

- Information on Closure
- Service Learning Students' Viewpoints

# The Inside Track

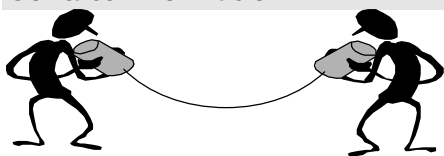
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## Service Learning at Tulane University

*Faculty Course Development Grants; Student Information on Closure*

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### Amanda's Space

This fall semester, the Office of Service learning provided students with some intriguing new learning opportunities, as well as some projects that students are building on from previous semesters.

Two students from *Professor Gotham's* Urban Sociology course are working with the **New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau (NOMCVB)** on several different projects. First, students are reviewing the NOMCVB web site, comparing and contrasting it with other websites from CVB's in cities with a population of 1 million and greater. Finally, students are reviewing NOMCVB's local reputation by surveying New Orleanians.

Additionally, six

Urban Sociology students are working with the **Urban Conservancy**, a service learning partnership that has been successful in the past and continues to grow. Students compile information on well-designed commercial and residential development projects that interface with the tourism industry in the city of New Orleans. Information on these "Positive Projects" will be brought together in a presentation that members of the Urban Conservancy staff can give to local neighborhood groups, civic organizations, and real estate developers interested in promoting economic development compatible with our unique environment. Students work together to create easily understandable and visually appealing presentations

Students from *Dr. Gina Dorre's* Introduction to Women's Studies course are working with **Great Expectations** and **Dress for Success**, both of which have been popular service learning sites in the past. The students assist the Community Relations Director with a variety of projects and special events to help educate community members about Great Expectations' services. Students also help prepare outreach materials, help distribute information

at community outreach events and help solicit for in-kind gifts.

Students working with Dress for Success conduct community-based research to uncover locally-based services dealing with finances, careers, government funding and women's health, in order to inform professional women's group members about low-cost and free services available to them. Students are also contributing to the on-site Dress for Success Resource Library by collecting informational brochures, flyers about upcoming events, educational displays, etc. Students also assist with the Professional Women's Group Members Demographic Research, where they gather demographic information about women in Louisiana to help Dress for Success with fundraising and program reporting efforts.

*Professor Beverly Trask's* students observed local movement classes in area schools and senior centers and now lead swing dance classes once a week for **Woodson Learning Academy** students and **Central City Seniors**. On November 20<sup>th</sup>, they participated in a performance with dance legends from around the country.

~ Amanda Buberger  
Senior Program Coordinator

### Rachael's Area

The fall semester has passed so quickly! Am I the only one who is still trying to catch their breath from the hustle and bustle of September? As things begin to wind down there is some housekeeping to discuss and some thank you's to extend.

A major portion of service learning is centered on developing relationships with site members. There are a number of Tulane Service Learners placed at school sites. These individuals have had an opportunity to develop relationships with elementary, middle and high school students. Students from *Professor Ed O'Neal's* General Psychology class have formed valuable relationships with young readers and mathematicians at **Lafayette, Crocker, and Hoffman Elementary Schools.** *Professor Stacy Overstreet's* students from the Childhood Behavior Disorders course are working with students and teachers at **Lafayette Elementary.** These relationships are unique because they are very positive yet last only a few months. In an effort to conclude the service learning relationships in a positive way, it is important for service learning students to begin pointing out to their tutees that the semester will be ending soon.

Concluding activities can include writing letters, making cards, writing short stories about your experience, creating a collage, trading school pictures, or spending the session discussing the semester and future plans. Be sure to do things that both of you will enjoy and remember.

Service learners are also working in other settings. This semester, *Professor Michael Cunningham* has students from his Introduction to African American Psychology class participating in activities at **McGregor Jones Health Care Center.** The service learners there are enjoying playing BINGO and interviewing the

residents about their past experiences. Service Learners from *Professor Harry Howard's* Brain and Language course are intrigued by their service experience in **Charity Hospital's Speech Pathology Department.** They have had an opportunity to assist in the rehabilitation process of stroke victims of varying ages and backgrounds. Other students participating in this class are placed at the **Chartwell Center** where they assist classroom teachers in their work with autistic children.

I would like to thank all of the faculty members, community site contact persons, and office staff for their assistance in getting Tulane Service Learners acclimated to their sites. Without your assistance and cooperation the success of this program would be severely limited. Thanks to you all!

~ Rachael Thompson  
Senior Program Coordinator

### Carolyn's Corner

***"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: indeed it's the only thing that ever has."***

**Margaret Mead**

I have just come on board with the Office of Service Learning and am quite impressed with the caliber of work that students are generating at their sites. The students are involved in some very exciting projects--projects that embody the very essence of Margaret Mead's statement. They are thoughtfully carrying out their service hours and have been extremely diligent in their commitments to their sites.

