

Project FOCUS (Fostering Our Community's Understanding of Science) partners UGA science majors, both graduate and undergraduate students in the **College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences**, with local elementary school teachers. UGA students spend 40 hours each semester in the elementary school, helping to teach science. There are a number of goals for the program, including improvement of the science experience for elementary school children through relevant, hands-on experiences; improving the content knowledge and confidence of local elementary teachers to bring about sustained, positive changes in how they approach science; develop a sense of community involvement for UGA students; and enhance the communication and leadership skills of UGA students.

The capstone course in the **Institute for Women's Studies** has a service-learning component. The class, *Integration of Theory and Practice*, is intended for senior women's studies majors to help them integrate the knowledge they have gained throughout their studies, with a focus on how theory can inform our day-to-day activism and advocacy. In past years, the class has taken a service-learning approach by having students plan the annual community "Take Back The Night" event. Future classes may repeat that experience or may go in different directions, depending on the needs of the students, instructor, and the community.

Burn Camp provides master's students in the **School of Social Work** with a dynamic educational opportunity where they learn social work values as well as essential life lessons in an intensive week working with burn-injured children. Since 2000 when the first group of students signed up for this experimental course, more than 100 MSW students have participated in burn camp. While the focus going into the experience is typically on the children themselves, the greater learning for many of the students has been on cultural awareness, gender issues, tolerance, social divisions, organizational and community development and group dynamics.

The Institute for Leadership Advancement within the **Terry College of Business** offers a course titled *Leading from Within*, which examines leadership in business organizations. This course focuses mainly on leading and developing others in organizational settings through a servant leadership framework. While in this course, students in the Leadership Scholars Program begin working on their Youth and Community Leadership Assembly (YCLA) Projects. The Institute has taken advantage of strong relationships with six non-profit organizations throughout the state to create challenging and meaningful projects for each team. There are four expected outcomes of the YCLA: to develop and implement a meaningful project in collaboration with the leadership of a community service organization, to build effective teams and learn about team work, to identify and practice project management skills, and to present project deliverables and results to the client.

For more information about the Service-Learning Initiative at the University of Georgia, contact Dr. Art Dunning, Vice President for Public Service and Outreach at adunning@uga.edu or at 706-542-3352

SERVICE-LEARNING

chronology

The University of Georgia

Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach

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Background leading up to current initiative

Over the years, The University of Georgia (UGA) has spent considerable time and effort examining the degree of student engagement on the campus. Observations, qualitative and quantitative data, and recommendations on issues of UGA student engagement are included in a number of UGA documents including

- The proceedings of the 1999 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium entitled, *Citizen Scholars: Engaging Students with their Communities*;
- The Final Report of the President's Task Force for the Quality of the Undergraduate Experience (1997);
- The Executive Summary of the 1999-2000 University of Georgia Self-Study entitled, *Creating a Climate of Inquiry: The Undergraduate Experience at a Public Research University and its Relationship to the University's Mission*; and,
- The 2000 UGA Institutional Strategic Plan.

2002

During the 2002-2003 academic year, the Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach partnered with the Office of the Vice President for Instruction and charged a Service-Learning Committee to examine ways to increase opportunities for UGA's students to become more engaged in learning through experiential activities in their community. The committee proposed a variety of activities and programs for the campus in a report that was submitted to the provost in May 2003. The proposal, *Increasing Learning Opportunities for UGA Students: Linking Academic Study and Civic Engagement*, included a number of recommendations that have since been implemented.

