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The Inside Track

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Service Learning at Tulane University

Mini-grants offered to educational partner sites; List of Possible Courses for Spring 2000

On the Move

When I was hired by the University to help develop the service learning program, Dr. Barbara Moely, the Director of Service Learning, sent me to UC Berkeley to try to learn how their program was set up. Oddly enough, one of the things I learned from this trip was the importance of having key members of the university support the program. Well, just last week things came full circle! I was in line for coffee at PJ's and right next to me were Provost Gilliland and President Cowen. I had never met President Cowen before but I knew he and the Provost were supporters of service learning.



Provost Gilliland introduced me to the President. And to my surprise, he told me that on his way back to New Orleans from a recent trip, he had read our most recent service learning newsletter. This made me ecstatic! It also made me proud to have graduated from a university that is now very much engaging in the community.

On that same fateful coffee trip I saw yet another supporter of service learning. Dr. Larry Powell, Director of the Campus Affiliates Program (CAP) and Associate Director of the National Center for the Urban

Community(NCUC), Research and Academic Program. Service Learning got its start a few years ago with support from the Education component of CAP and CAP continues to be a vital partner in getting service learning to the New Orleans community.

All these coincidences really made for an interesting coffee break! As I made my way back to my office, I reflected on how far service learning has come at Tulane: From 4 courses in Psychology in Fall 1997 to at least 17 courses for next semester! It also made me think about how far we have to go to meet all of our objectives. Each year, we move a step closer to providing the best service to our constituents, the Tulane students and faculty and our community partners. I want to thank everyone for supporting us and being patient as we learn our way to providing the best programming possible. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge Dr. Moely who has tirelessly been working to make this program more visible within the university community.

We would like to wish everyone a wonderful and safe winter break! We look forward to seeing you next semester!

~ Vincent Ilustre, Assistant Director

Reminders for Students Currently Engaged in Service Learning:

MAKE SURE that your service hours are completed prior to the start of study days. ALL time sheets should be turned in to your professor.

REFLECT on what you have learned from your service and how this can help you gain a better understanding of the content of your course.

SHARE your experiences with others and think about how you can continue your service experience beyond your service learning course.

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Amanda's Space

As with any new position, whether it's the first months at a job, the first few games with a team or the first few weeks as a service learner, there is always a period of adjustment. In the first few weeks of the semester, service learners often reported that their experience was frustrating, that they felt as if they were wasting their time. But now, with a month left in the semester, most service learners are comfortable with their placements and fear they that they will not have enough time to do everything they would like to do.

Rap session discussions and e-mail correspondence between service learners and the Service Learning staff have evolved over the course of the semester as service learners, the populations they serve, and community partners build relationships and form expectations of one another.

Students who are enrolled in Prof. Gotham's Urban Sociology and Dr. Moely's Growing Up in the City recently made impressive presentations about their service learning experiences to members of the Urban Village, the urban-theme dormitory on Tulane's campus.

Service learners from Urban Sociology introduced the audience to community partners: the Peete Works/CAP Office and C.J. Peete, the housing development in which it is located, as well as the City Planning and Emergency Preparedness Offices, both located at City Hall. Urban Villagers learned that C.J. Peete is presently undergoing major renovations and mass relocation of residents. The audience also saw how social services and community-based events, such as the community fair which took place October 30th, continue to take place in the community through the efforts of

Peete Works staff, service learners and social work interns.

City Planners-in-Training (a.k.a. service learners) explained what goes on at the City Planning Office. They report that planning is a long, bureaucratic process making it difficult to incorporate their "fresh ideas" in a concrete and productive way in the 20 hours of service they will complete over the course of the semester. Nonetheless, service learners displayed a near-expert knowledge of the geography of the city and its unique planning restrictions, which they acquired during their efforts on the Recreation Element of the Master Plan. Service learner Greg Thurnher, who works at the Office of Emergency Preparedness, described the purposeful school-shooting drill that he developed which will test the preparedness of the city should such an emergency ever take place.

With a professional Power Point presentation and slides, service learners from Growing Up in the City took their audience on a tour of Carter G. Woodson Middle School and gave examples of literacy and math-improving strategies used with the students they tutor. The service learners were able to reference Bronnfenbrenner's ecological model of environmental influences to understand the lives of students with whom they work at Woodson.

School and hospital-based service learners will soon bring closure to the relationships they have developed with individual students and patients this semester. Service learners at the Mayor's Office of International Relations and Trade Development have been working on preparations for the Inter-American Development Bank Conference which will take place in March.

Congratulations to all service learners for their productive activities this semester!

~ Amanda Buberger, Service Program Coordinator

Greg's Corner

This month the Office of Service Learning awarded a number of Enhancement Grants to local schools. The grants were designed to enhance the work of service learners in the schools and classrooms. We received a total of 13 proposals of which 6 were funded. Grants were awarded to projects planned at: Augustine Middle School, Fortier High School and Woodson Middle School.

