

The Inside Track

The Tulane Service
Learning Newsletter
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Service Learning at Tulane University

Service Learning Courses on the Move, Student Research on Service Learning, Students' Viewpoints

Reminders for

Service Learning Students

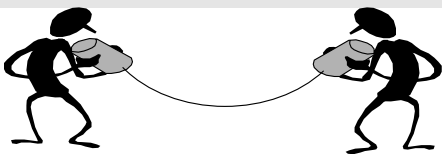
REFLECT on what you have learned from your service and how this can help you better understand the content of your course.

Be CONSCIOUS of the many time constraints the Spring semester presents. Plan ahead and make the most of your service experience.

Be PROACTIVE. The opportunities service learning provides you are great, but they lie dormant unless you apply yourself and act!

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

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Working at OSL

Every year, the Office of Service Learning employs work study students to help with the daily operation of the office. This articles is written by Brandy Johnson who helps Vincent Ilustre track students at their sites.

The spring semester brings many new students as well as many returning students to service learning. These students have chosen from a variety of rewarding sites, which serve not only as a place to complete their service hours, but also a place to become more familiar with the subject matter of their class, and to learn more about themselves.

The service learners in *Professor Maureen Shea's* Social Problems in Latin American Literature had the choice to work at **InterFest, Hispanic Apostolate, or Great Expectations**. At Interfest, a student is helping the organization maintain better contact with the Latin American and Caribbean cultures in New Orleans. This student is developing a mailing list, doing an inventory of local cultural groups and is writing press releases on **InterFest** activities and events, as well as assisting with the production of an **InterFest** monthly newsletter. At the **Hispanic Apostolate**, the students work with the Education component of the program,

assisting, teaching, or participating in English as a Second Language programs or Citizenship preparation classes. At **Great Expectations**, the students accompany the staff as they visit the client families in their homes, performing home assessments, making safety check of the client's home. These students also accompany clients during hospital visits or teach in prenatal, parenting, or GED classes.

Another class with a service learning component is *Professor Edmundson's* Business Ethics class. All of the service learners in this class work at the **Levy Rosenblum Institute** in one of three divisions, **Individual Development Accounts, Academies of Entrepreneurship, or Volunteer Income Tax Assistance**.

Individual Development Accounts are matched savings accounts for low-income individuals and families whose saving goal is towards acquisition of a first home, a business, or post-secondary schooling. Students help with case management at the site by directly contacting IDA participants and assisting them with completing the required economic education and making referrals to professionals who can help the client reach his or her goal. Students working in the **Academies of Entrepreneurship** serve as class instructors at a public school, providing instruction to the participants on fundamental business principles that will enrich the students' understanding of entrepreneurship.

Topics include Business Ethics, Marketing, Accounting, Economic Literacy, and Job Interview Skills. Students involved with the **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance** program help families with their income tax after a lengthy training session provided by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

Students in the Master's degree program of the Cell and Molecular Biology Department take a two-semester research course administered by *Professors Ken Muneoka and Garic Grisbaum* that has them working at **Touro Infirmary**. Students rotate through four departments (**OB/GYN, Rehabilitation, Oncology and Psychiatric Units**) of the hospital doing various predetermined activities and using their experiences as the basis for class research presentations.

Amanda's Space

Despite all of the distractions this spring semester (Super Bowl, Mardi Gras, Spring Break), community-based service learning projects are rolling! Every time I turn around, students are impressing me with their enthusiasm and self-initiative.

Students enrolled in Cultural Heritage of Latin America, taught by *Professor Amy George-Hirons*, are working at the **International School**. Students develop lesson plans focusing on aspects of Art and Cultural celebration for Kindergarten and 1st grade Spanish emergence students. Students also lead discussions about art, movies, literature and architecture and organize arts and crafts activities.

In *Professor David Hurewitz's* Investigating Urban Neighborhoods, a group of students are working with the **Neighborhood Gallery**. The students assist the gallery with daily operations and assist with set-up for weekly programs and events. For example, students built sets for upcoming plays with other volunteers from the local community. They also work with

children in the community garden, help organize the thrift shop, enter contact information into their database and work with media to better publicize the Gallery's events. Students have also been placed at **Woodson Middle School**, where they work with middle school students as reading tutors with the HOSTS Program. Each service learner is assigned 2-3 students and works one-on-one with each of the students outside of the classroom. Students are also working with the **Great Expectations Foundation**, assisting with community relations and the Family Circle HIV/AIDS program (See feature article). Other students are working with the **Central City Senior Center**, where they work closely with elderly people on a variety of activities, but mainly assisting with the seniors on the center's newly Internet connected computers.

