Notes From the Director

“The smallest indivisible human unit is two people, not one; one is a fiction. From such nets of souls societies, the social world, human life springs.” - Tony Kushner.

It is about people, isn’t it? We spend much time planning on how to align outcomes with activity, create programs that meet community needs, and/or identify competencies that may or may not legitimize the ephemeral often immeasurable work we do. The messy, complex work of community engagement is mostly possible through the efforts of people. Programs don’t live past a grant cycle or a semester unless people believe in them, drive them and are willing to shape and reshape them.

Fall 2013 is certainly about programs, The B.Side, Digital Inclusion, Faculty Fellows, CPV/Project Shift, and CrossTown, but mostly this newsletter will highlight people, faculty, students, staff and community, people those that give these programs, this Office breath and life.

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Brief History of The Classification:

Carnegie created this classification as a way to recognize the evolution in higher education as the old classifications (eg current: MA and Research I, etc.) did not reflect the breadth and depth of university activity, mission and purpose.

Carnegie (Re)Classification in Community Engagement
The Time is Now

The Office of Academic Service-Learning is overseeing the Carnegie (re)Classification in Community Engagement which was given to EMU in 2008.

All colleges and universities who received the classification in 2006 and 2008 and want to continue being a Carnegie Community Engaged Campus are now required to reapply. Requests to reapply were launched in May 2013 and the application is due in April of 2014.

The classification process then (and now) required universities and colleges to engage in a self-study of their engagement practices by providing evidence-based documentation on everything from curriculum to scholarship to partnerships and outreach. A campus-wide community engagement survey was created to launch our self-study. Faculty, Administrators, staff and students received a survey via my.emich in late October 2013.

Guiding this (re)classification process is the Carnegie Core Committee administrators: Bin Ning, Rhonda Longworth, Melody Reifel, Caryn Charter and Jeff Kentor: faculty members: Ethan Lowenstein, David Clifford, Claudia
Petruscu and Russ Olwell; staff member: Jasmina Camo-Biogradlija and students Sarah Erlewine and Ben Harrington.

The Classification process is equivalent in time, complexity and content to that of an accreditation process.

Why the Carnegie Classification is important to EMU

Internally the Classification process has provided a roadmap in the organizing, collaborating and institutionalizing of community engagement at EMU. The Classification has also engaged EMU in ongoing national dialogue/conversations in and around community engagement in higher education.

There are some significant changes from the 2008 to 2013-14 application namely its emphasis on the institutionalizing of community engagement. Institutionalization in this context refers to recognition of community engagement as part of our identity, mission, and ongoing activity in teaching, research, and service, as well as to material and organizational support for community engagement at all levels. We are evaluated based upon 2008 application and our assertions on how we have and will continue to deepen our community engagement efforts on campus.

Bottom line - The (Re) Classification

seeks evidence of how community engagement has become deeper, more pervasive, better integrated, and sustained at your institution.

New AS-L Course

“Writing About Controversy in Literature for the Young”

Ramona Caponegro, English Literature professor and recent participant in our Faculty Fellows Seminar, is launching a new course entitled, “Writing About Controversy in Literature for the Young (CHL 451-W).”

Why is this class important?

Controversies about children’s and young adult books are almost always initiated by adults. Children and adolescents may react differently to different books, and they may make their reading selections or even self-censor accordingly. But adults are much more likely than the young readers to become invested in ideas about the appropriateness of certain books and topics. Indeed, some of the biggest debates within the field of children’s and young adult literature involve the contents of the books that are written for, sold to, taught to, and read by children and teenagers. Parents, teachers, librarians, psychologists, and scholars differ in their beliefs about what content is appropriate for different age ranges. Opinions also differ about how sensitive subjects, particularly those involving social injustices and atrocities, should be introduced to young readers.

What will it cover?

In this course, we will examine different works of children’s and young adult literature that address sensitive and controversial issues, exploring the effectiveness of different books, as well as larger questions and debates about if, how, and when to introduce these issues to a young audience. We will also consider what our objections, reservations, and concerns about introducing certain topics to young readers say about our understandings of childhood and adolescence, as well as about our values as individuals and as a society.

What is the AS-L Component?

To investigate this class material more deeply, the students in CHL 451-W will partner with 826michigan in their one-on-one tutoring, take part in writing programs and workshops for young writers, identify and fill gaps in the organization’s library, and assist with the publication of children’s work, grant writing, and special programs.

How does this AS-L component deepen the students’ learning?

By collaborating with this community partner, we will gain a fuller understanding of the ideas and debates that we are exploring in class, the target audiences for the books that we are reading, and ways in which potential readers and books can be brought together. We will also be searching for and addressing possible disconnects between understandings of theoretical and fictional children and the actual children we will get to know through our service.

Entrepreneurship at New Tech

Cultivating a community of creators, initiators and inventors.

