

Advancing Diversity in Higher Education

# DIVERSITY

D I G E S T

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## The Civic Work of Diversity

By Caryn McTighe Musil, senior vice president, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Global Initiatives, AAC&U

Although rarely named as such, diversity work—whether local or global—is in fact civic work. I just finished reading a powerful book, *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America* (2005), by Fergus M. Bordewich. It describes in a gripping narrative how a small minority of abolitionists, fugitive slaves, and free blacks organized, preached, wrote, went to court, politicked, and defied laws and lawmen for a half century until they had shifted the collective conscience of the North. Moving from laissez-faire and pro-slavery sympathies in the 1820s, northerners ultimately could no longer tolerate the moral and political oxymoron of a democracy that enslaved a third of its populace.

If *Bound for Canaan* were taught in a college course, would it be read only in diversity courses? Or would it be seen as one of the great civic lessons that every graduate should know about? Until the answer is the latter, we risk losing the very heart of this great democratic experiment in the United States.

When the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) launched American Commitments: Diversity, Democracy, and Liberal Learning, a multi-project initiative, in 1993, the long-entrenched habits of memory and national narratives that had sanded smooth the violent and contested history of our democracy were being unmoored by new scholarship on diversity that touched every discipline, century, and genre. For many, it was a revelation to juxtapose diversity with democracy. What could they have in common, some asked in amazement. The answer, of course, was everything.

Whether in the United States or in other democracies around the globe, diversity tests the moral commitments of a democracy. Are the opportunities and privileges of a democratic society meted out equally across different groups of people? In the United States, our nation's identity continues to evolve as excluded groups—citizens and noncitizens—organize civically to insist that our democracy honor its deepest principles. Democracy, at the same time, provides the moral compass for diversity. What does the common welfare of all demand from each of us? It is not simply a matter of securing individual rights, but one of agreeing to live together as a diverse democratic community. This kind of conversation was at the center of AAC&U's Tri-National Seminar, a project that involved educators from India, South Africa, and the United States who examined comparatively the nation-building role of higher education in diverse democracies.

### Parallel Educational Reform Movements

The link between civic work and diversity work, however, has sometimes been lost in the explosive growth of civic engagement on college campuses in the last decade. Most

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## Educating Multicultural Community Builders: Service Learning at California State University Monterey Bay

By Seth S. Pollack, associate professor and director, Service Learning Institute, California State University Monterey Bay

THE CAMPUS WILL BE DISTINCTIVE IN SERVING THE DIVERSE PEOPLE OF CALIFORNIA, ESPECIALLY THE WORKING CLASS AND HISTORICALLY UNDEREDUCATED AND LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS. . . . THE IDENTITY OF THE UNIVERSITY WILL BE FRAMED BY A SUBSTANTIVE COMMITMENT TO MULTILINGUAL, MULTICULTURAL, GENDER-EQUITABLE LEARNING. . . . OUR GRADUATES WILL HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF INTERDEPENDENCE AND GLOBAL COMPETENCE, DISTINCTIVE TECHNICAL AND EDUCATIONAL SKILLS, THE EXPERIENCE AND ABILITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO CALIFORNIA'S HIGH QUALITY WORK FORCE, THE CRITICAL THINKING ABILITIES TO BE PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS, AND THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SKILLS TO BE COMMUNITY BUILDERS.

—CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY MONTEREY BAY, VISION STATEMENT, 1994

The California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) vision statement has been central to the development of all aspects of our young campus's unique outcomes-based academic program. But it is the vision statement's emphasis on diversity, social justice, and civic engagement that is at the heart of CSUMB's innovative work in service learning. Service learning is one of our seven "core values," and since the founding of the university in 1995, has been a core required component of the academic program. The overall goal of CSUMB's innovative service-learning program is to help prepare "multicultural community builders": students who have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to work effectively in a diverse society to create more just and equitable workplaces, communities, and social institutions.

Like other students at colleges with service-learning programs, CSUMB students tutor and mentor young children in school and after-school programs, work in soup kitchens and homeless shelters, pro-

vide outreach and educational services for a variety of social service agencies, and support many other important community programs and initiatives. What distinguishes CSUMB service-learning students (besides the fact that they represent 100 percent of the student body) is that they all examine race, class, gender, and other aspects of social privilege and marginalization in the context of their service experiences. At CSUMB, service learning and multiculturalism are inextricably intertwined.

A two-tiered service-learning requirement begins with the general education requirement in "community participation." To fulfill this requirement, all students take Service Learning 200: Introduction to Service in Multicultural Communities. In this class, students provide service to the community while examining issues related to multiculturalism and diversity, social power, privilege, and oppression. Through critical service-learning pedagogy the course encourages all students to explore their own identi-

ties, imagine how others might see them, and begin to understand how identities affect involvement in community. In this way, service learners become more aware of the stereotypes they hold, and become sensitive to the dangers of interacting in communities in ways that perpetuate existing systemic injustices. As students become more aware of the existence of oppression and injustice in their everyday lives, they are better prepared to respond to racism, classism, sexism, and other forms of oppression that often underlie the service context.

Introduction to Service in Multicultural Communities provides students a foundation in critical multicultural theory, service, and civic engagement. Students build upon this foundation in their required upper-division service-learning courses. Each undergraduate major has developed service-learning courses that address social justice issues relevant to their field. For example, all computer science students take Technology and Community, a course in which they provide technology support to community organizations while examining issues related to the “digital divide.” Thus, all CSUMB’s technology students develop a heightened awareness of their role as future information technology professionals in overcoming (or contributing to) economic and social marginalization.

Students in the integrated science major (earth systems science and policy) examine issues of environmental justice, such as access to parks and open space by communities of color and the use of pesticides in agriculture. At the same time, these students work in environmental restoration projects, analyze the impact of chemical exposure on farm workers, and develop interpretive materials for parks that are responsive to the needs of our diverse, multicultural community. Through these service-learning courses, all CSUMB science students develop the knowledge,



CSUMB students participate in “Cesar Chavez Day of Service Learning”

skills, and desire to bring the power of science to the service of our marginalized communities.

*As students become more aware of injustice in their everyday lives, they are better prepared to respond to forms of oppression that often underlie the service context.*

What has been the impact of CSUMB’s unique service-learning requirement, and of its explicit focus on diversity and social justice? Evaluation results are encouraging, and show that requiring service along with the examination of deep-seated social injustice can have a positive impact on students’ attitudes. Over the past four academic years (2001–5), 4,033 students have completed an end-of-semester evaluation of their

service-learning course experience. Of these students,

- 89 percent state they feel more comfortable participating in the community after their class;
- 84 percent state they were encouraged to think about social justice issues in new ways;
- 90 percent state they were motivated to listen to perspectives different from their own;
- 80 percent state that their assumptions were challenged;
- 85 percent state they feel a stronger commitment to being involved in their community.

Students are examining complex social issues related to diversity and multicultural civic engagement. They not only are developing skills as multicultural community builders, but they also are entering into much-needed dialogue around difficult issues of racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of systemic oppression.

For more information on CSUMB’s service-learning program, visit [www.service.csumb.edu](http://www.service.csumb.edu). ■

## Education for Democracy: Place Matters

By Nan Kari, codirector of the Jane Addams School for Democracy, and Nan Skelton, codirector of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

*This sense of being in a place, being here, is a wonderful perception that involves the whole body—heart and mind, without any separation.*  
—Sandra Piccinini

JANE ADDAMS SCHOOL FOR DEMOCRACY (JAS) WAS FOUNDED ON THE PREMISE THAT THE TEXTURED STUFF OF A NEIGHBORHOOD—ITS HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROBLEMS, AND ESPECIALLY ITS PEOPLE—CREATES AN ESSENTIAL CONTEXT FOR CIVIC LEARNING AND PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION. JAS IS AN EXISTENTIAL PLACE WHERE PEOPLE SHAPE THEIR IDENTITIES IN A RELATIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH OTHERS.

