We're writing with good news: the creation of the Civic Engagement and Service-Learning office, created this past fall through the union of the campus-wide Community Service Learning office and the honors college Community Engagement Program. The new office, under the Provost, places more resources in service to the entire UMass campus. We have a triple focus—on faculty, on community organizations, and on students.

We offer support to faculty to develop and run service-learning courses and to integrate community engagement into their scholarly practice. That support includes:

- Professional development groups beginning this spring focusing on engaged teaching, research on service-learning, and community-based research.
- The Service-Learning Faculty Fellows Program. Applications will be due in late March for the program running in 2012-2013. The request for proposals will be available in early February.
- Individualized support for faculty interested in developing courses and community partnerships.

We offer civic engagement and leadership development opportunities to students, including:

- The new Certificate in Civic Engagement and Public Service.
- The individualized Civic Engagement +X Major in BDIC.
- Multi-semester service-learning programs such as the IMPACT! RAP and the Citizen Scholars Program.
- Introductory and advanced service-learning classes.
- Civic leadership roles such as undergraduate teaching assistants, campus/community liaisons, and AmeriCorps Student Leaders in Service opportunities.

We work with community organizations to strengthen existing partnerships with UMass and to develop new ones. Read the Holyoke Campus-Community Compact and find out more on the Holyoke C3 website about the principles guiding our work with Holyoke community partners and, by extension, with our partners in every community.

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- Introductory and advanced service-learning classes.
- Civic leadership roles such as undergraduate teaching assistants, campus/community liaisons, and AmeriCorps Student Leaders in Service opportunities.

We encourage you to look over this newsletter, check out our website and contact our office to explore the possibilities.

Look for our next issue in late March.

John Reiff, Director
Carol Soules, Associate Director
UMass Civic Engagement and Service-Learning

Community Focus: Big Brothers Big Sisters

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hampshire County (BBBS) has partnered with UMass’s Civic Engagement and Service-Learning (CESL) office since “before the invention of service learning,” according to Hampshire County BBBS director Renee Moss.

“Since before I got here in 1985, UMass students have been volunteering with Big Brothers Big Sisters,” said Moss. And as the Civic Engagement and Service-Learning office has grown, so too has the commitment to service at Big Brothers Big Sisters. In 2007 CESL entered a new phase in collaboration with Big Brothers Big Sisters, offering an on-campus mentoring program affiliated with the introductory service-learning course, Mentoring with Big Brothers Big Sisters. The course is taught by BBBS Case Manager Tom McGuire. In addition to a curriculum focused on mentoring youth, each student in the course is...
matched with a Little; the group of college students and youth meets together every week on campus. In addition to taking part in activities on campus, the group eats together in the Franklin Dining Commons, a place some of the Littles have referred to as “the restaurant.” Moss estimates that the number of UMass students involved with her program has tripled since the collaborative on-site course was started.

A second UMass/BBBS partnership is the Adoption Mentoring Partnership, which matches youth who are adopted with UMass student mentors who are themselves adopted (See more about this on page 3).

Nick Manolakis, a student at UMass and a liaison to BBBS, has been mentoring since fall 2009.

“It’s a great program because it makes such a huge difference in the community,” he said. “I have both seen and heard many stories of children’s lives being drastically changed for the better. I love giving my time to help my Little and the program, because it is such a rewarding and wonderful experience.”

Manolakis has a Little who is in sixth grade. “He loves to play sports and video games. Usually when we get together we do one of those two things, or sometimes both,” he said.

Manolakis said his experience working with the organization has been extremely positive.

“BBBS is a great program that truly cares about the community and every person in its program. I love being a part of the organization for that reason and making a difference every day.”

What do students who choose to do service-learning at BBBS do? Simple, according to Moss. “Whatever fits.”

Moss said Big Brothers Big Sisters has 50 mentors who are currently UMass students, and generally has two or three interns doing administrative work, with much of the office staffed by UMass work/study students. In addition, Moss said that for BBBS fundraisers, usually there are thirty or more volunteers from UMass.

