Note From The Director

This past fall we had both a record number of faculty applicants for our bi-annual AS-L Fellow Seminar and a record number of CAS-L (our internal mini-grant program) grant applications to support AS-L efforts. Why? Possibly many new faculty arrive from graduate work in various discipline exposed to service-learning and community based scholarship. Another possibility is that engagement in the community is a more acceptable form of scholarship. Imagining America: Artists & Scholars in Public Life published a report entitled, “Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University”. In this report its authors, Ellison and Eatman discuss the growing acceptance and challenges of public engaged academic work across multiple universities and communities. We also have the Lumina Foundation outlining in their degree profile the necessity of Civic Learning. In this area out—of-classroom activity is considered integral to one’s degree. Knowledge and commitment to action, according the Degree Profile, are necessary for the development of civic learning.

I believe as an institution we are at a precipice. How much can we or should we institutionalize service-learning, public scholarship and civic engagement? What should be the university’s role in a community?

Certainly the faculty fellow seminar, now in its 17th year, reflects EMU’s commitment to integrating service into courses, curriculum and the community. However, many universities craft clear over-arching strategies as it relates to the engagement and collaboration with the surrounding community. Faculties are a significant entry-point into our community through courses and scholarship yet they are one bridge. This newsletter highlights programs such as the B.Side and Digital Inclusion, and projects like Townhall Nation, which diversify the University’s collaboration with the community. In this newsletter we highlight faculty and programs, which equally create possibilities and opportunities for students and our community.

For more information on IA and this report go to: http://imaginingamerica.org/ and click on the reports and essays tab.

For more information on Lumina’s Degree Profile and its 2025 plan go to: http://www.luminafoundation.org/goal_2025.html

TownHall Nation, an act of civic imagination

Town Hall Nation is a national engagement initiative... a process of arts-based civic dialogue and imagination. AS-L is heading up the EMU portion of this project, and is in the process of developing a 30 minute piece/event that demonstrates, presents, or embodies an ideal town hall meeting. The project is entitled, “Whose City Is It?”

Whose City Is It? – A city income tax; role & responsibility of the University to the city which houses it; present and future generations asked to fix the mistakes of the past; staving off the inevitable (i.e. bankruptcy), and asking people to pay more only to maintain the status quo.

This is a complex local issue as it involves a ballot proposal that will require all those who work in the city limits to pay an income tax. The majority of people who would be required to pay income tax do not live in the city, and will be unable vote. However, if the city does not increase its revenue it may be bankrupt and have its assets taken over by a state Emergency Manager. All elected officials under the current state of this state law would be dismissed from their positions.

The ballots financially impact those who live and work here such as property owners and university personnel more intensively than those who just work here or live here.

To learn more about TownHall Nation, go to www.townhallnation.org.

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12 graduate and undergraduate social work students recently returned from Bluefields, Jamaica after successfully completing several service learning projects in a small fishing village on the south coast of Jamaica. With the support of the CAS-L grant, students were able to provide some requested and needed services to this small community during the winter break. One specific project involved the Belmont Academy high school, where administrators had requested training on conflict resolution, peer mediation, and parent education.

After researching available curriculum, the “Love and Logic Train the Trainer” curriculum was identified as being both culturally relevant and sustainable beyond the one week of the class. Belmont Academy identified parents, teachers, administrators and student leaders who participated in the three day training. After completion of the training, feedback from participants was very positive; they felt the concepts were relevant and applicable. We will continue to work with our community partners in Jamaica to expand the program next year and reach more parents. The Academy made a commitment to use the curriculum as part of their parent education program through the school’s PTA. The vice president of the PTA and the principle for the academy were in attendance for the entire three day workshop.

Thanks to the CAS-L grant were able to train our community partners and leave the curriculum materials with them for continued use. EMU Students were able to take responsibility in providing leadership during the training and expressed having experienced great personal and professional growth from

MCC Award: Dr. James Perren

Dr. James Perren, Assistant Professor was awarded the 2011 Michigan Campus Compact Faculty Community Service Award in support of his efforts and innovations in academic service-learning and community service at EMU.

Dr. Perren received this recognition in Lansing on January 30th surrounded by many of his colleagues from World Languages.

Dr. Perren arrived at EMU in 2008. Since his arrival he has become one of EMU’s primary service-learning practitioners and community-engaged faculty. Shortly after his arrival he launched a service-learning course, which used service as means of language acquisition for ESL students. Building on this course he along with office of AS-L and Rollins College in Florida, developed a program entitled, Nation Abroad. This program had EMU students performing various acts of service for migrant farming communities to a Native American community center. In all instances, students performed service as means of improving their English language skills. Dr. Perren has presented internationally on such scholarship.