Today we witness growing divisions among people along many lines of difference. Students frequently talk of their sense of disconnection from community life, a condition the academy does not, and perhaps cannot on its own, adequately address. The emphasis on abstract theoretical knowledge creates an intellectual culture separated from knowledge gained from lived experience. Young men and women, second-generation immigrants especially, often tell us that their age-segregated college experience distances them from relationships with children and elders of their cultures of origin.

There are few places where people can establish intergenerational and cross-cultural relationships in public settings. Often these relationships, when they do happen, form around tutoring or other one-way, service-based exchanges. The barriers to egalitarian relationships are real: differences in languages, customs, worldviews, education, and economic status. All of the barriers impede relationships and understanding across difference.

To ensure an authentic multicultural education that nurtures the skills and attitudes for democratic participation requires more than a selection of readings “about” diversity, diversity training workshops, or even service projects. In order for students to see themselves as public actors, competent to make significant contributions, they need to engage in sustained work in



JAS student tutors elementary school children

real places where they can experience the complexities of society.

JAS opens such an intercultural space—a place that connects the academy with the West Side neighborhood of St. Paul, Minnesota. Like Jane Addams’s Hull House in Chicago, JAS is located in an immigrant neighborhood. Here Hmong, Somali, and Latino families live alongside residents of European descent. Envisioned as a democratic organization, JAS was cocreated in 1996 by immigrant leaders, students, and faculty from the University of Minnesota, the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, and the College of St. Catherine and staff from the local settlement house. Though not a bricks and

mortar school (it convenes two evenings every week inside the neighborhood high school), JAS is an important public space and communal context in which to build authentic relationships across age, culture, and language groups.

The broad vision of engaging people as active agents in a shared public life cannot be achieved through individual relationships alone. Public work is the animating context for civic learning. We regularly convene public forums with political candidates that engage people across four languages, for instance. We worked with U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone and Representative Bruce Vento to gain support for passage of

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## Narrative and Community: Civic Engagement and the Work of Diversity

By Amy Koritz, associate professor of English, Tulane University

IN MY NARRATIVE AND COMMUNITY COURSE, I ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO ENVISION LITERARY STUDIES AS A TOOL FOR THINKING ABOUT AND DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS IN A DIVERSE SOCIETY. I HAD THREE MOTIVES FOR CREATING SUCH A COURSE: FIRST, ALTHOUGH MY UNIVERSITY IS LOCATED IN A POOR, MAJORITY–AFRICAN AMERICAN CITY (NEW ORLEANS), IT SERVES MOSTLY WHITE AND AFFLUENT STUDENTS. THE HOSTILITY AND MISUNDERSTANDING SOMETIMES PRODUCED BY THIS CIRCUMSTANCE REQUIRED THE SUSTAINED AND THOUGHTFUL ENGAGEMENT ONLY A CLASSROOM COULD PROVIDE. SECOND, AS AN EDUCATOR I FELT A RESPONSIBILITY TO OFFER THOSE STUDENTS ALREADY INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY AN INTELLECTUALLY RICH AND USEFUL ACADEMIC CONTEXT FOR THEIR WORK. FINALLY, I WISHED TO EXPLORE WHAT A PUBLIC MISSION FOR LITERARY STUDIES MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN THE CLASSROOM. CONSEQUENTLY, COMMITMENTS TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, DIVERSITY, AND LITERARY STUDIES WERE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE COURSE FROM ITS INCEPTION.

### Placing Community at the Center

Each student in Narrative and Community completes a research-based community partnership project—a grant proposal, strategic plan, or program proposal—that is responsive to the partnering organization’s needs. Placing this project at the center of the course refocuses classroom learning toward the goal of informed, thoughtful civic engagement. Although students read and write about literature throughout the semester, disciplinary content is always connected to their community work. Planning and teaching the course is a collaborative process. I work closely with Carolyn Barber-Pierre and Hamilton Simons-Jones, administrators in student affairs who oversee community service and multicultural student organizations. Service-learning staff help manage the challenging logistics of a class in which more than twenty students work with half a dozen community organizations.

To succeed in this course, students must collaborate and communicate effectively with individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Students develop these complex, multifaceted skills through multiple pathways, including presentations on multicultural communication by guest speakers, readings that deal with obstacles to communication across racial and cultural

divides (Jamaica Kincaid’s novel *Lucy* is one good example), and classroom story circles that connect students’ personal experiences with diversity to course content.

The syllabus is organized around topics selected for their importance to strong community partnerships. We begin with “knowing where you are,” which introduces students to the history of the civil rights movement in New Orleans and Tulane’s place in that history. Other topics address the structural and interpersonal roles of money, institutions, and narrative in shaping relationships. Each topic is relevant to effective civic engagement as well as literature. None could be adequately addressed without attention to diversity.

Connecting the intellectual work of college with the practical work of engaged citizenship is crucial to sustaining a tolerant and heterogeneous civil society. Literature is important to this goal, as philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1996) demonstrates in her eloquent argument for the humanizing empathy and compassion to be gained by studying the realist novel. Creating this course, however, required help from colleagues in student affairs, service learning, and elsewhere on campus, as well as the atmosphere of common endeavor created by Campus Compact and the Association

of American Colleges and Universities. My experience developing and directing a living-learning community organized around urban issues was also valuable. This experience demonstrated to me the educational potential of an academic program that validates students’ concern for community and desire to leave the world a better place. Narrative and Community embodies in a single course the holistic approach to student learning typical of living-learning communities.

### Impact and Outcomes

Narrative and Community will be taught for the third time this fall. Student interest has steadily increased and course evaluations have been strong. Students consistently report a greater sense of personal efficacy, both in improving their community and in dealing with uncomfortable or unfamiliar situations. They acquire a deeper and more concrete understanding of the importance of commitment and follow-through, and of how racial and cultural differences affect their attitudes and assumptions. The course strengthens the dedication of those students already involved in community work while motivating others to become more involved.

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## Research Shows Benefits of Linking Diversity and Civic Goals

By Sylvia Hurtado, professor and director, Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles

DIVERSITY INITIATIVES ARE STILL SOMETIMES THOUGHT TO BE MARGINAL TO THE REAL WORK OF INSTITUTIONS, A “STAND-ALONE” GOAL, OR EVEN TOO POLITICAL FOR BROAD-BASED ACCEPTANCE. BUT SUCH INITIATIVES ARE ESSENTIAL IF WE ARE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING A TOLERANT WORKFORCE, PRODUCING ENGAGED CITIZENS, AND ADVANCING THE PROGRESS OF OUR SOCIETY. WHEN ALL STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT DIVERSITY, THEY WILL BE BETTER PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE DIFFERENCE, ACT RESPONSIBLY, AND MAKE ETHICAL DECISIONS IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AND DIVERSE WORLD.



Sylvia Hurtado

Those of us engaged in advancing the public service mission of institutions must begin to consider the important role that diversity plays in our work and our ability to contribute to the development of underserved communities. We can find allies among civic engagement proponents and should begin to consider how service learning is a vehicle for furthering diversity learning goals. Working together, we need to develop common goals for undergraduate education and faculty development that include working with diverse communities inside and outside the classroom. Many campuses already have a substantial array of initiatives that address diversity and civic engagement. However, greater integration across units and additional program coherence is necessary to explicitly address undergraduate preparation for participation in a diverse democracy.

