University of Massachusetts Amherst

Civic Engagement & Service-Learning Annual Report

THE PROVOST’S COMMITTEE ON SERVICE-LEARNING

Academic Year 2013-2014

Community for Social Progress (formerly Citizen Scholar Program) Students and Faculty
UMass Civic Engagement and Service-Learning (CESL) is the office established under the Provost to assist the Provost’s Committee on Service-Learning (PCSL) to develop and nurture service-learning across the university—and to sustain UMass’ position as an innovator and national leader in Community Service Learning and meaningful engagement. The two groups worked together to create a five-year strategic plan for 2012-2017 that has four primary goals:

I. Enhance service-learning and civic engagement curriculum and improve student learning.
II. Enhance collaborations and support strategic service-learning and civic engagement partnerships.
III. Enhance infrastructure for service-learning and civic engagement.
IV. Promote service-learning and civic engagement as a tool for faculty professional & personal development.

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Executive Summary

The UMass Civic Engagement and Service-Learning office (UMass CESL) supported dozens of Service-Learning undergraduate and graduate courses across the campus, a thriving faculty development program, four of the campus’s seven flagship undergraduate service-learning programs, an undergraduate Certificate in Civic Engagement and Public Service, and a Civic Engagement major track within the Bachelor’s Degree with Individual Concentration.

One of the highlights from this past year was the Symposium on Valuing Engagement, held on September 12, 2013, which brought in nationally-known experts to talk with campus administrators and faculty about how UMass could better support community engagement in research and teaching.

For the second year, The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Vision Project awarded CESL a grant to support service-learning on campus. The $74,250 grant provided continued support for the development of new service-learning courses, the deployment of undergraduate students as Liaisons between their service-learning courses and community organizations, and a partnership between UMass Amherst and Holyoke Community College focused on service-learning assessment.

Another grant from the Association for the Contemplative Mind in Higher Education is supporting faculty in bringing contemplative practice into service-learning courses. Yet another grant from the Massachusetts Society of Professors made in Summer, 2014, will support workshops with departmental and college personnel committee members to explore what excellence in community-engaged research and teaching looks like in their own disciplines.

As part of the university’s application for renewal of its elective classification by the Carnegie Foundation as a Community Engaged institution, the campus created and began to fill an online database of faculty and staff engagement through research and teaching in communities locally, regionally, nationally, and globally: at the end of August, 2014, UMass Worldwide shows 363 campus programs partnering with 500 organizations in 22 states, involving 85 different campus units.

CESL staff and PCSL members were very involved with the campus strategic planning process through the Subcommittee on Outreach and Engagement, which developed a series of recommendations for the new campus strategic plan. The plan calls for increased attention to community engagement in research and teaching and in decisions about promotion and tenure, and names civic learning as one of the hallmarks of education at UMass Amherst.

For the eighth consecutive year, the campus was once again listed on President Obama’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

For all our program highlights visit us at: http://cesl.umass.edu/
AWARDS & GRANTS

The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Vision Project: The MA BHE is the state agency overseeing all 29 public colleges and universities. It recently established a Vision Project which includes a goal of civic learning and civic engagement, making Massachusetts the first state in the nation to set this goal for all its public higher education institutions. As the public institution with the deepest roots in service-learning and civic engagement, UMass Amherst is well positioned to act as the flagship in this initiative, which is attracting interest from across the nation.

UMass Amherst benefited in AY 2013-2014 from a Vision Project Performance Incentive Grant of $74,250 to support our work on civic education through service-learning. This grant had four components:

1) 22 Civic Engagement and Service-Learning Fellowships to support the development of Service-Learning courses.
2) Support for student leadership development: 8 students were funded to spend much of the summer working with community organizations who this year will act as Campus/Community Liaisons, helping other service-learning students work with those same organizations.
3) Support for five Assessment Fellows who developed tools to assess the impact of service-learning courses on students and on community partners.
4) Support for collaborative work with Holyoke Community College, sharing in faculty development and assessment.