Students in *Professor David Jeffery's* class on European Political Economy are very involved with their project at the **Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans.** A student is researching import and export opportunities and business opportunities between Israel and New

Orleans, while another student is developing an Anti-Semitic curriculum for sixth-grade students, which will be presented at a Federation workshop in December. Other students are focusing their efforts on editing and updating an online web directory of international trade websites for the **Louisiana International Trade Center—Small Business Development Center.** Students working with **Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** are creating a local Housing Resource Directory. The students create the Housing Resource Directory by networking with and interviewing key players within the local affordable housing industry at local banks, universities, non-profits, city offices, etc.. The Housing Resource Directory will be routed to HUD's main website to be utilized by those involved in the housing industry. Locally, HUD's New Orleans branch office will utilize the directory to better serve public inquiries for housing assistance available through local service providers. The directory will also be used to circulate important information to local players about upcoming events, available funding and changes in policy.

Through the service learning option in *Professor Ken Muneoka's* Embryology Class, students are working at **Charity Hospital, University Hospital, and Children's Hospital.** From observing obstetrics patients to assisting doctors and nurses in the neonatal intensive care unit, the students are learning new skills as well as reinforcing classroom lessons.

Other highlights include service learning options in *Professor Edward Morse's* class in Sociology of Terrorism. One student completed her hours at the **Office of Emergency Preparedness.** She provided much-needed assistance by researching grant opportunities on the Internet to help fund emergency shelter management. She was also responsible for contacting other

emergency personnel regarding emergency activation activities. Students are providing assistance to **The Red Cross of Louisiana**, not only helping them to rewrite their workshop presentation materials for families and businesses, but also, delivering the presentations in various group settings. Meanwhile students at the **Louisiana Office of Homeland Security** are helping businesses beef up their security plans to better stave off possible terrorist attacks. Finally, a student who chose the service learning option in *Professor Morse's Introduction to Sociology* class has finished her service learning activities at **Touro Hospital**, where she provided valuable administrative assistance to emergency room personnel.

Come help change the world with us at the Office of Service Learning!

~ Carolyn Lebrane Tilton  
SL/Internship Coordinator

### **COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: New Orleans Charter Middle School**

New Orleans Charter Middle School is a progressive public school that sits adjacent to Palmetto Street in the Carrollton/Hollygrove neighborhood. The students at this middle school are exposed to a number of different experiences through a unique partnership with the non-profit organization, New Orleans Outreach. This partnership has been an integral part of the Charter students' education for almost 10 years. In this time, New Orleans Outreach has coordinated the activities of over 1,000 volunteers from the community. New Orleans Outreach operates under the mission of "bringing the community into the school." Service learning students from Tulane University are a part of that effort.

The partnership with Tulane University Office of Service Learning began in August 2001 and has

successfully continued to provide classroom assistants and one-on-one tutors for the teachers and students at Charter Middle School. Tulane service learners who participate have been students in *Professor Teri Davis' Introduction to Education* class. The service learners help reduce teacher/student ratio, helping to meet one of Outreach's goals in improving the educational experience at participating schools: "New Orleans Outreach impacted its schools and teachers by bringing direct help into the classroom to reduce student/teacher ratios...". Tulane service learners have also provided Charter students with the individual attention that is necessary for many students to successfully pass the LEAP test. Overall, Tulane service learners contribute to the life of Charter Middle by providing vital assistance to teachers and enhancing the learning environment for students.

The partnership between Charter Middle and Tulane University has been beneficial for students from both sites. In the future we hope to continue this partnership as well as build on the current programming.

~Siobhan Feeney is the New Orleans Outreach Coordinator for Charter Middle School.

### **From My View...**

As a Tulane Graduate student and Medical School Applicant, what better way to gain first-hand experience in the Hospital than Touro Infirmary? The Touro rotations offered through the Office of Service Learning have already proved to be more than valuable. At Touro, Service Learning students are allowed to rotate through four different units: Psychiatry, Oncology, OB/Gyn, Rehabilitation.

My first and only rotation thus far places me in the Psychiatric ward. There are, at Touro, two divisions of the ward, R5, and M8. R5 manages older patients suffering from

the onset of Alzheimer's, Dementia and other debilitating agents. M8 on the other hand is where all the thrill seekers such as myself go. This ward deals with the younger crowd, suffering from an array of *mind-altering experiences*, and exposure to *mind-altering substances*. Though it's great clinical experience, be sure to stay alert while on this ward!

Up next for me is my rotation in Oncology, where I will be dealing with cancer patients. While I am at the hospital, I will find time to squeeze an autopsy in to my schedule. No hospital stint is complete without one.

For all students with an interest in pursuing a career in public health care, the Touro rotations offered through the Office of Service Learning is a definite starting point. I will keep you guys posted.

~Victor Stams is a graduate student in Cell and Molecular Biolog and is participating in Dr. Grisbaum's Research class. You can reach Victor at [vstams@tulane.edu](mailto:vstams@tulane.edu).

