

Service Learning Planning Committee

Meeting, Friday, October 27, 2006 Co-chaired by Isabel Nazario and Jerome Kukor.

Attended: Ronald Anglin, Paul Belliveau, Ethel Brooks, Joe Cooper, Glenda Daniel Kamal Khan, Laurie Lewis, Jim Luxhoj, Marty Markowitz, Joanna Regulska, Yilis Suriel.

Not attended: Cynthia Daniels, Monica Devanas, Maurice Elias, Peter Guarnaccia, Susan Keith, Monica Mazurek, Amy Michael, and Jeffrey Rubin.

After introductions, the co-chairs of the committee Isabel Nazario (IN) and Jerome Kukor (JK) opened the meeting by thanking everyone for participating in the committee and informed them of its charge. They stated the charge is to make recommendations for the conceptual framework that will inform theory and practice of service learning including: intentional goals, administrative structure, a mechanism for collaboration among Rutgers' Schools, campus-community partnerships, assessment systems, and funding strategies that will guide the institutionalization of civic engagement at Rutgers' New Brunswick/Piscataway campuses. Jerome Kukor informed the committee that the aim of the first meeting is for everyone to become familiar with one another and discuss how we will proceed with the planning process.

As part of the introduction, the co-chairs noted that Rutgers offers many forms of experiential learning including community-based research, service learning, and community service volunteerism. There are individual faculty and collaborations between faculty and students working in various disciplines, along with student organizations involved in volunteerism that is not linked to a course. There are also numerous co-op education programs and service learning opportunities administered by programs such as CASE (Citizenship and Service Education Program) where students earn an extra credit for doing community work that is connected to their course work.

Both chairs emphasized that we lack critical information on what impact Rutgers is making through service learning and engaged programming. They asked what is the impact on students, faculty, and broader communities? They noted that we lack guidelines for measuring standards, organizational systems for communicating across Schools and lack mechanisms for collaborating, assessing and promoting significant work. They emphasized that as part of the restructuring of undergraduate education, we need to develop a support system for all the units and schools that are providing service learning.

IN said that Rutgers has institutes, centers, and programs that together have amassed a large network of community organizations, but we don't know what we are accomplishing with them.

JK reminded us that Rutgers is a Land Grant institution with a long tradition of partnering with communities. He said a good example of this is the Agricultural Experiment Station

in Cook College which is currently involved with 21 counties in New Jersey. Kukor added that all too often faculty see “service” as this other task they need to do in addition to their teaching. Service is understood as a task for example participating in a committee; however, Phil Furmanski asked us to see it as fully integrated into what we do, and that is to see it as “public scholarship”.

Next JK asked the committee members to share their experiences with service learning. Before opening the meeting to the committee members IN informed everyone that there are additional committees making recommendations that will be relevant to the work we are doing in our committee. This includes the Co-op Education group and the Programming Implementation Committee. She noted that as we move further along all three committees will be sharing information with one another.

In response to Kukor’s request that we hear from committee members, **Joanna Rogulska** said that she envisions service learning as a way for our students and faculty to become knowledgeable about global cultures. She said that we must have “visionary thinking” to conceptualize courses, research (opportunities) and have faculty also perform an advisory role for service learning. She is interested in connecting with international institutions to provide students with opportunities to work with women’s organizations in Africa, for example. She emphasized that this work must be viewed as a “true” partnership between student and faculty. She said it must be seen as a “two-way street,” (mutually beneficial to both). In her new position as director, she found that Rutgers has over 150 agreements with institutions abroad, but there is very little information on the nature of the partnerships, nor is there any other kind of data.

Kamal Khan said that he sees service as an opportunity for our students to teach giving the following example. In his (ODASIS) program, a student working with a doctor learns about diabetes and in turn the student teaches the class about the disease. Also as part of his experiential learning experience, he teaches families in community settings.

Paul Belliveau commented about the role of the students in the Rutgers Business School in helping communities to develop strategic planning and marketing plans for integrity housing and other projects such as the bottled water marketing plan for Newark. Students earned 2 credits for academics and 1 credit for service.

Ethel Brooks informed us that students in her Women Studies 101 course are assigned a social action project as part of their final. The student must identify an issue in the community that is connected to topics studied in the course and through service play a role in helping to reflect or transform the problem.

IN noted there are several professors such as EB that see themselves as public scholars who teach students that they can be agents of social change - an important aspect of service learning.

James Luxhoj discussed an “Ergonomics class” taught in Engineering that requires students to participate in workshops at local communities to analyze workstations. In this course, students use their academic skills for professional development. They conduct engineering analyses that help solve problems in communities. He also informed us about a new program not attached to a course titled *Engineers Without Borders*. It comes out of a national society of Engineers committed to community service.

JK said that from what he has heard (thus far) it is clear that just developing a directory and identifying connections will be a good start for this committee. **IN** agreed.

James Luxhoj said that he wanted us to consider students learning “ethics” as part of service. He described it as learning to be a good citizen. He mentioned the *Life Long Learning Rutgers Program* that has this focus, but it is optional for students.

Paul Belliveau responded saying that this program has been around since 1979 and it is the required capstone experience for all graduating students. He noted that they are currently undergoing curricular revisions.

James Luxhoj noted that in their Mechanical Engineering courses, there is no experiential learning requirement.

