

Reflections

ELWS Receives Engaged Department Designation

by Benjamin Solomon

On May 2nd, 2019, the SLCC Service-Learning Grant and Designation Committee recognized the English, Linguistics, and Writing Studies Department (ELWS) as an official “Engaged Department.”

According to Lucy Smith in SLCC’s Engaged Learning Office, “A department is considered an Engaged Department when they have philosophically and structurally integrated civic and community engagement throughout the culture, leadership, and curriculum of the department.”

Working with community partner organizations, local organizers, activists and public servants, the engaged faculty of the ELWS invites students to see and experience how reading and writing intertwine with community issues, local conditions, and civic action, and how writing outside the boundaries of the college classroom can have a profound effect on learning and growth.

Civically Engaged English Scholars study how language, writing and other forms of communication allow them to respond to social problems and create change in our local communities. And they use their emerging knowledge of writing to directly serve local communities and speak to local issues they are passionate about.

Students who complete the Civically Engaged Scholar Program receive a distinction on their transcript, graduate with honor cords, and are eligible to transfer their civic engagement transcript to many four-year Utah institutions.



THAYNE CENTER
AT SALT LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

25 YEARS
1994
2019

SLCC to Host Service-Learning Conference

Salt Lake Community College will be hosting the 2020 National Community College Conference on Service-Learning and Community Engagement on May 29th and 30th, 2020. This dynamic conference is an opportunity for community college faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community partners to network and develop promising practices in the field of service-learning and community engagement. The conference planning committee seeks experienced community college faculty, practitioners, students, and community partners as conference presenters, to share the value of service-learning in giving students real-world experience that helps to build their academic skills and commitment to their local communities.

The theme of the conference, *Service-learning for the Public Good*, speaks to the importance of the work that community colleges do every day. Registration information is available at <https://www.slcc.edu/thaynecenter/publicgoodconference.aspx>.

Upcoming Events

- Engaged Learning Celebration. January 31, 2020. 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm. Student Center Oak Room
- Civic Literacy Student Learning Outcomes Workshop. February 28, 2020. 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm. TBD
- National Community College Conference on Service-learning and Community Engagement. May 29-30, 2020. Taylorsville Redwood Campus
- Service-Learning Professional Development Series. January 13-March 25, 2020. Online

Spring Semester 2020

Justin's Story

by Cristina Chirvasa

I had the opportunity to work with Catholic Community Services (CCS) to fulfill the service learning component in my Technical Writing class. The project I worked on required interviewing CCS-picked clients and creating a website design with the information. Justin's is one of these stories. Justin relies most heavily on CCS' dining hall, computer lab, winter donations, and shower system. The dining hall provides a consistent source of food. Without it, Justin worries he would starve. With access to the computer lab and help from CCS staff, he's been able to build a resume and get a job at UTA. The winter donations CCS receives every Christmas season have been crucial for him during the freezing Utah weather. Finally, the shower system provides him the basic dignity of feeling clean every night. Most of these services would be impossible without donations. Food is needed to provide meals to those who otherwise would not be able to eat, winter clothing to keep clients warm and prevent health concerns, hygiene products to enable greater cleanliness, and monetary donations to maintain current services and improve upon them.



Justin

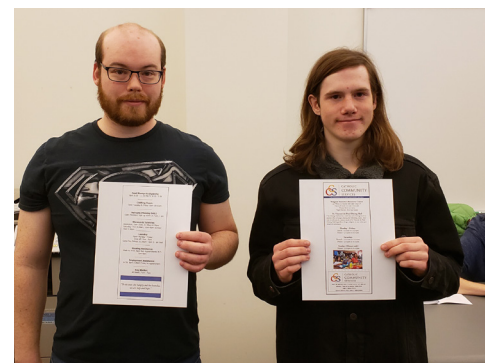
courtesy Cristina Chirvasa

His positive outlook on life and his excitement about getting a job put things into perspective. He taught me to strive for more out of life, while remaining thankful for what I have and those who have helped me along the way. I hope that his story will erase the stigma some continue to harbor for the homeless. I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to practice the writing and design skills honed in the classwork to engage in such meaningful work for an amazing organization.