Service-Learning Course Development: The Vision Project supported two groups of faculty and professional staff who met on a monthly basis to develop new service-learning courses or redevelop current ones. The group working from Spring, 2013 through Fall, 2013 included:

Alison Butler, Communication
Kathy Davis, Education
Martha Fuentes-Bautista, Communication
Krista Harper, Anthropology and the Center for Public Policy and Administration
MaryAnn Hogan, Nursing
Laura Lovett, History
Catherine Sands, Stockbridge School of Agriculture
Bonnie Strickland, Psychology

The group working from Spring, 2014 through Fall, 2014 includes:

Meghan Armstrong, Languages, Literatures, & Cultures—Spanish and Portuguese
Hari Balasubramanian, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering
Benita Barnes, Education
Lorraine Cordeiro, Nutrition
Jessica Johnson, History
Robert W. Maloy, Education
Ana Muriel, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering
Jerusha Peterman, Nutrition
Marie C. Polizzi, Education
Darrel Ramsey-Musolf, Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning
Lindiwe Sibeko, Nutrition
Florence Sullivan, Education
Ruth-Ellen Verock-O’Loughlin, Education
Sara Whitcomb, Education

Assessment: CESL piloted a new assessment project with the launch of our online Assessment Toolbox. Experienced service-learning faculty (from UMass and Holyoke Community College, working together) developed a list of 6 assessment tools to determine student learning outcomes and in helping them strengthen their courses. These 6 assessment tools comprised the Assessment Toolbox which was posted on the CESL website and which service-learning faculty were invited to use during the Spring 2014 semester. Faculty were then invited to participate in focus groups in May
to reflect on the assessment tool they used. Six faculty members participated in these focus groups, sharing how they went about assessing students and what they learned about their challenges and successes in teaching, delving into deeper discussions with one another about ideas for the future. In addition to assessment, this process served as an opportunity for collaborative faculty development.

Faculty reported a variety of important kinds of student learning: doing the “hard work” to understand racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression; doing “real life” problem-solving that allows them to discover how much relevant knowledge and competency they already have; gaining context to really understand how textbook concepts apply to life and link to other issues. One faculty member said, “Learning becomes embodied. It becomes contextualized as really understanding the relation between theory and practice. And I think they begin to understand why we teach them theory.”

Faculty reported that for some of their students, this learning is transformative: “They learn empathy. They start being aware of seeing things from other people’s perspectives. They talk about not taking things for granted. They see the world differently.”

The Association for the Contemplative Mind in Higher Education awarded CESL and the Center for Teaching and Faculty Development a $5,000 grant in Summer 2014. This grant supported four faculty members who participated in a week-long Contemplative Pedagogy workshop, exploring ways to integrate contemplative practice into their courses. This grant also supports integration of contemplative pedagogy in the 2014-2015 Faculty Fellows program.

The Massachusetts Society of Professors awarded CESL a grant of $3,858 to fund workshops for UMass departmental and college personnel committees, department heads or chairs, and faculty who do community-engaged research and teaching to discuss and identify how to define, evaluate, and reward this work in their own disciplines. Ten to twelve workshops will be offered during 2014-2015.

RECOGNITION

President Obama’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll: UMass Amherst was listed again on the 2013 honor roll, our eighth consecutive appearance on the list. This national honor roll recognizes institutions of higher learning for their commitment to and achievement in community service.

The Carnegie Foundation Classification of UMass as a Community Engaged Campus: UMass Amherst was one of fewer than 200 colleges and universities nationwide to receive the elective classification for Community Engagement from the Carnegie Foundation in 2008. In April, 2014, UMass submitted an application for renewal of this classification. Highlights of some of the data collected from 2012-2013 for this application are:

- 120 service-learning courses were offered in this academic year, 4.3% of all UMass courses and 15 more than were offered the year before the last application (2007-2008).
- 27 departments offered service-learning courses, 6 more than in 2007-2008 and 48% of all UMass departments.
- 77 faculty members taught service-learning courses, 10 more than in 2007-2008.
- 3509 students participated in service-learning courses, 484 more than in 2007-2008 and 17% of total enrollment.
INITIATIVES

**Symposium on Valuing Engagement:** CESL collaborated with the Faculty Senate Council on Public Engagement and Outreach to organize a Symposium on Valuing Engagement on September 12, 2013. The event was part of the year-long UMass Sesquicentennial Celebration. John Saltmarsh from the New England Resource Center for Higher Education and Tania Mitchell from the University of Minnesota were the keynote speakers; discussion among engaged faculty, department heads and deans identified a range of ways that the campus could better support community engagement in research and teaching—especially by weighing it more fully in faculty personnel decisions (merit, promotion, and tenure).