Students enrolled in the Urban Environment, a one-credit seminar through the Urban Village taught by *Professor Amy Koritz*, are working with a number of environmental programs. Some students are working at the **Crescent City Farmer's Market**. Students develop educational materials that explain the local environmental benefits of farmer's markets to children visiting the market. They also work on a map that points out other places of interest around the market to be given to Saturday visiting the area. Other students are working at the **Mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs**, assisting with the development of the Lead Poisoning Prevention educational materials. Students involved in this program study the health and behavioral consequences of lead poisoning, as well as the lead remediation and treatment efforts in New Orleans. Their final product will be an information and activities packet on lead awareness and poisoning prevention for use in elementary or middle-school classrooms, which they will present to at least one class in a New Orleans school. Student are also working at the **Tulane Office of Environmental Affairs**, studying background information on residential energy efficiency "best

practices" in southeastern United States. Students conduct an informal survey of local developers to determine degree of awareness of efficiency standards and best practices. Students working at the Tulane Office are also assisting with a bicycle route project, for which they review educational policies and programs from other states that have been collected by **Tulane's Office of Environmental Affairs**. Students consider the potential for these policies and the programs' adaptation in New Orleans. They will participate in at least one education program on bike safety at an area elementary school, as well as develop a bicycle education presentation for Tulane students. Finally, students have been given the opportunity to develop independent projects, creating goals that fit in with the class curriculum as well as the needs of the community.

Students in Environmental Politics of Latin America, taught by *Professor Brian Potter*, are working with the **Mississippi River Basin Alliance (MRBA)** and the **Gulf Restoration Network**. Students working with the **MRBA** help to identify links and parallels between navigation and forestry issues on the Mississippi and South American rivers such as the Rio Paraguay. Students also act as liaisons for the **MRBA** with groups working on South American issues. Students involved with the **Gulf Restoration Network** research and present useful information about Aquaculture and Transboundary Fisheries Management issues. Students will look at the contrasts between the shrimp aquaculture management of Latin America and the US, as well as the affects of the trans-boundary fishing management on the sea turtle population in the Gulf. Students will also assist in website development and design and learn about the issues, organizations and policies of the Network. Students are also working with the **Sierra Club**, where they identify transportation alternatives and regulations in Latin America, as well as the impact of NAFTA on cross-boarder transportation

A group of students in *Professor Travis's* Persuasive Writing class are working with **The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**. Students assist in the creation of a presentation about Equal Employment Opportunity Laws, specifically in regards to immigrant workers, for EEOC staff to use when educating employers and employees in local businesses. Students are also working at the **Mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs** on a document that will lay out the office's accomplishments and offer recommendations for the future of the OEA to be presented to the new Mayor. One student is working to improve the Mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs website. Other students are working with the **Urban Conservancy**, interviewing key players surrounding local "good" development projects to gain an understanding of how each development was shaped by economic, political, and social forces. Students work in small groups to prepare information that will be brought together into a visual, comprehensive presentation that will be used to educate local citizens and future area developers about "good" development versus bad development. Other students are working at the **Council for International Visitors**, helping to promote CIV and its programs through the construction of fund-raising business letters, help with arranging professional appointments for international visitors, and writing of newsletter articles.

I want to thank all of the community-based service learning supervisors and faculty members for their help getting the semester started. This semester's projects are very interesting and it has been a pleasure watching students take them into their own hands and run with them.

~ Amanda Buberger
Senior Program Coordinator

Anna's Area

Many exciting things are happening at the Office of Service Learning this spring! I am focusing my energy on working with our education sites and the students who are doing their service learning there. It is great to see so many students at so many different levels working together and learning from each other.

Two new courses on board this spring include *Professor Teri Davis's* Introduction to Education and *Professor Ed O'Neal's* Introduction to Social Psychology. As Davis' students study education theory and teaching methodology, they are working at three different school sites: *Carter G. Woodson Learning Academy*, *New Orleans Charter Middle School* in affiliation with *New Orleans Outreach* and *Joseph S. Clark Senior High School*. Several students from Ed O'Neal's course study group dynamics and human interactions as they work at *Lafayette Elementary School* and *Carter G. Woodson Learning Academy*.

I would like to thank our new and returning faculty members, community partners and students for helping the semester get off to a great start.

Prior to beginning their service, the students attended a variety of workshops on building successful academic partnerships. All service learning tutors begin work with their students by getting to know each other and initiating the relationships essential to improving academic skills.

Our elementary and middle schools are in the process of preparing for the upcoming LEAP test. We wish you all the best of luck. Here are some specifics on what's taking place at our school sites:

Fourth graders at **John W. Hoffman Elementary School** are working with service learning students to improve their math skills. The tutors use the curriculum set by the school's new HOSTS, Help One Student to Succeed, program.

