A Note From the Director

We build too many walls and not enough bridges.—Issac Newton

This year the Office of AS-L and Engaged Scholarship is embarking on a new program. We selected two local organizations and are working to ensure through service-learning, internships, and practicums, we can meet their needs. In this time of tenuous funding for universities, non-profits and community programs, our goal was to really direct our core and consistent commodity, people, to fulfill direct needs of the community. This year our two ‘highlighted’ organizations are 826michigan and Parkridge Community Center. 826michigan coordinates an after-school writing program at Ypsilanti Middle School. To help with programming we have a graduate student who is in charge of recruiting and overseeing volunteers as well as programming. At Parkridge we are working to provide some infrastructure to a homework club as well as assist in providing support to various projects from installment of a kitchen sink, to a website and a holiday play.

-Jessica “Decky” Alexander

College Positive Volunteers (CPV) is a program in consultation with Michigan Campus Compact and Michigan College Access Network. CPVs are those college students and their administrators who are aware of how they impact the college enthusiasm and readiness of the K-12 youth they interact with as they volunteer in local communities.

As a college access program, CPV reflects efforts to increase the college enrollment and success for all students, and especially underrepresented students, by providing them with support and information about college preparation, paying for college, career selection, financial resources, etc.

EMU’s CPV Training is unique in that it frames college access under the 5 Core College Conversations. These Conversations are a result of focus groups and meetings with EMU students and staff dedicated to college access programming as well community partners focused on college access. Our goal is create a common language, information and resource directory for all University college access programs.

Those participating in CPV training will:
• Evaluate their own college journey
• Be provided mapping and personal inventory tools to adapt or modify for their own communities
• Be introduced to the Michigan College Access Portal and its immense value as a resource for students, parents, mentors, and school counselors in accessing post-secondary opportunities within Michigan.
• Be presented with CPV developed specialty forms such as post-secondary opportunities for students with disabilities or military options and contracts etc.
• Develop a plan of how CPV resources can be used in your own programming.

For more information or to set up a CPV Training contact: Jessica ‘Decky’ Alexander, jalexande1@emich.edu or Darius Fowlkes at dfowlke1@emich.edu.
Paul J. Ramsey, assistant professor of teacher education, recently published a study on the use of academic service-learning in social foundations of education courses. While many undergraduate students are quite engaged with social foundations content, they sometimes have difficulty seeing how the material better prepares them for life in the classroom. An academic service-learning requirement, the study concludes, helps bridge this divide between theory and practice for students, while, simultaneously, providing a useful service to the community.

During the fall 2009 and winter 2010 semesters, Joe Ramsey taught four sections of the required undergraduate social foundations course, “Schools for a Diverse and Democratic Society” (two sections each semester). For each semester, one course included an academic service-learning component and the other did not; until the first day of class, students did not know the requirements, thus generating a sort of random sample. Through a comparison of course evaluations, surveys, and student work (including reflection journals purchased with a CAS-L grant), this small-scale study found that students’ service experiences helped them understand the course content more fully. Joe’s article on the use of academic service-learning in education courses was published in *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue* (“Experiencing the Social Issues that Impact America’s Classrooms: A Study of Academic Service-Learning in Education Courses,” vol. 13, no. 2, 2011).

Joe Ramsey noted that his study would not have been possible without the guidance and support of Decky Alexander, Director of the Office of Academic Service Learning and Engaged Scholarship; Decky directed Joe to numerous articles on AS-L that greatly helped him contextualize the study.

James Perren, Assistant Professor, World–Languages
AS-L Faculty Fellow, Winter 2009

I participated in the AS-L Seminar in Winter 2009 and developed an academic service learning course in ESL/TESOL (international English Education). The Helpy Hour concept is to provide regularly scheduled community-based outings that are welcoming, interesting and useful opportunities for international and domestic students to ‘use’ language. Helpy Hour follows an Alternative Spring Break model that incorporates pizza-socials (without alcohol consumption) to facilitate reflective conversation after task completion. During these events the participants use English (and teach their languages and cultures) while working together with community partners in non-profit organizations to meet community needs.