**Student Awards:** PCSL invited service-learning faculty to nominate students in Spring, 2014, for the *Academic Engagement and Community Transformation Award*, a new award recognizing students who excel in leadership, academic excellence, and contributing to a campus/community partnership. Fourteen students were selected.

**Course Designations:** CESL worked with the Provost’s Committee on Service-Learning to continue designating courses on the registrar’s list of courses in SPIRE to carry one of two designations. The *Civic Engagement* designation encompasses a broad range of ways that courses might lead students to learn about and engage in action for the public good. Courses with the *Service-Learning* designation are a subset of that broad range meeting additional criteria. A course may be assigned either designation but not both. Faculty can apply for either of the designations at [http://cesl.umass.edu/faculty/coursedesignation](http://cesl.umass.edu/faculty/coursedesignation).

**Collaborations:** On campus, CESL worked with:

- the Bachelor’s Degree with Individual Concentration (BDIC) to support a [Civic Engagement major track](http://cesl.umass.edu/faculty/coursedesignation);
- the Center for Student Development to support the creation of an Alternative Spring Break service program and a community engagement/leadership development program;
- University Relations to collect information about the community-engaged research and teaching done by faculty and staff across the campus;
- the Joint Task Force for Strategic Oversight Subcommittee on Outreach and Engagement to produce guidelines for the development of community engagement called for in the campus’s strategic plan, and
- the International Programs Office to enhance International Service-Learning offerings for UMass students.

Beyond the campus, CESL worked with the Five College Community-Based Learning Committee to develop resources benefitting service-learning on all five campuses, most notably the orientations to community service in Holyoke and Springfield—Holyoke Bound and Springfield Bound—and a bus running to Holyoke and back Monday through Thursday afternoons to transport students to serve with community organizations.

**Community Partnership Development:** In addition to our individualized partnership work in Hampshire, Hampden and Franklin Counties, CESL organized two Faculty & Community Partners workshops, one on campus and one at the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center in Holyoke. The sessions included faculty, staff and student leaders who have ongoing Holyoke partnerships, along with their community partners. The focus was on: sharing best practice information, mapping current work, spotlighting 3 very different partnerships and the work they are doing, outlining future opportunities, and discussing what we can do together to enhance and strengthen our work together. The sessions were attended by over 80 individuals. This work will be continued into next year as we work together with our partners to strengthen our practice and enhance our impact.
HIGHLIGHTS OF LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

UMass continues to support outstanding service-based leadership programs for students, all of which have received public attention and praise. These include:

IMPACT!: This year-long Residential Academic Program for first-year students brings together community service, contemplative practice, leadership development, and social justice.

Citizen Scholars Program/Community for Social Progress (CSP): CSP (with its new name: the Community for Social Progress) is a 2-year curricular service-learning program, designed to build students’ capacity for civic engagement and leadership. Over four semesters, students work at least 180 hours in a partnering community organization, while moving through a set of four courses that challenge them to articulate their own visions of how a good society should be constructed, explore tools for democratic change, then engage them in projects related to public policy and organizing. Over the 15 years of the program, 14 CSP graduating seniors have been named UMass 21st Century Leaders and 24 have received the Senior Leadership Award. Three have been student government presidents and four have served as student trustees.

UMass Alliance For Community Transformation (UACT): UACT is a partnership of UMass students, faculty and members of grassroots community organizations, working together through curricular Alternative Spring Breaks to build community, promote social and economic justice, and advance cross-cultural understanding.

Student Bridges: Student Bridges is a student-initiated and led, student-to-student outreach project using year-long tutoring/mentoring CSL courses, policy analysis and advocacy to support the University’s efforts to increase admission and retention of under-represented students, including low-income students, first-generation students, and students of color.

TEAMS Tutoring Project (Robert Maloy): Entering its 64th semester, the TEAMS program of the Secondary Teacher Education Program in the School of Education (Education 497I & 597R), places 45 to 60 undergraduate and graduate students to work each semester with elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and alternative education programs in eight towns (Amherst, Northampton, Easthampton, Westhampton, Hadley, Deerfield, Holyoke, West Springfield and Greenfield as well as the UMass Workplace Education Program), where they provide academic tutoring to culturally and linguistically diverse students. Drawing on students’ experiences tutoring across the Pioneer Valley in schools in communities with very different levels of affluence, the TEAMS course explores questions of equity in education.