Making a Difference

by Nicholes Greene

The members of Daniel Baird's ENGL-2100 flyer design team would like to say that it was a pleasure to work with Catholic Community Services and Monica Rich. Our job was to improve on and create a new flyer to help spread awareness about what services the CCS can provide to the homeless community. Monica, our community partner, was pleased with the final design, and the CCS started printing them as soon as they received a copy. The user feedback that Monica received was that the users liked how easy it was to find information and that it was easy on the eyes. Creating this flyer was a learning experience not only in design but in letting the team know that what we do can make a difference.



Jeffrey Daffern (l) and Nicholes Greene (r)

courtesy Nicholes Green

About Reflections

Reflections is a newsletter for and about service-learning in English published twice a year by the SLCC English Department. We welcome submissions on students experiences, faculty perspectives, pedagogical insights, community partner engagement, civic involvement, staff profiles, and upcoming events. Send photos, events, posters, or articles to estone@bruinmail.slcc.edu.

Editors: Elisa Stone, Daniel Baird, and Clint Gardner

English Department Service-Learning Committee: Benjamin Solomon (co-chair), Jason Roberts, Daniel Baird (co-chair), Lisa Packer, Andrea Malouf, Lucy Smith, Elisa Stone, Tonja Vincent, Kati Lewis, James Celestino and Clint Gardner

SLCC English, Linguistics, & Writing Studies Service-Learning Reflections Spring 2020

Deeply Connected: Lucy Smith

by Lori Brock

Lucy Smith, coordinator of the Engaged Learning Office at Salt Lake Community College, says her job is a perfect fit for her. “I have a master’s degree from the University of Utah in Experiential Education, but more importantly, I am a hands-on learner.” While her background has prepared her to work with nontraditional settings and learning styles, her spirit and vitality make all the office’s programs, including the service-learning program, soar.



Lucy Smith SPLORE volunteer guiding on the Colorado

courtesy Lucy Smith

Lucy credits her practical and direct approach to life to her parents who provided countless opportunities for her to explore nature and her role within it. “We spent an enormous amount of time just being outdoors. When we would go camping, my brother and I were treated equally. We were both expected to do all the things involving camping—fishing, hunting, and surviving. Looking back, I think these trips cemented my love of the outdoors and how I best learn.”

Using those camping trips as a springboard, Lucy continued to seek opportunities in the outdoors, and in programs like SPLORE, an organization that makes outdoor adventures accessible for people with disabilities, she found a way to share her love of nature. This involvement also set her on a path of service. “I’ve done direct service most of my adult life and my most profound experiences center around this service.”

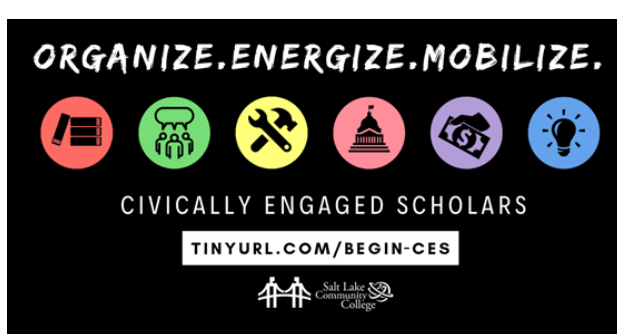
Lucy’s role as the coordinator of the Engaged Learning Office is to support faculty as they integrate service-learning in their classrooms. One way she helps faculty is to facilitate group discussions to “formally integrate service in their curriculum as an academic strategy.” She addresses concerns such as, “How does the service relate to the course content? How do we help students apply their new knowledge to the service they do? How can they use the community as a living text instead of just reading about issues online? And how do you incorporate learning about social issues into your discipline?” She also coordinates with the Thayne Center to find community partners interested in providing service opportunities to students. She works with current funding sources and is constantly developing new avenues for all of the programs. Lucy is responsible for collecting the data necessary to receive the Carnegie National Recognition Award and other grants.

