

NOMINATION FORM
CHE SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT COMPETITION

Institution _____ Columbia College _____

Title of Project: LA 201: The Sophomore Seminar on Diversity, Gender, and Social Justice; Christine Hait's Section with Service Learning at the Ebenezer Lutheran/Community CME TASC After School Program

Director of Project _____ Dr. Christine Hait, Professor of English _____

Contact Information of Project Director

Address: Division of Languages and Literatures, Columbia College, 1301 Columbia College Drive, Columbia, SC 29203 _____

Telephone Number: _____ 803-786-3711 _____ Email Address: chrishait@columbiasc.edu _____

Establishment Date of Project _____ Spring 2012 _____

Unit That Administers Project _____ LA 201_ and Center for Applied Learning _____

Total Number of Students Involved _____ approximately 22 students a semester. As of Spring 2014, over 100 students have participated in Dr. Hait's service learning project. _____

Signature of Institutional

President _____  _____

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REGARDING THE NOMINATED PROJECT
(Insert your answer after each question.)

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. Briefly, how does your project meet the parameters of this definition?

LA 201 is a part of the general education curriculum and is designed as a sophomore experience. A requirement of all students in LA 201 courses is 30 hours of service learning. Each LA 201 instructor works with a community partner and designs a service learning experience for her students. Dr. Hait's section of LA 201 is focused on understanding diversity, gender, and social justice through identifying the needs of children and learning about the various ways that individuals and organizations can help to meet those needs. LA 201 students keep a log of their service learning hours and write monthly reflections on their service learning experience. In Dr. Hait's section, students also create a contributions list (see samples of a reflection and of a contributions list attached).

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

LA 201 is a part of the general education curriculum and is designed as a sophomore experience.

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

The project affects approximately 22 sophomore-level students a semester. Since Spring 2012, over 100 Columbia College students have participated in Dr. Hait's service-learning project.

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

The twenty or so young people served each school year by the Ebenezer Lutheran/Community CME TASC After School Program live in the 29203 zip code/Eau Claire neighborhood. The program building is only blocks away from Columbia College. The students in the program range from first graders to high school students. For the last couple of years at least, the children have all come from single-mother homes, and the students must apply to be in the program and demonstrate a need for the program. The program is designed to keep the young people safe and off the streets during the after-school hours and to feed them, give them homework assistance, offer them enrichment programs and activities, and provide them with positive role models. Because they go to school in--and the resident students live in--the 29203 area, Dr. Hait's LA 201 students are assisting members of their own community and building stronger community ties.

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

The TASC After School Program plays a vital role in the community, and Dr. Hait's LA 201 students play a key supporting role. With 22 students contributing 30 hours of service learning, every semester Columbia College students devote 660 hours to the TASC After School Program. The college students spend much of their time working one-on-one with the young people in the program providing them homework assistance. This assistance is vital, and often the college students will report that they have observed the young students dramatically improve in their math or their reading skills during the course of one semester. The TASC students don't get home until after 7:00 p.m., so it is important that they have their homework done early and have an opportunity to have their questions answered.

LA 201 students also devote hours working individually or in teams to create enrichment lessons and activities for the young people. Columbia College students are in charge of enrichment every Wednesday during the semester. They have shared their backgrounds and shared their interests with the TASC students, and they have applied knowledge from their fields of study and knowledge from their study of leadership to create a variety of lessons. During Wednesday enrichment, TASC students have learned from the college students about good nutrition, common words and phrases in French, good sportsmanship, the cuisine and cultural traditions of Mexico, the planets, swing dancing, journaling, solving math problems, sound financial practices, being a good friend, and drawing cartoons. Truly, the list could go on. As Mrs. Bonaparte, the Program Director, often reminds the college students, many of the TASC children have not had the privilege of private lessons, and many of their parents are working two jobs to support their families. Enrichment activities give the children an opportunity to enjoy a variety of fun lessons and activities that spark their interest and broaden their horizons.

In addition, the Columbia College students spend many hours planning an end-of-the-year celebration and other events that provide an opportunity for the college students and the TASC students to get to know each other and have fun together. In the fall, the end-of-the-year celebration takes place at TASC and is a holiday celebration, but in the spring, the end-of-the-year celebration is a Field Day and Carnival that takes place on the Columbia College campus. In the fall, the TASC students come to campus to enjoy Boorific, a campus-wide trick-or-treating event in the residence halls. The LA 201 students host the TASC students for this event. It is exciting and inspiring for the TASC students to spend time on a college campus and to see in the campus setting the college students whom they have come to admire. The hope is that the TASC students will feel that Columbia College is part of their community and that college is an achievable goal in their own lives. These events combine with the homework assistance and the enrichment activities to give the TASC students many opportunities to interact with positive role models who support them and encourage them to strive for academic success and to make good choices (see a PowerPoint introduction to the service learning project attached).

