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*The Tulane Service
Learning Newsletter
Volume 2 • Issue 1
March 2000*



Service Learning at Tulane University

Biggest Service Learning Numbers since Program Started; Over 300 Students are Participating

On the Move

It's always exciting to be part of something new, but it is even more rewarding when that something new continues to grow and exceed even your own expectations. Such is the case with my involvement with Service Learning. I am energized by the level of interest that the new administration has shown in our programs. President Scott Cowen and Special Assistant to the President, Dr. Jack Grubbs, are enthusiastic about the program's future. Evidence of growing support within the Tulane community has also come from service learning's inclusion in the University's 2010 Plan, a blueprint for taking Tulane into the next millennium.

Faculty members are also becoming more involved with service learning as evidenced by the largest number of service learning course offerings to date. Their enthusiasm is only equaled by those of their students who choose to actively seek out these courses. I've met with several students who have taken a service learning course every semester that one has been offered.

None of this would be feasible without the help and support of our community partners. They have

welcomed our students with open arms and are very excited about the level of engagement that Tulane has taken with the community. You'll read about some of our community partners in this issue!

With all the enthusiasm that service learning has garnered, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the assistance and support that we have received from Provost Martha Gilliland. Her departure is a great loss for the Tulane community but especially for Service Learning. Her insight and guidance will be sorely missed. We wish her well on her new venture!

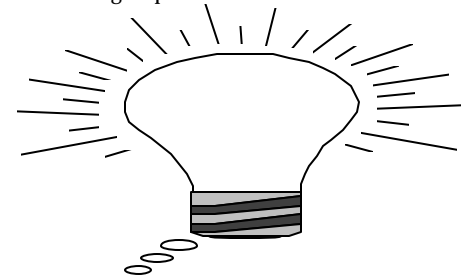
~ Vincent Ilustre, Assistant Director

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Reminders for Students Currently Engaged in Service Learning:

ATTEND the appropriate number of rap sessions. Some classes require rap sessions: please consult with your faculty member.

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.

DRESS appropriately for your site and be consistent in your attendance.

ASK for assistance. If you have any questions or problems, call your site monitor. We are here to help you!

Amanda's Space

Service Learners are all over the city this semester:

Service learners from Professor Dietzel's Feminist Theories class are serving and learning in four community agencies. A group of students are helping Laura Zamjahm, Program Director at *Grace House*, prepare women in a drug treatment program to take their GEDs. Others are helping Monique Harden at *Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund* develop a campaign to save Kisatchie National Forest through the legacy of Caroline Dormon. Students are also developing workshops on anti-discrimination with Tydell Nealy, Program Analyst at the *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*, and researching hate crimes with Rosana Cruz at the *Lesbian and Gay Community Center of New Orleans*.

Professor Shea's Gender and Sexuality in the Hispanic Culture students are also involved in service learning at the *EEOC* and the *Lesbian and Gay Community Center of New Orleans*, in addition to the *Agency for Environmental Health* with director Kathy Dickerson. *AEH's* goals are designed to improve human and environmental health in developing Latin American countries. Service learners from this class, as well as Professor Potter's International Environmental Politics, are contributing to *AEH* in the following ways: preparing case studies, writing grants, and attending *Inter-American Development Bank* conference workshops.

Students from the International Environmental Politics class also participate in service learning projects at *Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund* where they are researching and informing citizens about industrial toxin release. Other students from Professor Potter's

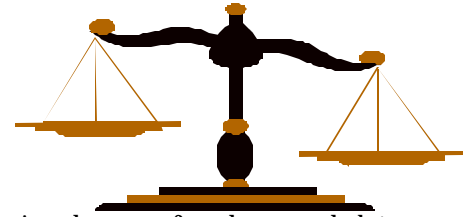
class are helping Deputy Director Rodney Littleton at the *Mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs* to organize this year's Earth Day (April 22nd) and updating the New Orleans Recycles Directory.

Students from Professor Loungo's Medieval Cities class are learning about New Orleans history by doing research on buildings nominated for historic landmark designation at the *New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission* with Lori Durio. Another service learning project takes place at the *Williams Research Center*, with director Alfred Lemmon, where a service learner is preparing documents, to be preserved on microfiche, that records the history of the ownership and development of land in New Orleans. Also at *Williams Research Center*, are Professor Klingler's French in Louisiana students, who are translating 18th and 19th Century Louisiana documents.

Two groups of students are also at *Touro Infirmary* where they received orientation from Caroline Drumm, Director of Volunteer Services. Students from Professor Colombo's Brain and Behavior class are in the *Rehabilitation (M6 and M9) units*, for patients with acute brain trauma and mild strokes while students from Professor Burdsal's Molecular Biology in Cancer class are in the *Oncology (M5) unit* inpatient and outpatient unit for patients with cancer. Both groups of students are engaging patients in conversation and are tracking their progress with the help of Susan Greco, R.N., Director of Rehab Nursing (M6 and M9) and Helen Neil, R.N., Director of M5 Oncology Nursing Unit.

