

Senate Community Relations Committee meeting

12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Room 272, Hillman Library

June 18, 2013

Attendees: Kimberly Barlow, *University Times*; Laurie Cohen, ULS, CRC Co-Chair; Maggie Folan, Nursing; Lovie J. Jackson Foster, Social Work; Ryan Gayman, Honors College; Andrea Kriska, GSPH; Patrick Loughlin, Bioengineering; Martha Ann Terry, GSPH, CRC Co-Chair

We began the meeting by acknowledging Martha Ann's service to the committee, as this was her last meeting as co-chair. In her place, Lovie Jackson Foster has agreed to be the co-chair, and everyone congratulated Lovie.

Our guest this meeting was Ryan Gayman, the Community Engagement Advisor in the Honors College. Ryan worked as the executive intern for Amizade Global Service-Learning before coming back to the University. He told us about the programs he is coordinating. The Honors College is trying to address three core values: 1) academic attainment; 2) intellectual curiosity/passion for learning; and development of a social conscience. There are four points to the community engagement process in the College: 1) classes; 2) advising; 3) independent research; and 4) experiential learning.

In terms of classes, there is a service-learning grant program for faculty to develop courses for undergraduate students. Five thousand dollars is available to cover transportation costs, materials, and reimbursements for the time involved in developing the course. These can be one-time courses or long-term classes. The classes don't even need to be new courses, but could instead be existing classes that are enhanced with service-learning principles. All of the chairs of undergraduate programs on campus have been informed about these grant opportunities.

Andrea asked Ryan about a practicum that GSPH offers involving community workshops. Would the grant pay for community members to attend the two-day summer workshops? Martha Ann asked Ryan to give some examples of service-learning classes on campus. An engineering class worked on storm water runoff to help the flooding situation in Highland Par. The projects are community-driven and community-focused.

Ryan advises the students who sign up for service-learning classes and connects them with mentors. He is creating an online resource guide which will be searchable by area of focus. University fellowships and scholarships are handled by the Honors College, and he works to broaden awareness of public service fellowships by connecting alumni with current students who share a common area of interest.

The third point in the plan is independent research, and this is covered by the Brackenridge Fellowships. The students come together once a week to present their work. There are currently sixty Brackenridge Summer Fellows and they continue to receive advising after the project is completed. Ryan has created something called the Community-Based Research Fellowship. The participants are required to work with a faculty member and a community group and they attend a weekly interdisciplinary seminar where they present their findings and discuss issues like ethics, power, politics and responsibility. One of the areas they focus on is to what degree the skills they learned at Pitt help them work in the field.

The final point of the model is experiential and independent learning. The plan is to create a group of "Community Scholars." Agencies would submit a form indicating their need for a position to complete a specific project, and the scholars would apply for the position. Once the project has been completed, there would be a contextual piece of the assignment, addressing what was accomplished and how it was beneficial to both parties.

The remainder of the meeting consisted of suggestions for future projects the committee could get involved in for the next year. These included: Project Backpack; Family House preparations for Thanksgiving dinner; the Sock Drive; serving or preparing holiday dinners at Children's Hospital; Angel Trees; taking a field trip to the Oakland Food Pantry; having another teleconference with a community service counterpart at one of the regional campuses; participating in the Day of Caring as a group or creating our own Day of Caring project as a group; and working with the Birmingham Free Clinic on the South Side.

Next meeting: September 17, 2013

Submitted by Laurie Cohen, July 2, 2013