Fortunately, we have empirical findings that strongly support the beneficial link between campus diversity initiatives and educating for citizenship. Data from the Preparing College Students for a Diverse Democracy project show that campus practices that facilitate student interaction with diversity promote the development of complex thinking and socio-cognitive and democratic skills.\* Following are some of the project’s specific findings:

- Positive, informal interactions with peers from diverse backgrounds resulted in student preferences for more complex thinking about people and their behavior, increased cultural and social aware-

*We have empirical findings that strongly support the beneficial link between campus diversity initiatives and educating for citizenship.*

- ness, and improvements in perspective-taking skills (the ability to see the world from someone else’s perspective).
- Significant changes were also associated with increases in students’ democratic sensibilities, including their pluralistic orientation (the ability to work with diverse people and viewpoints), interest in poverty issues, and concern for the public good.
- In contrast, students who had negative interactions with peers from diverse backgrounds (involving conflict or hostility) were not only least skilled in intergroup relations, but also demonstrated

lower scores on the outcomes, suggesting they were least likely to develop the habits of mind needed to function in a diverse world.

- Students were likely to revert to familiar and solidified positions when encountering conflict in intergroup relations, suggesting that educators need to assist students in understanding and developing constructive ways of dealing with intergroup conflict.
- Students who enrolled in diversity courses or participated in diversity-related extracurricular programming scored consistently higher on the majority of educational outcomes in the study. This included democratic sensibilities such as interest in poverty issues, concern for the public good, and sense of the importance of making a civic contribution.
- Taking a diversity course in the first two years of college was also associated with increased likelihood of voting in a federal or state election, while participation in extracurricular activities related to diversity was associated with voting in student elections and increases in leadership skills.
- Service-learning courses increase students’ concern for the public good, their sense of the importance of making a civic contribution, and their leadership skills.

\* It is important to note that our statistical analyses controlled for student predispositions on each of the outcomes we monitored. We were interested in those activities and experiences that contributed to the value-added change on an array of cognitive, socio-cognitive, and democratic outcomes.

- Service learning may have an indirect effect on many more outcomes, and such effects are likely to be partially dependent on students' skills with diversity.
- Participation in intergroup dialogue (opportunities for facilitated, extended discussions about diversity) was associated with increases in students' perspective-taking skills, the development of a pluralistic orientation, interest in poverty issues, and a belief that conflict enhances a democracy (rather than detracts from democratic ideals).

These findings suggest that specific campus practices can help students integrate their learning, merge experience with knowledge, and improve intergroup relations skills. Most significantly, they show that we are able to observe and document the educational effect of diversity on a broad range of outcomes. These are compelling reasons to initiate conversations across campus to create productive links that can further the goals of undergraduate education and the public service mission of institutions.

Our students live in a diverse and complex world, and we have yet to realize the goal of a truly pluralistic democracy in American society. Higher education is largely responsible for producing the next generation of leaders who can manage people and ideas in diverse workplaces. These leaders must possess the values, skills, and knowledge to devise creative solutions to social problems and address the widening social and economic gaps. We have a responsibility to produce graduates of all races and ethnicities who can be agents of change, who can help to identify and reduce social inequality and barriers to participation in our democracy, and who understand, through experience, the link between diversity and civic engagement.

For more information about the Preparing College Students for a Diverse Democracy project, see [www.umich.edu/~divdemo](http://www.umich.edu/~divdemo). ■

## Diversity and Civic Engagement Outcomes Ranked Among Least Important

*By Debra Humphreys, vice president for communications and public affairs at AAC&U, and Abigail Davenport, vice president at Peter D. Hart Research Associates. This article is excerpted from "What Really Matters in College: How Students View and Value Liberal Education" in the Summer/Fall 2004 issue of Liberal Education.*

IN 2004, AAC&U COMMISSIONED A SERIES OF STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS. IN EACH LOCATION, ONE DISCUSSION WAS HELD WITH PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS OR RISING SENIORS WHO PLANNED TO PURSUE A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE, AND A SECOND DISCUSSION WAS HELD WITH ADVANCED COLLEGE STUDENTS AT BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. THE FOCUS GROUPS EXPLORED THE STUDENTS' HOPES, CONCERNS, EXPECTATIONS, AND GOALS REGARDING COLLEGE.

Participants were asked to identify the five most critical and two least critical outcomes from a list of sixteen. Students identified global understanding, civic engagement, a sense of values and ethics, and intercultural skills and knowledge as among the least important goals for college learning.

Nearly all the students we interviewed regarded civic engagement as something that might be important to some individ-

uals, but not as something that a college education should address. Some of the students went so far as to suggest that activities like service learning might distract from the more important work of their own *individual* self-development—the primary reason they gave for attending college.

For more information, see [www.aacu.org/advocacy/pdfs/HartFocusGroupResearchReport.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/pdfs/HartFocusGroupResearchReport.pdf). ■

Student Rankings		
Most Important Outcomes	Mid-Tier Outcomes	Least Valued Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sense of maturity and how to succeed on your own</li> <li>• Time-management skills</li> <li>• Strong work habits</li> <li>• Self-discipline</li> <li>• Teamwork skills and the ability to get along with and work with people different from yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible business skills, and a specific expertise and knowledge in your field of focus</li> <li>• Independent and critical thinking/reasoning skills</li> <li>• Strong writing and oral/speaking skills</li> <li>• Improved ability to solve problems and think analytically</li> <li>• Exposure to the business world</li> <li>• Leadership skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of values, principles, and ethics</li> <li>• Tolerance and respect for people of other backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and lifestyles</li> <li>• Competency in computer skills and software</li> <li>• Expanded cultural and global awareness and sensitivity</li> <li>• Appreciation of your role as a citizen and an orientation toward public service</li> </ul>

## Promoting Cross-Cultural Understanding for Students of Science and Technology

By Richard F. Vaz, associate dean of interdisciplinary and global studies, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

RELATIVELY FEW U.S. STUDENTS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PARTICIPATE IN STUDY ABROAD, AND FEW OF THOSE WHO DO STUDY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. YET IT IS IN THESE COUNTRIES THAT THE NEED FOR APPROPRIATE, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TO FUNDAMENTAL COMMUNITY PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC HEALTH, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND AGRICULTURE CAN HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND BOTH THE POTENTIAL AND LIMITATIONS OF THEIR DISCIPLINES. LIKE OTHER TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITIES, WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE (WPI) MUST SEEK CREATIVE WAYS TO INCULCATE CIVIC AWARENESS AND CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING IN ITS STUDENTS. WPI'S APPROACH INVOLVES A BLEND OF SERVICE LEARNING, CIVIC INVOLVEMENT, AND STUDY ABROAD.

WPI's Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) is intended to help students understand the social and global contexts for their careers as scientists and technologists. This degree requirement presents small, multidisciplinary teams of students with a problem that has both technical and societal components. Such problems challenge students to reflect upon the relationships of science and technology to civic issues and community needs. The IQP learning outcomes include critical and contextual thinking, written and oral communication, integration and synthesis, and cross-cultural competency. Assessment data indicate that these outcomes are best achieved in off-campus settings.

WPI has established a network of "Project Centers" around the globe to which students and faculty travel to address problems of importance for local agencies and community organizations. Over 65 percent of WPI graduates complete at least one nine-credit-hour project off campus, and over 15 percent do so in developing nations such as Costa Rica, Thailand, and Namibia. In Costa Rica, student teams work on problems related to energy, development, and environmental conservation. In Thailand, students may work with farmers to promote sustainable agriculture or with community leaders to design sustainable energy sources for hill tribe villages. In Namibia, project topics include water resource management,



In Thailand, WPI students work with community partners

wildlife conservation, and aquaculture initiatives.

