

# SYNERGY

SEPTEMBER 2009



## *Service-Learning: A Collaboration Success Story*

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**G**reetings and welcome to the inaugural issue of our newsletter. We wanted to take a moment to introduce ourselves so that you can place a name with a face. My name is Dr. Christopher Lewis and I am the National Chair for the SAPAA Knowledge Community (KC). I am the Director of Enrollment Programs and Student Services at the Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan. I was one of the original National Chairs of the KC when it started back in 2002 and have been very involved ever since and am excited to be back in the top leadership role again. Leigh Remy is the Vice Chair of SAPAA as well as Class Dean at Dartmouth College. Leigh recently was the Region 1 Representative for SAPAA, and I am very excited to have her serving with me in her new capacity.

We have many goals set this year that can be found on the SAPAA website and I hope that you will examine these to get a better understanding of what SAPAA is all about. We also want you to know that SAPAA is here for you, its' members. We are always looking for feedback and ideas about how we might be able to better meet your needs in regards to examining issues surrounding Academic and Student Affairs Partnerships. With this in mind we hope that you will feel comfortable contacting either of us with your ideas, questions or concerns as we move forward.

The SAPAA KC is also governed and led by people just like you. Thus, we are always looking for people who are interested in getting further involved. Whether this means volunteering to be a reviewer of programs for the national conference, volunteering to serve on one of our committees, serving your regional SAPAA representative, or through some other way, we are looking and need you to step forward to help lead the KC into the future. If you may be interested in finding out more about getting involved, please contact either of us and we will find ways to connect you with opportunities.

We are very excited to have this new piece of knowledge available for all of our members and for the entire profession. Over the next year this newsletter will be focusing on many of the main topical areas that the SAPAA Knowledge Community stands for and are working on. We hope that you also will find the information provided helpful in your own professional practice. We encourage you to consider writing an article for a future newsletter as well as we are always looking for writers to share their thoughts, ideas and experiences with others interested in Student and Academic Affairs Partnerships.

Thank you for your interest in SAPAA! We have a ton of great things planned over the next year so we hope that you all will continue with us on this ride. We look forward to having you involved in the near future within the KC.

Sincerely,



Christopher Lewis, Ed.D.  
SAPAA KC National Chair

Leigh Remy  
SAPAA KC Vice Chair

# FEATURE ARTICLE

Grand Valley State students helping a local elementary school with a Halloween party.



## *Service-Learning:*

### *A Collaboration Success Story* written by: Chad E. Garland

The benefits that can occur when student and academic affairs work together are well documented (Banta & Kuh, 1998; Schroeder 1999). Whether it's collaborating together on first year programs, living-learning communities, or even university-wide assessment projects, there is little debate that such collaborations tend to have significant and positive outcomes. Growing out of a desire to renew the civic mission of our institutes and maximize student success, service-learning initiatives have come to exemplify what a successful collaboration can achieve. Studies have documented the positive impact of service-learning on academic performance (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999) including application of new knowledge, critical thinking skills, and their problem analysis (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001). In addition, service-learning courses and programs have been shown to have a positive impact on attitudes towards civic responsibility, the ability to impact one's community, and overall community involvement (Eyler & Giles, 1999; VanHecke, 2006).



University of Maryland students and faculty helping with a tree planting initiative for Earth Day.

Collaborations and partnerships in service-learning can be as unique as the individuals involved with them. Depending on the type of service experience desired, the intended outcomes, and logistical elements, the degree of collaboration for a project will vary. Even though each individual partnership may be unique, most

service-learning projects can be categorized as a clearinghouse project, 'service as text' activity, or an integrated service experience (Engstrom, 2003). Each category can have its own benefits and hurdles.

Clearinghouse activities have little collaboration between the faculty and student affairs, with most interaction occurring through the sharing of resources that may or may not always be helpful. The clearinghouse or community service office provides general support such as presenting workshops to classes and assisting students on finding experiences related to their class needs. The office might also provide agency information directly to a faculty member who coordinates their own experience or provide some basic information on including service-learning experiences in their courses.

