Service Learning is Integral to Quality Enhancement Plan

Service learning is an integral component of Western Carolina University’s new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The Plan has been developed as a requirement for the reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

“The QEP focuses on Synthesis as a pathway to intentional learning,” explain QEP Committee Co-chairs Scott Philyaw and Brian Railsback. “Service learning is a natural part of how the QEP aims to enhance student learning.”

Drs. Philyaw and Railsback explain further: “In an era of engagement in higher education across the United States, universities seek to graduate more students who take classroom theory to real-world practice. The QEP seeks to enhance student learning in such a way that undergraduates will synthesize academic and co-curricular activities so their post-graduate dreams are more likely to come true. The QEP also encourages students to engage in a variety of activities – such as an internship or trip abroad – as part of a learning plan that leads to a career or graduate school.”

Carol Burton is Director of the SACS Review at WCU.

NC Campus Compact Director to Speak at Service Learning Awards

North Carolina Campus Compact Executive Director Lisa Keyne will be guest speaker at the Third Annual WCU Service Learning Awards Ceremony on April 26. Dr. Keyne is expected to speak about higher education initiatives and achievements in the areas of service learning and civic engagement.

The awards banquet will be held in the University Center Grand Room, beginning at 7 p.m. Students, faculty, staff, and community partners will receive awards in recognition of their service and accomplishments.

NC Campus Compact is a coalition of college and university leaders established to encourage and support campus engagement in the community. Dr. Keyne began serving as executive director in October 2006. She was Vice Provost at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, for six years.

Marking MLK Day

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day usually is a day off for many people in the United States. For no fewer than 50 members of the WCU family, however, it was “a day on.”

On January 15, Latoya Blackwell, Lauren Ross, Holly Wilson, B. J. Green, and B. J. Pendry joined other WCU students who made it a day of service to the community. The two BJs worked alongside 26 other students and three faculty/staff members on Project F.I.R.E. (Fuel Intervention for Rural Elderly) in Sylva. They rolled up their sleeves, put on gloves, and did their part in splitting and storing 15 loads of firewood for distribution to about 12 of our elderly neighbors.

Meanwhile, Stephanie Beatty, Ramona Dowdell, Kayla Kelley, Jamie Swank, and fellow students created a “Garden of Peace” mural at the REACH of Macon County shelter near Franklin. WCU Art Instructor Marie Cochran designed the mural.

Cody Grasty, President of the Student Government Association, participated in the post-project reception during which students reflected on the significance of the day.

• See Snapshots, pages 6-7

In This Issue:

* Excellent Displays at Community Service Learning Fair – Page 8
Student Civic Engagement

Below are edited excerpts from *The New Student Politics: The Wingspread Statement on Student Civic Engagement* (2nd ed., 2002). The publication’s author is Sarah E. Long of Providence College, and the publisher is Campus Compact. (Used with permission.)

There is a significant emphasis on inclusion – the ability of all to participate – as a cornerstone of democracy. Students make choices about participation associated with certain social issues based upon personal interests or experience. Their participation is highly individualized (where the personal is linked to the political) but this should not be equated with individualism (where self-interest is the overriding motivation). Therefore, their participation is not tied to any agreed upon or widely shared goal – on the contrary, the highly individualized nature of participation means that their efforts are highly fragmented.

Defining civic engagement: The manner in which we engage in our democracy goes beyond, well beyond, the traditional measurements that statisticians like to measure us by, most notably voting. Indeed, student civic engagement has multiple manifestations including: personal reflection/inner development, thinking, reading, silent protest, dialogue and relationship building, sharing knowledge, project management, and formal organization that brings people together. Cultural and spiritual forms of expression are included here, as are other forms of expression through the arts such as guerrilla theater, music, coffee houses, poetry, and alternative newspapers.

How service learning bridges service work with politics: Service learning is a mechanism that connects service and politics. Service learning has been called a “strategy for civic engagement.” Through service learning, we have the opportunity to share and relate our experiences with others and to explore the broader context of our service activity. Service learning, with its rich integrations of readings, reflection, and class discussion, offers feedback and recognition and makes us realize that collectively we are a powerful force for social change.

