Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement

CSUCI STUDENTS SERVING THE COMMUNITY

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Students Respond Positively to Service Learning Courses

Service learning courses offered during fall 2006 benefited not only CSUCI students and their academic career; but the community as well.

Approximately 221 CSUCI students participated in 14 service learning courses. This student effort translated into:

- 3,743 hours to 14 community-based organizations through various service learning projects
- $73,887 of economic benefit to Ventura County.

Service learning opportunities were provided in multiple disciplines including:

- Art
- Education
- English
- Environmental Science and Resource Management
- History
- Liberal Studies and Sociology

At the end of the fall semester 190 service learning students were surveyed to gather input and feedback on their service learning experiences and community contributions.

Results showed overall 78% of students who engaged in service learning found the quality of their experience to be excellent or good, while 86% strongly agreed or agreed that the service aspect of the course provided them with a better understanding of the needs and problems facing the community in which they live.

A majority of students (92%) strongly agreed or agreed that they learned course content better when it was connected to " real life" situations, and more than half (70%) said they would like to see more service learning courses offered at CSUCI.

CSUCI Community Partners Serve as Co-Educators

The Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement (OSL-CE) has established partnerships with many community-based organizations and schools in Ventura County. Our community partners are integral to the success of our service learning students and serve as co-educators to facilitate onsite learning and reflection. Below is a growing list of our current University approved community partnerships.

- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Cabrillo Economic Development
- Café on A
- California Conservation Corp
- Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy
- City Impact
- El Concilio del Condado
- Many Mansions
- Pleasant Valley Neighborhood for Learning
- Ventura County Libraries
- Ventura County Superior Court
- West Coast Environmental and Engineering
- Westminster Free Clinic

Hunger Banquet Highlights Global Poverty and Hunger

On the evening of October 5, 2006, the OSL-CE hosted an Oxfam Hunger Banquet. The event brought together CSUCI students, faculty, staff and community members in one simple act to help raise awareness around the staggering statistics of global poverty and hunger.

The Oxfam Hunger Banquet dramatized the inequitable distribution of food resources in today's world and, if for only a brief moment, gave participants firsthand experience of the realities of global hunger and poverty.

The event provided a forum for students, the campus community, and the community-at-large to come together to explore and examine their own roles as informed, engaged, and socially responsible citizens.

Ann Sobel, CEO of FOOD Share, Ventura County's food bank, spoke about the regional issues of hunger and poverty as well as local efforts to combat them. Leading up to the banquet CSUCI campus community took action towards combating hunger in Ventura by collecting canned food items for FOOD Share.

The Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement is central to the University's civic and community engagement mission.

To help realize the University's mission the OSL-CE establishes partnerships with faculty and community-based organizations to provide rich opportunities for students to engage in the community while preparing for their career objectives.

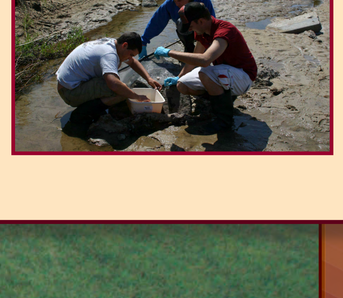
In addition to fostering civic engagement and promoting social and environmental justice, these community experiences afford students an opportunity to enhance their critical thinking techniques, social interactions, business networking and many other life-long skills and abilities.

The Community as an Extension of Classroom Learning

Each semester a variety of service learning projects serve both CSUCI students and the community. Below is a sample of two service learning projects.

- **Soc/Eng 331: Narratives of the Working Class:** Students in Professors Renny Christopher's and Beth Hartung's class experienced ethnographic interviewing of individuals who recently moved into farmworker and affordable housing units supported by Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation. CSUCI students studied a selection of narratives about the working poor and working class to better understand the diverse perspectives and issues impacting persons engaged in the economic struggle, such as, housing affordability and livable wage. This service learning project will be unveiled to the campus and community during a weeklong celebration in March honoring Cesar Chavez, his work, legacy and values.

- **Environmental Science Resource Management 463: Water Resource Management:** Professor Don Rodriguez's students contributed to a water quality monitoring project on the Revolon Slough within the Calleguas watershed. The watershed ranks as one of the most impaired in the state of California. Students worked in teams to learn about regional water issues, and collect and monitor water samples from this watershed which has never been done. Water samples were analyzed and used to inform a final report sent to the Hansen Trust.



- **The Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement is central to the University mission**
- **CSUCI students respond positively to service learning courses**
- **CSUCI community partners serve as co-educators for our students**
- **The Community Serves As An Extension of Classroom Learning**
- **Hunger Banquet highlights global poverty and hunger**