

FYE Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

October 2006

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This issue reflects on the first service learning opportunity of the semester. The Day Of Caring with the United Way was held on September 9th. Most of the FYE seminars participated in the Day of Caring. The students, and their professors performed tasks including, but not limited to, painting fences, cleaning houses, and planting trees. All of the feedback about the Day of Caring has been positive. We even had some students “volunteer” to be a part of the Day of Caring that were not required to be there for class credit. This was largely due to the motivation of their peer mentors. The peer mentors deserve recognition on a job well done. These mentors have been a great help this semester. Four seminar instructors (Marquez, O’Neill, Stengel, and Catepillan) have taken the time to share their experiences, struggles, and successes in the articles below.

Graduate Assistant

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Kris Vitucci. I am the part-time Graduate Assistant for the General Education Office with Dr. Foster-Clark and assistant to Kathy Naegele-Delgado in the CAP office for coordinating FYE service learning opportunities. Service learning is an important part of the FYE seminars, although it can be an overwhelming task to envision, research, and implement a service learning activity. I am available to help any professor with their service learning activity for the FYE seminars this year. The best way to contact me is through email Goffasst2@millersville.edu and/or khvitucc@marauder.millersville.edu

IMPORTANT NEWS

- **Dealing with Diversity – Your Input Needed.** Several of us are working on a presentation to be shared at the upcoming AAC&U Diversity and Learning conference in Philadelphia on October 19th. Our mandate is to discuss how the first year learning communities contribute to their students’ confrontations with and learning about diversity. We would like to highlight some of the specific ways issues of diversity are being handled in the first-year learning communities. Please take a moment to send Fred Foster-Clark an email that describes the concrete ways students in your course – through readings, class exercises, writing assignments, service learning, etc. – confront diversity. Feel free to append attachments that may be relevant. To be most useful your contributions must be received by Friday, October 6.
- **Extension of the FYS/LC Initiative.** Faculty Senate will consider a request to extend the pilot-testing of the First Seminar/Learning Community program at its October 3rd meeting. Faculty members connected to the program are urged to attend and express your views. Meeting is at 4:00 pm in Osburn 200. If you can’t attend, please take the time to speak to your Department’s Senator and convey your sentiments.
- **Gen Ed Reform.** There will be a special open meeting of Faculty Senate on Tuesday, October 31, dedicated to consideration of new objectives and new curricular directions for the General Education program. This meeting will also be at 4:00 pm in Osburn 200.
- **Next Brown Bag Discussion.** The next Brown Bag Discussion devoted to learning communities and first-year programming will be held on Thursday, October 12, at 3:30 pm in Adams House. Please come to share your questions, concerns, and experiences and hear what other folks are doing in their LCs and seminars. This is also a great opportunity for faculty who are considering proposing a seminar to get some informal feedback about their ideas.
- **Commuter Issues.** At the last Brown Bag Discussion (on September 8) one of the concerns discussed involved the integration of commuter students into the living-learning communities which are strongly (by design) dorm-based. While a few ideas were shared, we’d like to hear from more people about their experiences and any ideas they have struck upon to help commuters feel more a part of the learning community. Related concerns were raised about students in the ENGL 110 or COMM 100 sections who aren’t part of the learning community that comprises most of the students in the section and about students who may be placed in dorms different from the one where the majority of students reside. Anyone with stories to share, advice to give, or techniques to consider are asked to send them on to Linda McDowell or Fred Foster-Clark so they can be compiled for the next Newsletter.

Service Learning/Day of Caring 2006

Scientific Revolutions: An Exploration of Method

by Lynn Marquez

I love the idea of service learning and am fascinated by the tales shared by colleagues who take their students to retirement homes and prisons and homeless shelters all in the name of the betterment of society, but I've often been perplexed at how I can pull off meaningful service learning in a science class. This summer I really became perplexed at how to pull off meaningful service learning for fifteen students in a class discussing the process of scientific revolutions. Then, like Archimedes in his bathtub (we just talked about the buoyancy principle in class) it hit me – use my colleagues!

