Contents

Student Engagement Edition

John Schell earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Drew University and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Vanderbilt University.

Having served as chair of the English Department and Assistant Dean at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Schell joined the University of Central Florida in 1987 to chair the Department of English, which he did until 1997.

Schell joined the UCF Office of Academic Affairs in 2000, where he served as Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies. Since 2008, he has served as Vice President and Chief of Staff in the Office of the President.

UCF serves an 11-county area with nearly 3.6 million people. This means that the opportunities for our students to practice in the Central Florida community what they learn in the classroom are virtually innumerable. This large community-laboratory gives our university, our faculty members, and our students a competitive advantage over the older and more established universities in the state.

Most educators now know that engaged learning increases graduation rates and helps students establish careers in their chosen fields. I know that as a political science major my internship with community organizers in Hoboken, New Jersey, was a formative experience in my education. And though we have an aggressive and highly successful engaged learning program at UCF, I think we can do more to take advantage of the many applied learning opportunities that are available and that serve our students so well.

Before suggesting how we may increase experiential learning, let me give a brief overview of the status of engaged learning at UCF. Internships, practica, and clinical experiences have always been a staple of UCF education. And last year, more than 6,700 undergrads participated in at least one of these activities. To these applied-learning opportunities we added academic-based service-learning in 2003. Since we began keeping records in 2004, more than 52,000 UCF students have worked with over 500 community partners in service-based class projects.

Other engagement activities have also become part of the UCF Experience. Undergraduate research was established at the institutional level in 2003, and recently the Carnegie Foundation named UCF a "Leadership Institution in Undergraduate Research." Our study abroad office now boasts of programs for students in 21 nations. Along with many other capstone courses, the College of Engineering senior design class partners students with community groups to solve local problems. The honors program, LEAD Scholars, and co-operative education provide students with academic-based applied learning.

And if students want to participate in an engaged-learning activity that is not related to an existing class, Volunteer UCF has collaborated with Interdisciplinary Studies to develop a one-credit course that includes 15 contact hours in any number of disciplinary fields, a written reflection on the experience, and faculty supervision and assessment.

In the spring of 2009, a survey among undergraduate students found that approximately 80 percent of UCF graduating seniors took part in one of the engagement experiences listed above. This led a group of faculty members to ask two pertinent questions: 1) how can we better recognize students for their experiential learning activities, and 2) how can the university gain recognition for the work its faculty members are doing to support engaged learning?

After more than a year of study and discussion of these two questions, the group recommended that the university require all students to participate in an engaged-learning activity prior to graduation. Since engagement is clearly a priority for UCF students, the faculty members thought that it made sense to make experiential learning a purposeful and well-defined element of a UCF education.

The challenge that the committee faced next was to design an engagement requirement to address the diverse needs of our students, colleges, disciplines, programs, campuses, and course delivery methods. We learned long ago that at UCF one size does not fit all.

The faculty members proposed an engagement experience that would require students to meet the following criteria:
a. earn a minimum of one credit hour
b. demonstrate personal growth, civic engagement, or academic engagement
c. require the completion of a minimum of 15 contact hours
d. involve faculty or professional direction or mentoring
e. produce a structured student reflection
f. meet clearly stated learning objectives
g. follow an approved assessment design

Internships, international experiences, undergraduate research, honors participation, and the other activities discussed above meet these criteria. And so will new engagement activities that innovative faculty members and students will create to enhance student learning.

In summary, UCF students now participate in engagement activities at the undergraduate level to serve their community and to enhance their education. And I agree with the committee of faculty members that we should require all students to have at least one of these engagement activities before they graduate. Such a graduation requirement will serve the interests of our students and our community, and it will further define the UCF Experience. Please keep this idea in mind as you enjoy the diverse contents of this special Student Engagement issue of the *Faculty Focus*, remembering that UCF does indeed stand for opportunity.

Please join us for
Service-Learning Day 2010: Engaging STEM and Creating Sustainable Partnerships

The event includes lunch and will provide opportunities for UCF faculty to network with representatives of K-12 schools and other community partners as well as faculty and staff from other Florida institutions of higher ed and colleagues from our own campus. This exciting opportunity is a joint effort of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Experiential Learning, and the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and is sponsored by Florida Campus Compact and the Corporation for National Community Service.

Faculty who attend this event may apply for grant support for relevant projects. More information on that program will be available during the conference.

Classrooms Without Borders
Consuelo E. Stebbins

Consuelo Stebbins is an Assistant Vice President for the Office of Internationalization and Associate Professor of English as a Second Language in the Department of Modern Languages. She received her Ph.D. in Multilingual Multicultural Studies from Florida State University where she was a US DOE Title VII Fellow. She joined UCF in 1987 to establish the Center for Multilingual Multicultural Studies. She has served as Department Chair of Modern Languages and as Associate Dean in the College of Arts & Humanities. Recently, she has received several grants from the US Department of Education to support UCF's internationalization efforts.

Study abroad programs that include a service-learning component require students to interact closely with faculty directors and peers beyond the constraints of traditional classrooms. Students often describe their experiences in these high impact activities as "life changing" as they reexamine their values and beliefs and consequently gain a better understanding of themselves in relation to other communities. In the past, study abroad programs concentrated on language and cultural learning; however, now students are searching for opportunities to engage in service-learning abroad. UCF's colleges have responded to the student demand by creating projects around the world, where students gain first-hand experience in their various fields, while also making a difference in foreign communities. The following are samples of in-service programs offered abroad by various UCF colleges.