In order for students to develop appropriate and sustainable solutions from technical, economic, environmental, and cultural standpoints, they must first develop an understanding of the perspectives of the local organizations and communities. Before leaving campus, the students spend up to four months preparing for the project experience, beginning their transition from classroom to applied learning.

For example, the required preparation for students going to Thailand consists of 4.5 credit hours of work with the following elements:

- **Language and culture:** Students spend fourteen weeks studying Thai language and culture. The language component focuses specifically on spoken Thai for basic situations the stu-

dents are likely to encounter in their work. The cultural component focuses on preparing students to interact in effective and culturally appropriate ways with community partners and Thai citizens in the course of their project work. Students also use reflective writing exercises to help them consider how their preferred modes of work and communication might be received in Thailand.

- **Project context:** Some projects are located in the slums of Bangkok, others in remote rural villages. Each project team researches the community in which they will be working so that they can understand their project in social, economic, and other local contexts. This typically involves considerable research as well as regular communication with the community partners.
- **Project content:** Projects typically require students to acquire background knowledge in both technical and non-technical areas. The students must set goals and formulate their project through a literature review, with special attention to previous related studies.
- **Methodologies:** Most projects draw on methods from the social sciences, such as interviews, focus groups, and both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The students must develop a proposal in which they identify methods likely to be effective for their work.

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## There Is No Substitute for Experience

By Paul Sather, director of the Service-Learning Academy, and Nora Bacon, associate professor of English, both of the University of Nebraska at Omaha

IN JANUARY OF 2005, THE SERVICE-LEARNING ACADEMY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA (UNO) PUT THE ADAGE “THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR EXPERIENCE” INTO ACTION BY INVOLVING THIRTEEN FACULTY MEMBERS IN A “COMMUNITY-BASED” FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR. THE WEEKLONG SOUTH OMAHA SEMINAR FAMILIARIZED FACULTY MEMBERS WITH THE LATINO COMMUNITY IN SOUTH OMAHA AND GAVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE SERVICE-LEARNING FIRST-HAND. THE SEMINAR ACQUAINTED PARTICIPANTS WITH THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF SOUTH OMAHA, INTRODUCED THEM TO THE NETWORK OF SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES SERVING THE COMMUNITY, AND DEVELOPED THEIR CULTURAL COMPETENCE. IT ALSO SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED HOW ACADEMIC AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING STRATEGIES INFORM EACH OTHER IN SERVICE-LEARNING COURSES.

The seminar focused on faculty rather than students for several reasons. First, “buy-in” by faculty members is essential to the creation of sustained and broadly based service-learning programs. In a 2000 study of forty-five colleges and universities, Rebecca Bell and her colleagues found that the strongest predictor for institutionalizing service learning on college campuses is faculty involvement and support. Second, quality service-learning courses attract students and provide meaningful community engagement only when faculty members construct appropriate service-learning projects—that is, when they understand the concepts of partnership and reciprocity, approach community-based work in a spirit of inquiry, and integrate community-service experiences with course learning goals. Third, while faculty members are often interested in developing deeper community connections, they often lack opportunities to become acquainted with community leaders and organizations.

A faculty development initiative that involves experiential, community-based work requires the cooperation of key players on campus and in the community. The planning and implementation of the South Omaha seminar was a highly collaborative endeavor from start to finish.

On campus, researchers associated with the Office of Latino and Latin American Studies (OLLAS) planned presentations

on Latino immigration to Nebraska, the history of South Omaha, the role of Latinos in regional and national politics, and issues of identity and acculturation.

*Quality service-learning courses attract students and provide meaningful community engagement only when faculty members construct appropriate service-learning projects—that is, when they understand the concepts of partnership and reciprocity, approach community-based work in a spirit of inquiry, and integrate community-service experiences with course learning goals.*

In the community, a group of directors and program managers from five non-profit agencies planned an immersion experience for faculty. They arranged meetings with key community leaders and introduced faculty to key religious institutions, the local police precinct, the state of housing stock, and the pace of

work at a local meat packing plant. In addition, they presented essential information about health issues in the community, the difficulties facing immigrant women, and successes and challenges of business development. Finally, two recent immigrants agreed to share stories from their experiences.

A crucial element of the seminar was the two-day placement of faculty members in the agencies where they were to act as service-learning students. At this stage, eight community agencies were involved: the Chicano Awareness Center, El Museo Latino, Family Housing Advisory Services, the Juan Diego Center, the Immigrant Rights Network, the Latina Resource Center, One World Health, and Project Omaha. At each agency, staff provided a brief orientation to the agency and then involved the faculty members in hands-on service activities.

Some service projects were closely linked with the professor’s expertise: a professor of counseling conducted a mini-workshop on crisis intervention for the staff of a walk-in multiservice agency; a professor of foreign languages assisted in translating documents at a health center; an instructor in communication led a goals-articulation workshop for clients at a women’s resource center; a linguist began an investigation of school-based resources

*continued on page 17*

## The Personal Is Still Political: HIV/AIDS Education and Prevention

By Bianca I. Laureano, graduate student and instructor, University of Maryland, College Park

MY MOTHER STILL TELLS THE STORY OF HOW MY THIRD-GRADE TEACHER ASSUMED THAT BECAUSE I GREW UP IN A BILINGUAL HOUSEHOLD AND HAD AN “ETHNIC” NAME, I SHOULD BE ASSIGNED TO ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) CLASSES. MY PARENTS ARGUED TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS THAT MY BILINGUAL ABILITIES WERE NOT LIMITATIONS AND THAT PLACING ME IN ESL CLASSES BECAUSE OF MY ETHNIC BACKGROUND WAS A FORM OF RACISM. AS A CHILD I DID NOT COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS GOING ON, BUT I CAN DISTINCTLY RECALL THE DEFIANCE AND PRIDE IN MY MOTHER’S VOICE WHENEVER SHE TOLD THE STORY. SHE KNEW THAT SHE HAD DONE SOMETHING POWERFUL AND IMPORTANT.

Decades later, I understand more fully how influential my parents’ actions were. They helped me find my own voice and showed by example the importance of being an advocate for change. Yet, I am frustrated by the fact that today such actions are often not considered to be examples of civic engagement. Instead, civic engagement is usually about encouraging young people to vote. Have we already forgotten that the personal is political?

Organizing for HIV/AIDS prevention and education is an act of civic engagement for me—for personal and political reasons. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that eight to nine hundred thousand people residing in the United States are infected with HIV, and the Alan Guttmacher Institute estimates that about twenty thousand new HIV infections occur each year among people under the age of twenty-five (Weinstock, Berman, and Cates 2004). It should come as no surprise that young people are mobilizing and educating their community about HIV/AIDS. Let’s be honest, people in the U.S. may not die because they fail to vote, but they may die because they fail to educate themselves about HIV/AIDS.

When I began my undergraduate studies at the University of Maryland, I arrived with very limited knowledge of health and wellness. I quickly discovered, through peer-led discussions as well as access to the Internet and to a comprehensive health-care



National Condom Week event with peer educators at the University of Maryland

facility on campus, that I had previously been denied critical information due to the location, status, and lack of resources in my community. I got angry.

School administrators, health-care professionals, and community leaders who claimed to be interested in my academic success failed to provide my parents and me with information and resources that could assist us in making the best decisions possible about our health—a factor that I believe directly intersects with educational excellence. The heteronormativity within my home contributed to the invisibility of HIV/AIDS in my life, as did the national perpetuation of the idea that the disease could only be contracted by the queer community and people using

intravenous drugs. Before college, the closest I came to a conversation about HIV/AIDS, or any curricular engagement with sexuality, was the Reagan administration’s “Just Say ‘No’” campaign.