“We like to begin sophomore year,” Moss said. “That way the students can continue on for a few years with their little brother or sister. Most students who become mentors end up staying until graduation.”

Little brothers and sisters range in age from seven to sixteen years old; most are matched between ages 8 and 12, and end up staying in the program because of the bond with their mentors.

However, Moss added, BBBS is always looking for more mentors; especially, but not limited to, men.

“We’ve never had enough men to mentor the boys,” Moss said.

Those who mentor at Big Brothers Big Sisters make a commitment to do so for one year, and meet weekly with their little brother or sister, according to Moss. Some are in the on-site program at the university which includes monthly events like a Halloween party and a pool party. Other matches are community-based—for students who have a car.

For more information, visit the BBBS website or contact the CESL office for information about the Mentoring with Big Brothers Big Sisters course in the fall semester.

Student Profile: Yaa Mensah

Yaa Mensah, a UMass sophomore double majoring in Public Health and Psychology, has found what she thinks might be the perfect location for service-learning in western Massachusetts, offering a unique environment and diversity of experience.

Yaa engages in service at the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Holyoke, as part of her commitment to Student Leaders in Service—an AmeriCorps program that funds an education scholarship after students participate for a given number of hours per year. At the Boys and Girls Club, Yaa says each day offers new challenges and opportunities.

“The kids are very interesting,” she says. “Holyoke is really diverse, and there are a lot of kids who are Spanish speakers. And it’s a different perspective, because they were mostly born here but they’re still learning English as a second language. A lot of the people who work there are bilingual, so they’re really equipped to help out the kids as much as possible.”

Part of the work that tutors do with the children at the Boys and Girls Club—ranging in age from 6 to 10 in Yaa’s group—is helping with their homework, and focusing on each child’s specific needs.

“Reading comprehension, really understanding what’s asked of them, is sometimes tough,” says Yaa. “A lot of the time you just need to sit down with them, and read what’s asked, and try to explain it to them in a way they can understand. It’s nice to help them accomplish something that they’re struggling with.”

For about a year, Yaa has been working at the Boys and Girls Club in Holyoke, as a tutor and helping to coordinate activities in her role as the CESL Site Liaison.

In addition to helping with homework, which is the most important job she’s tasked with there, Yaa also
goes with the kids to the gym, or outside where they play. They also have different activities depending on the season, like a recent holiday arts and crafts project. According to Yaa, the work she does at the Boys and Girls Club is perfect for college students who might be leaning towards working in education or childcare.

“If you like working with kids, you’ll really like it,” she says. “It’s rewarding.”

There are a number of students who help out at the Boys and Girls Club. From Monday to Thursday each week, there are about 6-9 UMass students daily, with different students coming in every day. There are also students from other schools who come in throughout the week.

Service-Learning Academic Option: Certificate in Civic Engagement and Public Service

CESL is thrilled to announce the new Certificate in Civic Engagement and Public Service, which is available to all UMass students beginning this semester!

**What is it?**

A certificate is similar to a minor, except that a minor is usually in a single department, whereas a certificate explores a complex topic using courses from several departments. For the Certificate in Civic Engagement and Public Service, students take six courses, choosing at least one from each of five content areas:

- Issues of Social Justice
- Diverse Publics
- Community/Political Organizing
- Public Policy
- Civics and Political Theory

At least three of the courses selected within these content areas must be Service-Learning courses (courses that integrate service into the academic work of the course). The Service-Learning courses must include at least one course each designated as a Foundations course and a Capstone course. A full list of eligible courses is available on the CESL website.

The combination of theory and practical experience organized across the five content areas provides a coherent framework for students who want to learn how to be effective in building a more just and peaceful world.

**Why pursue the certificate?**

Students can:

- Develop the skills needed for a life of active and engaged citizenship
- Get hands-on experience connecting ideas and action
- Explore a path to a career in the civic sphere, non-profit sector, or politics
- Learn how to create positive social change
- Receive recognition for public service done while at UMass
- Learn how to connect such work to their major.

For more information, visit the Certificate website.