The College of Education collaborated with the University College of MARJON-Plymouth, United Kingdom, to offer a Study Abroad Program in summer 2010. Coordinated and taught by Dr. Gillian Eriksson, this program offered online courses that were part of a regular program that included an international service-learning component. Students visited agencies to examine issues such as socioeconomics, educational equity, and ethnic diversity for exceptional students. After completing modules online, students traveled to Plymouth to complete additional field experiences in three local schools, each student being placed with an elementary school teacher. This allowed students to engage with specialist teachers for exceptional students, classroom aides, principals and parents.

The College of Health and Public Affairs and Florida Hospital SHARES International sent a physical therapy team to work in children's homes in Kingston, Jamaica, during the spring 2010 term. The team consisted of the SHARES coordinator, a physical therapist, medical equipment specialists, and 13 physical therapy students enrolled in the doctoral program at UCF. The purposes of the trip were to provide direct physical

therapy services, host education opportunities for caregivers and volunteers, and deliver medical equipment. The mission was accomplished over a period of five days in partnership with HOPE Worldwide in Jamaica. The physical therapy team spent time at two children's homes. At both homes the staff identified specific children in need of a physical therapy screening and prepared a care plan for each child. Group training sessions were held for staff members to address body mechanics, range of motion, positioning, and behavior strategies. Staff of the children's homes are local women who have little if any education in caring for children with special needs, and this training was vital to improve the children's quality of life as evidenced by fewer contractures, less incidences of pneumonia, and increased mobility. Nineteen wheelchairs were delivered to care centers in Kingston. UCF coordinator Dr. Jennifer Tucker described the impact of the program on the children of Jamaica: "This trip was hugely successful! The friendship, education, and equipment left a footprint on the children of Jamaica that will last a lifetime!"

The College of Business Administration is working closely with the International Business Association (CBA), a student organization formally recognized by UCF's Student Government Association in fall 2008. The mission of the IBA is to help CBA develop a strong and sustainable international business program. The IBA provides a forum for students to learn of study abroad opportunities and to provide input on future program development. The goals of the IBA include providing input that will help develop the international focus of the College of Business in its curricula and research programs and promote the inclusiveness and diversity of the student body. The premier project of the IBA is the Global Business Brigades (GBB). With its headquarters at the University of California-Berkley, the GBB is a socially conscious network of volunteers that brings business skills and a passion for change to developing communities around the world. Established in fall 2008, UCF's GBB chapter was the first, and is currently the only, GBB in Florida. The GBB is supported by the College of Business, the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Student Government. Under the direction of Drs. Bradley Braun and Richard Ajayi, UCF's GBB has successfully implemented four micro-enterprise development projects with the indigenous Koskuna tribe in Panama. The GBB is currently planning its fifth project in Panama, which will be implemented in December 2010.

Nine students from the Burnett Honors College traveled to St. Kitts and Nevis in June as part of the President's Scholars Program. Under the direction of Dr. Martin Dupuis and Dr. Kevin Meehan, students engaged in five community projects based on their major fields of study. You'll see more on this project in Dr. Meehan's piece. One team focused on environmental education and renovated a computer lab and science center for a primary school. Working with community partners, the class was able to provide computers, microscopes, science equipment, and science books for the children. A sea turtle protection program was done as a field trip, too, and students saw the giant leatherback turtle nest. Students also painted the rooms and played a match of cricket! The pre-med students shadowed doctors at the hospital for three days.

Engineering students participated in a sustainable agriculture project and did research on the feasibility of small scale hydroponic and organoponic farming. In Nevis, the class engaged in an oral history and cultural drumming projects.

Through a partnership established between UCF and the University of UCR-Puntarenas campus, Dr. Denise Gammonley in the College of Health and Public Affairs and Maria Redmon in the College of Arts and Humanities developed a service oriented summer study abroad course "Globalization and Contemporary Social Issues in Costa Rica." Key to the success of the service-learning abroad was the integration of Spanish language training throughout the three-week course. Students participated in intensive language training sessions in collaboration with faculty from UCR-Puntarenas. These sessions included peer-learning exercises where students from UCR learning English were also afforded the opportunity to practice their conversational skills. A wide range of service-learning activities were provided, consistent with the aims of the course to broaden intercultural competence and strengthen understanding of community capacity building and social service delivery systems. Service activities included a beach clean-up project with UCR students, delivering a reminiscence and activity program at a local senior center, planting trees to support the efforts of a rural women's microenterprise cooperative, interacting with young children at a shelter/orphanage while learning of the social reality that creates the need for a shelter/orphanage, and engaging in youth development with rural children on Isla Chira through a community mapping project. Building on the success of the program, the UCF School of Social Work is planning to host students from UCR-Puntarenas who will take part in their own study abroad experience here at UCF in July 2011.

Plan now to apply for the
Winter Faculty Development Conference!

Nine-month faculty members are invited to submit a proposal to participate in the 2010 Winter Faculty Development Conference, to be held on Dec. 14-16. We are altering the format this year to include two new components: a professional conference style format of participant presentations and some time dedicated to "think tank" discussions on a variety of issues relevant to UCF faculty. Faculty will apply by proposing an 8-10 minute presentation to share with colleagues. Presentations may take the form of original (SoTL) research, meta-studies, or demonstrations of individual "best practices." Proposals are due Oct. 29, 2010. For more information, go to <http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/>

From the Experiential Learning Office
Sheri Dressler

Sheri Dressler is the Director of Experiential Learning and also teaches in the Department of Counselor Education. She received her Ph.D. in Counselor Education at the University of Florida, Gainesville and joined the faculty at UCF in 1982. She has held national leadership positions in experiential learning and has received leadership and excellence in programming awards at state and national levels.

