

Engaged

Service Learning Newsletter Lewis University

LEWIS ALUM SERVING AS AMERICORPS*VISTA

By Christie Billups, D.Min., Coordinator of Service Learning

The Office of Service Learning is thrilled to have Beka Flanagan on board as the new Assistant to the Office of Service Learning. She has been in the office since the first of August continuing the work of Rachel Burke the first VISTA and initiating new Service Learning projects. Rachel and Beka met over the summer to talk about programs and expectations, so Beka was able to hit the ground running (and she's been doing the mad dash ever since).

Of course, it is also amazingly helpful that Beka is an alumna thus providing her with a wealth of knowledge about Lewis University as well as relationships among students, staff and faculty. Further, her dedication to both service and service learning prior to becoming a VISTA volunteer is remarkable. She captured the spirit of service learning through participation in Dr. James Burke's Christian Social Teaching course which fully integrated service learning in its curricular objectives. As a student, Beka served at Feed My Starving Children, The Greater Chicago Food Depository and various endeavors of student organizations. She was one of the primary facilitators of last year's very successful Invisible Children event. Also, Beka traveled with other Lewis students, staff and faculty on the Habitat for Humanity trip to Tennessee to help build homes and clean up after the tornado last May. Prior to her experience at Lewis, she set the tone for her life of service by visiting New Orleans three times addressing some of the needs of those recovering from Hurricane Katrina. She also traveled to Israel to help facilitate a youth camp for 150 young people by meeting basic needs (cooking, coordinating, and the like) as well as assisting with leadership workshops.



Beka is very hard working and a pleasure to have on our team. She and I are both on hand to aid in developing service learning resources, connecting faculty and students with relevant community partners, and supporting our collective endeavors to grow service learning programming at Lewis University. She can be reached at flanagbe@lewisu.edu or x5023. We are located in the Office of Service Learning in LARC, BE181.

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LEWIS FACULTY: PERSPECTIVES ON SERVICE LEARNING

Possible Service Learning Opportunities for Finance Students

It's easiest for me to think about the value of service learning if I say, 'learning through service.' Then, its connections to our classrooms, textbooks, and University Mission become clear, and possible service learning opportunities for students in my classes come quickly to mind.

I teach finance to business and non-business students. Finance focuses on matters relating to money - how to raise it, how to spend it wisely on various projects, how to invest it, how to determine the monetary value of assets, how to manage it. Business students with finance majors go on to careers in banking, investments, insurance, corporations and the government. Non-business students use their finance training in nursing, education, science, aviation and other careers.

How might service learning help Lewis finance students prepare themselves for successful careers after graduation? I would like to suggest a few ways finance students might engage in service learning to supplement and hone the finance skills they learn in the classroom:

1. Teach finance in the community – There's no better way to improve one's understanding of a subject than to teach it. There are undoubtedly student and community groups in the area that would like to have tutors help their members better understand how to balance their checkbooks, make sense of the interest rates they pay on loans, or get a better feel for current global financial problems. Many finance students from Lewis would be excellent tutors on topics like these.

2. Help a local non-profit with fund raising – Fundraising entails studying available options for raising cash, saving and investing it, spending it, and keeping track of the cash flows. Finance offers concepts and tools which are useful in making these decisions and managing these activities. Finance students could help the non-profit think through their fund raising strategies and help them with implementation.

3. Travel study PLUS service learning – Study abroad opportunities are wonderful experiences but cannot be considered service learning, per se. A lot of learning happens, the classroom experience is extended and supplemented, cross-cultural understanding is fostered, but travelers do not really provide any service or assistance to residents of the host country. However, service learning -'learning through service'- can be an integral part of study abroad. For example, a trip to Uganda is being considered for 2013 which would give Lewis students a variety of service learning opportunities. For finance students on the trip, the service learning might take the form of helping local entrepreneurs develop business plans, apply for financing, or set up record keeping systems. Students participating in such a service learning experience should return to the U.S. with an enhanced set of finance skills and a deeper understanding of crossing cultures and global realities which would serve them well in future careers.