YCS and EMU’s The Business Side of Youth (The B.Side) have embarked on a new curricular and co-curricular partnership at New Tech High School. The B. Side (www.bsideofyouth.com) a program housed in EMU’s Office of Academic Service-Learning has since 2007 provided hundreds of area youth training in business development, entrepreneurship and business concept testing. In this partnership, B. Side Director, Jack Bidlack and educator Ariel Jones are providing approximately 300 hours of entrepreneurship training, education and support...
to three classes five days a week through January 2014. The students in all classes are developing business plans, testing services and/or products, creating elevator pitches and presenting their plans at SharkIt!, a business plan pitch competition for cash prizes which will be held at New Tech. Local business leaders along with B. Side directors will judge the SharkIt! competition. Students participating in SharkIt! will also be mentored to participate in EMU’s Skandalaris Business Plan Competition on February 7, 2014. This competition is open to and attended by high school students from all over SE Michigan, with a top cash prize of $1,000.

Project Shift
A College Positive Volunteer Program

Project Shift, now in its second year is a collaboration between GEARUP and The Office of Academic Service-Learning and funded through Michigan Campus Compact.

College Positive Volunteers (CPVs) are college students focused on increasing college access and post-secondary opportunities for young people across the state. In EMU’s program, Project Shift, EMU students work with a cohort of over one thousand 9th grade students at Kennedy H.S. and Truman H.S. in Taylor, and Romulus H.S. and River Rouge H.S. CPV trained GEARUP employees go into each of the schools once a week, twice a month and present the Quantum Learning Curriculum. The Quantum Learning and GEARUP partnership follows this methodology, “College success is developed through academic and personal preparation. It does not come by chance.” Student learning and life skills lessons are used to reach the ultimate goal which is to get our students to and through college. Ultimately, CPV’s are working to shift the attitudes of the high school students towards a post-secondary path/life. The Project Shift student coordinators are Chartonay Sumpter and Shavonne Coleman.

CrossTown Theatre Troupe
Five Years and Growing

CTT (CrossTown Theatre Troupe) now in its fifth year and in partnership with Bright Futures, a 21st Century learning program, is an after-school theatre program at the following high schools: John Glenn High School, Romulus Middle School, Romulus High School, Ypsilanti Community High School, and Ypsilanti Community Middle School. This year MFA and MA Graduate students in Applied Drama/Theatre and Theatre for Young Katie’B Jarvis, Mark Isler, Shavonne Coleman, Ariel Jones and Big Fire (MFA 2012) and undergraduates Payton Steele and Xavier Kimbrough serve as teaching artists where they work to catalyze youth voice through theatre.

New this year, CTT will oversee and direct the Fall theatre production at Ypsilanti Community High School. The inaugural launch of YCS’ theatre program will be a “10 Minute Play Festival.” High school students who participate in the 10 Minute Play Festival will have an opportunity to learn improvisational skills, interactive theatre, and gain an understanding of theatre for social change as well as provide a high level performance for their community. The production will be directed by Shavonne Coleman and Big Fire and is set to open at the end of December.

CTT’s performances seek to increase community engagement, access to youth perspective and generate community dialogue. CTT strives to recognize what issues the youth community deems most important, provide a safe place for teens and young adults to share their experiences, highlight the diverse nature of our neighborhood and help establish a greater sense of accomplishment for the youth community. To learn more about CTT check out its website at http://crosstowntheatre.weebly.com/

Meet Our New Staff

Xavier Kimbrough

I’m an undergraduate student with a concentration in communication. I think that to better understand one’s self and to more efficiently work with other people in the world around us that communication styles need to be more closely examined. In the AS-L office I’ve been working on getting a link redirecting Eastern students from the EMU calendar to the visityps.com calendar that sponsors non-campus events of educational and community building natures. I also have done some research to help start an off-campus rating website off of Eastern’s home page for students that sign leases blind to the experiences of other students. I’m also responsible for answering phones, taking messages, checking mail, and delivering different paperwork and mail around the campus. In terms of hobbies and interests, I love to be a social butterfly and hang out with all of my friends. Diversity more than anything is something that I’m very passionate about so I attempt to try a little bit of everything so that I don’t ever find myself in a place where I feel like I’m not learning more about other people and other cultures. I love listening to music, going to the gym, going out to eat, and shopping.
Katie' B

Are you a grad student, undergrad, high school?
I am a graduate student

What's your concentration and why?
MFA in Applied Drama/Theatre for the Young. I think the arts can be a powerful tool in education.

How you think academic service-learning can positively impact the community?
I don't think we can ever stop learning new ways to serve and learn. The more we learn the more we can help others learn.

What's your favorite thing about working in the AS-L office?
All the laughing and the strong support system we have here.

What are your hobbies?
My hobbies include singing, reading, knitting and trying desperately to learn to ride the unicycle.

Payton

Are you a grad student, undergrad, high school?
Undergrad

What's your concentration and why?
Communication with a concentration on media and film studies.