The media, government, researchers, and others in positions of power were holding my community accountable for information we rarely received about HIV/AIDS and general health. And they did not seem interested in examining their own roles in maintaining our ignorance. The limited financial resources available to organizations educating for sexual health in the community produces limited knowledge in that community. A patriarchal and heterosexist society that does not give high priority to the well-being of youth of color,

especially of young women, reinforces the lack of knowledge that today is killing millions of us.

I was in a position of privilege. I was attending an institution for higher education and so had a responsibility to educate my community. When I realized a majority of the students of color and working-class students around me also lacked knowledge about similar topics, I understood how racism, classism, and institutional oppression operate. I decided I had to ensure that all students and members of my community knew about obtaining and maintaining optimal health.

The networks I created grew into peer-education opportunities and events designed to raise awareness of health and HIV/AIDS. My advocacy efforts have influenced my teaching philosophy and my understanding of positive youth development. My work with AAC&U's Program for Health in Higher Education has provided me with an opportunity to work on HIV/AIDS programs at a national level.

Through this work I have been able to critically analyze and question my assumptions and beliefs about race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, dis/ability, and structures and institutions of oppression. These skills are essential to living in a global society where communicating across multiple communities and borders is difficult but critical. There are multiple ways of being an activist and a leader and multiple ways of working toward social change. We must never forget that providing knowledge is both a personal and political act. ■

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## Narrative and Community

*continued from page 5*

Communities, unlike courses, do not end at the close of a semester. We therefore encourage students to pursue an internship or independent study course to continue their work. Ultimately, however, no matter how successfully this course integrates civic engagement, diversity, and literary studies, it alone cannot create fully informed and effective civic partners. I was particularly excited, therefore, when one student decided to develop a proposal for a minor program in "community studies." Such a

program would enable true curricular transformation, giving Tulane University's students and faculty a rigorous, thoughtful, and practical path toward stronger, more effective engagement with the diverse community of which it is a part. ■

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## In the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

*Excerpted from Statement of Support in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Association of American Colleges and Universities Board of Directors*

The impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast region is catastrophic and unprecedented. The region faces years of difficult recovery efforts, the burden of which will be disproportionately borne by the poor and those who now find themselves without homes, jobs, adequate insurance, or any material belongings or resources. On behalf of the entire AAC&U community, we express our profound concern for all those affected and pledge our support for those in need.

*Floods wash away the surface of society.... They expose the underlying power structures...and the unacknowledged inequalities.*

underlying power structures...and the unacknowledged inequalities." The academy continues to have a civic obligation not only to provide expertise to prepare for and respond to disasters, but also to help the nation redress the causes of the inequality and disenfranchisement made all too clear in the wake of such a disaster. We must teach students about these issues and inspire them to respond with reasoned inquiry, creative problem solving, compassionate concern, and a strong sense of social

This event provides a valuable opportunity for the nation—and its colleges and universities—to reflect on the root issues that make many Americans especially vulnerable in times of catastrophe. As David Brooks wrote in the *New York Times* on September 1, 2005, "Floods wash away the surface of society.... They expose the

and civic responsibility for the long-term health of the democracy in which they live. AAC&U will do all it can to assist colleges and universities across the country as they rise to this civic challenge.

To read the complete statement, please see [http://www.aacu.org/About/statements/hurricane\\_katrina.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/About/statements/hurricane_katrina.cfm)

## The Civic Work of Diversity *continued from page 1*

of that growth resulted in volunteer centers organized to work in local communities, service learning through which such activities were nested within academic courses, and entrepreneurial partnerships between institutions and community-development groups that sought to transform entire sections of cities. The unfortunate, if unintended, result of the growth of the civic engagement movement on campus has been to uncouple diversity from the civic arena.

Too often, diversity was dropped from the language, conception, teaching, and practice of civic learning on most campuses. Instead of a unified, student-centered educational reform movement that sought to educate students for socially responsible engagement in a diverse and sometimes divided world, two parallel

educational reform movements emerged nationally and on many campuses. One expression of that division is that the diversity education practitioners and leaders are multiracial, while the civic engagement practitioners and leaders are largely white. To be sure, there are people who have a foot in both worlds and whom we have sought to feature in this issue of *Diversity Digest*. They realize that uncoupling diversity and civic work diminishes the possibilities for learning and building strong communities, locally, nationally, and globally, which is, of course, a goal embraced fervently by those engaged in civic engagement work. To do civic work with integrity and have an impact, students need knowledge about the cultures and communities with which they will interact and understanding of the historic

and current inequalities that have defined social locations and opportunities.

### The Power of the Union

In making civic engagement the focus of this issue of *Diversity Digest*, we offer concrete examples of institutions that have linked diversity and civic engagement in powerful, effective, and educationally transforming ways. We are encouraged by what we see in the field. Articles feature new conceptual frameworks for civic learning, curricular designs that explicitly address rather than erase the connection between diversity and civics, community engagement that moves from charity to partnerships, faculty development models that practice community-based learning, and research about the democracy outcomes of diversity learning.

Faces/Phases of Citizenship				
Face/Phase	Community is . . .	Civic Scope	Levels of Knowledge	Benefits
<b>Exclusionary</b>	only your own	civic disengagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one vantage point (yours)</li> <li>• monocultural</li> </ul>	a few and only for a while
<b>Oblivious</b>	a resource to mine	civic detachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• observational skills</li> <li>• largely monocultural</li> </ul>	one party
<b>Naive</b>	a resource to engage	civic amnesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no history</li> <li>• no vantage point</li> <li>• acultural</li> </ul>	random people
<b>Charitable</b>	a resource that needs assistance	civic altruism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• awareness of deprivations</li> <li>• affective kindness and respect</li> <li>• multicultural, but yours is still the norm center</li> </ul>	the giver's feelings, the sufferer's immediate needs
<b>Reciprocal</b>	a resource to empower and be empowered by	civic engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• legacies of inequalities</li> <li>• values of partnering</li> <li>• intercultural competencies</li> <li>• arts of democracy</li> <li>• multiple vantage points</li> <li>• multicultural</li> </ul>	society as a whole in the present
<b>Generative</b>	an interdependent resource filled with possibilities	civic prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• struggles for democracy</li> <li>• interconnectedness</li> <li>• analysis of interlocking systems</li> <li>• intercultural competencies</li> <li>• arts of democracy</li> <li>• multiple interactive vantage points</li> <li>• multicultural</li> </ul>	everyone now and in the future

Reprinted from Musil 2003

Wanting to provide a structural expression for the integrated vision, AAC&U in partnership with Campus Compact established a new Center for Civic Engagement and Liberal Education. The center is deliberately located squarely within AAC&U's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Global Initiatives. We wanted to underscore the integral connection between diversity and civic work and the importance of placing such learning at the academic core of a student's experience.

One way to integrate diversity and civic learning is to move from the language of service to the language of justice and social responsibility. A second is to link both diversity and civic work to the learning outcomes we want to cultivate in students. What do students need to know in order to function effectively and responsibly in a dynamic, volatile, stratified world? The accompanying chart suggests the kinds of learning that present a new face of education for responsible citizenship.

This emerging new practice of multicultural civic learning teaches students to be empathetic, look at an issue from multiple points of view, analyze interlocking systems that govern lives, and understand the history of and contemporary struggles for democracy. It also helps students gain new intercultural competencies and commit to democratic values and an ethical framework for action so they can practice responsible acts of citizenship and the arts of democracy.

With such capacities students may themselves become the democratic activists writing the next great chapter in democracy's unfolding evolution. ■

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## Education for Democracy

*continued from page 4*

the Hmong Veterans Bill. We organize an annual neighborhood Freedom Festival to recognize new citizens. In 2004, we convened a press conference at the state capitol to educate Minnesotans about abuses of the human rights of Hmong people left behind in the Laotian jungles. Both houses of the legislature subsequently passed a resolution urging Congress to press the issue in trade negotiations with Laos. In all of these examples, when Somali, Hmong, and Latin American immigrants and U.S.-born citizens work together on significant, visible public issues, the power of a diverse public becomes evident. In the process, people of all ages learn to cross borders of class, culture, age, and language.