Community service without a curriculum connection often does not allow students to realize interconnections between their service work and larger systemic issues. Service learning provides the “why” – the reason for doing service, and shows us how we can attempt to bring about greater social change. … Through service learning, important relationships between professors and students are developed, evidenced in some instances as mentoring. Service learning also builds bridges and pathways to career possibilities. By merging academics and service, service learning makes systemic social and political issues an obvious extension and duty of higher education.

MAKING SERVICE LEARNING EVEN MORE POWERFUL

We should consider ways to deepen service learning and enhance its capacity to promote civic engagement. First, whenever possible, establishing and maintaining a strong relationship with the community is essential. Community members should not be made to feel as if they are being studied or objectified. The professor should know the community and community-based organizations well enough to be able to facilitate deep reflection in the course material. (As a way of equalizing the playing field between academics and community service providers, it has been suggested that professors co-teach courses with community partners.) The focus of our education is changed immeasurably through a community-based perspective. It is necessary, however, to prepare students for service. ...

On the academic side, service should be integrated into curricula so that it fits within the student’s course and major. In addition, it is important for professors to consider that competition for grades (e.g., going for the “A”) may detract from actual learning. Another suggestion is that there should be less emphasis on the number of hours of service required to complete a course, and more concern for a quality experience.
I think service learning has improved my sense of community involvement. Making a difference by using my skills to help others is a good feeling. It makes me feel like a valuable part of my community, and I hope in the future to do more as a volunteer. But I know I gained much more. I befriended a very sweet little girl, grew in my understanding of another culture, and reached beyond myself and my fears.

– Susanna Forrester, Student

Prior to studying Spanish at the University, I was unaware of the changes that were happening and I was disconnected from the community in general. As a result of service-learning projects and requirements for my class, I had to participate in community activities and projects. And I am very grateful because it has opened my eyes and my heart.

– Donna Ferrera, Student

The most rewarding aspect of the tutoring experience was certainly an increased commitment to community service. … This project enabled me to focus on civic engagement and to personally gain from service learning.

– Maxwell Long, Student

I think that this project was a great idea because we got to help children and in the process we were able to learn a little more about the Hispanic culture. In this service-learning project I learned that I liked helping people.

– Elizabeth Wright, Student

I believe that getting involved with this type of project, or with any type of service learning project, is valuable not only to the individual but to the community as well. The fact is there is strength in numbers. The more people, whether they be students or adults, that get involved on a community level the more benefits that will be achieved by all of those involved in the process.

– Colin Townsend, Student

Editor’s Note: The five students quoted above took Spanish courses with Patricia Hackett in 2006 and were involved in either the “Leamos y aprendamos” or “Estrellas brillantes” service-learning project.

• Service learning is an important part of the CM [Construction Management] curriculum and I will continue to try and integrate it with every capstone project.”

– Dr. Craig Capano, Associate Professor, Construction Management

• As a public agency, the Health Department has always relied on volunteers … We realize the importance of students interacting with our agency. … As a health educator in the community, I appreciate the opportunity to work with the Service Learning Department at Western. We have successfully implemented several service-learning projects within the community. This collaboration has been a very rewarding for both our agency and the students involved.

– Jimmi Buell, Health Educator, Jackson County Department of Public Health

• Together, we can make a difference for the people who live in the Western North Carolina region. Your help and the partnership will be an asset for our outreach.

– M. Thomas Jackson, Ph.D., Executive Director, Connections Center/Creative Communications Youth & Family Services, Fletcher

• It’s wonderful to see WCU’s involvement in the community. I am excited about the collaboration with the local community as well as the academic division. I’m sure these initiatives will only grow.

– Dr. Beth Tyson Lofquist, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, WCU

• We [recently had] a very positive experience … with a group of Western students. On Mountain Heritage Day the Women’s Rugby Team did an outstanding job for us. Throughout the day their tasks were many and varied – they were especially helpful at the Children’s Heritage Area. These students were particularly engaging and enthusiastic with the children and made the area a fun place to be. The team had a combined total of 56.5 hours of service.

– Leslie C. Costa, Historic Interpreter, Mountain Heritage Center, WCU

• WCU has been a great supporter of The [Community] Table over the years. We can never thank the students, faculty and staff enough for all that has been done to keep our services available to the community. Thanks!