I have worked in higher education, specifically in experiential learning, for many years. Over this time, I have watched with interest how applied learning methodologies have moved from marginal to central importance in higher education. There are many reasons for this shift, but certainly one of the major ones is the ability of experiential learning programs to promote increased engagement among all participants, including students, faculty, and community partners. Now more than ever, accreditation boards are including co-op, internship and service-learning along with other forms of experiential learning as means to measure learning outcomes, incorporate resources for learning and research outside the classroom, develop relationships with community partners as co-educators, and promote engagement.

To understand this process better, it helps to look at changes that have occurred in the past twenty years. In the early 1990s, four countries, the U.S., U.K., Canada, and Australia, simultaneously produced government documents stating that students were not graduating with necessary skills. In the U.S., the Department of Labor produced the *Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills* (SCANS) in 1991. This included both discipline-related skills and so-called "soft" skills and when it was revisited in 2000, the list had not changed. In 1997, the *White Paper on Higher Education* written by Edgerton and published by the Pew Institute adjusted the focus from measuring teaching to measuring student learning. As we all know, this change is one with which we still struggle, but this new focus moved experiential learning, with its ability to contribute uniquely to student learning and access data from outside sources, to a different level of academic interest. The resurgence of service-learning to promote civic engagement opened yet another source of student involvement and now the overall interest in engagement, both academically and in outreach into the community, has become a central focus around which all of these activities revolve.

At UCF, 20,000 students participate in experiential learning courses each year, helping to make engagement a significant part of the UCF experience. The Office of Experiential Learning instructs internship, co-op, and service-learning courses, and each form has a unique impact and different instructional benefits. Co-op allows students to work in major/career-related positions over many semesters, creating a developmental learning process in which students apply what they are learning as they are learning it and receive progressive responsibility as they increase in their academic preparation. Co-op courses are structured with supervision, learning objectives, reflection assignments and evaluation. These courses may be for credit or non-credit and students who participate are three times more likely to obtain major-related employment upon graduation or be accepted into graduate school than their counterparts. Internships are generally one semester but are similarly structured for learning. In this case the likelihood of obtaining major-related work upon graduation is two times as great as for those without this experience. In service-learning courses, some or all course objectives are taught through student participation in community service projects with an emphasis on increasing awareness of diversity, community social issues, and civic engagement.

The beneficiaries of this form of instruction first are the students. The real world is less predictable than a classroom, and there is no faculty member working for hours ahead of time to present a problem or case that comes out even or focuses specifically on a particular issue being addressed. The real world requires critical thinking to figure out which theory applies in which case, adapting to change and diversity of thought and methods, communicating effectively, dealing appropriately with supervisors, admitting mistakes, applying theoretical knowledge, and accepting repercussions. It also allows students to connect theory and practice, learn state-of-the-art techniques, create a network of contacts, and, not surprisingly, gain the recognition that one is not likely to be the CEO of the company any time soon. All of these and more have been shown to be learning outcomes from participation in experiential learning courses. Clearly, allowing students a chance to apply what they have learned in the classroom in real-world environments is eye-opening and likely to increase their commitment to their discipline, to service in their community, and to completing their education. Even unexpected results can be helpful. One of my favorite examples is a young woman who had always wanted to be a lawyer. We helped her obtain an internship in an excellent law firm where she received glowing evaluations. However, at the end of the semester, she announced that the experience was a tremendous success because she had decided that she did not want to be a lawyer after all. She was changing her major and wanted to thank us for saving her parents the money it would have cost to send her to law school. This is engagement on many levels with outcomes impacting students' continuing to graduation and becoming successful employees, citizens, and alumni.

The second beneficiaries are the faculty and the institution itself. Faculty who instruct experiential learning courses consistently report that the experience revitalizes their teaching,

brings genuinely motivated students and current information into the classroom, and creates opportunities for community partnerships for consulting and research. Additionally, the availability of primary learning outcome data often informs research and grant proposals, curriculum improvement, and accreditation reviews. UCF has been recognized for excellence as an "engaged campus" numerous times, raising our national and statewide reputation in this area.

The third beneficiaries are the community partners who serve as co-educators. This adds resources to the learning process and contributes human resources for projects that might not have been completed otherwise. These partners report that working with our students brings energy and vitality to the workplace, helps them solidify their relationships with UCF and motivates current employees to consider pursuing higher education. Last year, co-op students alone earned $17 million and service-learning students contributed 145,000 hours in service, comparable to $2.5 million saved by community partners.

This year, the Office of Experiential Learning will add modular courses on teamwork, ethics, organizational culture, poverty, diversity, and more to the resources that are already available to faculty on our website. We will continue to provide workshops on experiential learning teaching methods. It is my hope that student participation in experiential learning will continue to grow at UCF so that students, faculty and our partners in the community can increasingly benefit from this unique form of instruction.