Some service-learning projects are planned specifically to add onto a student's learning experience in a course and has been referred to as 'service as text.' These activities view the service project as if it were a course text that could be added into the course to supplement the classroom experience. Activities of this type are often offered as optional experiences and some institutes have even awarded additional credit hours for completing the service component. Planning such activities tend to require more collaboration between academic and student. Faculty and staff must work closely to assist students in identifying experiences that fit the course material and insuring there is a common set of shared learning outcomes used for reflecting on their experience with staff or writing an essay for their professor.

The final category, the integrated service experience, differs from the first two in that it involves a focus on student learning beyond just a single class or course for the most part. Integrated experiences are large scale commitments on the part of certain faculty or even a department that tend to include long term commitments to local service sites and community agencies. Courses and class syllabi are normally designed around the service opportunities and student affairs staff, faculty, and community agency partners meet regularly to set learning goals and outcomes, discuss curriculum, and assess progress. Students are often included in the collaboration as well.

Collaborations in service-learning are only as successful as the foundation they are built upon. Although every collaboration can be unique, there are some basic things to consider when building a foundation for your partnership:

**Take time to get to know everyone and learn who brings what to the table.** Knowing what motivates others, their skills sets, and how they prefer to communicate can go a long way towards helping things go smoothly or working through issues that may arise. This is why we often see a progression where faculty and staff will begin work together on a clearinghouse project and gradually work towards a more integrated experience once they are more familiar with one another.

**Outline specific learning outcomes and expectations.** The learning outcomes and expectations are like a map for your initiative. They provide direction and instruction for getting to your destination and the more specific and defined the instructions are, the easier it will be to get everyone there.

**Clearly define each collaborator's role in the project.** Having defined roles allows individuals to be accountable for their work and increases efficiency in the process. It also provides the opportunity to match people with certain skills to the proper task or provide opportunities of growth for those interested.

**Plan your assessment at the beginning.** If you have clearly identified your learning outcomes, designing your assessment early should not be an issue. Knowing how you plan to assess your project can often help in designing the experience. Plus on-going assessment allows faculty and staff to review progress and collaborate on any necessary changes as they might be needed versus waiting until the end.

Although more work is needed to insure a successful collaboration in service-learning, such as open and honest communication or continual review of dynamic learning outcomes, these suggestions will help get the partnership started in a positive direction. Building collaborative projects can be contagious and each year service-learning continues to grow and become more institutionalized at our colleges and universities. Collaborations that began around a single class have often blossomed into university wide commitments to service-learning, centers to assist in developing service-learning courses, or even significant curriculum reformation. This positive track record for service-learning over the years has resulted in a large amount of success stories truly demonstrating the benefits when student and academic affairs collaborate. There are probably several stories right on your own campus, seek them out and find out what has made them a success! ■

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About the Author: Chad Garland has several years of experience collaborating with faculty on service learning courses and initiatives at Grand Valley State University and the University of Maryland – College Park. He currently works in Residence Life at Central Michigan University and serves on the university service-learning taskforce while working on his Ph.D. in Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education (HALE) at Michigan State University.



Grand Valley students cleaning up a playground area in a local park.



# ***Make a Difference***

*Tap Your Partnership Resources for Effective Service Programs  
by Marguerite Bonous-Hammarth, Ph.D*

UCI Summer Transfer Institute participants display poster boards with the community service action plans developed during their residential program at UC Irvine.

The unprecedented 13,000 service projects that were completed nationally as part of this year's King Day of Service – a 162-percent increase from those reported last year on the event's website (<http://www.mlkd.gov/>) – serve as testament to the evolving interests among individuals to take action to benefit their communities. The record number of projects that honored King's legacy and his motivating words that “anyone can lead,” also remind educators about the importance of drawing upon the power of their partnerships – across their campuses and beyond – to improve their community engagement and service learning efforts.