### **From My View...**

I was wavering between nervousness and excitement when we pulled up to a blue house with a white picket fence. Sandra Bell was waiting and excitedly waved us into her home. Ms. Bell is one of 50 Individual Development Account (IDA) graduates to be interviewed by students from Business Ethics and International Development classes.

Ms. Bell enthusiastically answered questions about her new home. I was amazed as she described all the hard work she had put into saving for her home and explained that without the IDA program she would still be living in an unsafe housing development.

Ms. Bell's positive experience is a testament to the benefits of social programs such as IDA. She taught me that anyone can

achieve their goals if they work hard enough.

~ Jackie Loonstra is a student in Dr. Edmundson's Introduction to International Development course. You can reach Jackie at [jloonstr@tulane.edu](mailto:jloonstr@tulane.edu).

### From My View...

It's been nearly nine years since I was in middle school, but the memories are still fresh in my mind. My grunge phase, the awkward appearance, the overwhelming angst, and of course, the hormones. Now at the age of 21, I have returned to middle school. As part of Service Learning for Research Methods in Urban Communities, I am a tutor at Bishop Perry Middle School.

Bishop Perry is an all-boy, Catholic middle school of 60 students from grades five through eight. The students are primarily African-American and come from families living below the poverty level. The boys have all been selected based on their motivation and previous outstanding academic achievement. Bishop Perry students attend school from 8am to 5 pm. The school focuses on creating a holistic learning environment by teaching the students about their African-American heritage and providing activities in the afternoons. The school is entirely funded by grants and donations. As a result, the students and their families are responsible for the upkeep of the school, and must take care of custodial duties every weekend. In exchange for their successful academic achievement at Bishop Perry, the students are awarded the chance to attend their desired parochial high school at no cost.

On my first day, I walked into the school with two other girls from my class. Each student came to introduce himself and shake our hands. Immediately the boys told Krista Maleri, the tutorial coordinator, that they needed tutors. Every day that I go into Bishop Perry, I am greeted. One of the boys I have

tutored, Darnell, is especially friendly. Every time I see him, he says, "Hi Kavitha. How are you?" pronouncing my name, even though adults who I have known for years can't always pronounce it. I just found out that he got very good grades on his last report card and he no longer needs a tutor. I was told he was extremely upset that he didn't get to have a tutor anymore. If you ever need a self-esteem boost, tutor Bishop Perry students! They make progress and show their appreciation.

Tutoring at Bishop Perry has really given me some insight into the topics I study in class. We have been studying the impacts of neighborhoods on development. Bishop Perry provides a unique environment because the students attend school in a neighborhood different from the one in which they live. The school tries to buffer against potential negative influences by having extended school hours. In addition, on Friday evenings, the boys can come back to Bishop Perry to play basketball or watch movies, so that they do not have to find something to occupy their time. They are served snacks in the afternoon, and while the teachers demand respect, they are seen as friends as well. Bishop Perry acts like an extended family to its students.

~Kavitha Dileepan is a student in Professor Cunningham's Research in Urban Communities class. You can reach Kavitha @ [kdileep@tulane.edu](mailto:kdileep@tulane.edu).

### Providing Closure

"They aren't coming back?" one child exclaimed during a focus group at Hoffman Elementary. "Didn't your tutor tell you that?" asked the moderator. "No," replied the student, "I'm sad".

It's that time of the semester to start thinking about wrapping things up with the people at your site. In any service-learning setting, it is important to maintain professional relationships with the people you work with.

Providing adequate closure is an important part of any relationship, be it with a second grader, a businessman, or a patient. Here are some tips for successful closure:

In school settings:

1. Notify the teachers or administrators of the last date you plan to come to the school this semester. Even if you think they're too busy, it's common courtesy to let them know what your plans are. Also, express your gratitude for the opportunity to work in their school.
2. Sit down with the students you tutor **at least 3 weeks before** the last day of service learning and look at a calendar. Have the students work with you to find the current date on the calendar. Then, point out the last day that you will be coming to the school this semester. Together, count the remaining number of times you will see each other again. This will help the students be mentally prepared for the termination of your relationship. Even if you don't feel that you've developed a strong relationship with the students you work with, you never know how they will feel once you're gone.
3. Each week until the end of the service-learning semester, look at the calendar with the students and remind them that you will be leaving. Explain that you will be going on Christmas break, just like they will.
4. Plan an activity for your last tutoring session. We don't recommend giving kids gifts, because not all kids will get one. However, you can plan a fun activity such as playing a

game or making going-away cards for each other on the last day.

5. Tell your students how much you've enjoyed working with them. Also, take a few minutes to reflect on the progress your students have made over the semester and encourage them to keep working towards their goals.

In community/health settings:

1. Notify your supervisor and any staff persons with whom you work of your last service date **at least 3 weeks in advance**.
2. Thank the people at your site for the opportunity to work with them.
3. If possible, plan a special activity for your last day.

Providing closure is important for the recipient of service, as well as for you. Closure can provide all parties involved in the service-learning experience with a sense of completion at the end of the semester.

~ *Devi Miron, Graduate Student*