Trailblazing and seeing a need in the local community, in fall 2009 Dr. Perren launched Helpy Hour. This bi-weekly Friday afternoon activity encourages all university personnel to participate in community service at various sites for just one hour. While the focus is on service, Dr. Perren does participate, and provide guided reflection following each Helpy Hour event. Faculty, students and staff from all walks of the campus community participate in Helpy Hour.

Dr. Perren works with local organizations soliciting service needs that can be completed on a Friday afternoon.

Finally, accompanied by several students and faculty in Political Science he accompanied a group to El Salvador to engage in community conversations with citizens of several communities on issues relevant to their needs.

Dr. Perren is an amazing ambassador to our surrounding community. His efforts to bridge the university and community are innovative, persistent and authentic.
Digital Inclusion Collaboration

On May 23rd, 2012 Digital Inclusion (DI) will be participating in the Women & Information Assurance Conference being host by the College of Technology Information Assurance Program. This conference is specifically targeting young women and showing them the opportunities there are for them in the field of Information Assurance.

Digital Inclusion will be providing 30 computers for the workshop “Build a PC”. In addition to the computers, a handful of young women that have been through the DI program will be on hand to help workshop participants navigate the experience.

This just another example how a successful program like DI can expand its impact and even provide the needed resources so that youth can experience hands-on training in IT.

Toyota and Digital Inclusion Outreach

On March 29th, 2012 Digital Inclusion (DI), Washtenaw Literacy and Comcast will have representatives on hand at Ypsilanti High School’s Parent Teacher Conferences. This unique collaboration was made possible through a donation from the Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing tech center in Milan Michigan. The funds will provide 20 computers for low-income students. The computers were refurbished by youth in the DI program and each winning family will receive a computer, CRT monitor, keyboard and mouse. The computers also come with software all ready installed and a 30 day warranty.

Michigan Campus Compact “Service-Learning & Civic Engagement Institute

Several former Faculty Fellows led sessions and workshops at the conference, which took place January 30th & 31st in Lansing.

“Faculty Fellows & Academic Service-Learning, a 17-year University Investment and Exploration”

   presenter: Jessica “Decky” Alexander

“Exposing Prospective Science Teachers to After-School Programs as an Avenue for Combating Science Illiteracy”

   presenters: Chiron Graves and Lynn Kleiman Malinoff

“Creating a Meaningful AS-L Experience in Capstone Courses”

   presenters: Kathleen Stacey and Jeannette Kindred
**Digital Inclusion (cont.)**

Jack Bidlack, the Director of The B. Side said, "We wanted this effort to be a win, win, win, win initiative. Low-income students need to have access to a computer on a regular basis to be successful in school today. They also need affordable internet access, which is why Comcast will be there to sign up low-income families for their Digital Essentials program – internet service for low-income K-12 families at $10 per month. We want the school and the teachers to win by encouraging and providing an incentive for the parents of the most at-risk demographic, to receive the information and support they need to help their child be more successful in school.

These computers are an incentive and we hope that everyone sees that and are willing to participate in the Parent Teacher Conferences to get their chance at winning a computer. To further incentivize it for participants, for every teacher that the parents meet with they will get a stamp, for every stamp they will get an additional chance to win. We are hoping to make this an annual or a fall and winter event for YHS. We could also replicate this anywhere providing someone is willing to make the donation to make it happen. Thanks to Toyota we will be able to provide all of this for their $1,000 donation."

Washtenaw Literacy will be there to inform both parents and students that struggle with literacy about the services that they provide for free. They have been providing literacy training and support in Washtenaw County for more than 40 years and customize their instruction to meet the needs of the individual. With over 900 volunteers they continue to empower and improve literacy in adults throughout Washtenaw County.

With this unique collaboration of private, public and non-profit organizations we hope to spark a bright and better future for those families that receive these computers and provide the access necessary for them to be successful in the digital age.

**B.Side Basics**

In February The B.Side rolled out its 10 week B.Side Basics, making this the 12th B.Side basics offered to young people in our community ages 13 to 20. This class has 16 youth from all parts of Washtenaw County. With both a larger and dedicated group it is easier to have more meaningful discussions around the topic of entrepreneurship.

The synergy of this group is leading to the re-launch our community showcase featuring youth business plans, products and services. The community showcase will become even more possible with support and guidance from a Strategic Communications MBA graduate team from the COB, information on date and time will be announced shortly.

If you are interested in learning more about the B.Side and/or participating in the community showcase email The B. Side at info@bsideofyouth.com.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**End of Year Celebration**

On Friday, April 20th, the Office of Academic Service-Learning and the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance will be co-hosting an End of Year celebration. This is our chance to honor the relationship between the University and the community.

**Date:** Friday, April 20th, 2012  
**Time:** 11:30 am - 1:30 pm  
**Location:** EMU's Lake House  
**RSVP:** vtomalia@emich.edu