What's your favorite thing about working in the AS-L office?
The opportunities that it gives to both community programs and students.

What are your hobbies?
Singing, anything having to do with music.

Shavonne

What do you do in the AS-L office?
CPV Student Leader and Program Director for CrossTown Theatre Troupe

Why is working with AS-L important to you?
Not only do I get a chance to work with and help others but I am able to do what I love while I'm doing it. Through the AS-L office I am able to use drama and theatre to give youth voice, provide students with resources and knowledge to succeed, and participate in academic service learning projects that positively affect my community.

What EMU program are you in?
Applied Drama/Theatre for the Young M.F.A.

What are your career aspirations?
I am currently doing what I aspire to do. I hope to continue to perform, direct, and facilitate not only classes but also the execution of wonderful projects like CTT.

What do you do or fun?/What are your hobbies?
I love to sing, travel, and bake (especially cupcakes)!

Tori Tomalia

Tori Tomalia has been the life force, the glue and the calm in the Office of AS-L since 2011. As the graduate assistant Tori has coordinated, initiated and innovated many AS-L programs, processes and procedures. In this digital world she has insisted that everything we do is documented and uploaded to our AS-L ‘shared drive’.

Decky: Where's that, how do I access it again?
Tori: (for the 500th time) I'll show you, it's easy.

Basically, anything in the AS-L office that was created or crafted: a newsletter, list-serve, seminars, community panels, grant budgets, award events, initiatives (e.g. highlighted community partner program or the launch of Bright Impact Software) or the humbling epaf process) was touched, finessed and Tori'd.

Tori'd means doing something without a chip, a crack or visible flaw.

In May of 2013, Tori was diagnosed with Stage IV Lung Cancer. The details of her journey can be found here: http://lil-lytnin.blogspot.com/.

On this blog site, Tori, a young, non-smoker, artist, academic, wife and mother of three young children shares the heartbreaking truths and the triumphs of this life changing journey. It is a Tori’d read, flawless, without a chip or a scratch.

In an office which supports community, we thank Tori for guiding and supporting this AS-L community - we are brighter and better because of her.
The B. Side launches the Digital Inclusion store on Eastern Michigan University's campus

New store offers refurbished computers for sale and affordable computer technology services

by Debra Johnson, Published November 21, 2013

YPSILANTI – Digital Inclusion, a computer refurbishment and technical training enterprise that benefits area youth and low-income residents, has opened a store in Sill Hall, in the College of Technology on Eastern Michigan University’s campus. To celebrate the opening, a ribbon cutting ceremony will take place on Monday, Nov. 25, from noon to 2 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. Please R.S.V.P. at info@direcycle.com by Friday, Nov. 22.

Digital Inclusion is operated by The B. Side, a youth-driven entrepreneurial and leadership organization that provides economic opportunities for Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County area youth.

Founded in 2007, The B. Side program seeks to reduce the technology gap in low-income areas of Washtenaw County by placing skilled youths back into the community. The program is housed in EMU's Office of Academic Student-Learning.

“The majority of the youth that go through the Digital Inclusion program are from low-income households or are designated as at risk youth,” said Jack Bidlack, director of The Business Side of Youth at EMU.

EMU’s Academic Service-Learning programs incorporate a teaching and learning approach that seeks to integrate community service with research and education at the University and within the community.

The Digital Inclusion program is open to youth ages 13 to 21 years old who live in and around the Washtenaw County area. Participants receive 40 to 55 hours of computer hardware and software training and also receive a $150 store credit upon completion of the program.

“The Digital Inclusion program and store credit impact youths in two ways,” said Bidlack. “Not only does it provide them with access to a computer in their own home, but it also gives them the ability to practice the skills they have learned during the program.”

Digital Inclusion offers affordable technology services to low-income residents and the general public, but also sells refurbished computers and laptops at reasonable prices. For example, you can purchase a complete computer system, such as a Dell 620 desktop computer, for as low as $100. Qualified low-income residents will also receive free licensed Microsoft software with their purchase. The Digital Inclusion store carries both desktops and laptop computers, with systems available in both PC and Mac. The store is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Digital Inclusion was launched in 2008 by The B. Side and was initially funded through a grant from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation to pilot a computer refurbishment and training program for youth. The B. Side developed, tested and operated this pilot program for two and a half years before creating a sustainable model.

“The B. Side and Digital Inclusion programs have always had a strong partnership with EMU,” said Bidlack. “We are very excited that this new store will provide necessary equipment and support to the community, and to the university’s students, staff and faculty. It is our latest step to bridge the digital divide in the Ypsilanti area, and we are confident that it will be successful.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Michigan Campus Compact’s Civic Engagement Institute 2014 (Feb 2-4, 2014)
“Celebrating 25 Years of Connecting Campus and Community” - Grand Rapids, MI
End-of-Year Celebration Friday, April 11th 11:30-1:30 p.m. Lakehouse