

CTE NOTEBOOK

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“Service Learning”

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Reinert CTE Mission Statement

The mission of the Paul C. Reinert, S.J. Center for Teaching Excellence is to support Saint Louis University faculty and graduate students so that they can better serve the intellectual, spiritual, and social needs of all learners.

The Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence

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Learning Leadership Through Service

Dr. Ron Modras, Theological Studies

Although we may not have committed them to memory, most of us are familiar by now with the so-called “five dimensions” of the Saint Louis University experience – scholarship and knowledge, intellectual inquiry and communication, community building, leadership and service, spirituality and values.

The department of theological studies in which I teach has made it a policy that all syllabi for our courses frame their learning outcomes by using the five dimensions as a template. Not every individual course is expected to hit all five dimensions. But the department considers itself obliged to reflecting all of them within its total curricular program. I should think that every department would consider itself similarly obliged, lest the University be guilty of false advertising. But fulfilling that contractual obligation can be more challenging than it may at first appear.

There is no problem fulfilling the first two dimensions. Imparting scholarship and knowledge, honing skills of intellectual inquiry and communication – that’s what we academics do. We can do community building without much difficulty too, teaching respect for human dignity and an appreciation for diversity. Even teaching spirituality and values is not too much a challenge; even faculty in the hard sciences can discuss the values behind their discipline’s professional ethics.

But leadership and service – is something else altogether. Certainly the Office of Student Life and its Center for Leadership and Community

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help the University to justify its leadership claims, as does Campus Ministry. Our students, at least those living on campus, have any number of opportunities to learn leadership skills through a host of organizations and service projects. But is leadership-learning something undergraduates get only in their co-curricular life. Don't we on the academic side of the curricular divide have obligations (and opportunities!) here as well?

I find the only way I can impart leadership skills to my students is by having them do service learning. I make fifteen hours of service a requirement in a course I teach on Ignatian Humanism. Students select a site from the many offered by the Service Learning unit at the Center for Teaching Excellence. Although a number of students are already involved in service, many of them are missing the reflection component of their service that is essential for a complete service learning experience.

I find it gratifying to hear these young adults relate to the class how embarrassed they were when someone first told them, "you are a miracle-worker" or "you are a God-send." Or how humbled they are by the realization that they have been gifted and therefore have something to give. Or that they are privileged and have the responsibilities that go with privilege. They learn first-hand about problems like poor schools, poverty, homelessness, spousal abuse, racism, ageism, and health care. And after a while they begin asking about and analyzing the socio-economic causes of those problems, an essential component of leadership.

A number of my colleagues in theology use service learning as a way of teaching leadership skills. And a number of other departments and schools do as well. But, unless I'm mistaken, the vast majority of departments do not. I am curious how those other departments impart the leadership skills that the University says are part of the SLU experience. There may be other ways, but I don't know them, and I don't think there is a better way. I recommend it most highly.

The Office of the Provost
Undergraduate Initiatives &
The Reinert Center for Teaching
Excellence present

Understanding Millennial Students: Strategies to Address the Needs of Today's Students

with
Richard Sweeny
University Librarian at
New Jersey Institute of
Technology

**Tuesday, May 15th 2007
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
BSC Room 170**

Register online at
<http://fyp.slu.edu>

Annual Faculty Development Portfolio Retreat

The Annual Faculty Development Portfolio Retreat sponsored by the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence is for non-tenured, full time faculty and has a central theme of “Building Your Academic Portfolio.” The workshop was presented by Dr. Marilyn Miller, former director of the University Missouri Program for Excellence in Teaching and currently an educational specialist with the United States Department of Agriculture. The retreat continues to be very well received by the faculty participants. The

2007 participants worked to develop strategies for documenting good teaching, research and service in preparation for the promotion and tenure review process. The retreat also provided faculty with an opportunity to come together across disciplines as a teaching community for conversation and mentoring. All participants left the retreat with at least an initial draft of their academic portfolio. Look for opportunities to participate in the retreat in spring 2008.

2007 Portfolio Retreat Participants



From Left to Right: James A. Sebesta, S.J., Aviation Science; Kathryn Pole, Educational Studies; Tricia Austin, Physical Therapy; Marilyn Miller, Facilitator; Debra Davidson, Occupational Science/Occupational Therapy; Candace Martinez, International Business; Beth Hill, Center for Teaching Excellence; Andrew Brimhall, Counseling and Family Therapy; Angie Beatty, Communication; Margaret Perkinson, Occupational Therapy



Remembering Some Key Elements of Service Learning

Gail Herzog,
Director of Service Learning,

As we wrap up our first year of Service-Learning under the new foundational structure of collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, there are a few essentials to review and highlight. Often the lines are blurred between curricular and co-curricular service activities, and while certainly learning can occur whenever the learner is ready, there are some differences to summarize, as highlighted by service-learning expert, Andrew Furco for the Corporation for National Service.