Associate Professor of Finance (COB)
Dr. Frank Rose

LEWIS FACULTY: PERSPECTIVES ON SERVICE LEARNING

To continue fostering skills and enthusiasm for service in the community developed in service learning courses, students could take on an internship – There are numerous internships available to Lewis students through the Career Services department. Many of the listings on the JOBNET database are finance-related. A recent perusal of the listings reveals internships in business strategy development, financial services, financial planning, insurance, project consulting and many other areas. Internships allow students with interest in finance and other disciplines to apply what they've learned in class and explore potential career paths. Both service learning involvement and internships look great on resumes.

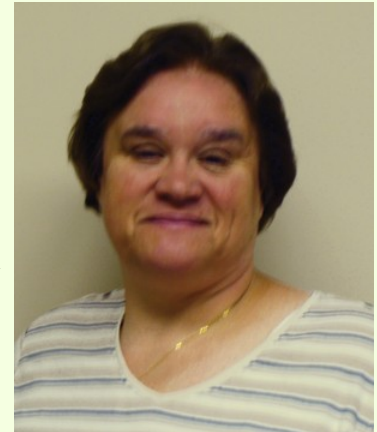
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Research and Community Action

The students in 78-496: Research in Social Work are participating in community action research.

Four community organizations have enlisted our help to analyze the data they are collecting to evaluate the services they provide. The agencies include Bolingbrook and Romeoville High Schools, survey on “Bullying”; Will County Health Department’s “Healthy Families” survey on “Cultural Competence”; Big Brothers Big Sisters survey on “self-esteem”; and Chestnut Hill Services’ pre and post survey on “drug prevention” for middle school students. Along with these four local community studies, two on-campus surveys will be conducted and analyzed which address: *students in helping professions and factors linked to working with the elderly* and *student views of connections between Catholic Social Teaching and career choice*. Together, these projects give social work students the opportunity to participate in service learning experiences and learn about how research informs policy.

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Associate Professor, Social Work (CAS)
Dr. Ruth Osuch

Success of Service Learning Courses



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Dr. Stacie Elder

In accordance with LaSallian Mission and Values, courses from various colleges incorporate a service learning (SL) component. In an effort to assess the impact that SL has on students’ and university SL outcomes, a research project was initiated in the Spring of 2011 by Stacie Elder, PhD, RN; Christie Billups, D. Min and Director of the SL Department; Rachel Burke, BA; and Jion Yen, PhD. A mixed methodology was used, employing a student pre and post-test, student reflections, as well as a faculty focus group, to explore the viewpoints of the efficacy of SL in the course. We are proud to be presenting the very significant, positive results at the IARSLCE National Conference at the Palmer House in Chicago on November 4th. Due to the positive nature of the study’s results, the research will be continued in 2012.

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LEWIS FACULTY: PERSPECTIVES ON SERVICE LEARNING

Service Learning in the College of Nursing and Health Professions

Pediatric Nursing Course

The Lewis University nursing students enrolled in the pediatric nursing course have participated in service learning activities with vulnerable populations within our local community for over 10 years. In an effort to support the mission and values of the University, College of Nursing and Health Professions faculty, Sheila Berkemeyer and Anne McShane, established a partnership with the Diocese of Joliet Early Childhood Services Division, Head Start Program. As members of the “Health Services Advisory Committee” of Will County, we have worked closely to help ensure the needy families of the area receive necessary health care services to promote health and wellness.



Assistant Professor (CONHP)
Anne McShane



Instructor (CONHP)
Sheila Berkemeyer

This relationship helped the faculty develop and implement a Doherty Center research grant addressing the educational needs of Head Start families and staff that interact with children with asthma. The nursing students have participated in health screenings and education for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and at-risk adult caregivers. This association has helped our students to learn about the physical, mental health, and social needs of families living in poverty.

One focus of this service learning course is exposing our nursing students to the needs of children outside the hospital setting so they can view the continuum of care including access to care, the role of the nurse, and case management for youngsters with acute and chronic health conditions. The students' work with these children and families has taught them the importance of social justice when advocating for this culturally diverse, at-risk population. Through their work with high risk children and families in the Joliet community, CONHP students have implemented Mission-based care in the spirit of association.