Students at **Lafayette Elementary** continue to improve their reading skills

as well cultivate a love for books with help from their reading buddies and the **For the Children** reading program which supplies service learning students and volunteers with all the materials they need to work with the children.

Through **New Orleans Outreach**, Service learning students at the **Charter Middle School** act as in-classroom assistants and individual or small group tutors. Additional students work as tutors at **McNair Elementary School**. One student teaches an after-school dance elective.

Eighth graders at Woodson are working with service learners to prepare for the LEAP test and improve their language arts skills. **On Saturday, March 23rd from 10 AM – 4 PM, we will work with Tulane's Office of Alumni Affairs to paint the school and decorate with paintings of the school's mascot, the tiger. Lunch will be provided. Please join us!**

~ Anna Groppi
Senior Program Coordinator

Internship Nook

In addition to our work with service learning, the Office of Service Learning (OSL) facilitates student internships for four departments within the university: **English, Psychology, Sociology, and Political Science**. We view internships as a natural continuation for service learning students—offering a longer term of service at the site, advanced levels of responsibility, and an opportunity to further their own research interests. All OSL-sponsored interns earn 3 credit hours, serving a certain number of hours at the site along with attending a weekly seminar. The interns also develop a final project or paper reflecting both their research and knowledge gained at the site.

We are continually creating community partnerships, developing exciting new placements for interns to augment the various sites at which they already work. The OSL works with students in order to assess individual interests when considering internship placements.

Students are placed in a variety of sites including social service agencies, governmental agencies, cultural organizations, and others. For a more particular look at some potential sites, following is a breakdown of internships by department.

We are especially proud of our **English** department interns, as the spring 2002 class is the first batch handled by the OSL. Students are doing public relations and event planning work at the **Audubon Nature Center**, grantwriting and fundraising for the **Urban Conservancy**, and curriculum development for **Start the Adventure in Reading**. *Professor Molly Travis* is the faculty liaison and she is excited as we are about the further development of the program within the English department.

Professor David Jeffrey leads the **Political Science** department seminar. Jeffrey sees the internships as an opportunity to move students forward into the professional world. Readings and discussions are used to allow students to better understand the structure of their placements—giving interns valuable skills with which to understand and function within any organization in the future. Interns are placed at sites that vary from the **Mayor's Office for Environmental Affairs** to **Planned Parenthood**.

Sociology interns for spring 2002 are working at **Upward Bound** with Dr. Tanis Dasher, among other sites. Dr. Dasher allows interns an opportunity to develop professional skills by leading group counseling sessions with Upward Bound students—working on issues such as self-esteem and peer pressure. Sociology intern Penny Rosenbloom said of her internship at Upward Bound, "I've learned more from this than any other class I've taken." *Professor Joel Devine* oversees the Sociology internship program.

Psychology students are working this semester also at Upward Bound, but additionally at the **NO/AIDS Task**

Force. The Task Force offers a range of service to AIDS patients. Interns are able to assist with client intake and upkeep as well as learning more about how non-profits are funded by helping to develop grant proposals. *Professor Jeffrey Lockman* and *Professor Barbara Moely* oversee the Psychology seminar. The seminar offers readings on a variety of sources that reflect the issues that interns encounter through their various placements.

Look into an internship through the OSL if you will be a junior or senior in 2002, majoring in one of the above fields, and would like the opportunity to earn 3 credit hours while getting first-hand, professional experience, advancing your research, and developing your résumé.

~Scott McCraw
Internship Coordinator

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: GREAT EXPECTATIONS

In 1991, the City of New Orleans Health Department created Great Expectations to address the problem of infant mortality. In 1995, the leaders of Great Expectations' community-based Consortium established the Great Expectations Foundation, Inc., (GEF), a nonprofit agency in order to ensure continuation of the program beyond the demonstration period. The incorporation of the Foundation demonstrates the important role Great Expectations has played in improving the health of women, infants, and families in New Orleans, and the community's dedication to seeing the program continue.

Tulane's Office of Service Learning began working with The Great Expectations Foundation in the 2000 school year. Since then, both interns and service learners have worked with the foundation and members of the community on a variety of programs. Students have assisted in the creation of an agency handbook, which includes contact information for shelters, medical care, immigration, and employment.

Students have also been involved in the organization of prenatal classes, community relations, case work, and health/pregnancy classes.