Two innovative grant proposals utilizing computer software were awarded: Mr. Jacobs, a teacher at Fortier High School, designed a project that allows his Tulane service learning students to work one-on-one on the computer with students who need extra help. Ms. Mathews at Woodson requested computer reading programs. The software will allow Tulane service learners to tutor students in reading and at the same time orient them to computers.

Two teachers at Woodson, Ms. Hampton and Ms. Elmore, were awarded several sets of ITBS testing books. These books are designed to improve students' ITBS and/or LEAP scores. Now Tulane service learners and CACTUS volunteers can use these study guides when tutoring students for the LEAP exam.

Also at Woodson, Mr. Ghering was awarded funds to purchase various building sets that allow students and service learners to work hands-on with math problems. The project is designed to reinforce concepts of work and energy discussed in the math classroom.

Ms. Farkouh, a teacher at Augustine, received a number of resources, novels, and materials that will aid service learners working in her special education classroom. Also, Ms. Farkouh requested a resource book on teaching students with behavior disorders. The book will be available for service learners in her class who have specific questions about certain behavior disorders.

Mr. Lindsay at Woodson came up with a creative project for service learners to do with his students. The Office of Service Learning will provide Mr. Lindsay's service learners with cameras, film, and art supplies. The team of

students and service learners will take photos and write descriptive paragraphs about their favorite things at Woodson, thus emphasizing positives about the school. This project not only facilitates interaction between Woodson students and Tulane service learners, it also provides students with a tangible final product by which to remember their experience.

Finally, Ms. Bentley, Ms. Henderson, and Ms. Dooley designed a project in which service learners and Woodson students will work together to create a yearbook for the school. This grant will allow Woodson Middle School to have a yearbook for the first time since 1981.

The Office of Service Learning was very pleased to see so many exciting grant applications! We hope that even more school faculty and Tulane service learners will consider applying for grants in the spring.
~ Greg Chapuis, Site Monitor

Service Learning Courses, Spring 2000

The following is a listing of Spring 2000 course offerings that will include Service Learning. All these courses can be found in Tulane's Schedule of Classes. Please register through tutor.

Cell and Molecular Biology

Burdsall - Cell 471 Molecular Biology in Cancer

French

McCall - Fren 481 Autobiography

History

Luongo - HISA 697 Medieval Cities

Political Science

Potter - POLS 401 International Environmental Politics

Rose - POLA 315 Elections in America

Rose - POLA 618 Public Opinion Voting Behavior

Psychology

Colombo - PSYC 347 Brain and Behavior

Daly - PSYC 321 Child Psychology

Dempsey - PSYC 340 Child/Adolescent Social Development

Moely - PSYC 320 Educational Psych.

Overstreet - PSYC 334 Childhood Behavior Disorders

Swann - PSYC 325 Psychology of Early Childhood

Sociology

Gotham - SOCI 619 Urban Organization

Morse - SOCI 670 Sociology of Law

Spanish

Howard - SPAN 426 Spanish Phonetic and Phonology

Shea - SPAN 410 Gender/Sex Hispanic Culture

Women's Studies

Dietzel - WMST 399 Feminist Theories

Reading Intervention News

Service learners from a variety of courses are involved in individual reading instruction at two New Orleans public schools, Woodson Middle School and Hoffman Elementary School. As part of the evaluation of their efforts, achievement tests, measuring word recognition and reading comprehension, were administered at the beginning of the semester and will be administered again at the conclusion of the semester. The results of the early testing emphasize the need at these schools for individual reading instruction, with many of the students referred by teachers scoring below grade level. At each school, service learners have commented that the students lack the ability to sound out words and often guess at words based upon similarities in starting letters. Consequently, the incorporation and refinement of an effective method of phonics instruction has been a major focus in the improvement of our tutoring efforts. Currently, information regarding the effectiveness of this semester's reading interventions is not yet available since the end of the semester test administration has not been completed. I look forward to sharing this information with the

service learning community in the near future!

~ Sterett Mercer, Evaluations Coordinator

From My View . . .

Every Tuesday and Thursday, the medicinal smell would hit me as soon as I got off of the elevator. This day too--no different from any other. I quickly went through the nurse's station and entered the locked ward to start visiting with the patients. Car accidents and workplace accidents comprised most of the patients that I met on the Head Trauma unit at Touro Hospital. These brave and persistent people are there to relearn things that most take for granted, like walking and talking. There is one girl with whom I spend a great deal of time. She didn't say much or really respond to what I would say, but she seemed to enjoy the company. She had been in a car accident and suffered extensive damage. She couldn't speak very well and she was bound to a wheelchair, with limited use of her arms. She was rendered completely dependent on others. Quite a change from the roles of Wife and Mother that she had filled before the accident. I would talk to her, read to her, help her to therapy etc. One day I was arranging some pictures on her bulletin board when suddenly I sneezed. "Bless You." I said thanks without thinking and just as soon as that was out of my mouth, I spun around and said, "Did you say that?" I was shocked!! She nodded her head and started to laugh. I laughed, too. It was nice to be laughing with her. I suppose that day was different. It occurred to me that my presence was noticed more than I originally thought. Since then, she has come so far. Her speech has improved unbelievably, she is able to interact more with her family, and she is even starting to walk. It's amazing--and I feel lucky to have been a part of it. I do look forward to next week.