Service-Learning (S-L) is different from **Volunteerism** where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the primary intended beneficiary is clearly the service recipient. S-L is different from **Community Service** where the primary focus is on the service being provided as well as the benefits the service activities have on the recipients. The students receive some benefits by learning more and more about how their service makes a difference. S-L is different from **internships** that engage students in service activities primarily for the purpose of providing students with hands-on experiences that enhance their learning or understanding of issues relevant to a particular area of study. S-L is different from **Field Education** that provide students with co-curricular service opportunities that are related, but not fully integrated, with their formal academic studies. Students perform the service as a part of a program that is designed primarily to enhance students'

understanding of a field of study, while also providing substantial emphasis on the service being provided.

Service-learning **syllabi** must clearly explain the role of service in the course, demonstrate how service connects to course content, clarify why service is the pedagogy of choice, and describe what the service component will entail. SLU faculty can clearly link the benefits of service-learning with the Five Dimensions of the SLU experience where service and leadership, along with community building are integral parts of the mission of our Jesuit University.

To be considered service-learning there are several **elements** that should be included in the experience. Students must provide a meaningful and needed service to the community identified and asked for by the community, with the connections between the course objectives and service activities being clearly conceptualized and articulated. Faculty must guide students in understanding the relevancy of their work in the community to the course objectives and provide opportunities for students to reflect upon their experiences in a variety of mediums. Disciplinary knowledge informs the work done by students in the community, and classroom activities allow students to learn from each other as well as the instructor. Ideally, the relationships between the University and community site must strive to be a reciprocal partnership. We are working towards establishing a true collaborative partnership where students, faculty and staff, and community partners all work together with mutuality and reciprocity for the common good.



The Technology Corner

Sandy Gambill, Program Director for Learning Technology

Most parents and educators understand that today's generation live and breath technology. The tragedy at Virginia Tech has brought into sharp focus exactly how young people are using technology to tell the story of their daily lives through social networking websites such as MySpace and Facebook, as dozens of sites sprung up featuring videos, photos and other forms of tribute to the fallen students.

The April 18, 2007 edition of *The News Hour* featured a provocative overview on this digital story telling phenomenon. (See resources to watch the story online.) Andrew Nachison of the Institute for the Connected Society, who has interviewed, pointed out that "Young people do this intuitively and naturally without thinking about it, without a sense of wonder, when they send a text message, or they send an e-mail, or they shoot a video, or they post a message to their friends on MySpace."

Since reflection is an element of story telling, perhaps we can harness this technology use to help students develop the service learning reflections. Here are some suggestions to help students document, organize, and ultimately, reflect.

1. Rare is the student who doesn't have a digital camera or camera phone. Whether or not this is appropriate will depend upon their given service learning assignment, but photographs can be a useful tool to help document experiences for later reflection. Make sure the student understands that if they will be photographing people (especially children!) they need to ask permission and may need to get a signed release form. Photographs can be incorporated into a PowerPoint presentation, or turned into a resource like this photo essay created by Micah House students: <http://www.slu.edu/outreach/micah/essays.html>

2. Many students can shoot and edit digital video. Again, they might use video to document their experiences (see caveats in above in the photography section) or use video to keep a "diary" of their thoughts and feelings.

3. Ask students to keep a blog (see the resource section) as a reflective journal. Additionally videos and photos might be posted on the blog.

4. Ask students to create an ongoing podcast concerning their experiences. Podcasts are easy to create through services such as Gabcast, and can be posted directly onto a blog.

Resources: News Hour Story: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/science/jan-june07/vatech_04-18.html

A Blogging Primer: <http://cte.slu.edu/t/dec06lt.html>; Gabcast: <http://gabcast.com>

Call for Nominations

2007 James H. Korn Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award

The Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence is pleased to invite nominations for the 2007 James H. Korn Scholarship of Teaching and Learning award.

Criteria for award:

- Must be current full-time faculty member at SLU. Note: a team of individuals or a department may be nominated as long as at least one member of team is currently a full-time faculty member at SLU.
- Nominees have conducted research on teaching and student learning.
- Results of research were disseminated to peers through means such as publication, conference presentation or poster session, invited presentation, departmental or school symposium.
- Nominee is willing to present the research results at the CTE Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) symposium to be held in Fall 2007.
- Self-nominations are acceptable.

To Nominate:

Please email nomination information to:
Mary Stephen (Stephen@slu.edu),
Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence,
Verhaegen 315 by May 11, 2007

Nomination Information:

Name(s) & contact information of nominee(s)
Email address and academic department
Briefly describe the nominee's scholarly work
Your Name & contact information

Please provide sufficient detail to allow selection committee to determine whether or not to include nominee(s) in the group of finalists for the award. Finalists will be asked to provide additional detailed information on the project.

CTE 10 Year Anniversary Speaker Series

Coming This Fall...

Robert Bringle, Ph.D.,

Director of the Center for Service
and Learning
Indiana University Purdue
University, Indianapolis

Tom Reeves,

Professor Instructional Technology
University of Georgia

CADE Course Design Workshop

May 21 – June 30, 2007

The workshop is free and entirely online, and participants must be able to devote about 90 hours for the workshop's discussions, readings and assignments. Participants will design an on-campus or online course that will be subsequently taught.

Completed applications should be sent to your JesuitNET representative at: (<http://www.ajcunet.edu/distanceeducation.aspx?bid=595>) for review and emailed to vigilante@ajcunet.edu by May 4.