– Kay Turpin, Chairman, Board of Directors, The Community Table, Sylva

• The mural ‘Garden of Peace’ [created on MLK Day] for our shelter playroom … is wonderful. … We are now looking at other service-learning opportunities together!

– Ann Van Harlingen, Executive Director, REACH of Macon County

“We truly make a difference”

A 19-member team participated in a weeklong series of service projects with several social service agencies in Philadelphia during Spring Break, March 5-9. The team consisted of 16 students, two members of the Service Learning staff, and two members of the Service Learning Advisory Committee. The Service Learning Department organizes Alternative Spring Break with sponsorship from Last Minute Productions, the student programming board.

Here are excerpts from an e-mail, dated March 12, to the Service Learning Department:

“I’ve talked with several of the agencies and they loved having you! Tell everyone from WCU thank you so much for all of their hard work and dedication! You truly made a difference. Working with college students and getting them excited in volunteering is one of the best parts of my job. … I hope that the past week in Philly encouraged everyone to not only take a closer look at the social issues facing us every day, but also to have fun when they volunteer! It was great working with you and your students – your flexibility, organization and enthusiasm made everything much easier on all ends. I hope it was a worthwhile and memorable break and, of course, I encourage everyone to come back!

– Danielle Gross-Eskin, Project Manager, Northwest Philadelphia/Montgomery & Bucks Counties, Greater Philadelphia Cares

“...is wonderful.”
Why I Incorporate Service Learning into my Courses

I have regularly incorporated service learning into my course curriculum for the better part of ten years; in fact, since well before there were Service Learning Departments established on most college campuses. My first experience introducing the concept of community service to my students was as a teaching assistant at the University of Tennessee. As hard as this might be to believe (fortunately!), the first time I proposed incorporating SL into my course curriculum, I had to consult university officials all the way from my Department Chair to the University Counselor in order to get their approval. Their ultimate verdict: I could incorporate SL as an option, but could not require it of my students. Fortunately, so much has changed in the years since, as the value of this wonderful teaching tool is increasingly recognized and utilized across disciplines.

I would like to share with you the way that I incorporate SL into my courses. Although I certainly recognize its value in any level course, I particularly like to focus on SL in my freshman level American Government courses. This is the case for three reasons, which I share with my students at the beginning of each semester.

First, I discuss with my students the research from psychologists indicating that performing good works for others can increase one’s own serotonin levels. I explain briefly the link between serotonin and depression, and we talk about the percent of students at Western who indicate in surveys that they have suffered depression or even contemplated suicide in the past academic year (information provided by the Counseling Center). Particularly given the special challenges that so many freshmen face in making the transition from home to college, any effort I can make as an instructor seems exceedingly worthwhile to me at what can be a vulnerable time in so many students’ lives.

Impact on Retention

Second, I discuss with my students the impact community involvement (whether campus-based or community-based) can have on the University’s retention rate: the more quickly new students get involved in their new community, the more likely they will be to stay here. The point I try to stress with my students is that, although their initial community service involvement is the result of a course requirement, my hope is that they will find an issue/activity during the course of the semester which they genuinely come to care about and want to continue to be involved with throughout their college careers or even beyond.

Third, and only as a last step, I discuss the benefit of SL in terms of our political system. It provides a nice segue into our class discussion of their first major reading assignment, an excerpt from Alexis de Tocqueville’s Democracy in America in which he discusses the role citizens play in building and maintaining strong communities.

The last major component that I incorporate in terms of my SL approach is the adoption of a class theme. I present to the students several options in terms of issues which they can choose for us to examine during the course of the semester. In previous years, my classes have explored issues related to crime and violence, child welfare in the United States, as well as issues of affordable housing. After discussing the various potential themes and the types of service activities related to each which we might participate in during the course of the semester, I allow the class to vote on which one they prefer. I then incorporate that theme into student-led class debates as well as lectures throughout the semester on topics such as: how does the Constitution address the issue; how do the media cover the topic; what actions has Congress taken regarding the issue; which agencies within the bureaucracy have primary responsibility over the issue? And of course, their service-learning activities are connected with agencies that address that issue on the local level.