The one fundamental concept that I want my students to understand is the process of science. What is scientific inquiry and how does it really work? I have approximately 80 colleagues in the School of Science and Math actively engaged in the scientific process and many of them are working for different civic and community organizations. So, I asked some of my colleagues if they needed some help with their research and they all graciously agreed to take on a few students. This semester I have four students working with Dr. John Wallace (biology) on a project for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental protection; five students are working with Dr. Kathleen Schreiber (geography) on a project monitoring stream chemistry and non-native species for the Lancaster County Conservancy; Dr. Alex DeCaria has agreed to take on some students for another project with the Conservancy mapping boundaries and trails. And then, a few students will work with me mapping Lancaster County geology to create a natural history for the Conservancy.

None of the students have yet completed their service learning experience, so I have yet to see their reflections, but so far all signs are good. One group has gone on their first field excursion. Initial feedback was positive. Another group is raring to go next week. We'll see what we all learn from this service learning experience.

Home and Homelessness Seminar

by Dan O'Neill

It is hard now to imagine teaching the Home and Homelessness Freshman Seminar without a Service Learning component. But I didn't always feel this way.

It was with some trepidation last year that I arranged for my class to participate in a series of Service Learning projects with agencies serving homeless men and women in Lancaster. I had found my group of students to be somewhat sheltered in their backgrounds, and to have surprisingly limited exposure to some of the social problems we would be discussing. Would the requirement of service learning add to their already fragile hold on their work and obligations? Getting settled in college, acclimated to dorm living, and meeting the standard of college work seemed to be using all their energy. Would this be too much?

I think, in all honesty, that I was also struggling with how involved I wanted to be. I was torn as I went over it again and again in my mind. Service Learning would force me to move out of my comfort zone. I would be working side-by-side with my students away from my familiar classroom or office. On the other hand, it would allow for more personal conversation and afford us all the chance to get to know each other better. On the other hand, it would take more time and that seemed in short supply already.

Some of my concerns were justified. Yes, service learning did demand more of my students and me—our time, our energy—and challenged us—our biases, our comfort zones. Was it worth it? Definitely. Many students identified the Service Learning projects as the element they liked the best about the seminar. I felt it was easier to talk about the crisis of affordable housing in Lancaster, and the concept of a living wage once the students had seen for themselves—if only briefly—children eating dinner at the Crispus Attucks shelter, or the surprisingly well-groomed and articulate men and women having breakfast at the Anchorage Breakfast program at St. James Episcopal Church. It confounded their expectations (“they don't look homeless”) and made our class discussion “real.” One student wrote to me at the end of the class to say that the “thing I liked most about this class was the feeling that I really helped people....*it made me feel like I made a difference.*”

Service learning, community service and a confession: The Facing Fear Seminar

by Barb Stengel

I'm a fan of service learning; we've been doing that for years in the teacher education program - disguised as field experience. The foundations bloc required for all certification candidates involves service to local schools (as a teacher's aide essentially) while also providing students with a window on school structure and teacher--student interaction. The service learning/field experience isn't enough by itself to prompt the kind of seeing and understanding we want students to develop, but when considered against the background of course concepts and theories, this service learning experience is very powerful. Because I understand that and value the learning that well-planned service experience can generate, I looked forward to developing a similar kind of service learning experience for my Facing Fear course.

When I first taught "Fear" last fall, I planned to ask students which of an array of social experiences cause them the most discomfort and then try to place students in locations that would move them out of their comfort zones. Well, I asked the students at our first class meeting and then tried to meet with Kathy Naegele-Delgado to make arrangements. I was way too late to do that complicated kind of arranging. And I realized that transportation for first year students to a host of different sites would be difficult to set up.

So last spring, in advance of teaching two sections this fall, I met with Kathy, trimmed my expectations, focused on two closely situated sites (a nursing home and a youth offender facility), asked students who came for orientation which would make them more uncomfortable, and spoke at length with the volunteer directors at each site about how we could make this a worthwhile experience for my students and for their residents, i.e. how we could make it truly be service learning as opposed to community service. The more I talked with the volunteer directors, the more I understood new hurdles. Any student working with youth in PA must have criminal clearances (the child abuse clearance requires about a month of lead time and costs \$20).