Poetry as Service?
Terry Thaxton

Terry Ann Thaxton is Associate Professor of English and Director of The Literary Arts Partnership at UCF and ArtsBridge UCF. She also provides storytelling workshops to residents in the memory-loss unit at a local assisted living facility, about which she has an article forthcoming in *Teaching Artist Journal*. She is editing a book *Take it Outside: Creative Writing in the Community*, and her collection of poems *Getaway Girl* is forthcoming from Salt Publishing (UK) in Summer 2011.

Mary was in her 50s. She had a degree in Business from UCF, and now she was in one of my creative writing workshops. During our first class I asked each writer to think of a place from his/her childhood that held special meaning. I asked them to create a scene using concrete, specific details of that place. When everyone finished writing, we read the scenes aloud. Mary was embarrassed, and though reluctant, she read.

She'd grown up on a farm in Montana. Her scene provided us with vivid sights, smells, and sounds of the place. She read about spending the night at her friend's house, about waking in the middle of the night in need of the toilet, but not being able to find it. She woke her young friend who told her the toilet was out by the barn, in the outhouse. Everyone in class laughed. Mary continued reading. When she finished, everyone clapped and told her how much they enjoyed her story.

Mary thought we were laughing at how bad her writing was. I explained to her that we were experiencing the memory with her, imagining our own confusion at no toilet inside the house. At the end of that first class, Mary told me she was surprised that others listened so carefully to a story about her childhood.

Throughout the semester, Mary continued to write stories and poems about her life. She embraced her ability to use irony and wit along with sensory details in her writing. In one poem, "Dumpster Diving," Mary describes her experiences living homeless on the streets of Orlando, in which the speaker is "just about to jump over the side of the dumpster for that make-shift meal of fresh garbage, of roast beef (I can smell it) when there are sounds of hi-tec police searching for clues from a robbery down the street (not me) in the messy trash." Poem after poem, story after story, Mary took us inside her life.

Mary was nontraditional. Yes, she was in her 50s, sitting alongside nineteen and twenty year-old college students, and yes she had a degree in Business. More impressive was that Mary had been living at the Coalition for the Homeless in Orlando for over a year, and was participating in the first community workshop my poetry students and I conducted at the shelter.

At the end of the semester, students organized a reading at a local coffee house. The room was packed with students, other residents from the shelter, community members, newspaper reporters, and friends. Mary wore her best dress, Chaunet wore a backless black velvet dress, Billy wore a suit, and Charlotte wore a fancy hat. No one listening would have known these people were homeless.

But everyone in that place listened.

It's true that busses can run, meals can be dished out, and lights turned on without poetry. It's certainly true that a person can survive the streets of Orlando without writing a single line of verse. It's true that anyone can write a journal entry, break it into lines and call it a poem.

Since the workshop with Mary seven years ago, my students and I have provided creative writing and reading opportunities for people in prisons, shelters, public schools, residential treatment facilities, housing projects, and many other social service agencies. My students do not begin to do this as "volunteers," but because I require them to do this as a service-learning component in my courses. In addition to critiquing each others' writing, students are actively engaged in their communities, coaching people on the techniques of creative writing.

Service-learning is reciprocal. I have no doubt that if you ran into Mary today, she'd remember that workshop, she'd remember that we listened to her words, to her life, and she would be grateful. But my students learned at least as much about creative writing as Mary. They also learned poetry's place in the world.

Students often think poetry is self-expression or therapeutic. This misguided notion allows them to use abstractions and generalizations, keeping their writing sophomoric, dull, and flat. While poetry has therapeutic value, as does any form of creation, poetry is communication. The process can be therapeutic, but empowerment—giving voice to experience— comes from turning that expression into a product—into art: into a poem that makes sophisticated use of the techniques of craft. It is this artistic product that allows the writer to move beyond the experience, to see the experience as separate from who they are at present. And this is what I want my students to learn in their service-learning.

My students and I are not therapists. We are writers. What we know is that creative writing—learning to hone the elements of craft—enlivens language and draws readers into our understanding of the human experience. For students, this service-learning requirement often becomes the turning point in their academic career. They begin to understand how their academic pursuits translate into lived experience.

After students complete a semester of service-learning in my creative writing class, they often want to continue the work they began. Thus I founded the Literary Arts Partnership (LAP) at UCF.

LAP trains and supports writers to serve as teaching artists in community settings, promoting literacy through the craft of creative writing. The other art disciplines are far ahead of creative writing programs in the training of students as teaching artists. For several years at UCF, ArtsBridge has been supporting collaborations between UCF and K-12 schools by pairing university arts students (scholars) with a K-12 teacher to introduce arts-based instruction as a tool to address core curriculum areas such as English, math, social studies, and the sciences.

ArtsBridge, supported by the Office of Experiential Learning, is part of ArtsBridge America, founded at UC Irvine, which encourages students of all majors to be engaged in art as a way to inspire children and youth in learning all subjects.

This semester, ArtsBridge UCF is supporting three partnerships. (We're taking applications for Spring 2011 ArtsBridge Scholars.) Grace, a theatre MFA candidate is working costume design into a fourth grade curriculum; Alina, a senior majoring in theatre is working with voice in written speech; and Tamra, a MFA in Creative Writing candidate, is incorporating fairy tales in a fifth grade classroom. Each of these scholars is supported by a UCF faculty mentor in her discipline and a host teacher. This semester, we've introduced

the ArtsBridge Apprentice Program. Each scholar is also serving as a mentor to UCF sophomores and juniors in a discipline other than their own.