Currently, Tulane students are assisting the Community Relations Director with a variety of projects and special events to help educate community members about Great Expectations' services. They also prepare outreach materials, help distribute information at community outreach events, and help solicit for in-kind gifts. Additionally, students are working with the Family Circle HIV/AIDS program, assisting case managers with maintaining files and providing case manager services to over seventy clients living with HIV/AIDS.

FOCUS: Student Research

Like many students at Tulane University, Service Learning has provided me with an opportunity to apply what I have learned in my academic studies to events occurring in the real world. For three of my four years as an undergraduate student, I have worked at **Hoffman Elementary School**. The experiences that I had with both the teachers and students at Hoffman helped me grow personally and enhanced my understanding of issues that I covered in my classes. During my time at Hoffman, I became curious as to how service learners impact Hoffman students emotionally and academically.

In order to study how service learning affects elementary school students, I conducted a series of discussion groups last year at **Hoffman Elementary School**. *Dr. Moely, Devi Miron*, and the staff at the Office of Service Learning worked with me to create meaningful discussion topics and arrange the logistics of the study. The information obtained from the discussion groups was used to improve the training that service learners receive.

This year I have decided to expand upon the research that I conducted last year for my honors thesis. The discussion groups last year indicated that service learning affects students' academic

growth and enhances their self-concept. Therefore, *Devi Miron, Megan McFarland* and I administered a self-concept survey and a reading achievement test to fifty-two Hoffman students. The results from these assessments will provide more thorough information about both the academic and non-academic benefits of service learning. I also created a survey for students to rate their experiences with the service learning program. The results from this survey will indicate both the strengths and weaknesses of the service learning program. Hopefully, my research will enhance the quality of training that service learners receive.

The service learners who worked at **Hoffman Elementary School** last semester provided valuable information for my honors thesis. Each week, students from *Dr. Moehy's* Educational Psychology Class and *Dr. O'Neal's* Honors Introduction to Psychology Class completed weekly questionnaires about their work at Hoffman. These surveys were useful not only in tracking the progress of students participating in the service learning program but also for providing insight on how to better improve the program for service learners.

During my last semester at Tulane University, I have begun to reflect upon my undergraduate experiences. Service Learning definitely stands out as an aspect that has shaped and molded both my academic studies as well as personal growth. As with my other service learning experiences, this research project has forced me to analyze and interpret information in a more complex fashion. I hope that my research will provide information that will make service learning a more meaningful experience for all who participate. ~*Katie Shepard is a former service learning student. She is working on her Honor's Thesis with Professor Barbara Moehy. You can reach Katie at kshepar@tulane.edu.*

From My View...

Tutoring is the gift of sharing what you know with someone, and watching as your knowledge and ideas merge with theirs. I know I enjoy tutoring every week at **Woodson Middle School**. The eighth graders, who are part of the HOSTS program, give me so much wisdom and perspective. Though I am the one who holds the title of tutor, I feel as though I walk away each week from Woodson learning more than teaching. As the official tutor, I try to share with the students, but, since I am just passing down to them a gift that was handed to me on a silver platter, my own education, it is not as special as what they give me.

They give me a glimpse into their lives and their world, which are so different from my own or anything that I have experienced. They give me a new perspective and a new light with which to see the world. They are so innocent and bright, but face a world of challenges that they will have to overcome. Still, each student with whom I have worked has so much energy and personality that you can forget some of their academic hardships. Seeing their eagerness to learn gives one hope that something can be done to improve the schools in New Orleans. I believe the Service Learning Office at Tulane is part of that process. It strives to build positive rapport with the schools' teachers, staff and students.

The HOSTS program at Woodson has recently been restructured, and is now under a new coordinator, *Mr. Bowman*, who is full of energy and ideas. With him, the Woodson staff, wonderful Woodson students and open, enthusiastic Tulane students all working together, I think that there can be drastic improvements in LEAP test schools as well as overall academic improvements at this school. Spending time at Woodson gives you that sense of purpose as well as a sense of belonging to the New Orleans community while you are here at Tulane. It is a chance to step out of the eleven or so blocks of Tulane's campus and go out into the real world and learn more about this city and

some of the problems that its schools face.

Still, my experiences offer me even more than just hope and new perspectives. As a psychology major, I also gain actual, usable, first hand knowledge from going to Woodson. For instance, I am learning about social interactions and peer relationships as well as gaining first hand experience with child development. The fact that kids in middle school are "at that age" of constant mood changes gives me a glimpse into a little piece of every personality type that exists.

Finally, my time at Woodson has given me one of the biggest gifts I could ask for: a potential career choice. Through working at this school and others, I have really discovered a love of children and an appreciation of all they have to offer. They have made me want to be a teacher, and with that, I hope that I can give something back to some other kids one of these days.