Academic environments teach processes such as literature review, research, writing, and presentation as paths toward knowing. The JAS learning environment also emphasizes the importance of lived experience as a viable route to new knowledge. Personal histories shared by men and women from places all over the world offer rich teaching and learning opportunities. The stories from Laos, for example, convey a face of the Vietnam War rarely glimpsed in English-language history books. Because Hmong is only recently a written language, Hmong history is not yet widely recorded by those who lived it. Somali people also have important experiences to share about their country's history, especially the causes and effects of the ongoing civil

war. The long war has disrupted civil society so deeply that many Somali adults cannot participate in formal education and therefore don't have the writing fluency to easily capture lived history in their native language.

Storytelling has become an important part of JAS—it is the way we convey to others who we are as individuals and cultural groups. But it is also the collective narrative, an American story, that JAS tells, the story of coming together of people of all ages from diverse places and cultures. It is the story at the heart of American democracy, in which diverse groups of people act together in public to improve our common lives—a story to be retold with each generation as people make places home.

For more information about the Jane Addams School for Democracy, see [www.publicwork.org/jas](http://www.publicwork.org/jas). ■

### Educating All of One Nation Realizing America's Promise: Embracing Diversity, Discovery, and Change



October 6–8, 2005

Phoenix Civic Center • Phoenix, AZ

Plan to attend the nation's premier conference on developing and improving minority participation in higher education!

This conference will:

- Provide a forum for discussion of the key issues that affect diversity in higher education, including critical policy issues.
- Showcase institutional programs that have effectively increased the representation and success of individuals from underrepresented groups.
- Facilitate increased participation by underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

ACE, Center for Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity (CAREE)  
One Dupont Circle NW, Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 939-9395 • [allonenation@ace.nche.edu](mailto:allonenation@ace.nche.edu)

**ACE** American Council on Education  
The Unifying Voice for Higher Education  
Center for Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity

## Communicating Common Ground

By Margaret Finucane, assistant professor of communication, John Carroll University

COMMUNICATING COMMON GROUND, A JOINT PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION, THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER, CAMPUS COMPACT, AND THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, BEGAN AS AN EFFORT TO CREATE MORE ENGAGED STUDENTS AND FACULTY IN COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENTS. WHAT HAS EMERGED FROM THIS COLLABORATION IS A DYNAMIC PROGRAM THAT ENCOURAGES INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO EMBRACE THEIR COMMUNITIES AND TEACH STUDENTS THE BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY. WE ARE HAPPY TO NOW WELCOME THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AS A NEW PARTNER IN THIS NATIONAL PROJECT.

Through Communicating Common Ground, faculty members and students partner with community agencies and P-12 schools to reduce prejudice and foster respect for diversity. Because prejudice is detrimental to a strong democracy, these partnerships seek to maximize the opportunities for interaction among college students and school children in local communities. In the five years since its inception, the Communicating Common Ground project has grown to include over seventy-five partners nationwide. Below are examples of the work of some of those partners. For more information about the project, please visit [www.natcom.org/nca/Template2.asp?bid=268](http://www.natcom.org/nca/Template2.asp?bid=268).

### John Carroll University

Students enrolled in Interpersonal Communication at John Carroll University (JCU) tutor elementary school children from an impoverished urban community. Because JCU students are primarily white and the elementary school children are primarily African American, both groups of students have the opportunity to meet someone “different.” Part of the tutoring project involves short workshops on stereotypes, prejudice, and the importance of valuing diversity.

The college students and the elementary school children alike have benefited greatly from the program. The positive effects for college students are exempli-

fied by the experience of Molly Matesich, a junior at JCU who writes, “Of all the educational experiences I have had at John Carroll thus far, this one [the tutoring project] has definitely been the most rewarding. My experience . . . was more educational than anything I could have learned from a textbook or in a class-

*“My experience . . . was more educational than anything I could have learned from a textbook or in a classroom. The service project greatly enhanced what I learned from the interpersonal communication class.”*

room. The service project greatly enhanced what I learned from the interpersonal communication class.”

For the elementary school children, the opportunity to work individually with a college student has been highly valued. The children vie for the chance to be selected for the tutoring program. In addition, after one year of the tutoring program, the pass rate on the fourth-grade statewide proficiency tests jumped from near zero to 50 to 75 percent.

Anthony Jastromb, a fourth-grade teacher at the elementary school, attributes a significant portion of the increase to the presence of JCU students.

Students tutoring these children learn about the obstacles to education faced by urban districts. Significant college class time is devoted to discussing the relationships JCU students form with these children. We attend to language, nonverbal communication, perception, and other key aspects of interpersonal communication. Students complete guided journal entries for each week’s tutoring session. Analysis of the journals reveals that students gain a greater understanding of the relevance of a college education to “living in the real world” (Finucane and Akande 2005).

### George Mason University

Students in New Century College at George Mason University are participating in the Communicating Common Ground project and report a significant impact on their learning. Students enrolled in Social Movements and Community Action as part of a campus learning community work with community organizations to fulfill academic objectives while satisfying the organizations’ needs to effect social change in the community. Pre- and post-test surveys reveal “an increased awareness by students that service, citizenship, and civic responsibility are inextricably

connected” (Gring-Primble and Kenner-Muir 2005).

#### **Ball State University**

Students at Ball State University have the opportunity to participate in a fifteen-credit-hour interdisciplinary seminar studying hate speech. This seminar, *Learning from a Legacy of Hate*, exposes students to the power of hate speech and its impact on community members. Students interact with members of the community, examine attitudes of intolerance in the local community, and study ways to combat hate speech (Messner 2005).

#### **Western Michigan University**

Journalism students at Western Michigan University partner with a local high school’s journalism program to produce a special newspaper section for the local Kalamazoo paper that focuses on a diversity issue in the community. The college students report that they engage in significant research and learn reporting, writing, and editing skills more fully through participation in the project. Similarly, the high school students report that they learn more from producing this special edition than from any other edition. They also engage the community and their views on the importance of diversity often change (Christian 2005).

#### **Xavier University of Louisiana**

Honors public speaking students enrolled at Xavier University of Louisiana partner with local middle schools to develop the public speaking skills of seventh- and eighth-grade students. Each year, public speaking assignments are connected to a social studies theme at the middle school, such as the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education*. Xavier students design a public speaking curriculum that integrates research, writing, and presentational

skills. The middle school students have an opportunity to visit the university’s library to participate in a research workshop and an interview skills workshop. For the *Brown vs. Board of Education* assignment, students met and interviewed members of the New Orleans community who remembered the *Brown* decision and related events.

The project culminates in a celebration where the seventh- and eighth-grade students present their speeches. The middle school students report better understanding of significant events in history, increased confidence in their speaking ability, and satisfaction with the mentoring relationships they experienced. Xavier students report a stronger connection to their own histories and demonstrate a desire to explore the topics in greater depth for their own class presentations. Xavier students also report strong interest in continuing the mentoring program beyond the semester coursework (Louis 2005). ■

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## **Promoting Cross-Cultural Understanding**

*continued from page 8*

A team of faculty works together on campus to integrate these elements while setting high expectations for the students. Once in Thailand, the students work full-time for two months with their community partners and faculty advisers. The advisers work with local contacts to provide cultural orientation and guidance, and work closely with the students as they achieve their goals and develop a formal written project report.