That spirit of partnership has been the foundation for two new initiatives at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), using collaborations to inspire new generations of students to develop as social change agents.

An inaugural class of UCI Summer Transfer Institute participants included nearly 60 community college students from El Camino College, El Camino College - Compton Community Educational Center, Long Beach City College, Irvine Valley College and Rio Hondo College with a mission to learn about UCI educational opportunities while tackling issues of relevance to them and their regional neighborhoods. The group examined volunteerism and activism based on a Social Change Model of Leadership Development, a values-based model developed by UCLA professors Alexander W. Astin and Helen S. Astin and an ensemble research team.

“A service program like this is truly a collaborative endeavor and benefits us all,” said Henry Gee, Vice President of Student Services at Rio Hondo College, and a major partner in the initiative. “Our colleges gain by helping the many first generation students from our community to launch their engagement and passion in ways that have real-life relevancy, and our communities benefit from students and higher education partners who are motivated to give back and help those in their home communities.”

The residential Institute exposed students to service learning concepts, historical study of major activist movements in the US, approaches to inquiry, and practical strategies for community volunteerism. The program culminated in group work and presentations on action plans that students will use to address such social issues as educational preparation and neighborhood safety when they return to course-taking at their respective community colleges this fall.

“The pro-active roles that our students envision as part of their next steps beyond this Institute illustrate the ways in which we want them to help our college to connect at a deeper level to neighborhood needs. I’m interested in working with these students – some students in particular who proposed a peer counseling club – to implement these programs at the Compton Center,” said Keith Curry, Dean of Student Affairs at El Camino-Compton Community Educational Center, and another major partner in the community collaborative.

While Institute participants remain connected to UCI through partnership events and programs, a new Minor in Civic and Community Engagement provides undergraduates with an additional way to extend their service directly from their UCI home turf. Thirty-nine students have already registered for an “Introduction to Civic and Community Engagement” class this fall, one of three required courses for the minor. Students in the program also complete a primer on conducting community-based research as another required course, community-based internships, and four to five elective courses that highlight such themes as environmental stewardship, educational equity, health and communities, public history, art and culture, global citizenship, social justice, and leadership and public policy. The minor, which was developed with active involvement from Student Affairs, is open to any undergraduate regardless of academic major, since social and environmental issues weave through all disciplines.

Students for the minor are required to complete at least 100 hours of service from approved offerings that are coordinated to build on their extensive involvement in campus outreach activities – with undergraduates at last count involved in over 450 student clubs and organizations and a growing list of diverse community agencies coordinated through the Center for Service in Action in Student Affairs. The minor is designed to place service in a broader academic context so, for example, students not only tutor elementary school youth after school, but they also learn about educational inequalities, child development, and educational theory while participating in their related internships and academic courses.

“While there are certainly other colleges and universities with longer histories of service learning in the curriculum, this program gives our students experiences and skills in doing community-based work in so many places – not just in traditional areas like nursing, public health and education – but also in fields such as computer science, biology, and others. The minor also emphasizes the role of community-based research through our partnerships, reflecting our priorities as a research university and our university’s commitment to institutionalize engagement, which is very impressive given these hard budget times,” said Kristen Day, Professor of Planning, Policy and Design and Faculty Director for the minor.

Day, recently named as Director of Engagement for the campus, chairs a standing committee of faculty, administrators and students focused on civic engagement. The campus wide effort aims to implement strategies that broaden community engagement, tie existing UCI student volunteerism more closely to the academic curriculum, and help individuals from the community to connect more easily to UCI programs and services.