ArtsBridge is not only interested in theatre, creative writing, art, film, music, and digital media students to serve as ArtsBridge Scholars, but we are interested in business, engineering, math, science, and political science majors to work alongside our artists.

The service-learning requirement in my classes and the programs of ArtsBridge challenge students to apply, and thereby strengthen, their understanding of the techniques of their art. For children, youth, and adults who are living in the midst of crises, imagination becomes a tool for empowerment. For students, this work changes their view of education, of art, of being an engaged citizen.

Engaging Students in Academic Research
Kimberly Schneider

Kimberly Schneider is the Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) and a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology. She received her Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from the University of South Carolina in 2006. She joined the UCF faculty in 2007 when she became the Founding Director of OUR. Her research interests include science education and marine ecology.

Long before the Office of Undergraduate Research was established in 2007, UCF faculty had been engaging our undergraduates in research and creative activities. Student projects come in a variety of shapes and sizes—from group research projects in classes to independent projects that lead to peer-reviewed publications. By engaging in the creation of new knowledge and expanding our understanding of our world, students become scholars at an early age.

The benefits of undergraduate research to the students involved are endless. Students gain soft (e.g., discipline specific skills) and hard skills (e.g., communication, critical thinking), confidence, and career clarification from their experiences as undergraduate researchers. Their probability to move into a graduate program also increases. Mentors gain help with their research objectives and great satisfaction from mentoring young scholars. At UCF, these type of partnerships between UCF students and faculty are occurring campus-wide. For example, at the 2010 Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence (SURE), faculty from 38 departments/ schools mentored the 310 students who participated in the poster forum.

I personally have benefited from these experiences as an undergraduate researcher and a mentor. I also continue to witness the benefits of undergraduate research from the variety of students from all disciplines who work with our office and through campus-wide survey assessments of the undergraduate research experience. For example, 80% of our undergraduate researchers report that they spend at least 1 hour per week meeting with their mentors one-on-one. Similarly, 65% of students report that they have the right amount of support and guidance from their faculty mentor. I find these results impressive considering the multiple responsibilities faculty have at UCF.

Examples of Successes—From the UCF classroom to National Research Institutes

It is important to remember that undergraduate research does not fit into any one mold. Students gain insight and experience from short intense experiences as well as long-term independent projects. Two classes have used group projects to train students through the research process with many successful outcomes—Dr. Linda Walter's Marine Biology and Ms. Eileen Smith's Converging Media class. As part of the curriculum in each course the students team up and do independent research projects. Student teams in the Marine Biology course have presented at SURE as well as regional and national marine science conferences. In fact, students have won awards at several of these events. Additionally, two projects eventually were published in peer-reviewed journals. The Converging Media class has won awards several times at SURE, including a first place win in the 2009 Arts and Humanities category.

Often students are able to take their UCF experience and transfer it to opportunities off-campus. For example, Mario Pita, a third-year double major in Microbiology & Molecular Biology and Psychology has been actively working with Dr. Kiminabu Sugaya since arriving at UCF in Fall 2008. He volunteered with the professor before being accepted into the Research and Mentoring Program. Using his experience at UCF he was able to secure a competitive paid internship at the National Institute of Health (NIH) this past summer. He was a co-author of a peer-reviewed publication before he returned to UCF this past August. His UCF experience provided a great springboard to an incredible opportunity.

Helpful Resources

Every year we hope that more faculty get involved in engaging our undergraduates in research and creative projects. If faculty are looking for undergraduate students, they can create accounts at <http://www.our.ucf.edu/forfaculty/> to post positions. These positions can be volunteer, for independent research/student credit, or paid. The Office of Undergraduate Research receives close to 3,000 visits each month and students are frequently looking for job postings.

The Office of Undergraduate Research also runs a Student Undergraduate Research Council. These students serve as research ambassadors and peer mentors on behalf of our office. They are available to come to your classes to share information about undergraduate research. If you are interested in having a student council member visit your class, please contact our office at OUR@mail.ucf.edu.

Faculty also can work with students to apply for grants, travel awards, and publish in our *Undergraduate Research Journal.* A review of all the opportunities can be found at <www.OUR. ucf.edu>. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the Office of Undergraduate Research at OUR@mail.ucf. edu!

Engaging STEM in Service-Learning: A Biology Case Study
Linda Walters

Dr. Walters, whose research interests include Marine Ecology and Marine Conservation, joined the UCF Biology Faculty in 1997 as an Assistant Professor. Now a Full Professor, she has taught many types of classes, including very large, independent research, study abroad, and service-learning. Dr. Walters is the FCTL Faculty Fellow for Engaging STEM for 2010-2011.

Service-learning (SL) is well established as a pedagogical strategy in the arts, humanities, and social sciences to engage students and provide course content while simultaneously emphasizing civic responsibility of our undergraduate and graduate student populations. Traditionally, it has been used less frequently in STEM (science, technology, engineering & math) disciplines where course time is more focused on mastering large amounts of content and it is often assumed that the students are inherently self-motivated to learn and retain the material for future gain. However, this is not always the case.