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R E S O U R C E S

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

- ◆ Bringle, Robert G., Julie A. Hatcher, and Steven G. Jones, eds. *International Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Research*. Vol. 1. Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2011. Print.
- ◆ Hatcher, Julie A., and Robert G. Bringle, eds. *Understanding Service-learning and Community Engagement: Making Engaged Scholarship Matter*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Pub., 2011. Print.
- ◆ Jacoby, Barbara, and Pamela Mutascio, eds. *Looking in Reaching Out: a Reflective Guide for Community Service-learning Professionals*. Boston, Mass: Campus Compact, 2010. Print.
- ◆ Keshen, Jeff, Barbara A. Holland, and Barbara E. Moely, eds. *Research for What?: Making Engaged Scholarship Matter*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Pub., 2010. Print.
- ◆ Skubikowski, Kathleen M., Catharine Wright, and Roman Graf, eds. *Social Justice Education: Inviting Faculty to Transform Their Institutions*. Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2009. Print.
- ◆ Zlotkowski, Edward A., Nicholas V. Longo, and James R. Williams, eds. *Students as Colleagues: Expanding the Circle of Service-learning Leadership*. Providence, RI: Campus Compact, 2006. Print.

LEWIS FACULTY: PERSPECTIVES ON SERVICE LEARNING**Exploring the Possibilities in Content-Based Service Learning Projects**

The College of Education at Lewis University is committed to furthering STEM education and creating engaging hands-on experiments for science students preparing to be K-12 teachers. In my methods of teaching science course, the students unpacked the national and state science standards and did a gap analysis of the science curriculum for a local school district. The findings were surprising to the group of pre-service science teachers. There was little or no incorporation of technology into the science curriculum. Technology is a major goal of science teaching in the national and state standards, but it appeared to be totally missing from the local curriculum.

Technology funding is being sought to provide the technological equipment needed for a series of science content-based service learning projects. The main aim of this project is to merge the use of current technology with the application of science content knowledge and skills to real-world situations through the completion of service learning projects. Pre-service teachers in the fields of biology, chemistry, and physics will be involved in a science-based service learning project both during and outside of the Methods of Teaching Science course. During the course, students will be involved in every step of creating, setting up, and completing a problem-based learning activity in an attempt to solve a real-world problem for a community partner or team of partners. Given the variety of science subjects (biology, chemistry, and physics) and diverse experiences of our students, environmental projects will better allow for integration of topics and student backgrounds. The availability of a wide variety of environmental probes will enhance learning in the areas of technology, data collection, data analysis, and presentation or publication of quantitative results.

This project models the incorporation of the Lewis University mission values (knowledge, wisdom, justice, fidelity, and association) and the College of Education standards (becoming knowledgeable, critical, transformative educators; social justice advocates; multicultural educators) into a science project designed to serve community needs and interests. Additionally, community partnerships will be planned with K-12 schools and external agencies. Possible projects are the restoration of native Illinois prairies or completing a GPS mapping and environmental testing on the local wetlands to plan strategies for revitalizing the ecosystem.

The significance of this project is in modeling of inquiry and engagement in the science classroom through the planning and implementation of a content-based service learning project. Recent publications by the National Science Teacher Association (NSTA) highlight the overuse of “cookbook” laboratory activities and worksheets in the K-12 science classroom. This project will allow the pre-service teachers to participate in an activity that provide experience with inquiry and engaged learning, while focusing on the application of science concepts and skills and the use of technology through community-based, content-related service learning projects.

The implementation of such content-based service learning projects is sustainable due to the plethora of possible problems upon which to base future service-learning projects, the durability and nature of the technology, and the limited reliance on consumable materials which would require additional funding. We’re hoping to launch, a pilot during in the Spring 2012 semester.



Assistant Professor (COE), Dr. Lauren Rentfro

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THE OFFICE OF SERVICE LEARNING UPDATES

Lewis Welcomes the Community at Large

To kick off another exciting semester the CEC hosted the first Service Fair at Lewis University. We invited many local nonprofit organizations to participate, and fourteen of our community partners were available to come set up tables and speak to our students, faculty, and staff. This event highlighted all the ways that we, as a Lewis community, can come together in the spirit of association and work beside neighbors to meet community needs. The Office of Service learning, University Ministry, Student Leadership and Development, and Career Services are working together under the title of the Community Engagement Cooperative (CEC). This cooperative, through combined efforts and the engagement of Lewis and the local community, was able to facilitate an incredibly successful event.



