

Spring 2007



Service Learning News

Portland Community College

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Upcoming Events

April 16-21
Earth Week

April 12-14
**Western Region
Continuums of Service
Conference**
San Jose, CA

May 23-25
**Community College
National Center for Civic
Engagement Conference**
Scottsdale, AZ

For more information on
these conferences visit:
www.pcc.edu/servicelearning
and click on "conferences."

"A good college
affirms that service to
others is a central part
of education."
Carnegie Foundation

Inside this issue:

Syllabus Construction 2

Custom Site Lists 2

Student Scholarships 3

Spring Mini-Grant Recipients

*Spotlight on Loaves and
Fishes* 4

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What's a VISTA?

Elena McGrath is the newest member of PCC's Service-Learning program working at the Cascade Campus. She was hired through the Oregon Campus Compact AmeriCorps*VISTA project improve service-learning partnerships between Roosevelt and Jefferson High Schools and the Cascade Campus. AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) members assist community organizations create and expand programs that help bring individuals and communities out of poverty.



Elena McGrath

AmeriCorps*VISTA members serving through Campus Compact build the capacity of higher education institutions to serve the community and engage students in high quality service-learning and civic experiences. Elena's VISTA project is designed to increase civic participation on the part of PCC Cascade students and encourage mentoring relationships between high school and college students in order to lower the barriers to college enrollment for Jefferson and Roosevelt graduates.

While Elena is with us, she'll be contributing to the newsletter. Here's what she has to say for this quarter:

Since coming to Cascade this February, I have focused mostly on communicating with faculty and setting up the conditions for more service-learning partnerships at both Jefferson and Roosevelt. During the winter term, Elaine Beal sent members of her class to work in both the College Center and as teaching assistants at Jefferson. This program has been very successful and popular with the students involved. For the spring, I hope to extend this program to Roosevelt as well. In addition, Alexis Pike has expressed interest in recreating her Columbia Village service project at Roosevelt, partnering PCC photography students with high-schoolers in the spring term. I am also working on sending Cascade ESOL students into Spanish classes at Jefferson as conversation partners. By the fall term, I hope to have a number of well-established service programs at both high schools served by Cascade students from several classes and disciplines.

In terms of encouraging a spirit of service and volunteerism on the Cascade campus, I have given a number of presentations about the benefits of Service-Learning to classes, mostly in the ABE/GED departments. I am also working with Cascade's Green Team to lead a group of volunteers on Saturday, April 21st to participate and help set up the City Repair Project's Earth Day Celebration. This Celebration coincides with both Cascade Earth Week (April 15th-21st) and National Youth Service Day (April 20th-22nd). It has been an exciting two months for Service-Learning at Cascade. For more information on any of the projects mentioned above, please contact elena.mcgrath@pcc.edu or call (503) 978 5165.



Best Practices for Constructing a Service-Learning Syllabus

As part of the AACC Broadening Horizons through Service-Learning Grant PCC is a part of, the mentor team has assembled a guide to “Best Practices for Constructing a Service-Learning Syllabus.” Here are just a few of the suggestions. For the complete guide visit: <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/service-learning/faculty/>

Include a **definition of service-learning**. The American Association of Community Colleges offers a concise definition: “*Service learning combines community service with academic instruction, focusing on critical, reflective thinking and personal and civic responsibility. Service-learning programs involve students in activities that address community-identified needs, while developing their academic skills and commitment to their community.*”

Discuss which **course objectives** students will address through their service work in the community. This requires that community needs are identified and then linked to appropriate course objectives. The syllabus should explicitly tell students how the assigned service work meets course learning objectives and fulfills a need in the community.

State the **number of service hours required** of each student. Always delineate direct service hours, or contact hours with the community partner, versus time spent working on reflection and other service-learning assignments. Another model is to **require completion of a certain product** for the community partner, irrespective of the time it takes to complete. Consider which option is best for your course, students and community partners.

Carefully consider adjusting the workload of students. It is crucial that service work and related assignments are not an add-on to existing course work, but rather, in place of existing course work. Identify assignments that can be replaced or re-focused. Consider fewer readings, or at least make the readings more closely related to community issues and civic engagement. Replace papers with service-learning reflection journals and writing assignments. If there is a major research assignment in your course, consider integrating the community experience and oral interviews as a major primary source.

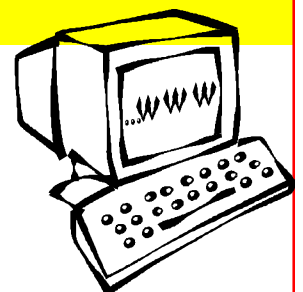
Students should not be given a grade for the service hours performed. They are given a grade based on the learning that happens because of the service and therefore, the manifestation of that knowledge. In other words, the reflection assignments are the evaluative measure of a service-learning experience. Always remember, you do not grade the service, you grade the learning.

Reflection assignments should be structured. When **reflection is guided by the instructor**, students connect their service work to course content more easily. Clearly define the methods of reflection and remember to use multiple reflective methods, respecting different student learning styles. Consider leading course discussions, creating journal prompts, paper topics, supplemental reading assignments and other methods that ask students to directly relate their service with course content.