Lucy shares her home with four chickens and two bunnies. “I have a pretty big back yard, so I grow a lot of my own food and the chickens give me eggs.” Lucy also uses public transportation and recycles. “If you love the outdoors, then you need to care about environmental sustainability. We all need to realize how deeply everything is connected.”

Spreading Awareness

by Mindy Young

As part of my ENGL 2100 class with Prof. Baird, we received the opportunity to work with the Thayne Center as part of our service-learning. Jazmin Meza and myself worked along with Cristobal Villegas to help with the Civic Engaged Learning (CES) handbook. While doing this project, I learned about the CES program and we created a brochure that would help get the vital information of the program to students. Along with this information, we gave students a way to contact Cristobal so they would be able to join. This program is about giving to the community while the community gives back to the students. Unfortunately, many of the Thayne Center programs are not well known or utilized, including CES. This program has increased four times the amount in the last year and hopefully this brochure helps it grow even more.



An Eye-opening Experience

by Keegan Cowley

For my technical writing class, I worked through United Way of Salt Lake, tutoring at James E. Moss Elementary. Of the 620 students attending the Elementary, 94% of them qualify for free or reduced lunch. This is a very diverse school with over 35 languages and 51 countries being represented. United Way of Salt Lake’s goal alongside providing the resources families need to survive is to ensure that the children are on track to succeed academically. I helped them with this goal by tutoring first through fifth grade students in reading. I was a little bit nervous going into it, but instantly connected with the students I was tutoring and enjoyed seeing them progress throughout the semester and begin to enjoy reading themselves. It was eye-opening to hear from these students about where they came from. I tutored one kid that had come from Honduras in the last year and another that had come from Syria when she was younger. I can only imagine what these families have gone through and what challenges they still experience now that they are here from language barriers to finding employment.



*SLCC service-learning student tutoring reading
courtesy Thayne Center for Service & Learning*

Change of Heart

by Danielle Davis

The only way to learn how to swim is to jump in the water; the same concept can be applied to learning. The only way to really learn something is to be hands-on and apply it to daily life. Through my service-learning course, I was able to do that. I chose Catholic Community Services to do my volunteer hours through and by choosing to be hands on in my learning, I learned how to take myself out the mindset of the seeing all the homeless as “stereotypical homeless” people; and see them people who are human beings and victims of the ongoing changes of inflation, renting prices, and income tax.

When I first showed up to St. Vincent de Paul Homeless Resource Center, I was an ignorant girl. I was ignorant to the economic housing crisis going on around me. The crisis that led thousands of people, and continues to lead growing numbers of people, down the rabbit hole of homelessness.

Volunteering with the homeless; a possible daunting task if entering with a mindset that the homeless are lackadaisical, drug-addicted moochers. Those 15 hours of service I was required to complete for my English 1010 course did not significantly change the lives of anyone I met, but it significantly changed my life. Who knew that preparing meals for people in need is all it took to open my eyes to the population who suffer all because they don’t have a stable roof over their head. By choosing to participate in a service-learning class, I chose to become more aware of problems in my community and I’m continuing to choose to find solutions for those problems. It all started with a service-learning class that I learned about the housing crisis in Utah. I learned by addressing one problem at a time it can potentially lead to fixing more problems.

Addiction is a scary topic, but there is an opioid epidemic that plagues Utah and I suspect that the homeless population is the main source of that epidemic. Drug dealers deal heavily in the downtown area, preying on the vulnerable population which happens to be the homeless. People can enter into homelessness without an addiction, but because of the heavy stress it takes on the body, can leave fighting more battles than they entered with. If a solution can be found to end the housing epidemic, then it can help start to unlock doors to end more epidemics; the opioid epidemic being one of many.

The solution is to spread awareness of the housing crisis and fight to have regulations on increasing rent. Like I said before, I started this journey ignorant; now I am opening my eyes to a whole new world, a world that has so much potential and just needs people willing to work to make a difference. Being civically engaged opened the door for me to start my journey through Americorp, where I will be helping fight this battle of unfair renting prices; and this reflection is a witness to how being civically engaged not only changed my view of the world, but also changed my heart.