WPI students join local partners to develop a sustainable solution to whatever problem has been presented. As a consequence, they see how local culture and community needs impact scientific and technological solutions, while they also develop capacities for working with people very different than themselves in locations far from home. Typically, they learn a great deal about themselves and their own cultural perspectives as well.

In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, science and engineering students must understand the complex relationships between culture, communities, science, and technology if they are to become responsive and wise practitioners. WPI has found that when thoroughly prepared and held to high expectations, students involved in real-world, community-based projects abroad are likely to make these powerful connections.

For more information about WPI’s Global Perspectives Program, visit [www.wpi.edu/Academics/Depts/IGSD](http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/Depts/IGSD). ■

## Academic Service Learning for Effective Civic Engagement

By Janet Eyles, professor of the practice of education, Vanderbilt University

WHEN YOU ARE IN A CLASS IT IS ALL KIND OF THEORY AND IDEAS. . . IT'S INTERESTING BUT YOU DON'T FEEL IT—ONCE YOU'RE IN A SITUATION WHERE YOU'RE ACTUALLY WORKING WITH THE PEOPLE YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT IN CLASS, IT MAKES IT MUCH MORE REAL AND MORE URGENT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT.

WHEN YOU FEEL MORE, THEN YOU THINK MORE.

—COLLEGE STUDENTS IN SERVICE-LEARNING CLASS

These students' musings on their service-learning experience capture some of the ways academic service learning prepares students for civic engagement. Students who are bored by what seems like abstract information unconnected to their lives often want to learn more and do more when they make personal connections with people in the community. Academic service learning that links community service projects to course subject matter not only motivates students to learn, but also provides experiences that facilitate the development of attitudes, skills, and intellectual abilities necessary for effective civic engagement.

My colleague Dwight Giles and I have conducted research that supports the link between effective service learning and student outcomes important for civic engagement. We have documented the impact of service learning on college students—and particular characteristics associated with high-quality service learning—in the first major national studies of this process. The largest of our studies was sponsored by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education and included a pre- and post-service-learning survey of 1,100 students participating in service learning on over twenty college campuses, along with four hundred nonparticipants. Sixty-five additional students on six campuses participated in hour-long pre- and post-service interviews, which assessed problem-solving capacity and critical-thinking capacity.

In another project sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service, sixty-six students were interviewed

about reflection techniques used to enhance learning in community service and service-learning experiences on their campuses.

### Efficacy and Commitment

Civic engagement begins with personal development—a sense of personal effectiveness, the sense that one is part of a wider community that can address problems, and a personal commitment to contribute to

*Service learning was a significant predictor of students' growth in personal and community efficacy and in commitment to future service.*

that community. We found that service learning was a significant predictor of students' growth in personal and community efficacy and in commitment to future service. Students in placements that were challenging and engaging also reported increases in skills useful for civic involvement, such as leadership and communication skills.

### Socially Positive Outcomes

While efficacy and commitment are important, we also hope that our students will pursue socially positive outcomes. The quality of the service-learning experience is associated with increased commitment to social justice and to related outcomes such as tolerance,

appreciation for other cultures, empathy, and spiritual growth. Quality characteristics that make a difference include diversity (having a chance to work with people from other ethnic backgrounds than one's own), application (connection between classroom study and the service experience), the nature of the placement (the importance and challenge associated with the work), and reflection (the frequent opportunity to discuss and write about the experience).

In a small pilot study with Vanderbilt students we were able to trace the perceptions of students before and after working in the community and found that students' descriptions of community partners changed dramatically over the course of their experience. Open-ended descriptions were both more complex and more positive once students had had the chance to work closely with community members and experience diversity.

### Knowledge, Intellectual Development, and Diversity

Personal confidence, reductions in negative stereotyping, and commitment to social justice are desirable but not adequate preparation for civic engagement. Students also need to have knowledge and the intellectual tools to deal with complex social problems. Most college students have not developed the capacity to reason effectively when confronted with ambiguity and complexity. In our intensive interview study we established that increasing the extent to which the subject matter of study and the experience are integrated through continuous challenging



Vanderbilt undergraduates engage in a service-learning project as part of a biological sciences course

reflection leads to increased problem-solving sophistication and to higher levels of cognitive development. While volunteer service unconnected to the classroom can also contribute to personal and social development, development of the intellectual capacity to deal with complex social problems results from structured opportunities to think about the meaning of this experience. Students who experience this highly reflective service learning increase their ability to analyze ill-structured problems. They develop a more complex causal analysis, are able to integrate more perspectives, and develop more adequate solutions. At the same time, they demonstrate awareness of ambiguity and the need to continuously modify their thinking as new evidence emerges.

While reflection is central to increased problem-solving capacity, we also found in the larger survey that exposure to diversity and involvement in projects responsive to community voice contributes to students' ability to see issues in new ways and to be open to different perspectives. Experiences with diversity during service learning break down stereotypes and contribute to personal growth, but also make a difference in the development of the critical thinking capacity necessary for effective civic participation.

Finally, students who have participated in reflective service learning are also likely

to come up with better plans for practically addressing community problems. They think more clearly about social problems, and they know something about the ways communities are organized to cope with social issues. Consequently, they are better able to suggest sensible strategies for becoming involved in the process. The contrast in practical strategies between students involved in high-quality service-learning experiences and other students was quite startling. Students without these experiences were more likely to produce naive strategies that ignored groups already working in the community or were insensitive to multiple perspectives and the organizational challenges of working in the community.

Academic service learning gives students the knowledge, critical-thinking capacity, and practical strategic experience to act on their commitment. While service learning alone has some positive outcomes, high-quality reflective service learning is predictive of the broad range of important personal, social, and intellectual outcomes linked to civic engagement. ■

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## There Is No Substitute for Experience

*continued from page 9*

for learning English as a second language. Other projects were less discipline-specific, but all were designed to enrich participants' understanding of South Omaha's culture, needs, and assets and of the Latino immigrant experience.

The week closed with a morning of reflection, course planning, and evaluation. All thirteen participants indicated that the seminar had significantly increased their understanding of the Latino community. A comparison of scores on pre- and post-tests confirms this perception. Participants' reflections and evaluative comments were equally relevant. One faculty member, a Cuban American who had grown up in South Omaha, commented on the personal sense of empowerment she gained as she saw possibilities for linking her academic work with her home community. Another respondent observed, "I am so glad UNO gave me this opportunity. I've wanted to do this for a long time, but didn't know where to begin."

To date, six of the participants have revised existing courses or developed new service-learning courses to involve students with nonprofit agencies serving South Omaha in the next academic year. In January, a similarly designed North Omaha Seminar will expose faculty to community-based service-learning opportunities in Omaha's historically African American community, which has a long tradition of partnerships with the university. We hope to offer both seminars on a rotating basis in the future. ■

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## Resources for Diversity and Civic Engagement

### CENTERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

#### Center for Liberal Education and Civic Engagement

Designed as a catalyst and incubator for new ideas, research, and collaborations, the Center for Liberal Education and Civic Engagement seeks to deepen understandings of the relationship of liberal education to service and civic responsibilities, linking this understanding to actions that address complex, urgent social problems. Founded in 2003, the center is the result of a partnership between the Association of American Colleges and Universities and Campus Compact.

For more information, please visit [www.aacu.org/civic\\_engagement](http://www.aacu.org/civic_engagement).

#### Campus Compact

Campus Compact advances the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility. Their work encompasses a broad range of activities designed to increase the effectiveness of those working to make higher education institutions vital agents of civic renewal. Campus Compact's Indicators of Engagement Project, sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, documents and disseminates best practices of civic and community engagement on different types of campuses.

For more information about this project, see [www.compact.org/civic](http://www.compact.org/civic).

For more information on Campus Compact, please visit [www.campuscompact.org](http://www.campuscompact.org).