My field is marine biology and over the past 13 years I have completely transformed my upper-division, undergraduate Marine Biology class (BSC 4312) from passive in-class lecturing, canned labs and field tours into an active learning environment. All students in the class engage in research that is presented at UCF's Showcase for Undergraduate Research (SURE); all learn about local marine biodiversity by creating photo-organism collections as we visit field sites around the state and participate in research cruises aboard the R/V Bellows. In past semesters, to include current topics in marine sciences and to give all students public speaking experience, I had groups select "hot topics" such as ocean acidification, research the topic, and create a group PowerPoint that was

orally presented with all participants dressed in professional attire and speaking as if the presentation were part of a professional symposium. In the fall of 2009, I was trying to come up with a way to add more value to the "hot topics" presentations, when Dr. Melody Bowdon, who is now the Director of the FCTL, came knocking on my door.

Melody suggested that I consider increasing the impact of this assignment by turning it into a service-learning (SL) project. It was not something that I had previously considered, so we brainstormed and came up with the idea of having the students transform their marine biology "hot topics" presentations into short movies (5–10 minutes) that we could then share with a local high school where she was already volunteering. Melody noted that my students would still learn about topics and get pubic speaking experience, with the next generation of UCF students also benefiting from the movie content that would not normally be presented as part of their high school curriculum. We decided to test this idea out fall semester with four highly motivated undergraduates who were already associated with my lab. The undergraduates worked in pairs and picked topics of interest and, with assistance of UCF's Level 2 Studio, created two amazing movies <http://engage.ucf.edu/v/p/9kNyUBA> and ;<http://engage.ucf.edu/v/p/6JA88Lt>. My UCF students, who now call themselves the A.Q.U.A.S. (Answering Questions about Underwater Aquatic Systems) visited their partner high school classrooms, delved into pre- and post-testing, created their own logo for T-shirts, and eventually won multiple awards at the UCF SL Showcase in April 2010 for all their efforts. Obviously it was a success at this scale, but could it translate into a 24-person class setting?

Some things changed with scaling up. Flip-cams replaced the professional videographers and had to be shared among the groups. Group size was either four or five students. Editing was much harder for some groups than others, and unfortunately I was not able to supply much assistance. However, equally amazing results were achieved. You might have seen a giant, tinfoil squid wandering around campus or students filming themselves at the beach discussing coral restoration technologies. We completed the semester with our own Earth Day event where 30 high school students came for the First Ever Marine Biology Hot Topics Film Festival. After movies were debuted, the high school students had a chance to learn about UCF while getting personalized tours of campus and making oyster restoration mats with the marine biology class. As with any good film festival, there were lots of awards, and the high schoolers voted on "most engaging." From pre- and post-testing, a second award was provided for "most audience learning." A CSI-style film on harmful algal blooms captured the most awards <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmKgd7w5-rk>.

In reflecting on my student learning objectives and my extra workload, would I incorporate SL in my STEM courses in the future? The answer is a resounding yes. I don't mind the extra work as long as I know I have created something that has long-term benefits for my students. Hence, I am already

planning to incorporate SL into my Marine Biology course the next time I teach it as well as my graduate-level Marine Conservation class this coming spring.

Later this semester, Dr. Bowdon and I will be searching for like-minded STEM faculty interested in adding a service learning project to one their spring 2011 classes. If you are interested, please let one of us know.

PURE Biomedical Science
Ken Teter

Ken Teter is an Associate Professor in the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences in the College of Medicine. He earned his Ph.D. in Molecular and Cell Biology from UC Berkeley in 1998. After serving as a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Microbiology at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, he joined the UCF faculty in 2004 as an Assistant Professor.

Effective undergraduate education requires an engaged student body. In the life sciences, this means students need hands-on training in a laboratory setting. To provide UCF students with a holistic laboratory experience, I established the Program for Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE) in 2007. This article will provide an overview of PURE, which could be used as a template to establish other department-based undergraduate research programs at UCF.

Undergraduate research provides students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge of biomedical science, to understand the scientific method, and to formulate an accurate view of the research experience. UCF undergraduates have other opportunities to participate in biomedical research, but none of the current UCF research programs provide a holistic experience. In contrast, PURE is a synthesis of discipline specific skills: benchwork, data organization, critical thinking, literature searches, literature evaluation, communication skills, and career awareness are all components of the program. PURE participants receive training in the practice and communication of science, gain discipline-specific information fluency, interact with the faculty on a regular basis, and form a network of peer support. The PURE curriculum has been developed to establish a network of student researchers who will be highly prepared for post-graduate success.

Students who intend to enter post-baccalaureate education programs are the target population for PURE. Rising juniors and seniors apply to PURE <www.biomed.ucf.edu/pure> in the spring and begin their research experience in the summer. Independent research projects continue during the academic

year when students also register for a year-long seminar course which I supervise. The students work on separate research projects in a number of faculty labs, but all PURE students receive a consistent, standardized educational experience from the PURE course. These weekly class meetings promote a sense of community amongst PURE participants. Oral and written presentations of student research projects are the main focus of the class, which is designed to improve the communication and comprehension of hypothesis-driven science. Students are also encouraged to apply for grant and fellowship support. Additional class sessions consider practical aspects of biomedical research, including topics such as (i) the peer-review process in grant/conference/manuscript submissions; (ii) the movement towards open access publication; (iii) the proper venue for communicating results (i.e., conferences, seminars, publications, websites, etc.); and (iv) patent / intellectual property issues. PURE students attend the six yearly Career Opportunities in the Biomedical Sciences seminars <www.biomed.ucf.edu/career> in order to expand their knowledge and appreciation of available career paths. As a capstone project, students prepare a poster of their work that is presented at the annual UCF Showcase for Undergraduate Research Excellence (SURE). Students who complete the 3-semester program receive a 3-unit restricted elective credit for Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences degree programs.

