

NOMINATION FORM
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICE LEARNING COMPETITION

Institution:

Piedmont Technical College

Title of Project:

“Pet Adoptions at Oktoberfest: A Partnership between Piedmont Technical College’s Veterinary Technology Program and Newberry Humane Society”

Project Director:

Dr. Ruthie Buist and Ms. Tanya Niles

Contact Information for Project Director:

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Establishment Date of Project:

This is an annual project that began in October of 2009. It has been an ongoing effort of the program. Oktoberfest is typically the first weekend in October.

Unit That Administers Project:

Division of Health Science/ Veterinary Technician Program

Total Number of Students Involved:

Approximately 40 students each year.

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REGARDING THE NOMINATED PROJECT (Insert your response after each question; the response to each question should be no more than one page)

- 1. For purposes of this competition, the Commission on Higher Education defines service learning as college student learning at any level and in any situation that is *linked* in a direct, hands-on fashion to the resolution of a problem or concern in a target community outside the institution *and is related* to a college course with some type of reflection activity. How does your project meet the parameters of this definition?**

“Oktoberfest” is an annual event held in the city of Newberry, South Carolina. This two day festival includes numerous venues for a variety of activities and fun events. The event also provide an opportunity for vendors to sell crafts, food, and other items of local interest. In addition, the Newberry Humane Society, in partnership with the Veterinary Technology Program at Piedmont Technical College, sponsors an adoption opportunity for dogs and cats from the local Humane Society shelter.

Prior to the Oktoberfest, veterinary students with oversight of the program’s veterinarian and licensed veterinary technician assess and evaluate the animals presented for adoption. The animals deemed “adoptable” are included in the event. Health concerns, temperament, and availability have been assessed in a manner compatible to the standard processes of determining an animal’s viability for adoption.

All animals available for adoption receive necessary vaccinations and have been neutered or spayed. This medical intervention is a service provided by the Veterinary Technology program of Piedmont Technical College.

The College’s involvement in the program allows the students in the Veterinary Technology Program to participate in various aspects of this very popular local festival. In doing so, the students get an opportunity to get hand-on experience with the animals, but they also get a chance to be involved in event planning and leadership development activities. The students get an opportunity to participate in improving the quality of life in the area. Mahatma Gandhi said, “The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” While the students are not involved at the national level, they can certainly be active at the local level and show the participants at Oktoberfest activities that there is value in providing adoptable pets, bringing joy to many.

All of the activities involved with the planning and execution of the project are tied to course competencies and student learning outcomes associated with the student’s academic program. This allows students the opportunity to reflect on their learning and enhance classroom activities with a service-learning opportunity.

- 2. Specifically, which segments of the college/university community does your project involve?**

The primary segment of the college involved in this project is the Veterinary Technology program and the Division of Health Science. Assistance with the project is also provided by college personnel at the Newberry Campus and members of the Veterinary Technology Advisory Board, which is composed of veterinarians and veterinary technicians from the College’s service area.

3. How many students (specify degree levels to the extent possible) does the project affect?

This project is an opportunity for students to demonstrate leadership and mentoring skills. Students involved are both the first and second year students of the associate degree program. An average participation is 18 second-year students and 24 first-year students.

Students function in committees to plan and implement the project. Second-year students take the leadership role and function as chairpersons to various committees, mentoring the first year students.

4. Describe the target community or communities your project serves.

Oktoberfest is an open event and is free of charge to the public. Participants in the event are a diverse cross-section of citizen from the seven-county service area of Piedmont Technical College, throughout South Carolina, and surrounding states. As this event has grown in popularity the draw far extends beyond local interest.

5. Describe your project's effectiveness in helping to solve the problems or concerns in the target community.

Abandoned pets are a national crisis that affects many communities. The Newberry Humane Society seeks to be a "no kill" shelter. To facilitate this goal, suitable adoptive "parents" must be located for these animals. As an ongoing mission of the Veterinary Technology program, every effort is made to assist with this goal.

The Veterinary Technology program has participated in Oktoberfest for seven years. During that time, nearly 100% of the animals brought to the festival for adoption have found homes. On average, 12 dogs and 15 cats are offered for adoption yearly. This success has not only aided in reducing the number of animals in the shelter; it has also reduced the likelihood of animals being euthanized. Raising public awareness of stray animals and adoption/foster opportunities are also goals for the shelter and Veterinary Technology program.

6. Describe the degree to which your project enhances student learning while providing specific examples of the service learning activities the college students engage in. Also explain how the service learning activities reinforce or apply what the college students learn in the classroom.

During the weeks leading up to the Oktoberfest event, senior Veterinary Technology students will have hands-on anesthesia and surgery labs in which the students perform diagnostic testing, monitor the patients under anesthesia, and maintain aseptic technique during surgery. The freshmen students will have hands-on opportunities with these animals as well, including bathing/grooming the animals prior to the event and assisting with behavioral assessments and general husbandry. All of this hands-on training is essential to student learning outcomes for the Veterinary Technology program, and it also helps the shelter by preparing these animals for adoption.

7. Is there academic credit associated with the project (not necessary for submission)? If so, please explain the particulars.

There is no specific academic credit associated with this project. All students enrolled in the Veterinary Technology Program are members of the Veterinary Technician Club. As a result, this community service project is an expectation of the students.

8. If funding is required, how is the project funded and what is the approximate annual budget for the project?

Minimal funding is required for this project. Through fundraisers and donations, the Veterinary Technician Club at Piedmont Technical College can offset expenses. The Oktoberfest is also utilized as a fundraiser. The students sell baked goods, various collars and leashes for animals, and provide activities for children, including face painting and craft projects to raise money to offset any incidental expenses of the project. An average expense for the project is \$500.00. No specific budget or itemized needs are determined.

9. Add any other comments you may have about your project.

The Oktoberfest service learning project is the culmination of an ongoing symbiotic relationship between the Veterinary Technology Program at Piedmont Technical College and the Newberry Humane Society. The Humane Society provides animals to the program for evaluation, assessment, and treatment. In turn these animals are made more viable for adoption. Through the Oktoberfest event, students are afforded the opportunity to facilitate the adoption process.

The ongoing relationship between the program and Humane Society is of tremendous benefit to both organizations. Veterinary technician students have the opportunity to learn the skills needed for successful learning outcomes and the Humane Society receives services that otherwise would have been an expense to the county. Having this relationship has reduced overall cost to the county and as a result, the Humane Society has greater resources that reduces the need to euthanize animals.

You may also include supplemental information about the project (such as brochures, pictures, etc.).

Please return this form via e-mail by **February 26, 2016**, to:

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