Whenever possible, based on the class theme and the schedules of the class members, I like to coordinate group work days, typically on a Saturday. This approach offers a number of important advantages. First, it allows me to monitor the performance of my students when they are completing their service hours. Even more importantly, it brings down barriers between classmates and allows us all to get to know each other outside of the classroom setting. I have found this to be invaluable. I have had students who were quite reserved in class and who never stopped by my office during office hours, who after working alongside me as part of a service project, felt comfortable speaking up in class and talked or even joked around with me before or after class sessions. Most importantly, what I like about group work days is that my students get to see clearly that I am not just “talking the talk” or giving them a “busy work” assignment. I believe in the value of service to the community, and I demonstrate that by working alongside them to address one of our community’s problems.

Dr. Claudia Bryant is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science & Public Affairs at Western Carolina University.
An Engaged Student

Garrett Richardson is an engaged student. At the Community Service Learning Fair in February, he promoted the VISTA and NC-ACTS! AmeriCorps programs. “VISTA means Volunteers in Service to America,” he explained. “To join, you must be at least 18. Applicants with a college degree as well as volunteer experience stand the best chance of being selected for this program.” A sophomore majoring in Social Sciences Education, with a concentration in History, Richardson is one of WCU’s 17 NC-ACTS! members for the 2007-2008 academic year. (NC-ACTS! means North Carolina Activating Citizenship through Service.) Richardson was appointed recently to the WCU Service Learning Advisory Committee and will represent WCU on North Carolina Campus Compact’s Student Advisory Board. The Student Advisory Board is a leadership team of students representing NC Campus Compact’s member campuses. Through this board, NC Campus Compact “seeks to unite North Carolina student leaders engaged in service, service learning, or civic engagement on their college campus,” said Leslie Garvin, Assistant Director of the state coalition. “The board will help establish a student voice to NC Campus Compact that will provide insight and ideas regarding decisions that impact students,” she added.

New Medford Scholar

Ashley Merrill is a new Medford Scholar. She joined the service-learning student leadership team at the start of the spring semester in January.

Merrill is a freshman majoring in Parks and Recreation Management with a minor in Special Education. She is a member of WCU’s Pride of the Mountains Marching Band. Active in Girl Scouting, Merrill serves as member of the Advisory Committee and a mentor to girls working on their Gold Awards, which represents the highest achievement among Girl Scouts. She herself received the Gold Award two years ago.

“I’m also active in mission work though my church. I went to Mexico last summer to build a house and to Mississippi over Christmas break to do hurricane relief,” she said.

“Community service makes me see the community and the world around me in a different light,” Merrill said. “It makes me appreciate the things I have and to feel privileged to have the opportunities I have.”

The Sentinel, January – March 2007
Project Participants

Project F.I.R.E.
Ben Agee, Jonathan Aguilar, Chris Bestwick, Chuck Bush, William Chappell, Darren Curtis, Gabrielle Davis, Chris Dixon, B.J. Green, Phillip Griffin, Doug Hileman, Stephen Jaqua, Curtis Johnson, Joel Jones, Ben Maus, Eli McCutcheon, Myles McGee, Kyle Mikesell, Asia Moore, Drew Morton, Torry Nergart, B.J. Pendry, Chris Powell, Erick Roberts, Brandon Stone, Patrick Velde, Phillip West, Paul Young, Dr. Elizabeth McRae, Tanisha Jenkins, Dr. Glenn Bowen

REACH of Macon County
Ashley Adams, Stephanie Beatty, Latoya Blackwell, Casey Blankenship, Nicole Bost, Marie Cochran, Ramona Dowdell, Savannah Filley, Mollie Fowler, Tatum Hargett, Elizabeth Hauser, Kayla Kelley, Mary Leadford, Mendy McKenzie, Celicia Milford, Heather Pritchard, Danielle Reese, Lauren Ross, Serena Smith, Samantha Stepp, Jamie Swank, Emily Turke, Holly Wilson, Tanisha Jenkins, Kathy Sims, Dr. Glenn Bowen

Photos: WCU Multicultural Center and Service Learning Department
Design: Clint Hardin
… On MLK Day of Service, 2007
Excellent Displays, Interaction at Community Service Learning Fair . . .

ON THIS PAGE:
• Balsam Mountain Nature Center Director Michael Skinner shares information with student Aaron Bloemsma.
• Graduate student Heather Hanami takes a keen interest in the Service Learning PowerPoint presentation created by Kathy Sims, Assistant Director of Service Learning.
• Career Services Coordinator Michael Despeaux with Betsie Letterle, a Preparedness Specialist at the American Red Cross.