I hesitated to sacrifice class time (for orientation time at the sites). Both directors suggested that I work with my students to plan what they would do with the residents (young and old) each week. That meant more planning hours than I felt I had, and I didn't have the vision to figure out how to link it directly to the course content.

I haven't given up yet, but I do understand that, depending on the focus of your "passion course," coming up with a genuine service learning experience may be the biggest challenge you face in framing your course. The good news is that my students had a great time at the Day of Caring and, because they helped with Lancaster's Heritage Day festival downtown, most inadvertently experienced what I was hoping for -- an encounter with others who aren't the same as them in a space where they weren't (yet) completely comfortable. On balance, I'm glad I decided on a small step until I can figure out how to take a big one.

Culture, Science, and Mathematics in the Pre-Columbian Americas Seminar At the North Museum of Natural History & Science in Lancaster

by Ximena Catepillan

The students joined together for the Day of Caring to do community service at the North Museum of Natural History & Science in Lancaster. The students and professor of the seminar arrived at the museum at 9 am where they were greeted by the museum staff. After a short orientation the students were assigned all types of duties such as: Mulch work in the garden, painting the outside benches, cleaning the lecture-room chairs, painting one of the rooms, cleaning walls and doors, sweeping the sidewalks, and raking leaves.

At 11 am Deb Freisher, the Volunteer Coordinator, and Margie Marino, the Executive Director of the Museum, led the group on a museum tour. Once the group arrived at the space exploration site they watched the launching of the Atlantis Shuttle with great explanations from Mike Smith, the Senior Astronomy Educator.

The students will continue volunteering at the museum during the opening of "Natives of the Susquehanna" exhibition, the "Mad Science Weekend", and other jobs as needed.

The whole group enjoyed the experience, below are some of their comments:

- *"I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to participate in this Day of Caring, and I look forward to being very involved next year."*
- *"I think it is important for college students to give up some of their time to help out others."*

- *“At first I wasn’t crazy about the idea because I had to get up early and it made me not able to go out Friday night. But in the end when the day was over, I felt fresh and good about myself.”*
- *“It was a great experience at the North Museum and I think everyone should get involved!”*
- *“Volunteering at the North Museum is good and it makes sense for the class.”*
- *“At the beginning of the day I was totally against this idea. Once the time was over I realized that taking a course where community service is required is a good thing.”*
- *“I am looking forward to my next opportunity to help out.”*
- *“I had fun helping clean their museum and would like to again.”*
- *“It made me feel good about myself and the class.”*
- *“I feel that the Day of Caring was a good way to know classmates outside of school.”*
- *“I think that as freshman starting at a new school it was a good chance for us to get to know each other.”*
- *“I think I can really learn a lot by volunteering at the North museum.”*

October Events

Date	Event	Time	Location	Description
Monday 9/25/2006	Voting Rights Seminar	7 p.m.	Lehr Dining Room, Bolger Conference Center.	The Honorable, Pedro A. Cortés, Secretary of the Commonwealth, Department of State, The Honorable Pedro A. Cortés is the Secretary of the Commonwealth, appointed by Governor Edward G. Rendell, making him the first confirmed Latino Cabinet member in Pennsylvania history. Secretary Cortés will address the Voting Rights Act of 1964, the aspects of the Constitution that prohibit U.S. citizens in our territories from voting, the ramifications for the Latino community and other citizens of the Commonwealth. Sponsored by Latino Celebration Committee, Office of Social Equity & Diversity, Government Department, and Latino Studies Minor.
Wednesday 9/27/2006	Anxiety Screening Day	11 a.m.-1 p.m.	MU Counseling Center, Lyle Hall	Anxiety Screening Day is an opportunity for MU students to have a free screening for anxiety disorders. Participants will view a video, take an anxiety disorders screening test, have a confidential meeting with a mental health professional and receive educational materials. Further help is available for those dealing with serious anxiety.
Friday 9/29/2006-10/1/2006	Getaway Weekend	5 p.m. 9/29/2006 -5 p.m. 10/1/2006	Off campus	Since 1995, new students have journeyed to a campground in central PA to participate in a relationship building, leadership development experience led by upperclassman. Getaway Weekend is a relaxing; fun adventure that helps new students fit in at Millersville and develops confidence. Many surprise themselves and become student leaders. The cost is \$20 but \$5 will be returned to you on the bus trip to the camp. Sign up at the Activities Fair during Orientation sessions or at Organizational Outbreak. The bus leaves Friday at 5 p.m. and will return to campus by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

