In an effort to provide varied workshops and fresh information for faculty, the Office of Service Learning is offering its third workshop this year: “Intel, Interaction and Integration.”

Monday, March 19th from 2:30-4 p.m. in the Faculty Dining Room.

Students in an upper level service learning course will share how service learning helps them to integrate course objectives and grow in civic dedication. At least two of our community partners will join us to share how service learning activities provide collaboration and much needed services in various areas of their agencies’ operations. Health and Counseling Director, Michele Manassah, will offer suggestions for seeking balance among the various aspects of our lives. Staying balanced is particularly challenging and apropos for faculty who choose to integrate service learning into their courses.
Applied Sociology Continues Service Learning Tradition and Attracts Local Notice

Applied Sociology, developed and taught by Dr. Gail Gehrig, has a long tradition of providing students with learning experiences through community engagement. Fall semester 2011, Applied Sociology students focused their projects on the social problems of poverty and hunger. One team of students partnered with the Angels R Watching foundation to fill thirty backpacks with school supplies for low-income children. The team engaged in a number of fundraising and awareness activities, both on campus and with two local community organizations, BD’s Mongolian Grill and Five Below (discount-retail store). Students also researched and wrote a paper on the importance school preparedness in low-income communities. The project was featured in a number of local suburban news media.

A second team of students researched and wrote a paper on local and world hunger while volunteering to prepare and serve meals to low-income members of the Joliet community at MorningStar Mission. Students also packaged food to be distributed around the world by Feed My Starving Children in Aurora. On campus, the team partnered with the Lewis Art and Psychology Clubs to create and sell items for the Lewis Empty Bowls project raising $600 for the University Ministry Hunger Week Fund. The proceeds were directed to Feed My Starving Children.
Following the Applied Sociology model, Professor Diane Rzeszewski and her Applied Sociology and Political Science class raised over $2,000 for Daybreak Center in Joliet. Daybreak provides a variety of services for local low-income residents. The service learning project was featured in the January 2012 Daybreak Newsletter. Current Applied Sociology community activities include serving food at MorningStar Mission, assisting the establishment of the newly formed Lockport Resource Center, and volunteering for Relay for Life, co-sponsored by the American Cancer Society and Lewis University.

(photo of D. R’s class made available by Katherine Skonicki)

Dr. Gail Gehrig (CAS ), GehrigGa@lewisu.edu

Community Engagement Cooperative Continues to Collaborate

Efforts continue to better coordinate community engagement across Lewis University’s campus through the Community Engagement Cooperative (CEC). Each month, representatives from the Office of Service Learning, University Ministry, Student Leadership and Development, and Career Services gather to discuss ways we can work together to offer meaningful service opportunities to students. As enthusiasm for service grows at Lewis, from volunteerism to service learning to internships, the CEC will be prepared to provide guidance and service opportunities encouraging present and future civic engagement, enriching the curricular and co-curricular experiences of students, and working successfully with area community partners.
College of Business Continues to Engage in Service Learning

This semester, Professor Bob Bergman in the College of Business has connected almost 60 students with eleven local non-profits and small businesses in Service Learning projects in his Public Relations classes. His students have been divided into teams of five to work with organizations like the Joliet YMCA, Cornerstone Services, and School on Wheels. Their project is the development of Media Kits for these organizations and a methodology for quick and easy customization of the Media Kits for distribution to various media outlets having different information needs. The project achieves numerous course learning objectives and takes six weeks within the semester.

When asked why he chose to offer another Service Learning course, Mr. Bergman stated, “Last semester I engaged a class in Service Learning and my student evaluations were off the map on the positive side. They absolutely loved getting out of their comfort zone and working with local non-profits rather than sitting in the classroom sleeping through lectures week after week. The evaluations included comments like, ‘This is the most valuable course I’ve taken at Lewis’ and ‘Every course should be taught this way’.”

Mr. Bergman continued by saying, “I enjoy meeting and working with many professionals in the community who express Lewis mission values in their work and engagement with my students. These Service Learning projects create a great deal of intrinsic reward and connect more of our local community to Lewis.”

When asked if he would incorporate another Service Learning project next semester, his answer was a resounding “Absolutely!!”
Discovering a New Partner: Service Learning With and In Lincoln School

In February, the Office of Service Learning (OSL) team went to visit with Mr. Quinn Adamowski, the principal of Lincoln School in Joliet. The meeting was initiated by Mr. Adamowski to seek our advice on the service learning for programming within Lincoln School. Besides offering some insights which we’ve gained in the field of service learning, we also presented ideas for future service learning projects between Lewis students and Lincoln School.

Lincoln School offers alternative education to four types of students from grades 6 through 12. They teach students who have been expelled for behavioral reasons from other schools, have social or emotional challenges, are chronic truants, or students who are part of ALOP, Alternative Learning Opportunities Program; these students go to Lincoln School by choice. It’s a very small school, but while there, its potential became very clear. The faculty is very dedicated, and Mr. Adamowski was enthused about developing innovative projects at the school, especially through service learning.

At the faculty workshop, the OSL staff plans to share the possibilities inherent in Assets Based Community Development (ABCD). The school is located in a neighborhood with many possibilities for development and networking. The students of Lincoln School have many untapped gifts that aren’t always recognized. Building relationships is key. For instance, the principal thought that there might be a plot for a community garden not far from the school. Cool Joliet, a non-profit dedicated to increasing the number of community gardens in the Joliet area, is one of Lewis’s partners. It’s all about connecting the dots and networking. The assets are there.

Thanks to dedicated faculty at Lewis who are doing great work throughout the region, word is getting out that service learning is effective, and that Lewis University is a great neighbor to have.