PURE is now in its fourth year of operation. We typically receive around 30 applications per year and admit 10-15 students into the year-long program. Some entering PURE students have no previous research experience and are placed with faculty mentors, while other students are already working in their host lab at the time they apply to PURE. The number of students admitted each year is directly related to the availability of open research positions and faculty mentors who can commit to at least a year-long mentoring effort. To date, 21 faculty members from the Departments of Molecular Biology & Microbiology, Chemistry, and Biology have served as PURE mentors. Thirty students have completed the program, and another 12 are currently enrolled. Of the 25 PURE alumni who have earned their degrees, 80% are now in post-baccalaureate programs (graduate school, medical school, pharmacy school, etc.). Two alumni are employed as research technicians, and another student joined the Peace Corps. PURE students have (i) earned scholarships, grants, or awards from the American Cancer Society, the National Science Foundation, the Florida Academy of Sciences, and the UCF Student-Mentor Academic Research Team program; (ii) completed Honors in the Major thesis programs; (iii) won First Place, Second Place, and Honorable Mention for presentations at the SURE conference; (iv) presented posters of their work at international conferences; and (v) published their work in the UCF *Undergraduate Research Journal* and other peer-reviewed journals. Student evaluations of the program have been uniformly positive, and the faculty sponsors have also provided an enthusiastic response to the program.

PURE students are highly motivated and would likely succeed without the input of this program. However, the evaluations offered by the Student Perception of Faculty Instruction forms indicate a positive impact on student development resulting from PURE participation. The program appears to provide additional support and motivation for the students, which increases their self-confidence and chances of post-baccalaureate success. Much of this support and confidence-building involves the communal nature of PURE activities. Peer support also facilitates the development of oral communication skills. Many students dislike public speaking and are further intimidated by public presentations involving the communication of science. The process becomes a bit easier when the presentations are given to a small group of friendly faces. Student performances improve over the course of the year due to increasing comfort with the format and to the incorporation of feedback that is provided by the class immediately after each presentation. Student motivation, self-confidence, and achievement are also influenced by the curricular designation for PURE and the SURE capstone project. PURE is an official Department program with a selective application process, so the simple act of being admitted to the program improves student self-confidence and motivation. The SURE capstone project provides students with a defined goal for the program and a sense of accomplishment at the end of the poster presentation. Peer support, an official program designation, and a defined goal/capstone project thus represent the most important components of PURE.

The PURE format could be adapted to any department-based research program. Although some of the topics and goals would be discipline-specific, the key components of PURE can be incorporated into any departmental program. The founding of a PURE curriculum (organization, advertising, faculty recruitment, department recognition) will require the greatest effort from a PURE coordinator. However, university resources can also be used to establish and support nascent research programs. PURE has been funded by small grants from LIFE at UCF, the Office of Information Fluency, and the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. Students are encouraged to apply for UCF funding opportunities such as SMART grants, travel awards, and the RAMP program. PURE students also participate in UCF research activities such as Office of Undergraduate Research workshops, publishing in the *Undergraduate Research Journal*, completing the Honors in Major thesis program, peer mentoring at the Summer Research Academy, and making presentations at SURE. UCF faculty and staff have also contributed to PURE: Heather Engelking from Career Services helps organize the Career Opportunities seminars; Drs. Svetlana Shtrom and Henry Estevez from the Office of Research and Commercialization give presentations on intellectual property and patent law; Dr. Kevin Yee from the Faculty Center hosts a yearly session on effective speaking techniques; and, of course, multiple faculty members sponsor research projects for PURE students. Once established, the main effort of a PURE coordinator will be related to the supervision and mentoring of students in the PURE seminar. This simply involves sharing an enthusiasm for the discipline, which is really no effort at all.

"Bifurcated Mobility"? Telecommunication, Globalization, and International Service-Learning

Kevin Meehan

Kevin Meehan is an Associate Professor of English, director of the UCF Haitian Studies Project, and faculty advisor for the UCF student chapter of Engineers Without Borders. His book, *People Get Ready: African American and Caribbean Cultural Exchange*, was published by the University Press of Mississippi in 2009. He enjoys co-directing the President's Scholars Program, traveling throughout the Caribbean, and playing live music.

Since 2008, I have been involved in the President's Scholars Study Abroad Program, first as a guest lecturer and more recently as one of the lead faculty members. Sponsored by the Burnett Honors College, this is a unique summer school course that combines international service-learning and study abroad in the eastern Caribbean island federation of St. Kitts and Nevis.

With support from FCTL, my co-teacher Martin Dupuis and I have increasingly relied on distance learning technology to help us communicate and plan more effectively with our program partners in the Caribbean, including Dr. Leighton Naraine of Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College in St. Kitts, Ms. Lisa Farrell-Davis of the Kalinago Group in St. Kitts, and Ms. Violet Herbert Clarke of the Nevis Historical and Cultural Society. What I want to reflect on briefly in this essay is the complex impact of telecommunication on our teaching and learning. Focusing on telecom successes and failures serves to highlight moments of mobility and immobility that structure our insights, reveal our blindnesses, and indicate prospects for socially transformative teaching and learning as the course moves through different modalities and physical locations in the world system.