Pedagogy, Technology and Course Redesign VII: Fairfield University

June 6-8, 2007

The conference brochure and registration information can be found at: <http://www.fairfield.edu/x17837.html>.

If you have questions about the conference contact Cynthia Delventhal, at (203) 254-4000, ext. 2876, or by e-mail at cae@mail.fairfield.edu.



Service
Learning
Volunteers
at
Camp
Beckwith

Back Row (left to right): Zach Zaubi, Greg Vukelic, Teresa Ogrinc, Brian Reilly, Rick Sadowski, Kara O'Malley.
Front Row (left to right): Catherine Lamb, Meg Welsh, Carolyn Batzel, Tricia Wong, Michelle Place, Maureen Cutrera

Service Learning on Spring Break

By:
Rick Sadowski,
Kara O'Malley & Brian Reilly

As we stepped on to the sand at the Gulf of Mexico, the twelve of us saw that we were the only ones on the entire beach. It was 6 a.m., and we had come to see the sun rise. What we found was much more: the vastness and immensity of the ocean coupled with the fierce pre-dawn winds combined to make us aware of how powerless we were against nature's fury. This same ocean was the one that Hurricane Katrina had come through eighteen months ago and destroyed much of the central Gulf coast. Although we were twelve college students on Spring Break we were not at the Gulf to spend a week relaxing at the beach; instead we were there to help with the ongoing recovery effort.

When thinking about Spring Break this year a group of us decided that we not only wanted to have fun and relax with each other, but we also wanted to make a difference. After contacting several organizations in need, twelve of us ended up driving two mini-vans 600 miles down to Mobile, Alabama to do service work at Camp Beckwith. Camp Beckwith is an Episcopal non-profit camp and retreat center which was still suffering from the effects of Hurricane Katrina.

Despite not knowing exactly what type of service we were going to be doing, we were all eager to get to work. We met with one of the directors of the camp. He told us what he had lined up for us. Our main goal was to clean up the storage space that had been flooded by the hurricane. We were anxious and excited. Over the next week we lifted, we moved,

we swept, we washed, we cleaned...and you know what? It was easy. The work itself was physically demanding and the hours we worked were long, but the bonding we experienced and the satisfaction of making a difference made helping out so easy.

We learned to work with each other and found that the twelve of us working together could accomplish things much faster than we could have individually. Not only could we get the work done faster together, but also the encouragement and camaraderie we shared made the load much lighter.

As we completed each task, some of the retreat tenants staying at the camp started to notice of all the work we had done. One woman went as far to say that we were "miracle workers". As sophomores in college, we were a little taken aback by this compliment. After all, we were just moving dirt, throwing out trash, and doing a little cleaning, which doesn't really sound like anything too meaningful. But in retrospect, there may have been something to what that woman had said. Although we were not "miracle workers," there was definitely some sort of divine intervention at work in what we doing. We aren't exceptional people, but we were doing exceptional things.

The decision to step out of daily life and help out other people is a profound one. It is profoundly important, but at the same time it's profoundly simple. Although we volunteered with the mindset of helping the camp after hurricane Katrina, the lessons we learned that spring break made the experience equally rewarding for us.

This reflective piece comes from students of Dr. Modras. They are reflecting on a service learning component of his course.



From the Director

The theme of this edition of *The Notebook* is service learning. Included in this edition are reflections on service learning from both faculty and student perspectives. Gail Herzog, program director for Service Learning, discusses the distinction between service learning and volunteerism, and Sandy Gambill, program director for learning technologies, suggests some ways technology might be incorporated into reflection.

In January 2006, Gail Herzog joined the CTE staff as program director for service learning. The creation of Gail's position resulted from a collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to increase support for service learning on campus and to increase the number of classes integrating service learning into curricula. Our focus on service learning in this edition provides an opportunity to highlight accomplishments brought about through this collaboration.

Gail and her partner in Student Affairs, Bobby Wassel, have produced some remarkable results in a short time. They have been assisted in planning by faculty fellow, Mary Domahidy, Ph.D., and service learning intern, Meredith Hoog. Accomplishments include a survey of community organizations to identify potential community partners; development of a website (<http://servicelearning.slu.edu>) that includes a wealth of information on community partners, service learning, and specific examples from Saint Louis University faculty; sessions that have brought faculty and community partners together to build partnerships; membership in Campus Compact; symposium by Cathy Burek, Ph.D., nationally recognized authority on service learning; creation of a service learning advisory board and a service learning recognition reception. The service learning team has visited numerous classes to talk about service learning and reflection, visited various community sites, and engaged in many consultations with faculty members interested in service learning.

The service learning team plans to offer a workshop this summer for faculty members interested in integrating service learning into their classes. In the coming year, Robert Bringle, Ph.D., director of the Center for Service and Learning at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis will be a featured speaker as part of CTE's anniversary speaker series, and a research study to identify service learning models used at Saint Louis University will be conducted. Please contact Gail Herzog (herzog@slu.edu) if you want to learn more about service learning activities and ways to incorporate service learning into your teaching.

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