#### National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good

The National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good was set up to significantly increase awareness, understanding, commitment, and action relative to the public service role of higher education in the United States. The National Forum collaborates with a number of organizations, institutions, researchers, and policy makers, each of whom

contributes in different ways to the movement to make higher education a leading force in American society. It aims to sponsor activities that are in line with three broad strategies: Leadership Dialogues, Connecting Research and Practice, and Public Policy and Public Stewardship.

For more information, please visit [www.thenationalforum.org](http://www.thenationalforum.org).

#### Tolerance.org

A Web project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Tolerance.org serves as an online tool for people interested in dismantling bigotry and creating, in hate's stead, communities that value diversity. Through its online well of resources and ideas, its expanding collection of print materials, its burgeoning outreach efforts, and its downloadable public service announcements, Tolerance.org promotes and supports anti-bias activism in every venue of life.

For more information, visit [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org).

#### The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)

CIRCLE promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. Although CIRCLE conducts and funds research, not practice, the projects they support have practical implications for those who work to increase young people's engagement in politics and civic life. CIRCLE is based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy.

For more information visit [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org).

#### Raise Your Voice: Student Action for Change

An initiative from Campus Compact, this site is dedicated to connecting, challenging, and supporting college and university students in community work, activism, leadership, and

civic growth. Here you will find practical information, ideas, and resources, as well as a forum for sharing ideas.

For more information, please visit [www.actionforchange.org](http://www.actionforchange.org).

#### Innovations in Civic Participation

Founded in 2001, ICP is a nonprofit social change organization that provides expertise, ideas, information, research, and advocacy support in the United States and around the world to develop and strengthen policies and programs that promote civic engagement through service. ICP works with government representatives, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and educational institutions to support and strengthen service policy worldwide.

For more information, please visit [www.icicp.org](http://www.icicp.org).

### PUBLICATIONS

#### *Engaging the Whole of Service-Learning, Diversity, and Learning Communities*

Edited by Joseph A. Galura, Penny A. Pasque, David Schoem, and Jeffrey Howard (OCSL Press, 2004).

Service learning, diversity, and learning communities, among today's most prominent higher education innovations, are integrated at the University of Michigan's Michigan Community Scholars Program. Voices included in the book are those of national leaders and faculty, students, staff, and community partners of this living-learning program.

#### *Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility*

By Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, and Jason Stephens (Jossey-Bass, 2003).

*Educating Citizens* reports on how some American colleges and universities are preparing thoughtful, committed, and socially responsible graduates. Many institutions assert these ambitions, but too few act on

them. The authors demonstrate the fundamental importance of moral and civic education, describe how the historical and contemporary landscapes of higher education have shaped it, and explain the educational and developmental goals and processes involved in educating citizens. They examine the challenges colleges and universities face when they dedicate themselves to this vital task and present concrete ways to overcome those challenges.

**Liberal Education, Volume 91, Number 1**

The winter issue of *Liberal Education*, titled “The Future of Diversity,” explores diversity and the array of issues and approaches that it refers to within the academy. What exactly is the role of diversity in fulfilling the academy’s educational and civic mission? Where is the diversity agenda head-

ing? With these questions in mind, and with an eye to the future, the issue examines the present state of diversity in higher education.

For more information, visit [www.aacu.org/liberaleducation](http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation).

**Public Work and the Academy: An Academic Administrator’s Guide to Civic Engagement and Service-Learning**

Edited by Mark Langseth and William M. Plater (Anker Publishing, 2004).

*Public Work and the Academy* provides academic leaders with a resource to increase their fluency with and ability to lead service-learning and civic engagement efforts on their campuses, with their peers, and throughout higher education. It is written specifically for academic leaders—chief academic officers, provosts, deans, and division and department chairs—who have significant responsibility for their campus’s academic programs.

**Partnering with K–12 National Organizations**

Rich opportunities exist for higher education and K–12 organizations to create partnerships around diversity and civic education. Below are examples from just a few organizations.

**The Cesar E. Chavez Foundation**

The Cesar E. Chavez Foundation service-learning resource guides are aimed at engaging K–12 youth in high-quality service-learning programs based on Cesar’s ten core values by providing a step-by-step project module while allowing for individual creativity. Teachers, community agencies, students, and professors have found the guides to be user-friendly and comprehensive.

Current resource guides are available at: [www.chavezfoundation.org/Default.aspx?pi=150](http://www.chavezfoundation.org/Default.aspx?pi=150).

**National Youth Leadership Council: Service-Learning Diversity/Equity Project**

The Service-Learning Diversity/Equity Project assesses the challenges and opportunities of reaching diverse communities, and develops the tools to meet those chal-

lenges. The initiative convenes service-learning professionals to grapple with diversity issues, identifying needs, best practices, and strategies. This information serves as the basis for new tools and curricula that enable teachers to better deal with diversity and the cultural needs of their students.

For more information, please visit [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org).

**The Constitutional Rights Foundation**

The Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) is dedicated to educating America’s young people about the importance of civic participation in a democratic society. CRF develops programs and materials for teachers, students, and public-minded citizens across the nation. The organization provides technical assistance and training to teachers, coordinates civic participation projects in schools and communities, organizes student conferences and competitions, and develops publications in the areas of law and government and civic participation.

For more information, please visit [www.crf-usa.org](http://www.crf-usa.org).

## The Civic Engagement Imperative: Student Learning and the Public Good

### NETWORK FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL CONFERENCE

**November 10–12, 2005**

**Providence, Rhode Island**

“The Civic Engagement Imperative: Student Learning and the Public Good” brings together faculty, student affairs educators, academic administrators, students, and community leaders to examine current definitions of and outcomes for civic engagement and explore new research, scholarship, and collaborations for civic engagement programs.

“The Civic Engagement Imperative” will examine the role of college in nurturing a sense of students’ social responsibility and helping them connect their educational goals and future well-being to the quality and values of the local and global communities in which they live and work.

#### Keynote Address

*Civic Engagement in a Divided World: Finding Common Ground*

- James A. Joseph, Professor of the Practice of Public Policy Studies, Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy, Duke University

The conference is designed in collaboration with the Center for Liberal Education and Civic Engagement, a partnership founded in 2003 between AAC&U and Campus Compact.

For more information please visit [www.aacu.org/meetings/civic\\_engagement](http://www.aacu.org/meetings/civic_engagement).

## DIVERSITY AND LEARNING

### Network for Academic Renewal Conference

October 19-21, 2006 • Philadelphia, PA

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Save the date and help chart the direction of our next decade's diversity work.

Visit [www.aacu.org/meetings](http://www.aacu.org/meetings) for conference details

**Proposal due date: January 6, 2006**



### About AAC&U

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises more than 1,000 accredited public and private colleges and universities of every type and size.

AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, and faculty members who are engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Its mission is to reinforce the collective commitment to liberal education at both the national and local levels and to help individual institutions keep the quality of student learning at the core of their work as they evolve to meet new economic and social challenges.

Information about AAC&U membership, programs, and publications can be found at [www.aacu.org](http://www.aacu.org).

## AAC&U Membership

If your address label on this issue of *Diversity Digest* has the letters NMI or NMPC on the top line, then your campus is missing important benefits, particularly related to AAC&U's initiatives in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Global Initiatives. Contact Dennis Renner (202-884-7435 or [memberservices@aacu.org](mailto:memberservices@aacu.org)) for membership information.

### From AAC&U Board Statement on Liberal Learning

AAC&U believes that by its nature...liberal learning is global and pluralistic. It embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural, and intellectual world. To acknowledge such diversity in all its forms is both an intellectual commitment and a social responsibility, for nothing less will equip us to understand our world and to pursue fruitful lives.



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