Spring Courses—Still Time to Sign Up!

- **Service-Learning Practicum:** SRVCLRNG 398, Section 2: Every other Wednesday, 4:40PM-6:40PM: Supports students who wish to continue service begun independently or in a previous course. Students share their community experience, think through solutions to challenges, and gain practical skills in reflection, critical thinking and communication. Contact: Nicole Nemec at nicole.cesl@umass.edu.
- **Independent Study:** PSY 369A: Reading in Psychology in association with the Adoption Mentorship Partnership: Become a mentor with the Adoption Mentoring Partnership organized by the Rudd Adoption Research Program in the Psychology department at UMass and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hampshire County.
- **Service-Learning Course List for Spring 2012** is available.
Faculty and Student Opportunities

FACULTY:
Nuestras Raíces is a grass-roots organization that promotes economic, human and community development in Holyoke, Massachusetts through projects relating to food, agriculture, and the environment. Partnership opportunities include youth curriculum development, community lecture series, economic development model research and more. Contact Carol Soules at csoules.cesl@umass.edu.

STUDENTS:
Nuestras Raíces is a grass-roots organization that promotes economic, human and community development in Holyoke, Massachusetts through projects relating to food, agriculture, and the environment. Volunteer opportunities include youth curriculum development, community lecture series organizing, economic development model research and more. For more information contact Molly Totman at mtotman@acad.umass.edu.

Apply to the Citizens Scholars Program (CSP) by March 30th! Be part of a community of students, faculty and staff who think critically about social issues and act collaboratively to create change. In this two-year service-learning program, you develop knowledge, skills, and vision needed to be a community leader—one who can work effectively with others for social change.

FONHOH (Honor for Haiti Foundation), a local NGO has designed a K-12 school in a remote region of Haiti for children without school access. Help is needed with:
- Student to work on design/implementation of a 10-month fundraising plan.
- Student to work on advertising the program.
- Student to assist with design/maintenance of a good website that can help generate attention.
For more information, visit www.fonhoh.org

Expeditionary Learning, a nationwide educational non-profit, has a collection of nearly 500 examples of student projects; this service position will assist in preparing some of those projects for online display. (Tasks include editing images in Photoshop, creating/editing PDF versions of student work, and research/writing of project descriptions. Photo editing experience is helpful, but not necessary. Office in downtown Amherst easily accessed by bus. For more information, contact Todd Felton at tfelton@elschools.org.

Upcoming Events!

SAVE THE DATE – CESL Spring Celebration!
Are you interested in meeting students from across campus who are engaged in service-learning and social action? Do you want to learn more about other opportunities at UMass Amherst to engage with the community? Then join us! Please RSVP online by April 6th.
Date: Monday, April 9
Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm
Place: Cape Cod Lounge, Student Union
Dinner will be provided

Holyoke Bound: Students doing service in Holyoke should participate in the orientation Holyoke Bound on Feb. 18, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Transportation and lunch provided. Registration required.
For more information go to the Five Colleges website.

Holyoke Transportation available to students! Buses are available to take students to and from their community service sites, Monday-Thursday afternoon.

Youth Action Coalition invites you to our 5th Annual Fundraiser

Lights, Camera, Youth Action!
Sunday, February 12, 2012
3:00-5:00pm
Northampton Center for the Arts
Various media exhibition by Arts-for-Change youth members
Presentations by YAC youth and adults
Live music (Benjamin and the Buttons)

Holyoke Winter Carnival: Interested in participating in Holyoke community events and enjoying some great winter activities? The Carnival is from January 29 to Saturday February 4. It will feature more than 25 events in 15 different venues across the City of Holyoke catering to all ages and tastes. For more info, visit holyokewintercarnival.org.

The ALANA Career Fair is for students of color (African, Latina/o, Asian/Pacific, and Native American) to meet prestigious national leading companies representing multiple career opportunities. The ALANA Career Fair is for all students (freshmen – seniors) to gain knowledge and explore future options. When: Tuesday, Feb 7, 1-5 Where: The Student Union Ballroom From: 1pm-5pm