*Lewis University’s Office of Service Learning has been asked to offer a workshop to the faculty of Lincoln School.

Looking For Resources? Come Check Out Our Bookshelf! (BE-181)

Where’s the Learning in Service Learning?

This question was first explored by Janet Eyler and Dwight Giles (1999) when service learning began appearing in college courses and curricula. There was some concern about whether service, while generally accepted as beneficial to students and communities alike, could actually enhance student learning. The fact is that not all service experiences lead to new learning, especially to academic settings. Faculty who teach service learning often know intuitively that their students are benefitting, not only personally but academically, from service learning experiences. At the same time, it is often difficult to identify and measure what students in our service learning courses learn.

I find that students get stuck when they attempt to connect their service experiences with the content or learning outcomes of a course. When engaged in service learning projects, they are often able to retell their experiences and even discuss personal reflections, such as how their experiences made them feel. For instance, a student in a Sociology course who visits a homeless shelter can describe the work she did, understand how she contributed to the mission of the organization, and connect emotionally with the people she encountered while doing service. She may come to know the stories of individuals and how they became homeless. But she will probably not see how the textbook chapter on structural poverty helps explain how and why there is homelessness. A Political Science student may not be able to evaluate whether public policy meant to help homeless people or end homelessness is effective. Similarly, a student in a marketing course may work in a charitable resale shop and walk away without considering how the tools of marketing might help the store increase donations as well as sales.

In order to help students make the intellectual leap from personal reactions to academic learning, faculty must carefully construct assignments that require students to connect experience to course concepts. Depending upon the course, students might be required to write an essay that tests a theory presented in the text based on their experiences and observations at their service site. In this way, the service experience becomes a form of evidence mobilized to support or question academic knowledge. Structured journals can also be effective tools, if (in addition to providing space for personal reflection) they require students to refer to course readings or utilize concepts in the class to explain an experience or propose a solution to a problem.
Project-based service learning is also an effective way of asking students to apply what they have learned in the classroom to the service experience or site.

If students design a marketing campaign, create a data management program, film a video to profile the organization, they must integrate what they have learned about the service site, social issue, and course concepts.

By linking service to learning, grading becomes more manageable. It is impossible to grade students on their service. We can only grade what students have learned from their experiences. In order to grade transparently and to communicate expectations, it is important to provide students with a rubric. I also find that creating a rubric helps me to refine my expectations and the requirements of an assignment. Plus, rubrics help me grade more efficiently.

If we do not require students to link their service experiences to course content and learning goals, then we may be encouraging volunteerism rather than service learning. Creating course and discipline specific assignments that help students bridge the gap between experience and academic learning is challenging but necessary. Service learning can be an impactful pedagogy that transforms the ways students view themselves and their educational/professional goals, but only with careful course design. There are resources for faculty freely available on the internet that provide models for course and assignment construction, as well as grading and assessment. Here are a couple:

The Campus Compact syllabi project collects, screens, and posts service learning syllabi from colleges and universities nationally: [http://www.compact.org/category/syllabi/](http://www.compact.org/category/syllabi/)

The Corporation for National Service and the Campus Community Partnership for Health have developed a toolkit for faculty teaching service learning courses (the toolkit is applicable for faculty in all disciplines): [http://www.servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/HE_toolkit_with_worksheets.pdf](http://www.servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/HE_toolkit_with_worksheets.pdf)

And...do not forget the resources that our Office of Service Learning can provide!
Lewis University Recognized on President’s Honor Roll

Lewis University is proud to announce the recent distinction attained in the area of community service and civic engagement. The University is being recognized and named on the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. We are grateful for the unified cross campus efforts and commitment to service that made this award possible. The OSL would like to recognize specific contributions made by: Dr. James Rago, Assistant Professor of Biology; Martha Villegas-Miranda, Coordinator of Volunteer Outreach; Dr. Pam Jessee, Associate Dean of COE; Joan Williams, Director of Advising; Dr. Christie Billups, Coordinator of Service Learning; Beka Flanagan, Assistant to the office of Service Learning and ILCC*AmeriCorps VISTA; and Dr. Julie Krahl, Associate Provost. Thank you for your time and support! We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those involved in, and who work to facilitate service and service learning, you have made this award possible! Lewis University last received this distinction in 2005-2006, and plans to apply for recognition annually.

Service Learning Team Members
Dr. Christie Billups (OSL)
Beka Flanagan (OSL)
Dr. Julie Krahl (Provost's Office)
Robert Bergman (COB)
Dr. Bonnie Bondavalli (CAS)
Jennifer Buss (COE)
Dr. Stacie Elder (CONHP)
Dr. Gail Gehrig (CAS)
Dr. Clare Lawlor (CAS)
Dr. Anne Rapp (SPCE)
Chris Swanson (Study Abroad)
Dr. Robert Nulph (CAS)

Community Engagement Cooperative
Dr. Christie Billups (OSL)
Beka Flanagan (OSL)
Martha Villegas Miranda (UM)
Sean Fagan (SL&D)
Representative of Career Services

Dr. Christie Billups
Coordinator of Service Learning
Phone: 815-836-5829
Fax: 815-838-4614
E-mail: billupch@lewisu.edu

Beka Flanagan
ILCC AmeriCorps*VISTA
Assistant to the Office of Service Learning
Phone: 815-836-5023
Fax: 815-838-4614
E-mail: flanagbe@lewisu.edu

The Office of Service Learning is located within LARC
Benilde Hall BE- 181
1 University Parkway, Unit 270
Romeoville IL, 60446-2200
www.lewisu.edu/servicelearning