IN commented that in the TUE Report the curriculum committee recommended a total of six credits, an Experiential Learning course, and a Reflective Thinking course as service learning requirements. She added there is also a Diversity course that is not a requirement, but may be significant for students participating in experiential learning. She said we need to think about what do our students need to know (beyond the proposed requirements)? She noted the committee can recommend additional areas of focus such as ethics and propose it as part of training for SL students.

Martin Markowitz proposed that the committee first provide a defining overview of what it is that we are doing. He said we need to have a vision and a definition of service learning. The guiding questions (provided by the chairs) give us six areas to focus on he said. He summarized them as follows: 1) Defining what we mean by service keeping in mind the SL recommendations as recorded in the Transforming Undergraduate Education Report; 2) Do a survey of who is doing what at Rutgers; 2) Identify benchmarks; 3) Form a structure of service education; 4) Development Phase; 5) Develop a mechanism for collaborating; 6) Assessment strategies. He added this committee should not set up a structure that will be micromanaging SL. He said we should be mindful that each of the Schools will have distinct ways to provide experiential learning for their students.

Both chairs agreed that this is a good way to proceed. **IN** said that we need to also recommend how to recognize/reward service work and we need recommendations on how best to promote the impact Rutgers is making through service.

IN also noted that the committee should keep in mind the role of community organizations. She said she sees the role of community agencies as co-educators; however, in a recent meeting with the community organizations that participate with the CASE Program emphasized that there is a disconnect between what faculty member's expect when they send a student into the community and the organization's expectations. **IN** said she would like for the committee to keep in mind that it is important to design a support system for service learning that will be mutually beneficial both for the university and the community organizations or institutions partnering with Rutgers.

Martin Markowitz responded to **IN**'s comments stating that we should build perception as a conceptual plane into our report.

Laurie Lewis said she deems assessment of service learning as very important. She explained it isn't about how many folks the students have impacted it is about the impact that SL has had in building new values and believes, or how this has led them to become better citizens. She added there are programs where this has happened, but it has not been assessed.

Martin Markowitz responded that once we have identified what we are doing we can recommend the appropriate assessment mechanism for that part.

The committee conversation then turned from discussing examples of service learning to concepts and logistics that will allow the committee to move forward in our planning process.

Laurie Lewis talked about how students from different departments tend to learn from each other and we should find ways of formalizing this so as to encourage it in service learning, particularly if it is required for graduation.

Ronald Anglin asked that we delineate what we mean by service and asked if SL activities are considered community partnership? He also inquired if we are limiting service to be used for when we want to say to the governor that we are a service university, but not for when a professor goes up for tenure?

JK responded that in our recommendations we have to (make sure) to include reward recognition for faculty and the university will also be recognized by Trenton as providing service.

IN said that in some cases SL could constitute community partnerships depending on how it is conceptualized.

JK said that the issue of how we make this work in a research- centered university is to be understood as we figure out how service learning will function, noting that service learning is inclusive of community activism, yet can also inform faculty scholarship. In addition, we need to keep the delegates in Washington well informed of what we are doing and note that we must do all this in an organized form throughout the university.

Joanna Rogulska responded by stating that we need not make a distinction between community research and just research,- stating “let’s get past this nonsense,-what we are talking about is engaged pedagogy.” She noted the terms used by us include: service learning, civic engagement, community-based research, public scholarship, community volunteerism and engaged pedagogy. She said the issue is that the “power” is in learning. She added the focus should be on the different forms of learning that takes place in each of the departments (Schools). Hence, this will give us an umbrella of activities of engagement (university wide).

JK recommended that as part of this committee’s homework we work on definitions, identifying language, making it broader, and to think about who do we want to engage? Is it faculty, administrative staff, students or all? We need to redefine and reshape theory of engaged pedagogy and service learning into our own understanding.

IN said that we need to determine what is a good fit for Rutgers? What are we already doing at Rutgers? We have to start from this point.

JK said that the Undergraduate Task Force defined service learning vaguely giving us an opportunity to define it. The working definitions will allow us to determine boundaries for engaged scholarship and service in Rutgers. He said the chairs will create a list serve to facilitate communication and share collective information among committee members.

Chairs discussed the logistics for setting up a communication system for the committee. They agreed that large documents will be placed in SAKAI and all other information will be shared through a list serve.

Joe Cooper asked if the focus of this committee is only undergraduates because there are many faculty doing engaged scholarship with graduate students.

Both chairs said that while the primary focus is undergraduate studies, we will look at graduate Schools that are providing engaged scholarship opportunities for graduates. There is the Bloustein School, the School of Social Work and the Graduate School of Education.

JK said that we will probably need to divide into subgroups to do our related tasks in the future. He said we may have to talk to student organizations and faculty in our departments and schools to gather information on what we are doing in Rutgers.

IN talked about the time line. Our aim is to have a “White Paper” completed by mid Spring semester. The next meeting she said is scheduled for November 17. We will send out a calendar of meeting dates.

JK reviewed our homework assignment in preparation for the next meeting in three weeks. Each person will develop an inventory list of engaged scholarship, community based-research and service learning taking place in their program, department, center or

school. Also everyone should send the conceptual terms that best describe what you are focusing on in your area. You should also send us any additional activities such as co-curricular that can be considered under the rubric of engaged pedagogy or public scholarship.

JK and **IN** thanked the committee and adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.