The benefits of this event are two fold. It was great to see cross-campus involvement in the service fair. Not only has the CEC met and planned to create a successful event, more than 72 students came through the fair and interacted with our community partners, and more than 21 faculty and staff attended as well. Secondly by meeting with our community partners and understanding what these organizations do, the CEC can do a better job connecting professors, service learners, volunteers, and student organizations with the community. The Service Fair opened a door for community engagement and has helped to broaden our horizons of Service Learning and community engagement. The effects of the Service Fair will continue to positively impact the community around us because of the relationships that were started or deepened as a result of this event.

Thank you to all those who worked to make this event grow wings and take flight, and the many Lewis' students, staff and faculty who took the time to stop by. We are looking forward to the Service Fair becoming an annual event at Lewis University.

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THE OFFICE OF SERVICE LEARNING UPDATES

Fall Service Learning Workshop

On September 27th, the Office of Service Learning held a workshop entitled “The Intersection of Service Learning and Social Justice.” The speaker was Karl Nass, MCP from DePaul University. Eighteen faculty and staff from both Lewis University and University of St. Francis gathered to consider service learning as a tool for enhancing the understanding of justice with students and enlivening the missions of our universities.



The goals of the workshop were: a) to continue deepening our understanding of service learning, b) to explore wisdom about moving beyond charity in local and global communities in order to engage issues and concerns around justice, and c) to discover and foster rich connections between the applications of curriculum and community engagement inherent in service learning, the Mission of Lewis University, and Vision 2016.

These hopes were amply met. Faculty and staff had a chance to engage in dialogue around practical applications in their respective courses related to service learning. There was a vibrant exchange about cross-disciplinary and cross-university possibilities for collaboration as well as a need for common assessment language when attempting to work cooperatively across curricular fields. With Mr. Nass’s guidance, we also discussed the use of reflective or focus groups for integrating service learning experiences with the course objectives and materials.

The afternoon was time well spent. We hope to continue offering some form of workshop or other faculty enrichment to aid more faculty members to initiate or enrich their service learning offerings.

A Word of Gratitude to Some of Our Faculty Partners

During the 2010-2011 academic year, the Office of Service Learning partnered with many professors, students, and community partners. We spent the year working with colleagues to assess the effectiveness of service learning in ten classes. This year, we are grateful to our nine colleagues that have once again agreed to take part in creating a service learning course and work with our office to do continued assessment. We would like to express our gratitude to Benjamin Eveloff (CAS), Robert Bergman (COB), Dr. Ibrahim Mescioglu (COB), Leslie Colonna (CAS), Dr. Christie Billups (CAS), Dr. Jerry Kavouras (CAS), Dr. Tracey Nicholls (CAS), Dr. Gail Gehrig (CAS), and Dr. Ray Klump (CAS). These colleagues represent the diversity of our service learning course offerings, and we are grateful for the opportunity to work with so many different areas of study. Toward the end of the semester, we will be sending out a post-service learning survey to these classes. The results of these surveys last year were significant highlighting both the impact of service learning and areas in need of improvement. As an office, we look forward to continued partnerships with the community, faculty, staff and students to make service learning increasingly vital and efficacious.

Check us out on the Web! www.lewisu.edu/servicelearning

We are in the process of updating our website. The updates will make for easier navigation and will provide more resources. While we work on the structure, Dr. Robert Nulph, Associate Professor of Communications will be working on a copy of our newest promotional resource. We hope to make this 10 minute informational DVD available soon.

One exciting feature of the website is our Community Partner Database. This database houses all of our Community Partner contact and program information as well as current and past course information as it pertains to each partner. If you would like log-in information, please contact our office and we would be happy to share that with you. Once again, we would like to say thank you to Dr. Cindy Kersey and Software Engineering students who participated in the Service Learning component of this course during Spring 2011. They did a fantastic job building this database to serve our needs as an office as well as the broader needs of the Lewis Community.

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