Although educators nationally and internationally now face budget landscapes that make deeper levels of collaboration and creativity the norm to design, implement and sustain our service learning programs for the greatest impact, they also have resources within and across their institutions to promote sharing best practices, tips and tools in these important learning areas. The Knowledge Community (KC) for Student Affairs Partnering with Academic Affairs (SAPAA) provides NASPA colleagues with avenues to connect professionally. [The SAPAA KC is issuing a call](#) via this newsletter for colleagues to draw upon resources already shared on the website (<http://www.naspa.org/>) and to contribute their latest best practices, references and citations, and other news about Student Affairs and Academic Affairs collaborations to inform and support NASPA membership. Please submit contributions to Marguerite Bonous-Hammarth at [mbonoush@uci.edu](mailto:mbonoush@uci.edu) and SAPAA will post ongoing updates to the website. ■

Marguerite Bonous-Hammarth is a Researcher in Residence for the University of California, Irvine.

# *Changing with the Times*

## ***SAPAA Name Change***

Over the past few months SAPAA has been considering a name change so that it better reflects the mission of the Knowledge Community (KC) as well as allows the KC to remain inclusive of all NASPA current and prospective members. Currently the acronym SAPAA stands for: Student Affairs Professionals Working In and With Academic Affairs. We have been hearing from numerous individuals that this name is limiting and potentially prohibits some from feeling like they should belong to the KC itself. The current name also is a remnant of the past where at first when the KC was established, it was focused on Student Affairs Professionals who were working in or with Academic Affairs.

Over the years the vision and mission of the KC has broadened to look at Student and Academic Affairs Partnerships in General. Thus, after considering these options as well as listening to feedback from both the leadership team and our current SAPAA members, we have asked the NASPA board to approve a name change for the KC to: Student Affairs Partnering With Academic Affairs. The acronym SAPAA will continue being used, but as you can see this name provides the KC more flexibility to focus on the myriad of issues that examine this topical area. We also hope that this name change will encourage more NASPA members to join, allowing the KC to remain one of the largest in NASPA. ■

Christopher Lewis and Leigh Remy

# SYNERGY

SEPTEMBER 2009

## Welcome to the first SAPAA newsletter!

**Synergy** : The interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects. (taken from answers.com)

I am excited to share with you the first issue of the SAPAA Knowledge Community Newsletter. We have chosen to call this newsletter “Synergy” to reflect the knowledge that both student affairs and academic affairs bring to institutional collaborations, resulting in more holistic and thoughtful learning experiences for students. The newsletter will reflect themes chosen by the SAPAA KC Leadership team with Service Learning as the September theme.

We are always seeking contributions, ideas and feedback to the newsletter, which can be submitted to [lorrbrow@iupui.edu](mailto:lorrbrow@iupui.edu).

--Lorrie Brown, National Communications Committee Chair for the SAPAA KC

### Article Submission Guidelines (adapted from the MMKC)

1. Articles should be between 300 and 1500 words.
2. All articles should be relevant to the mission and purpose of the SAPAA Knowledge Community and are encouraged to address the theme of the newsletter for the current issue.
3. Articles should include the name of the author, job title, and school affiliation, as well as any information on why the author has interest or expertise in the topic.

4. Anyone with an article that is time sensitive may be referred to the technology chair to ensure timeliness of publication.
5. References must be cited in APA format.
6. Please take the time to proof and edit the article. It may be edited for length.
7. All work should be saved in .doc (Word) format.
8. Photos and artwork are highly encouraged and should be sent in high resolution .jpg files.
9. All submissions must be sent to [lorrbrow@iupui.edu](mailto:lorrbrow@iupui.edu) by the due dates below in order to be included in an issue.

#### NEWSLETTER THEMES

- SEPTEMBER: Service Learning
- NOVEMBER: Making Connections (with a special focus on Graduate and Professional Programs)
- FEBRUARY: Global / Sustainable Connections and NASPA conference issue
- APRIL: Crisis Intervention Teams
- JUNE: Freshman/First Year Student Advising

#### SUBMISSION DUE DATES

November: October 23rd      April: March 26th  
February: January 22nd      June: May 21st

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