~ *Katheryn Schindler is a service learning student for Professor Davis' Introduction to Education course as well as Professor O'Neal's Introduction to Social Psychology course. You can reach Katheryn at kschind@tulane.edu.*

From My View...

Visitors always welcomed at the **Neighborhood Gallery**. As one approaches the Gallery, one is greeted by the tables of patrons sitting outside and the metal sign in the alcove leading to the Gallery door that reads "welcome." Upon entering the gallery, one is surrounded by art works layered up to the Gallery's high ceiling. The visitor is immediately met by the warm greeting of one of the owners or patrons.

"Investigating the Urban Neighborhood," a course taught by history *Professor Daniel Hurewitz*, requires a service learning component such as that of working at the **Neighborhood Gallery** in Central City. The Gallery is a multidisciplinary venue that not only shows visual art

works, but also keeps a garden, provides community meeting space, runs a thrift store, produces plays, and hosts poetry, comedy and other diverse events. The Gallery's owners, Sandra Berry and Joshua Walker, extend to Prof. Hurewitz's students an opportunity to engage in the activity of a unique part of New Orleans.

I have been working at the Neighborhood Gallery for about a month. It is a stimulating and dynamic environment as there is always something interesting and new taking place or to prepare for. I have been able to assist with the activity of the Gallery in a variety of ways. I have helped install work, assisted with office work such as sorting papers, and have helped organize the space. Working at these tasks, I am learning first hand about how the Gallery functions not only as a community art space but also as a business. Being at the Gallery also has served as a valuable opportunity to learn from Sandra Berry and Joshua Walker and from the artists represented by the Gallery.

The Neighborhood Gallery is vibrant. It has a vitality and spirit that reflects its owners, Sandra Berry and Joshua Walker, and the community members who use the space. Working at the Gallery, I am not only pushed to be engaged in the Gallery, I feel the push to be more engaged in my own work and reflect about the community in which I live.

~Zaroubie Abdalian is a service learning student in Professor Hurewitz's Investigating Urban Neighborhoods course. You can reach Zaroubie at zaroubie@tulane.edu.

From An Intern's View...

During the fall of 2001 I participated in service learning for my African American adolescent psychology class by working at Tulane University's **Upward Bound Program**. Upward Bound is a program that helps provide guidance to promising high school students who will be the first generation in their family to

attend college. I tutored two very intelligent high school juniors, worked with them on social skills, and helped them begin their college search. I thoroughly enjoyed the girls, and the experience as a whole. In the course of the semester I learned that another student in my class was an intern at Upward Bound. Her internship allowed her to spend more time with the students, develop a deeper relationship with them, and apply what we learned in class to develop her own mentoring program. Furthermore, she was earning three credit hours for doing something she really enjoyed, and gaining valuable work experience. Her enthusiasm encouraged me to search for my own internship.

I was pleased to learn that the Office of Service Learning had a number of potential internship placements. Scott McCraw provided information on placements and the initial contact. Through Scott's effort, I was placed with Start the Adventure in Reading (STAIR), a program that offers literacy tutoring to second grade students. At STAIR I am implementing my own story-writing program for second graders from two New Orleans elementary schools. By the end of the semester I will have developed a book for each of the children to take home as tangible proof of their accomplishments. My internship at STAIR is perfect for me because it gives me the freedom to design my own program, it allows me to work with children, and use my writing talents to inspire them to write their own stories. However, the best part of my internship at STAIR is that, when I graduate in May, I will know that I have had an impact on at least 25 students, and will have gained valuable, practical experience; that is what makes my work enjoyable and worthwhile.

~Camille Brown is an English major and is an intern at STAIR. You can reach Camille at cbrown10@tulane.edu.

Faculty Course Development Grants from FIPSE

Tulane's Office of Service Learning(OSL) is offering six \$1500 faculty course development grants to faculty members to develop new service learning courses. With support from the US Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education, we hope to build ongoing university/community partnerships that actively engage the community with university faculty and students in addressing issues of community importance.

The Goals of the Program

~ to support faculty efforts to develop service learning courses that

1. are based on theories of effective pedagogy and principles derived from research on service learning;
2. actively engage students in the community
3. enhance learning of course concepts through application and reflection

~ to engage faculty in enhancing Tulane's Strategic Planning Objectives as it relates to community involvement

~ to increase university awareness of community strengths and needs

~ to provide opportunities for collaborative community research and project development

Faculty course development grants are still available for Fall 2002, and Spring 2003. For more information about the faculty course development grants or about Service Learning, please contact, Vincent Ilustre at X3358 or by e-mail, vilustr@tulane.edu.