- Allison Johnston is a service learning student at Touro Infirmary for her Brain and Behavior course. Email Allison at lacydog@MSN.com

From My View . . .

It's Friday around 5:00 p.m. and things are winding down at City Hall.

My temporary caffeine high is gone and I am ready to relax and start my weekend. I sign my service learning time sheet and walk to the elevators. A few minutes later an elevator rings signaling its departure. I get on and press the first floor button. I stare at the glowing orange button as I stand alone in the elevator. Then an abrupt stop on the sixth floor breaks my stare. I step to the back of the elevator in order to give the "newcomers" some standing room. The doors open and the elevator is immediately filled with laughter as two ladies get on. Each lady is carrying a shoulder bag and sipping from a colorful thermos. One of the ladies greets me with, "How ya' doing darlin'?" I smile at her and shrug my shoulders. The elevator rings as it passes the fifth floor and then stops again. A rather jolly looking man wearing a Marc Morial t-shirt hurries onto the elevator. He too is greeted with, "How ya' doing darlin'?" except he answers by giving both ladies a hug. He then preaches his weekend philosophy to all of us as the elevator passes the last two floors. The doors open on the first floor and he bids us farewell, "See y'all on Monday!" I then make my way through the marble hallway leading to the exit door. I realize, though, that the hallway is not really what I would picture in a governmental building. It's not shiny and it does not have a fancy embellished border with touches of

gold or anything. Instead, it is sort of rugged and has a border of tiled New Orleans Street names such as 'Desire' and 'Carrollton.' Each tiled street name has a little piece of its name missing, making the passersby feel a part of something historic and weathered. I arrive at my car and feel somewhat re-energized. Whatever happened to me during my trek from the ninth floor of City Hall to the parking lot put me in a great mood. I turn to look at Poydras Street and notice the commuter traffic. I tell myself they are probably all traveling to my home town suburb across the lake, Mandeville. They probably think they understand New Orleans just like I always thought I did. I look back at my car and then decide against joining the traffic. Instead I walk to the coffee shop next to City Hall and sit down at a table by the window and feel very proud to be a part of the New Orleans community.

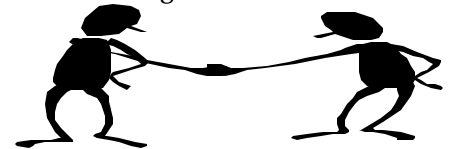
- Betsy Franke is a service learning student at the New Orleans City Planning Office for her Urban Sociology course. E-mail Betsy at efranke@mailhost.ts.tulane.edu

From My View . . .

Wow...another beautiful Wednesday afternoon and I'm walking into Woodson. It's weird for me to think that just 2 months ago I was scared to come here. I was scared that I wouldn't be able to help the kid I was assigned to or that he wouldn't want my help. As I

walked into Woodson for the first time, I was struck with the obvious differences from my childhood education. I almost turned around and walked out, telling myself that these kids have bigger issues than their reading progress and I couldn't possibly help.

I walk in today and I find myself smiling as I shuffle down the hall. All the kids here know that I'm from Tulane and a lot of times they ask me questions about college. Lately, I've had to show up early just because I get caught up talking to at least one person on my way to the classroom. I finally make it to class and my student is waiting at the door for me. He's just great and his enthusiasm brightens my day. Today we are going to finish up the project we've been working on. His mom's expecting a new baby soon and we've been making an "I'm Your Big Brother" book. He's been writing about himself and drawing pictures to illustrate it. He tells me that he wants a little sister and I tell him about how great my sister is. He tells me that he saw a show about New York (where I'm from) on TV last night and asks if I've ever been to the Statue of Liberty. I tell him about how you actually have to climb up this tiny staircase to get to the top and he's fascinated. I make a mental note to bring in pictures next week so we can write a story about all the things he wants to see.



My Service Learning requirement for my class is almost over and I know now that I have helped my student. Yeah, I think his reading has improved and he loves to write

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out our Website at: <http://www.tulane.edu/~ServLrng/main.htm>

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stories now. His spelling's a little better and he's learned at least ten new vocabulary words that he tries desperately to incorporate into conversation. But that's not really what I'm proud of. I'm proud that he doesn't think of me as his "Service Learner" and he's never called me his tutor. He tells his classmates that I'm his "friend from Tulane". I smile every time he introduces me like this, but it makes sense. He's more than my student, he's my "friend from Woodson"!

- Drina Freitas is a service learning student at Woodson Middle School for her Child Psychology course. E-mail Drina at dfreita@mailhost.tulane.edu