Since its 2009 inception, Helpy Hour participants have provided 340 hours of community service in Michigan, Florida and Louisiana. Community-based volunteer and academic service-learning activities such as those offered by Helpy Hour have received an increasing amount of attention in the applied linguistics literature, specifically in English language education. This highlights the growing powerful impact that authentic learning has for language students/educators and clearly indicates the need for providing EMU students with active hands-on learning. Helpy Hour encourages EMU students to satisfy their passion for civic engagement as well as fostering the development of meaningful relationships with EMU community members.

To find out more about Helpy Hour and how you can get involved, visit the Helpy Hour website at [http://helpyhour.webs.com](http://helpyhour.webs.com).
What is a CAS-L Grant?
A CAS-L grant provides mini-grants to assist faculty in implementing service-learning courses or community engaged scholarship? or creative activity.

Anita Rich, Professor, Interpretation/Performance Studies. AS-L Faculty Fellow, Fall 1998

"Performing With/In Prison: A Service-Learning Partnership" is a collaboration between Eastern Michigan University and the Woodland Center Correctional Facility (WCC), a high security mental health correctional institution. Aided by a generous grant from EMU's Academic Service-Learning office, a group of five graduate students and affiliates led by faculty member Dr. Anita Rich made weekly trips this past winter 2011 to facilitate theatre workshops with a group of inmates.

The first sessions focused heavily on building trust and community through the use of games and exercises. In subsequent sessions the inmates were introduced to some short forms of Playback Theatre as well as Image Theatre, adaptations of literature, and additional dramatic activities. An interesting challenge was that the inmates were not allowed to make any physical contact with the visiting facilitators and they were only allowed to make minimal contact with one another. As such, Dr. Rich and her team modified activities so that objectives were met while still following the rules. Working with prisoners who did not know each other very well and had varying levels of mental functionality, it was powerful to witness the increases in self-confidence and also the growing patience and understanding for one another that the men developed over the weeks.

The semester's workshops culminated in a performance offered by the inmates for correction officers, the warden, staff, and administrators. This original piece of theatre included adaptations of two Langston Hughes poems which were woven together with the experiences of the men who participated in the workshops. Several of the men also gave readings of original poetry and the entire group engaged the audience in some fluid sculptures, one of the short forms in Playback Theater. The inmates had a great understanding of fluid sculptures. They were able to improvisationally express emotions with body and voice in a way that is normally a challenge due to "flat affect", the inability to show a range of emotion, which is a common symptom of mental illness.

Following the performance, Dr. Rich and company conducted a "cooling through" session with the men to reflect on the experience of attending the workshops and of participating in the performance. One inmate said of the experience, "Interacting with the other men and with Dr. Rich and the students was great. It was positive to get out of the rut and express yourself, it was nice to know that there were people visiting every single week." Another noted that "theater group" was a "safe place to act and have fun" because normally "fluid sculptures and stuff like that is risky and you don't want to get labeled as soft."

The staff at WCC was pleased at the professionalism, organization, and commitment of the Eastern Michigan University team and requested that workshops resume in fall 2011. As a result the work has resumed this semester and EMU continues their collaboration visiting biweekly to offer performative explorations. The attendance has increased and the rich community partnership and the positive reactions from the men remains strong.
The Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) project was developed as an Academic Service-Learning (ASL) Project as part of course ACC 546 – Public and Nonprofit Sector Accounting and first implemented in the Winter 2011 semester under the direction of Professor William LaGore. The PAFR is designed to give the community a simpler, more understandable version of the government’s annual financial report. PAFR’s for six municipalities were completed in the pilot course, including Cities of Adrian, Tecumseh, Wixom, and Ypsilanti. Example of the work can be seen at

This pilot project has led to a College of Business “Academic Entrepreneurship” initiative starting in the Fall 2011 semester where five students under the direction of Professor William LaGore are preparing citizen’s guides/PAFRs and financial dashboards for municipalities across the state. This service is being provided in partnership with the Michigan Municipal League. The project provides financial information in everyday language—as simple as “where did the money come from?” and “where did the money go?” On October 12th in cooperation with the Michigan Municipal League, an email was sent to the 3,100 municipalities in the state offering this service. If successful, the initiative will continue to build the COB’s reputation and to provide full-time internships for our students.

