the themes of *involvement* and *engagement*. Students would give presentations and write reflection papers on their individual experiences. I encouraged them to visit the Service Learning Department and learn about various opportunities. I told that they should

give considerable thought to choosing an outlet that taps their own passions, interests, or specific concerns within the community. As we were part of a learning community, two other faculty members and I accompanied the whole class to the *Renewing America: Restoring the American Community through Citizen Participation and Civic Engagement* conference here on campus.

Be Purposeful

Through my previous work with experiential learning programs and service-oriented students, teaching USI

they held higher value and more of her attention.

Second, the Service Learning Department makes this practice easy. Classroom visits or one-on-one guidance are simple to arrange. The department also maintains and is constantly developing new contacts and relationships with service agencies, and they will collaborate with students or faculty to include other venues or opportunities as they may be identified. The department achieves real success by being both resourceful and flexible.

‘...service learning is a fine educational tool, and it can work in the context of any course or discipline.’

at Western in 2002 and 2004, and talking with colleagues, I can share some thoughts about the concept and its implementation.

First, service learning is a fine educational tool, and it can work in the context of any course or discipline. This conclusion requires both students and faculty to be purposeful in the selection of, reflection on, and accountability for whatever service occurs. I have seen some students “go through the motions” of choosing an easy assignment, doing the time, and reflecting that service is a good thing. Alternatively, another student may choose a service assignment that really corresponds to her or his major or career interests. Last year, one of my students, with a major in a helping profession, served at a nursing home where she spent time with a woman from whom she would draw much inspiration and mentorship. Her essay, for which she received an A+, detailed how this experience validated her choice of majors and helped her see classroom discussions and readings from an entirely different perspective in which

Finally, whole-class or group projects provide an opportunity for faculty to participate, making it symbolically representative of an inclusive academic community. It also creates a strong team spirit and makes the logistics of reporting, group processing, and accountability easier for the instructor. However, individual projects can allow students to be more purposeful in where they place their energy and what aspect of their discipline they wish to express with “rolled-up sleeves.”

I recommend service learning to students and colleagues as a means to make lessons less abstract, as a way to connect ourselves to our immediate and surrounding community, and as a path toward defining whatever purpose we choose for ourselves. Assign it, do it, think about it, and reap the personal, educational, and collective benefits.

J. Michael Despeaux is Career Services Coordinator & Counselor in the Office of Career Services & Cooperative Education at Western Carolina University.

Faculty Embrace Service Learning

Last semester, more than 20 WCU faculty members incorporated service-learning assignments in their courses. Students engaged in a variety of activities that they connected to their course material and that contributed to the community. Fixing computers, cooking and serving meals, planning campus service groups, providing answers to questions from community partners, holding workshops on physical therapy, and volunteering at the community library are a few examples of the services that students contributed to Jackson County communities. In class, they used these services to better understand course content and to discuss concepts of civic engagement, citizenship, and the needs of democracies.

In a learning community made up of USI 130 and Engl 130, **Chesney Reich** and **Leah Hampton** sent students to volunteer at the Sylva Library. As a result, they were better able to understand the connection between literature and life and to see the impact of a library on a community. **Barbara Hardie** used service learning in her USI class by sending students to the Community Table. She used the experience to connect with course goals involving an exploration of values and developing a sense of responsibility, especially towards others who are different from typical college students. **Bob Houghton** has used service projects in his education courses for many years. In his Edel 466 classes, students learned to meet community needs by responding to questions from the community. This activity helped them to develop research and composition skills that they were learning in class. **Joe McDonald's** SOC 103 students researched poverty and inequality in Jackson County and then created plans for student-led service groups to address particular problems. **Karen Lunnen, Tony Hickey, and Kathy Starr** also integrated service-learning activities in their classes. In assessments of the effectiveness of the service learning, professors reported positive benefits for the learning of course content, for developing positive attitudes and important skills related to citizenship, and for classroom discussion.

The Service Learning Department conducted a reflection session last semester for Instructor **Ronnie Stillwell's** business computer information systems (BCIS) class, whose service project was at Cullowhee Valley School. According to **Dan Clapper**, Head of the BCIS & Economics Department, the students "turned a big pile of junk PCs into 23 working PC's," much to the delight of the Principal (**Mrs. Peters**) and the children.

- J. McD.

MLK Service Project



In celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, students participated in two community service projects on January 19. The students cleaned up a section of NC Highway 107 and the cemetery at the AME Church in Cullowhee. Afterwards, they took part in a reception/reflection session in the University Center. The event was coordinated by the Multicultural Affairs Center and the Service Learning Department.
(Photo: Mark Haskett)



MEDFORD SCHOLARSHIPS: The application deadline for the Jacob Medford Service Learning Scholarships for the 2005-2006 academic year is March 21. Application forms and information are available in the Student Affairs Office, 460 HFR Administration Building.

FOR THE CHILDREN: The Region A Partnership for Children benefited from WCU volunteer support in the Fall 2004 semester. Students made "in-kind" contributions to the tune of \$2,379, reports **Emma Miller**, the Partnership's Early Learning Specialist. They assisted with the Community Early Learning Groups' (CELG) holiday party, a Make a Difference Day event, CELG group craft preparation, and Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) Sparkle kit assembly. Each hour of volunteer work amounts to \$16.03.

FEEDING THE THROG: **Glenn Bowen**, Director of Service Learning, was among volunteers who dished out food, cleaned tables, and wished students well on their exams at the Late Night Exam Breakfast in Western's Dodson Cafeteria in December. He joined Provost **Kyle Carter**, Student Affairs VC **Bob Caruso**, other University administrators, faculty and staff on the serving line to take care of a hungry throng of more than 600 exam-stressed students.

AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT: The Service Learning Department participated in bringing the AIDS Memorial Quilt to Western and in coordinating volunteer recruitment and assignments. The Quilt was displayed in the University Center Grand Room, February 11-14, in an effort to increase awareness of the enormity of the AIDS epidemic and educate the campus and community about prevention.