Dr. Morse's students from his Sociology of Law class are also engaged in service learning at three different sites. A group of students are helping Jonathan Riker at *Teen Court*,

where first-time juvenile offenders are given an opportunity to expunge their records in exchange for community service hours.



Another set of students are helping Rachel Wentworth and Stacy Seicshnaydre at the *Fair Housing Action Center* which aims to eradicate housing discrimination. Last but not least are a group of students who are working with Lois Simpson, Ann MacLaine, Sarah Voight, and Donna Myhre at the *Advocacy Center*, which provides legal representation, information and referral, education and training to people with disabilities and for people who are age 60 or older.

Staff members at the Office of Service Learning would like to thank all of the community partners for their help with training and orienting service learners this semester. The success of this program can be attributed to their diligent help and guidance.

~ Amanda Buberger, Service Program Coordinator

Greg's Corner

The halfway point of the Spring semester is coming up and things at the education sites are going great. Over 160 students are working at education sites. It seems like school-based service learners have much more confidence this semester. Students attended intensive training sessions which helped prepare them to enter the local public school setting and provided them with effective tutoring strategies.

Seventy-two Service Learners from Psychology classes tutor 126 individual students and assist teachers at *Carter G. Woodson Middle School*. In addition, about 25 Tulane service learners work at *Hoffman Elementary School*. These service learners either work with

individual Hoffman students outside of the classroom or assist teachers in special education classrooms. Other service learners chose to work in middle school special education classrooms. These students each work 2 hours per week at *Augustine Middle School*.

In addition, service learners have been placed at some new educational sites this semester. Almost 50 students from Dr. Moely's Psychology class work with *Tulane's Upward Bound Program*. Upward Bound is designed to provide after-school assistance and weekend tutorials to public high school students interested in college. In this program, service learners are paired with high school freshmen and serve as student mentors and tutors. Service learners from Professor Howard's Spanish Phonetics class are working as assistants in a Spanish classroom at *Booker T. Washington High School*. Service learners are able to use their knowledge of the language to assist high school students who are just beginning to learn Spanish.

Finally, many service learners are working with materials and on projects that were funded by last semester's school-based Service Learning Enhancement Grants. Teachers who work with service learners are eligible to apply for this semester's grants until March 1st. Service Learners may support teachers in the grant application process by suggesting innovative project ideas or typing up the proposal. Please stop by the Office of Service Learning to learn more about the Service Learning Enhancement Grant program.

Keep up the great work!

~ Greg Chapuis, Site Monitor

Internships

An exciting new Internship Program began this semester for juniors and seniors in the Psychology and Sociology departments. Students were offered the opportunity to apply for semester-long internships at sites across the city. Twenty-two students are participating in the Internship Program this semester. The program is enabling students to gain valuable experience that will accompany them as they

advance in their academic achievement and progress on their career paths.

Eleven Psychology students are interning for nine hours each week this semester at sites including the *Children's Bureau*, *Tulane's Upward Bound Program*, and *DePaul/Tulane Behavioral Health Center*. Students are involved in a wide variety of activities each week such as teaching, attending workshops and seminars, and carrying out research. The students are also participating in an hour-long seminar each week to accompany their experiences in the field. In the seminar, interns are encouraged to discuss and learn about issues such as racism, community violence, confidentiality, and poverty. Each student must also keep a journal and complete a semester project relating to their internship experience.

Eleven students from the Sociology Department are also participating in the Internship Program. Sociology students must complete a minimum of three hours each week at their internship site. Tulane Sociology students can be found in several offices at *City Hall*, the *National Center for the Urban Community* and the *Audubon Institute*. Interns are involved in activities such as employment support in low-income areas, city planning, website building, and fundraising. The students are keeping journals of their experiences and attend at least four rap sessions to discuss their internships.

The Internship Program is giving students a chance to explore possible career goals and choices while gaining invaluable experience in the field and exposure to mentoring professionals. The program is also a great opportunity for service learners who would like to enhance their commitment to and learn more about the New Orleans community. It is a goal of the Office of Service Learning to see the Internship Program expanded in the future to meet the

goals and needs of an increased number Tulane undergraduates in an even wider variety of community settings.

~ Rebecca Stevens, Internship Coordinator

From My View . . .

At about 9:22 am the service learning van pulls up in front of Augustine Middle School, as it does every Monday. I exit the van and begin my ascent up the stairs of this peach-colored school and enter the office. Once I've signed in I head down to room 108.

As soon as I walk in the classroom I am welcomed with the kids yelling, "Yeah Sarah's here!" and, "Come and help me, Sarah!". The teacher is almost as happy to see me as they are. The kids are usually working on English when I get there, so I help them to use the dictionary to look up their spelling words, and to think of ways to use these words in a sentence.

