



NEWS

The S.C. Commission on Higher Education
Garrison Walters, Executive Director
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Commission on Higher Education Presents Service Learning Awards

Service Learning Awards were presented at the Commission on Higher Education Meeting on Thursday, March 6, 2008. The Service Learning Review Committee was impressed by the efforts being made to link service learning to the community. Dr. Garrison Walters, Executive Director of the Commission on Higher Education, expressed his appreciation for the time and energy being put into these programs.

Criteria set forth for the winners were: community impact, number of students who participate, and integration into academics. Dr. Layton McCurdy, Commission Chairman, named the following winners and congratulated them on their outstanding programs.

Winners named were: Clemson University for the Public Four-Year Colleges and Universities for its Client-Based Writing Program. For this program, students produce communication deliverables (such as documents, websites, and so forth) that help non-profit agencies and other clients raise funds, educate the public, improve their operations, and serve the community. So far, students have helped resolve problems for 47 clients. The Client-Based Writing Program matches business and technical writing classes (English 304 and English 314) with local clients who need documents. Student teams produce the documents for the clients, which are now primarily non-profits in the Clemson, Anderson, and Greenville communities but which have also included campus departments and a few corporations. The program prepares students for workplace writing by engaging them in projects that have relevance beyond the classroom.

Newberry College won for the Independent Colleges and Universities for its Grant Homes Youth Development Project. Newberry College has partnered with the Grant Homes community, a subsidized apartment community operated by the Newberry Housing Authority, over the last year to establish a service project to improve life for children in the community. Over 200 families and 300 children make their home here. Most of the students from Newberry College who participate in this project do so through service-learning assignments in their courses. Several athletic teams and ECHO, a campus service organization, have also participated. This service project consists of after-school tutoring, field days, sports clinics, a video project (a communications class) and a Christmas Gift Program.

For the Two-Year Colleges, Trident Technical College won for its Charleston Clemente Courses Project. The Clemente Course is a free college-level humanities course which is an innovative approach to addressing homelessness and poverty through the empowering force of education. The idea behind this course is that abstract, critical thinking skills can provide the homeless and the disadvantaged with tools needed to escape multi-generational poverty. Study of the humanities engenders the ability to “think outside the box.” Graduates of the Charleston Clemente course illustrate this principle. For example, one student, previously a waiter, is now exploring a career as an events planner. Another student, a single mother with five children, is now employed by The Boys and Girls Club and is seeking a grant to provide free childcare for other single moms pursuing their education.

Plaques and checks for \$500 were presented to each of the winning schools by Dr. McCurdy as he expressed appreciation to State Farm Insurance for the financial awards.



Ms. Karen Horne, S. C. Department of Education; Dr. Summer Smith Taylor, Clemson University; Dr. Joe McDonald, Newberry College; Dr. Layton McCurdy, Chair of S.C. Commission on Higher Education; Dr. Mary Ann Kohli, Trident Technical College.