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

In LA 201, Columbia College students are asked to reflect on issues of diversity, gender, and social justice. Each instructor chooses her approach to the subject. In Dr. Hait's section, students read Michael Sandel's *Justice: What's the Right Thing To Do?* and focus on issues of justice as they relate to children, both locally and globally. Sandel uses case studies that bring out a variety of ethical questions concerning fairness and equality, freedom and responsibility, and wellbeing and virtue. As the LA 201 students work through Sandel's

chapters, they focus on the examples that involve children, and they apply concepts discussed to the specific case of children. The students discuss diversity and gender in the context of social justice, and they consider the ways issues of gender and diversity factor into the construction of a just society. A question often posed to the LA 201 students is, How do these issues and concepts relate to our TASC students?

The service-learning project gives the LA 201 students a way to think about Sandel's question—What's the Right Thing To Do?—in a way that has concrete application. The LA 201 students are challenged to ask on a variety of fronts, What is the right thing to do for these children? What is justice for them? How do issues of diversity and gender affect them? Sandel's book also gives the LA 201 students ideas about concepts that we want the TASC students to consider. Therefore, on a very different level, of course, my students through enrichment programs and through their one-on-one interactions with the TASC students encourage them to ask, What's the Right Thing to Do? They talk to the TASC students about being fair and just and showing kindness to their friends and to those in need. A diverse group of young people working together, the LA 201 students model for the TASC students teamwork and mutual support. Sandel's book is philosophical in nature, so the service learning experience helps the LA 201 students move from abstract theories to specific application.

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

Yes. LA 201 is a three-hour course that meets general education requirements.

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

The project does not require funding.

9. Feel free to add any other comments you may have about your project.

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

Attached: Sample contributions list, sample reflection, and PowerPoint introduction to the service learning project.

Please return this form via e-mail by **March 14, 2014**, to:

Trena Houpp, Associate Director
Division of Academic and Student Affairs
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
1122 Lady Street, Suite 300
Columbia, SC 29201

803.737.4853
thoup@che.sc.gov

Contributions (Use action verbs)	The Difference They Made
1. I provided an enrichment activity of Naikan and journaling.	It gave the children a basis for self-reflection and encouraged expression through writing.
2. I served food every Tuesday.	This helped take the load off Ms. Bonaparte as well as give the children a balanced meal (while also discussing the benefits of green vegetables!)
3. I helped Jordan with her collage.	Helping Jordan helped her come out of her shell to me and feel more confident with her own abilities.
4. I sang with the children during music enrichment.	It helped them stay on task while also helping Ms. Beth keep everyone somewhat in control.
5. I quizzed Malik on spelling words.	This helped him feel more confident and prepared as well as excited to show off his abilities.
6. I taught Kamiah a trick with 9 multiplication tables.	This helped her feel more capable as well as allowed her to do her work more efficiently.
7. I mediated a conflict between Neasia and Tatiana.	This prevented them both from getting hurt as well as showed them both they were capable of practicing self-restraint.
8. I read books with Jayda.	Helping Jayda keeps her from feeling frustrated with her reading difficulties as well preventing her from as disengaging.
9. I had direct conversations with Tatiana about her behavior and its implications.	I think talking to her like a peer made her feel more comfortable with me and fostered a more respectful relationship.
10. I taught Essence about other cool left-handed people (including Barack Obama!)	This made her smile and understand her own special traits.

Professor's Comments:

Grade:

Meredith Mathews

3 December 2013

LA 201

Dr. Hait

Final Reflection

As the semester comes to a close, I am full of gratitude for the past several weeks that I have spent working with Ms. Bonaparte, Ms. Kim, and the children at TASC. I was nervous at the beginning of the semester as I have little experience with children (specifically at-risk children) and I was unsure of what their needs were and how exactly I could maximize my abilities and be of service to them in the greatest capacity. As I became more comfortable, I began to know the children and the directors on a deeper level and allowed them to guide me into being as effective as I could be. Combining my responsibilities at TASC with what I learned as the semester progressed, I come away with more determination to serve this community.

I typically went to TASC on Tuesday afternoons right before the children arrived, and during these times I helped Ms. Bonaparte and Ms. Kim set up the food for the children. During this time I got to know them both better as the three of us cracked jokes, shared our thoughts, and learned more about each other. Both women were candid with me regarding their concerns about many of the children and about their home lives. When an incident with a parent occurred (who decided to pull her children from the program and then returned the following day to insult Ms. Bonaparte) I saw the true resolve of Ms. Bonaparte and Ms. Kim. As I watched Ms. Bonaparte keep her cool the entire time while the parent became more hostile, I admired her demeanor as well as her

commanding presence without having to raise her voice a single time. After the parent left, Ms. Kim's emotional reaction and anger on Ms. Bonaparte's behalf illustrated how the two women have each other's backs and the respect that Kim feels for Ms. Bonaparte and her mission. That incident left all of us shaken, and I still find myself thinking often about the two children who were caught in the middle. I desperately hope that there are adults in their lives that can show the care and nurturing that they will no longer receive from TASC.