ON PAGE 9:
• Medford Scholar Katie Graunke with the Skyland Care Center’s Activity Director Connie Cochran.
• Dr. Ronda Bryant, Director of Enrollment Support, found the Western North Carolina Nature Center’s display fascinating. Education Specialist Eli Strull shows her the features of a toad.

Photos: Mark Haskett, Office of Public Relations
Caruso Comments on Collaboration

Thirty-three community partner agencies and five campus departments/organizations participated in the 2nd Annual WCU Community Service Learning Fair on February 8.

The quality of the displays was excellent and the interaction among community agency and department representatives was remarkable, according to observers. The event served to strengthen the campus-community connection.

Dr. Robert Caruso, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, commended community agencies for their interest in collaboration with higher education institutions and expressed Western Carolina University’s commitment to community engagement.

Speaking at the Fair in the University Grand Room, Dr. Caruso told community agency representatives that their presence clearly demonstrated their interest in collaboration with members of our university community.

Dr. Caruso said: “WCU and our Service Learning Department are very committed not only to engaging students in the life of the mind but also in the life of the region. Relatedly, we are very interested in trying to meet the needs of our community and working with you on the best way to do that.”

In a message to participating agencies, Jane Adams-Dunford, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, said: “This is a day in which to applaud and celebrate the numerous partnerships that our Service Learning Department has developed within the community and region.” Mrs. Adams-Dunford added: “The community and the university reap greater rewards when activities are undertaken in the spirit of true partnership.”

Kathy Sims, Assistant Director of Service Learning, coordinated the Fair.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES/PROGRAMS: American Red Cross, AmeriCorps Programs, Autumn Care of Waynesville, AWAKE, Balsam Mountain Trust, Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Western NC, Bridge Park Project, Career Services & Cooperative Education, Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society, Cherokee Tribal Child Care, Community Table, Dept. of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, Golden Age Senior Center, Graham County Family Resource Center, Guardian ad Litem, Habitat for Humanity of Jackson County, Haywood Vocational Opportunities, Haywood-Jackson Volunteer Center, International Programs & Services, Jackson County Dept. of Public Health, Jackson County Family Resource Center, Kneedler Child Development Center, Last Minute Productions, Meals on Wheels, Mountain Mediation Services, N.C. Center for the Advancement of Teaching, Pathways for the Future, Reach of Jackson County, Reach of Macon County, Region A Partnership for Children, Service Learning Department, Skyland Care Center, Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center, Special Olympics of N.C., The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center, United Christian Ministries of Jackson County, Watershed Assoc. of the Tuckasegee River, and WNC Nature Center.
SEMINAR: Dr. William Richmond, Service Learning Fellow and Associate Professor – BCISE; Dr. Barbara Jo (BJ) White, Assistant Professor – BCISE; and Kathy Sims, Assistant Director of Service Learning, attended a seminar on “Advancing Service-Learning Scholarship in North Carolina” recently in Raleigh. Dr. Robert Bringle, Director of the Center for Service and Learning at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, was the featured presenter at the seminar, co-hosted by North Carolina Campus Compact and the NC State University’s Service-Learning Program.

ESTRELLAS BRILLANTES: Dr. Mark Couture (Head of the Modern Foreign Languages Department), Dr. Glenn Bowen, and Patricia Hackett presented prizes at “Estrellas Brillantes (“Shining Stars”) project on October 27 at Cullowhee Valley School.

LATE NIGHT EXAM BREAKFAST: Provost Kyle Carter, his wife Sarah, and three of his staff members – Dr. Fred Hinson, Dr. Beth Tyson-Lofquist, and Dr. A. J. Grube – joined Vice Chancellor Chuck Wooten (Admin & Finance), and Associate Vice Chancellor Leila Tvedt (Public Relations) at the serving counter for Late Night Exam Breakfast on December 13. They served scores of students in the Dodson Cafeteria.

Holly Taylor (Student Judicial Affairs), Christopher Birkel (Marketing & Business Law), Sandra Seiler and Chasity McDonough (Bookstore), Eric Lawhorn, Carol Mellen (Student Support Services), Larry Hunter (Athletics), and Dr. Glenn Bowen (Service Learning) also lent a hand.