A List of Your Own

Faculty, did you know that we can create a custom list of Service-Learning opportunities for you within the database? Students can go to the database, click on your name, and see the sites you have approved for your course. See who’s doing it already here: <http://www.pcc.edu/servlearnopps/index.cfm?fa=dspFaculty>.

If you’d like your own list, contact Jennifer, jennifer.alkezweeny@pcc.edu, 503-977-4419.



Spring 2007 Curriculum Development Mini-Grant Recipients

Each term, the Service-Learning Program awards \$500 mini-grants for curriculum development. The \$500 is compensation for curriculum development. The idea is to re-design an existing courses to include a Service-Learning component. Most instructors re-design a single assignment or unit of the course to include Service-Learning as an option for students. We had six applicants for the two grants this term. Criteria for selection includes: uniqueness of project, how well thought out and realistic the proposal, if it is distinctly a service-learning project versus work experience, and if the proposal comes from a faculty in a discipline new to Service-Learning. The recipients of the spring term grants are: **Kerri Babin**, PT ESOL faculty at Cascade, and **Sarah Bentley-Quintero**, FT Spanish faculty at Sylvania.

Kerri's project meets the course learning objective of "building confidence and skills speaking on academic topics." Her ESOL students will volunteer with environmental projects and reflect on the environmental issues facing society and how the environmental movement is addressing these issues.

Sarah's students will be serving a non-profits around the community that serve Hispanic clients. This will help students meet the learning objective of "recognizing and appreciating linguistic and cultural diversity within the Hispanic world" by reflecting on their experience and connecting it to the course materials.

To learn more or to get an application worksheet, visit www.pcc.edu/servicelearning and click on "faculty". Or you can contact the Service-Learning Faculty Coordinator for your campus. **Interested in a fall term Service-Learning Curriculum Development Grant? For best consideration, apply by June 8th.**

Scholarships....and why I give

The PCC Foundation has a number of wonderful scholarships. I give to the Service to Community Scholarship (STC). The STC scholarship is different from the others in that student recipients not only get scholarship money, but also give to the community. It is nice to know that I'm essentially giving twice. Once for the students' education and once for the benefit these students will bring to the community.

Next year, the foundation will award 12 \$3000 Service to Community scholarships. That's right, \$3000 per student! The students in return serve 75 hours each term at a local nonprofit social service agency or education institution. For more information on this scholarship, visit: <http://www.pcc.edu/pccscholarships/display.cfm>.

Marianne Kastner is a Service to Community Scholarship recipient this year and does her service with the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO). She comments, "The PCC Foundation Service to Community Scholarship has given me a profound sense of personal pride and accomplishment, firstly, for having been a selected scholarship recipient, and secondly, for having been challenged to actively put myself out in the community and get exposure I need to help me succeed. Education is good and necessary, but only through practical application does it serve the people and become useful. It has helped me broaden my perspective, become more aware of the ESL community, and begin to build a portfolio of work experience, contacts, and references. I continue to marvel and feel honored to have had so many windows of opportunity opened to me through this scholarship, and I am very grateful to those who offered me this chance."

April 15-21 is National Volunteer Week!

This is the week to recognize all the volunteers out there and thank them for their contributions to the community.

The theme for this year's National Volunteer Week is "**Inspire by Example.**" Be an inspiration to your students....volunteer!

PCC Service-Learning Program

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Comments on the newsletter?
Send them to
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BUTTONS! BUTTONS!

Do you have students doing service-learning this term? If so, let me know how many and I'll send you a PCC button for each of them to wear while they are out doing their service!

Spotlight on MLK Loaves and Fishes...

Loaves and Fishes, Inc. is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization that has been serving the elderly citizens of metropolitan Portland for over 60 years. The organization provides Meals-On-Wheels to homebound seniors as well as serves meals in various senior centers in the Portland area. It also creates access for seniors to other valuable community resources. As the baby boomer population is rapidly approaching senior citizenship, the need for services provided by organizations such as Loaves and Fishes will dramatically increase in the next few decades. Therefore it is imperative that students, the leaders and decision makers of tomorrow, become familiarized with the social, psychological, political, and economic challenges that affect the aging population.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Loaves and Fishes center would like to partner with the Portland Community College and the Service-Learning Program in an effort to open the lines of communication between students and aging individuals. Students from a variety of disciplines including Gerontology, Sociology, Psychology, and Nursing can greatly benefit from volunteering with seniors, as the information absorbed in the classroom comes to life through that interaction. Volunteer opportunities in the Martin Luther King Jr. L&F center include delivery of Meals-On-Wheels, preparation of Meals-On-Wheels and food served in the senior center, set-up and clean-up of senior dining area, and involvement with center recreational activities. Students will gain first-hand experience with effective operations in a non-profit/social service work environment, an understanding of the proper nutrition of elderly persons, as well as awareness of the various issues that affect senior citizens.

Please contact David Lomax or Monique Hedmann at 503-988-5211 for more information about volunteer opportunities with Loaves and Fishes.

Thought to Ponder...

"We learn by example and by direct experience because there are real limits to the adequacy of verbal instruction." Malcolm Gladwell, author of *Blink*.

Reflection Idea:

It is easy to fall into the mindset that community change is the responsibility of others. To help students think this through, ask them "What are you proud of in your community?" then "What are you sorry about in your community?" then open it up with "What role do you play in increasing the first list and decreasing the second?"

