



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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Columbia – Commission on Higher Education Presents Service Learning Awards

Service Learning Awards were presented at the Commission on Higher Education meeting on Thursday, March 5, 2009. The Service Learning Award Review Committee was impressed by the efforts of all the excellent programs nominated as well as with the number of projects occurring throughout the state. This year, twenty-four programs were nominated for the award whereas fifteen were nominated last year.

Presented since 2001, this award is part of the Commission's on-going initiative to publicize on a statewide scale the service learning and volunteerism efforts of our colleges and universities. The Commission views service learning as a meaningful endeavor with wholly positive outcomes for our students, faculty, and communities. Therefore, we wish to publicly recognize projects that represent the integration of student learning with community service. In order to accomplish this task, we hold one competition with three awards: one among the public universities in the four-year sector, one among the public colleges in the two-year sector, and one among the independent colleges and universities. Our aim is to choose the single most commendable service learning project in each sector.

Winners for this award were chosen based on the following criteria: ability to resolve community concerns or address community issues; degree to which project enhances students' learning; impact on campus; and integration into academics. Ms. Cynthia Mosteller, chair of the award's Review Committee, discussed the merits of each winning program. Mr. Kenneth Wingate, Commission Chairman, congratulated the winners on their outstanding programs as he presented them with their recognition plaques.

For public four-year institutions, **Francis Marion University** received the award for its **Advancing Rural Community Health (ARCH) Program** directed by Dr. Paul DeMarco. For this program, students assist rural community health providers and are directly involved in health screenings. The ARCH program primarily serves three rural counties in northeastern South Carolina: Marion, Marlboro and Williamsburg. The medical screenings, which consist of height, weight, blood pressure, blood sugar and lab work to check cholesterol, liver and kidney function, are free and open to the public. Diabetics also receive an additional test which measures the adequacy of diabetic control over the previous three to four months. These screenings take place in churches, schools, community centers, and other appropriate locations. The program targets the poor and underserved and the median income of the over 1000 patients screened in 2008 was \$20,000 - \$24,999.

The ARCH program places students in settings where they have a direct role in delivering services and these students learn patient interviewing, diagnostic testing, medical record keeping, data

collection, and research skills while providing services to ARCH patients. The program recruits junior- or senior-level students majoring in biology, psychology, nursing, education, and sociology, but all students are eligible to participate. Approximately 30 – 50 students participate in this program each semester.

Dr. Paul DeMarco, the program's director, accepted the award along with Francis Marion University President Dr. Luther F. Carter and Dr. Darryl Bridges, Vice President for Student Affairs.

For public two-year institutions, **Greenville Technical College** received the award in partnership with the **Medical University of South Carolina** for the **Lessons of the Heart** project directed by Dr. Dana Rafferty Parker. This project is a great example of **collaboration** in which the Medical University of South Carolina dental students rotate through the Greenville Technical College clinic to treat patients in need with the assistance of the Greenville Technical College dental hygiene and dental assisting students. With this program, the Medical University of South Carolina dental students and the Greenville Technical College dental hygiene and dental assisting students get hands-on learning that cannot occur in a simulation laboratory. In addition, these students are able to provide services to adults and children in need because the program targets those who are uninsured, underinsured, or not eligible for Medicaid.

Approximately 60 associate level dental hygiene, 34 diploma level dental assisting, and 50 senior doctoral-level dental students participate in this project each year and provide services at the Greenville Technical College dental clinic. During the Fall semester, the clinic was open for four half days per week and served 12-15 patients per week with total services valued at over \$5000 a week (based on what the services might cost in private practice). The clinic plans to double the time commitment and patients served in the Spring semester.

Dr. Dana Rafferty Parker, the program's director, accepted the award with Dr. John J. Sanders, Dean of the Medical University of South Carolina College of Dental Medicine.

For independent institutions, **Voorhees College** received the award for its **Student Volunteer Income Tax Program** directed by Dr. David Caslan. This program provides tax services to senior citizens of the Bamberg County area free of charge. Junior and senior level students who have successfully completed Accounting Tax One and Two are encouraged to participate in this program. These students obtain hands-on experience while they apply theory from the classroom to practice in a social environment. On average, each student is supervised while completing 45-50 senior citizens' personal tax returns. The project targets low income senior citizens who would forego filing without this service, thus losing possible refund benefits.

Approximately 8 -15 students participate in this program each year. These students are able to connect theory to practice as they identify and correct errors with the guidance of the program's manager. Students come away with a holistic learning outcome far beyond their peers who do not have the same opportunities to serve and learn by applying classroom learning through community outreach.

Dr. Bernard Moses accepted the award on behalf of Dr. David Caslan.

The Commission on Higher Education congratulates these outstanding educators for their excellent service learning projects and would like to thank them for their invaluable contributions to the state.



Service Learning Awards 2008-2009 Presented at the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Meeting on March 5, 2009. From left to right: Dr. John J. Sanders, Medical University of South Carolina; Dr. Dana Rafferty Parker, Greenville Technical College; Dr. Paul DeMarco, Francis Marion University; Dr. Bernard Moses and Ms. Teesa Brunson, Voorhees College; and Mr. Kenneth Wingate, Chair, Commission on Higher Education.