CESL Campus/Community Liaisons are students who have completed a Service-Learning course and who are invited by the faculty to return as undergraduate leaders to support in-class learning, as well as the community partnership aspect of the course. A prime example of this is the Liaisons working with the School of Education’s general education course, Multicultural Education (EDUC 377). For three years now, students have returned in subsequent semesters in a Liaison role. They participate in the Education course as a support to the faculty members, they go to their community partner site weekly to support the partnership and their fellow students, and they are enrolled in the CESL Leadership in Service-Learning course offered in the Fall and Advanced Service-Learning each Spring.

The Boltwood Project: The 45-year-old Boltwood Project, a civic engagement course with over 11,000 alums, places over 200 students per year in 12 different community organizations, providing weekly services to local residents who live with a variety of serious physical and/or cognitive impairments.
Service-Learning by UMass faculty & students has been innovative, ambitious, & effective, and UMass Amherst Community Service Learning programs have gained national recognition.

Civic Engagement and Service Learning
Director: John Reiff
Associate Director: Carol Soules
CESL/PCSL Support Staff: Kat McLellan

Provost’s Committee on Service Learning Membership 2013 - 2014
Chair: Joseph Krupczynski (Architecture)
Arthur Keene (Anthropology)
Bob Marx (School of Management)
Glenn Caffery (Resource Economics)
Leda Cooks (Communications)
Ellen Pader (LARP)
Dave Schimmel (School of Education)
Gilbert McCauley (Theater)

The Civic Engagement & Public Service Certificate involves six courses from five content areas, at least three of which must be service-learning courses. Nine students graduated with the certificate in the spring; five were Citizen Scholars.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CSL COURSES

UMass offers over 100 service-learning and community engagement courses. One example is Spanish Translation for Community Health Services (SPANISH 497TC), taught by Luis Marentes. The Holyoke Health Center contacted Spanish professor Luis Marentes to ask if he could offer support in translating their website from English to Spanish. In response, he created a service-learning course in which his 21 students learned about racialization in health and health disparities within Latino/a communities in the US and, using their Spanish-language skills, took on the task of translating the website. Through their work in the course, students discovered some of the insidious effects of class, race, and language on the health of people. The website included technical medical terms that were not easily translatable, and this offered students a great opportunity to learn the realities and complexities of translation and that it requires more than just being bilingual. Because students had learned about health disparities as they relate to non-English speakers, they saw a deeper meaning in their work and sought to perfect their translation as a means to provide better health information to Spanish speakers in Holyoke. Through this project, students engaged in a reciprocal process with the Holyoke Health Center in which students provided a service, and in return received a dramatically enhanced learning opportunity. Students had high praise for the course and appreciated the opportunity to do meaningful work that would live on and be utilized long after they received their grade and the course had ended.

CESL also offers courses directly under the rubric “SRVCLRNG” (Service-Learning). For example: Mentoring with Big Brothers Big Sisters (SRVCLRNG 292M) is taught by Tom McGuire, a case manager at Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Hampshire County. Tom’s course on mentoring meets on Tuesday afternoons in the Fall; each week through the year on Thursday afternoons youth who are matched one-to-one with the UMass students are transported to the campus from Fort River Elementary School. The “Bigs” engage their “Littles” in exploring the campus while building supportive friendships with them. Each day ends with a shared meal at what the “Littles” call “The Restaurant” — which is one of the UMass Dining Commons. This UMass partnership with BBBS allows BBBS to do deep training of this group of student mentors, while also creating a positive vision of college in the minds of youth who might be the first in their families to go to college.

About Community Service Learning at UMass Amherst

Provost Glen Gordon created the Provost’s Committee on Service-Learning on December 13, 1993 to provide advice regarding the emerging research and teaching of CSL and academic civic engagement, to assist development of the same across the UMass Amherst campus, and to seek ways to connect UMass to national initiatives. Service-learning by UMass faculty and students has been innovative, ambitious, and effective, and UMass Amherst Community Service Learning programs have gained national recognition.