Between serving food, helping with homework, and observing enrichment, I got to know the children better throughout the semester as well. I got a feel for little Amari's precociousness and began to see how Malik loved the challenge of an impromptu spelling test. I saw that focusing Essence's energy could diminish her frustration and even get a smile from her, and engaging in direct conversation with Tatiana could end in a meaningful dialogue rather than a barrage of insults. I found that providing the older Amari with a journal alleviated her boredom and spurred self-expression while keeping Elijah supplied with red markers would sometimes be rewarded with a "thank you, Ms. Meredith."

I am so grateful that I got to serve TASC and I am committed to continuing to return to the center to provide support to both the adults and children. I also have found that being a mentor is not a one-way street, as the sweet smiles and sparks of recognition that I saw in the children were frequently the bright spot of my week. I am not disillusioned by the difficulties that I witnessed first-hand that this population faces; my determination to be of service and a part of something larger has been strengthened.



LA 201

Building Community Bridges

Hait- Section 04

LA 201

- **Course Description:** LA 201 will introduce students to some of the central themes, debates, and issues that inform Diversity, Gender, and Social Justice. In particular, this course, using a problem-based learning approach, will explore current issues and controversial debates that have been central to the growth of the study of women and gender, and equal/human rights movements nationally and globally by exploring the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and gender. Through an interdisciplinary examination of our systems of knowledge and social institutions, the course will reflect on the way our public and private relationships, as well as the quality of our lives, continue to be shaped in relation to these systems and institutions. The course offers a range of perspectives on the work, class, and lives of women and men in our local, national and global communities.





Community Bridge

- This course, a required part of Columbia College's general education curriculum, was created to build community bridges. Students have opportunities to make connections between academic course work and practical experience and to develop a commitment to socially responsible leadership and civic engagement. Class requirements include both classroom components and time with a community partner. Students will devote **30 hours** to their community bridge. Our Wednesday class meetings will be 45-minutes long to allow for some time during class to be on site, but service hours will mainly take place outside of class time.

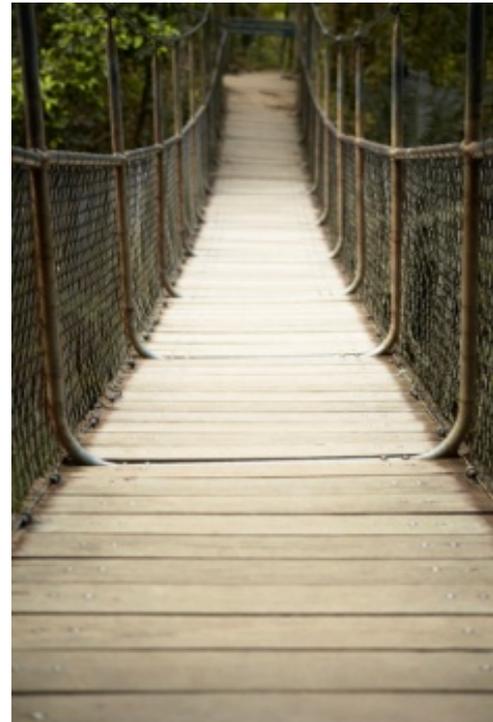
Dr. Hait's Sections

- This section of LA 201 will introduce students to some of the central themes, debates, and issues that inform Diversity, Gender, and Social Justice, but with a focus on children—their diverse needs, rights, and concerns. Children look to adults for support, protection, and guidance. Ideally, adults help young people live lives of dignity and promise. Our course text, *Justice*, by Michael Sandel, will help us to define justice and to appreciate the complexities involved in identifying just individual behavior and just systems, particularly as they impact children.



Dr. Hait's Community Bridge

- Students will work on-site with an afterschool program that is helping to meet the needs of children in our community.



Community CME/Ebenezer Lutheran TASC

M-Th 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

4317 Ridgewood Avenue

(from Leadership Circle, go right down
Columbia College Dr. Turn left onto Monticello
Rd. Take the 3rd right onto Muller Avenue.
Then turn right onto Ridgewood Avenue.
Community CME is on the left.)

Contact Person: Queen Burroughs-Bonaparte,
Program Director, 803 771-4739 Center



Needs We Will Meet

- Homework Assistance
- Wednesday Enrichment
- End-of-the-Year Celebration
- Semester-Long Support and Encouragement

TASC Students and CC Students at end-of-the-year celebration



Thank You for Your Commitment!

- I am asking you to make a commitment to the TASC Program children. They need you and all that you have to offer: your homework assistance, your support, your enrichment activities, your presence as a role model.
- Questions?