EVERYONE wants my help, so I have to make my rounds and be sure not to spend too much time with any one student. The two hours I spend in the classroom fly by. When it is time to leave all the kids beg me not to leave and want me to stay for the rest of the day. As I'm leaving, they all make sure to find out when I'll be back again to spend more time helping with their work. I assure them that I will be back next Monday. The time I spend in that classroom is the best part of my week.

This is my fourth semester to participate in a service learning class and I hope to have at least one more before I graduate. Service learning has taught me a lot about kids, about New Orleans, and about the educational system. The things that I experience as a service learner are things which I don't think I would be able to learn in a classroom. It has been such an amazing experience for me, as well as a lot of fun. I know that I will remember these experiences as positive, and happily take them with me throughout my life.

- Sarah Falkenstein is a service learning student at Augustine Middle School. E-mail Sarah at sfalken@mailhost.tstulane.edu.

From My View . . .

Being third year pre-medical students, we both have become comfortable working in a hospital setting. However, neither of us knew what to expect when we began our first day at the M5 Unit of Touro Infirmary. We would be interacting with patients that were suffering from various stages of cancer, something that neither of us had ever dealt with before. Yet our fears were quickly dissipated by the hundreds of smiling faces that we encountered at Touro. Touro Infirmary has succeeded in housing the maximum number of cheerful people possible in one building. Beginning with Caroline Drumm in the volunteer office and Jason in the outpatient chemotherapy clinic, right down to the friendly man that takes our parking pass as we exit the hospital. Not to mention the cancer patients...although we have only been volunteering at Touro for three short weeks, we continue to be inspired by each person we come in contact with.

We look forward to seeing certain patients each week. There is a lady who comes into the Outpatient Clinic to receive chemotherapy for bone cancer. She smiles at us and flashes her big blue eyes, telling us stories about her grandchildren. Like many other patients at Touro, she loves to give us advice. After jokingly telling her that we would probably be studying to be doctors for the next ten years, she replied, "If you don't work hard to meet your goals, it's like not having any goals at all - the most important things in life are never achieved easily."

We also met a witty old woman who appreciates our company so much that she is actively recruiting us to rent her apartment next year. She insists that she "won't rent to just anybody," and is constantly joking with us. She brings a positive attitude with her wherever she

goes. Two years ago, her doctor told her that her lung cancer would end her life within two months. Yet she is still fighting "the beast" with an open mind. She has shown us that you can accomplish anything if you set your mind to it--her illness has yet to slow her down.

Although all of our experiences at Touro have been interesting, it is our direct contact with the patients that we look forward to each week. Some of our friends are intrigued by our work, and frequently ask if we find it depressing to interact with terminally ill patients. However, the opposite is true-- we have found it to be extremely uplifting. Typically, students find their days filled with the mundane activities of class, homework, and tests. Service learning gives us an application of our coursework that is difficult to surpass.

Jennifer Nardone and Maya Goldberg are service learning students for their Molecular Biology in Cancer course. E-mail Jennifer at jnardon@mailhost.ts.tulane.edu and Maya at mglb2@mailhost.ts.tulane.edu.

From My View . . .

Feminist Theories is a requirement for any student at Tulane interested in a woman's studies major or minor. I as a member of the latter group enrolled in the class this semester, only to find that as the name of the course implies, I was drowning in a sea of words. In the midst of all this theorizing, what is being done for women who actually need help? Will all this talk about theory pave the way for activism? These are the questions I ponder as I sit in my comfortable feminist theories classroom. I ponder them until the service learning coordinators come in and ask us to step out of our comfort zone. This year

Professor Dietzel has requested that every woman enrolled in our class participate in a service learning project. After many concerns of students unable to bridge the gap between theory and activism, Dietzel thought it would be appropriate for her students to go out and do something for women.

The service learning coordinators give us a rundown on the various possibilities to serve women in the community. That is how I came to learn about Grace House. Grace House is a residential substance abuse facility located near Touro Infirmary. All the women there are over 18 years of age and are recovering from drug and alcohol abuse. The Grace House program works hand in hand with the twelve step program to help women lead a healthy, sober lifestyle. The women who come in to the program live there for six months. After three months, they must either find a job or begin studying for their GED. That is where I and the other feminist theory students come in. Some of the women at Grace House have never been taught how to read. Others need a brush-up job on their high school math. Feminist theory students become tutors. The director of the Grace House program has paired us up one on one with a Grace House client. Each week, we meet with the client and help her in her academic area of weakness. Each week, I have the opportunity to teach something that I have learned to a woman who is so eager to learn, a woman who wants to forget about the past and look towards the future. Each week, I have a sense of what being a feminist should really mean.

- Mary Hutto is a service learning student at Grace House for her Feminist Theories course. E-mail Mary at mhutto@mailhost.ts.tulane.edu.

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

The Office of Service Learning is funded by the Office of Academic Affairs and the National Center for the Urban