Teresa Doda of ARAMARK Food Services coordinated the breakfast.

RED CROSS TRAINING: Thirty-five Residential Living staff members participated in American Red Cross Disaster Management Training on January 6. The training was initiated based on Red Cross collaboration with the Service Learning Department.

CO-OP STUDENT OF THE YEAR: Taryn Birchfield, a Business Administration and Law major, who was a co-op student last summer with the WCU Institute for the Economy and the Future, is the Career Services Co-op Student of the Year. She won the $500 award and a plaque. Service Learning Director Glenn Bowen was one of the judges. Mardy Ash, Director of Career Services/Cooperative Education, appointed Dr. Bowen to the committee for the third straight year.

EXHIBIT: The Service Learning Department participated in the WCU Faculty & Staff Exhibition: Works from 2006 in Hunter Library, January 29-February 15. Four issues of The Service Learning Sentinel were among the items displayed. Reference Librarian Dana Edge thanked the Service Learning Department for its contribution.

ATHLETES: WCU athletes completed more than 600 hours of service to the community in the Fall 2007 semester, Assistant Athletic Director Jennifer Brown reported recently. The men’s basketball team led the way with 177 service hours of service. Athletes assisted with the Special Olympics, served in local elementary schools, and did other service projects, contributing a total of 615.5 hours. Here are the statistics: Men’s Basketball Team – 177 hours; Cross Country/Track & Field Teams – 175.5 hours; Women’s Basketball Team –139 hours; Soccer Team – 81 hours; Volleyball Team – 33 hours; Tennis Team – 10 hours. Based on a recommendation from the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, each student athlete is expected to participate in at least six hours of community service each year. The team with the highest average at the end of the year will receive an award. Dr. Brown, who is also the Senior Woman Administrator and Director of Academic Support Services for Student Athletes, noted: “Student athletes are driven to win, but that is not their only motivation. Students see the needs in the community and want to give back.” Brown reported. WCU has 300 student athletes.

FRATERNITY MEMBERS: WCU student volunteers recently contributed 206 volunteer hours to the NC Bartram Trail Society, the organization reported in its Fall-Winter 2006 newsletter. Five WCU student teams participated in a daylong work-hike on the Bartram Trail. WCU’s Inter-Fraternity Council (IFC) and the Service Learning Department organized the project in collaboration with the NC Bartram Trail Society. Tim Inman, Assistant Director for Greek Life and Student Organizations, served as advisor to the IFC. Some 60 members of the Greek community performed basic trail building and maintenance, carpentry, painting, and mulching tasks along portions of the 100-mile trail in North Carolina. “The service project worked well and the service experience was very rewarding,” reported B. J. Pendry, IFC President.

TEACHING FELLOWS: WCU Teaching Fellows completed about 360 hours of service in Fall 2006. “Each Fellow is required to submit 30 hours of service by the end of his or her sophomore year,” explained Jacqueline (Jackie) Smith, the Program Director. “However, many of our Fellows complete additional hours and continue to do service throughout their four years on campus.” The Fellows completed service in several settings, including Sylva’s Community Table, Smokey Mountain Elementary School, West Alexander Middle School, and Caldwell County 4-H Club. They also assisted with such events as Mountain Heritage Day and the Smoky Mountain Book Fair. Currently, 110 Fellows are in the program.

HONORS COLLEGE: Some 40 Honors students were involved in the Book Fair in the Fall 2006 semester. “Collectively, they put in about 120 hours of labor,” Dean Brian Railsback reported. Dr. Railsback’s two sections of USI 101 were involved in the Book Fair project. Dr. Railsback reported: “Each student turned in an assessment (a brief essay) discussing his or her role in the Book Fair and what was learned. Most of the students enjoyed their experience and felt they had learned much more about the region – several even bought books. Finally, the students created posters, flyers, T-shirts, and the program for the event; in addition, they were there as support staff throughout the day.”