Example of the work can be seen at the following website: http://www.ci.wixom.mi.us/index.aspx?NID=1054.

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CrossTown Theater Troupe Update
By Ariel S. Jones

CrossTown Theatre is back in effect this 2011-12 school year. This year’s participating schools are Willow Run High School, Ypsilanti High School, and Wayne Memorial High School. The Teaching Artists this school year are Shavonne Coleman, Laura Tanner, Jawan Jackson, and Ariel Jones, who also serves as the CTT Program Director. This year enrollment was quite unique, due to Learning Beyond the Classroom (LBC) credits being offered to those students who are considering enrolling at Eastern Michigan University. The LBC offering caused high interest in the CTT after-school club, since it is one of the only clubs that offers college credit for participating. Willow Run H.S. had so many interested students that CTT had to turn students away; in the past CTT has spent much of their time trying to recruit and retain students for the program. CTT is now gearing up to perform for the Annual MLK Celebration at Eastern Michigan University on Monday, January 16th, 2012. This year’s MLK Celebration’s theme is “The Strength Within.” The Teaching Artists and students are working on scenes and monologues that deal with identity, differences, and determination, just to name a few. Don’t worry, CrossTown Theatre never forgets to play in the seriousness of this semester’s work; play is essential to being an actor.

For more information on CrossTown Theater Troupe, visit http://www.crosstowntheatre.com/

Digital Success

It has been more than 3 years since The B. Side launched its Digital Inclusion (DI) program through a grant from AAACF. Since its initiation it has undergone some serious growth spurts.

In the first year of the program only a handful of youth received the computer hardware and software technical training that the program offered. In the second year more youth were trained and we hit a huge milestone when the program distributed more than 200 refurbished computers, mostly to low-income residents in Washtenaw County, and generated $16,210 in sales. This almost matched the initial grant amount exactly and guaranteed that the program could be sustaina-

ble through its own efforts.

In its third year Digital Inclusion ramped up the training and provided paid training for 45 local youth. Along with the training, DI established and implemented a 2 credit college course which was piloted at River Rouge High School over the summer, and graduated 11 students. If that wasn’t enough, DI launched its online store, direcycle.com, where shoppers can view and purchase the computers and other accessories and then pick them up at the actual store on EMU’s main campus.

Digital Inclusion continues to be a big focus for The B. Side and it has sparked a lot of local interest. To date, the program has generated more than $21,000 in sales and continues to serve those most in need, but with partnerships from organizations like Washtenaw County, EMU, Pittsfield Township and others to be named soon, DI is quickly building inventory. “It’s important that the word gets out there and that people understand that refurbished computers aren’t just for low-income residents,” said Jack Bidlack, the Director of The B. Side. “Our computers are for sale to the general public, small business, schools, etc. We exist as a ‘green’ business as well, and want to make sure that people take advantage of this opportunity. The more we sell the more we can serve, it’s that simple.”
Faculty Fellows Swap & Share Lunch on December 9th

Please join together with other past AS-L fellows for a Swap & Share lunch. This is an opportunity for past fellows to meet, connect, share and swap best practices or obstacles in academic service-learning and/or any kind of engaged scholarship.

**When:** Friday, December 9th, 11:00-1:00 pm  
**Where:** Room 301 in Student Center  
**Who:** All faculty fellows, past and present

A soup and salad lunch will be provided.

Please provide an artifact that you want to swap and share. This could be

* a reflection approach  
* a form, such as community partnership, student expectation, etc.  
* AS-L language integrated into a syllabus  
* an abstract of a presentation  
* or something else....

**RSVP to vtomalia@emich.edu by December 3rd.**