2003

In Spring of 2003, The University of Georgia was one of 437 colleges and universities across the country to participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The survey gathers information about the academic experience of undergraduate students. At UGA, 3000 undergraduates — 1500 first-year students and 1500 seniors — were randomly selected to participate in a web version and slightly less than one-third responded. The final report of the NSSE steering committee recommended that the University focus on two of the six themes that were identified in the survey results. The committee proposed a campus-wide focus on *Learning by Writing and Learning by Doing* that includes

- To **continue the dialogue** that has been begun as a result of UGA's participation in the NSSE and FSSE and to expand the level of engagement on campus;

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- To **support the UGA Strategic Plan** Direction 1, “Building the New Learning Environment,” which notes that “the ultimate measure of UGA resides in the quality of its teaching and learning.”;
- To **identify the Best Practices** for writing and service-learning;
- To develop more and better ways to **support and encourage writing** in all disciplines and across all schools and colleges;
- To **expand and support** more opportunities for faculty to incorporate **service-learning** into their classes;
- To **map writing and service-learning opportunities** that exist across campus in programs in Student Affairs, as well as in UGA's regular classrooms; and
- To **develop and support campus-wide partnerships and collaborations** which encourage the sharing of expertise and resources related to all of the NSSE themes.

2004

A **service-learning interest group** was formed in January 2004. The group, which meets once per month, is open to all interested faculty members and graduate students.

A **service-learning web-site** was developed by staff in the Office of Instructional Support and Development

A **Seed-Grant Program** was established in Fall 2004 by the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach that encourages service-learning projects.

2005

The 2005 Annual Public Service and Outreach Conference focused on service-learning. **Service-Learning: Linking Academic Study, Civic Engagement, and Scholarship** was held on Thursday, January 27, 2005, at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education. The conference was co-sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Instruction. The keynote speaker was Ken Reardon of Cornell University. Professor Reardon is a nationally recognized advocate of institutionalized service-learning programs. The East St. Louis Action Research Project and the Cornell Urban Scholars Program were two service-learning initiatives he discussed.

The Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach secured a \$2500 grant from the AAC&U (Association of American Colleges and Universities) **Bringing Theory to Practice Project**. The project is “addressing depression and substance abuse among youth (ages 15-25 through engaged learning and service.” Funds from the grant will be used for a workshop on assessment of service-learning.

The **Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach** will fund a second round of seed-grants for the development of long-term, sustainable domestic and interna-

tional outreach projects with a focus on service-learning through **two grant programs**—the Scholarship of Engagement Grants for University Engagement (SEGUE) and the International Development Education Awards (IDEAS).

Below are examples of recent Service-Learning activities at UGA

The **Office of International Public Service and Outreach** has initiated a new service-learning program, the **Community Engagement Fellowship (CEF) program** that encourages UGA students to share their study abroad experiences with the larger community. Since the program's inception, five CEF awards, totaling \$4,800, have enabled students to study in Tanzania, Mexico, and Ghana.

Public relations campaigns were developed by students in the capstone course for the public relations major in the **Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication**. Clients for the projects include the Office of Recruitment and Retention, the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA), the Office of International Education, the Athletic Association, the Clarke County Youth Association, and the Athens Ballet Theatre.

Undergraduate interns majoring in international business and public affairs provided portfolios (containing import/export information; regulations regarding tariffs and non-tariff barriers; contact information for potential import, wholesale, and retail clients; and focused marketing information for a variety of products) for a delegation of eight entrepreneurs and trade representatives from Kenya. This visit was the first phase of U.S.- Africa Trade: Finding Markets for East African Entrepreneurs, a two-year grant-funded project of the **Office of International Public Service and Outreach** intended to strengthen trade between the U.S. and East Africa.

Each summer, the **School of Environmental Design (SED)** tackles a new community problem in a developing country. SED has worked for the past several years in Ghana, West Africa. Students work side-by-side with local planners, community activists and NGOs to produce sustainable development plans that utilize principles of smart growth, economic restructuring, cultural tourism and environmental planning. The project has made a long-term impact in how Ghanaian villages use tourism to improve local quality of life.

Laurie Fowler, the director of public service and outreach in **UGA's Institute of Ecology**, works with her students in the Etowah River region of northeast Georgia on a service-learning practicum that focuses on habitat conservation. The students who participate in the course are mainly second-and third-year law students and master's students in ecology. Groups of three to six students work with community stakeholders in the Etowah River basin to help solve a variety of problems such as how to manage growth while preserving the fragile ecosystem of the Etowah.