NUTRITION CLASS: The ND 190: Personal Nutrition class sponsored a food drive in the WCU residence halls in November. April Tallant, Visiting Assistant Instructor in Health Sciences, reported that a total of 87 items were collected and donated to Community Table in Sylva. Residents of Helder Hall contributed the most – 41 items – and were rewarded with a party sponsored by the Resident Student Association.
Civic Place, a new living-learning community at WCU, hosted a dinner for former Representatives Jay Dickey (R-AR) and Liz Patterson (D-SC) when they came to Western for the Congress to Campus program on November 13, 2006. The dinner provided an excellent opportunity for students to discuss political and civic engagement with the former Congresspersons.

Civic Place residents Abony Galbreath and Charles (Joe) Loyd escorted Mr. Dickey and Ms. Patterson to the house in The Village on our Cullowhee campus.


Mr. Dickey and Ms. Patterson commented on the importance of service learning, which in Ms. Patterson’s view, means "you care enough about your neighbors and your community."

Mr. Dickey discussed his public service career and concluded that “the greatest thing is to do something for someone even without their knowing it.” He said it was important to make a difference in people’s lives – something he did in Washington, D.C., by “cutting through red tape.”

The Department of Political Science and Public Affairs organizes WCU’s participation in the Congress to Campus program. Dr. Christopher Cooper, Assistant Professor, served as coordinator.

ABOVE: Former Members of Congress Jay Dickey and Liz Patterson with Civic Place members and Service Learning administrators.
BELOW: Ms. Patterson has Joe Loyd’s rapt attention.

LEAD Conference
Civic Place members Abony Galbreath, Shannon Maxwell, and Bethany McClinton attended North Carolina College Personnel Association’s 11th Annual LEAD Conference at Duke University on February 17. Kathy Sims, Assistant Director of Service Learning, accompanied the group.

The LEAD Conference brings together student leaders from college campuses across North Carolina.
Several Western Carolina University faculty and staff members have been making service learning-related presentations at state and regional conferences this academic year. Faculty and staff members have been publishing scholarly articles on service learning as well.

Debasish Banerjee, Associate Professor and Associate Dean of the College of Business, presented a paper, “Integrating Curriculum across Courses and across Semesters Using a Service Learning Project,” at the Southwest Decision Sciences Institute 38th Annual Conference. The five-day conference was held in San Diego, CA, in mid-March. Written by College of Business faculty members Bill Richmond (Associate Professor), Barbara Jo White (Assistant Professor), and Debasish Banerjee, the paper was also published in the *SWDSI Proceedings*.

Debra Burke, Professor of Marketing and Business Administration & Law, made a presentation entitled “Motivating Faculty to Engage in Service-Learning Curricular Activities” at the 24th Annual Academic Chairperson’s Conference in Orlando, FL in February. The conference theme was “Academic Leadership: Building Responsive and Responsible Communities.” Prof. Burke reports that her session “generated a good discussion about the integration of service learning into a variety of educational contexts.”

Patricia Hackett, Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish, and Glenn Bowen, Director of Service Learning, were presenters at the 9th Annual North Carolina Campus Compact Service-Learning Conference on February 21 at Elon University.

Prof. Hackett, with students Donna Ferrara and Patricia Graham, made a presentation on “La Comunidad y Espanol: Community Service, Class Instruction, Competence, Contacts, and Conversation.” The presentation covered four service-learning projects through which students served as mentors, translators, tutors, and friends of native Spanish speakers. “Each project was designed to help Spanish students improve their language skills and develop increased cultural awareness and positive attitudes toward Latino/Hispanic communities,” Prof. Hackett explained.

“Integrating Service Learning into the Curriculum through a Faculty Fellows Program” was the title of Dr. Bowen’s presentation.

Dr. Bowen also made a presentation on “Facilitating Significant Student Learning through Student Affairs-Academic Affairs Collaboration” at the 2006 SACSA (Southern Association for College Student Affairs) Annual Conference in Jacksonville, FL. He highlighted service learning as one of the strong areas of collaboration at Western.

Service Learning Fellow Glenda Hensley (Arts & Sciences) will present “TIE: A Stage for Environmental Literacy across Campus and Community” at the American Alliance of Theatre and Education (ATE) Conference in Vancouver, Canada, in August. TIE is the Theatre in Education Program, which has a significant service-learning component.

“Student Affairs and Service Learning: Promoting Student Engagement” – an article by Robert Caruso (Student Affairs) Glenn Bowen (Service Learning), and Jane Adams-Dunford (Student Affairs) – was published in *The College Student Affairs Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2006.