October Events (Continued)

Date	Event	Time	Location	Description
Friday 10/6/2006	Freedom of Information Act Lecture	7 p.m.	Myers Auditorium, McComsey Hall	Millersville University's Ganser Library is hosting Paula Knudsen, a speaker from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Pennsylvania with a lecture on "The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) at Forty: 1966-2006." In addition to the lecture, Ganser Library is hosting an interactive library exhibit called "40 years of Federal Documents" in the library reference section. This exhibit is on display until mid-November. Both events are free and open to the public. For further information contact Megan O'Malley, Science/Government Documents Librarian at 717-872-3617.
Saturday 10/7/2006	Into the Streets	10 a.m. -4 p.m.	Off Campus	Various campus groups and organizations come together to volunteer their time in Lancaster City for the day. Transportation, breakfast refreshments are provided. Into the Streets t-shirt are also given out. If you are interested in joining for the day, please come to the informational meeting on Sept 14th anytime from 5:30-7 p.m. in SMC room 43.
Saturday, 10/7/2006	Community Day	12 p.m. -5 p.m.	Chryst Field at Biemesderfer Stadium	Community Day 2006 at Millersville University is set for Saturday, October 7, beginning at noon. Millersville neighbors are invited to Chryst Field at Biemesderfer Stadium for this annual event of fun and football. The football game begins at 1 p.m. with the gates opening at noon. The Millersville Fire Company will have a fire safety booth, there will be a clown with balloons, a kids coloring contest, meet the mascot and lots of fun.
Wednesday 10/11/2006	Biology Seminar, "What's an Ecologist Doing in a War Zone? Science & Security in Iraq & Afghanistan."	4 p.m.	Caputo 210	Dr. Peter Smallwood, associate professor of biology at the University of Richmond with his presentation on "What's an Ecologist Doing in a War Zone? Science & Security in Iraq & Afghanistan."
Thursday 10/12/2006	FYE/LC Brown Bag	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Adams House	Center for Academic Excellence sponsored opportunity for informal faculty development and discussion. Topic TBA
Monday 10/16-Tuesday 10/17/2006	Fall Recess	N/A	N/A	Fall recess
Wednesday 10/18/2006	WI/SP07 undergraduate registration materials available	N/A	On campus	WI/SP07 undergraduate registration materials available

October Events (Continued)

Date	Event	Time	Location	Description
Wednesday 10/18/2006	Forum on Immigration in 21st Century	7 p.m.	Lehr Dining Room, Bolger Conference Center	Roger Rosenthal, Esq., Executive Director, Migrant Legal Action Program, and Dr. Clarence Maxwell, Assistant Professor of History at Millersville University Panelists will discuss current immigration issues relating to Latinos and other Afro-Caribbean immigrants. Sponsored by Latino Celebration Committee, Office of Social Equity & Diversity and the History Department.
Wednesday 10/25/2006	WI07 registration begins for all eligible students	Unspecified	N/A	Winter 07 registration begins for all eligible students
Wednesday 10/25/2006	"Biological Characterization and Habit Mapping at the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctu-	4 p.m.	Caputo 210	Dr. Douglas Weaver, a marine biologist and GIS Specialist from NOAA with his presentation on "Biological Characterization and Habit Mapping at the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary."
Thursday 10/26/2006	Cultural Showcase	6-8:30 p.m.	MPR, SMC (SMC)	This event is highlighted by foods, a fashion show and dancing from around the world. MU students, staff, faculty and alumni do all performances.
Saturday 10/28- Sunday 10/29/2006	Homecoming		On Campus	Homecoming