While the President's Scholars Program is inevitably embedded in a machinery of educational tourism, Marty Dupuis and I both strive to challenge touristic patterns by organizing service-learning projects. These projects create contacts between UCF students and local people that press at the limits of Manichaean tourist-native dynamics criticized by Jamaica Kincaid in *A Small Place*, <http://www.amazon.com/Small-Place-Jamaica-Kincaid/dp/0374527075>. Developing these projects—in non-traditional farming, public health, public education, and oral history, among other areas—requires extensive planning and use of telecommunication technology. Adobe Connect, with its excellent webconferencing interface, has played an increasingly important role. As Violet Clarke wrote to me recently in an email communication, "Your web conferencing is an excellent medium for distance learning and exposure for our students too, when travel is an issue."

What began as a tool for evaluating the 2009 program has evolved into a critical planning component. This year, using Adobe Connect, students were able to see and speak directly with Leighton Naraine as well as Chauntelle Warner and the staff of Estridge Primary School in the Kittitian countryside. Because of increased pre-trip planning, students in the organoponic and hydroponic farming project with Dr. Naraine were able to visit and interact with Kittitian farmers practicing both traditional and non-traditional cultivation. Students in the public education group were able to better organize their workflow at Estridge and completed their renovation of science and computer labs ahead of time, allowing Ms. Warner to schedule a well-publicized dedication ceremony and a never-to-be-forgotten cricket match with students from the primary school. We were also able to organize an effective oral history project in Nevis despite the challenge of staff turnover at NHCS during the time of our visit.

Adobe Connect is only one node in a larger telecom network including email, instant messaging, mobile phones, and more. When Lisa Farrell-Davis from the Kalinago Group (a St. Kitts-based development NGO named after the island's original Amerindian settlers) could not get past a firewall to join an Adobe Connect session, we were nevertheless able to conduct a vitally important—and side-splittingly hilarious—orientation to Kittitian gender roles using Yahoo Instant Messenger. Similarly, Ms. Farrell-Davis and her Kalinago colleagues brokered a deal with DHL to ship computers and lab equipment from Orlando to St. Kitts for free, but when the courier arrived to pick up our small mountain of boxes, we issued a string of frantic IMs, website consultations, and cell calls between here, Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, and Basseterre in St. Kitts, in order to confirm the destination, the DHL commitment to ship for free, and the agreement by St. Kitts customs officials to treat the freight as a duty-free charitable donation. While we were working together in St. Kitts, a Kalinago-descent woman from Dominica contacted Ms. Farrell-Davis by email to congratulate her on the education project at Estridge and inquire about how to collaborate on similar work in the future.

Even as telecommunication and instructional technology enhanced the ability of faculty, students, and Caribbean-based partners to interact more effectively and generate experiences and insights outside the norm of touristic dynamics, we also saw plenty of evidence that we remain mired in some of the more pernicious aspects of globalization. Sociologist Mimi Sheller has written about tourism theorists' claim that virtual and real Caribbean spaces have become interwoven as an effect of destination tourism marketing, with the result that "[i]ncreasingly we travel to actual destinations to experience virtual places" (quoted in Sheller, "Virtual Islands" 28) <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/small_axe/v012/12.2sheller.html>. As we preview our destinations and program partners via Adobe Connect and other telecom means, are we not participating in exactly this process, thereby reproducing a touristic experience? This likelihood seemed confirmed when 2008 and 2009 President's Scholars alumni met the 2010 group for

a pre-trip lunch in Orlando, and a comparison of the souvenir picture books from 2008 and 2009 revealed an almost identical series of locations and poses. Sheller offers another critique, with implications that are perhaps even more disturbing, when she explores questions of mobility and immobility within the emerging Caribbean spaces mapped out by splicings of the virtual and the real. Without question, our access to Adobe Connect and other technologies underscores a hypermobility on the part of UCF students and faculty enabled by our hyper-mediated instructional experiences, but how equally is this shared with our counterparts in the Caribbean? According to Sheller the Caribbean is increasingly shaped by what she terms "bifurcated mobility" in which "islands are splintered into fragments that are highly accessible to a mobile elite while local populations are more and more tightly controlled in their ability to move, to access public space, or to control their own national territory" (31). In fact, we saw this bifurcation reflected in the difficulty of making connections for students to move between St. Kitts and Nevis, in always polite but increasingly adamant requests from our partners to see the program develop into an exchange that would permit Caribbean students to travel to Orlando, and in growing worries about Kittitians' access to public beaches as luxury real estate development proceeds on the island's southeast peninsula.

According to Issa Shivji, a political economist and jurist from Tanzania, as globalization intensifies, "increasingly space is annihilated by time" (1) <http://www.caledonia.org.uk/papers/Globalisation%20and%20Popular%20Resistance.pdf>, and no doubt we saw this happen, for example, in our Adobe Connect sessions. Often, though, "space" seemed to remain intractable to being annihilated by time. This happened across modalities of instruction, manifesting on one day as a lengthy delay while we sat in Classroom Building I troubleshooting Adobe Connect or SharePoint, or on another day as a difficulty using bank cards for point of sale purchases in St. Kitts compounded by an inability to resolve electronic finance problems via lengthy phone calls to Orlando and customer service call centers. Sometimes we faced instances of brute physical immobility such as getting a pickup truck stuck in a canefield or a downtown storm drain. The more time we spent in St. Kitts-Nevis, and the more our work took us outside the routines of tourism, the more our own mobility was subject to being diminished.

Reflecting on instructional modalities and how these modalities shed light on issues of globalization and mobility/immobility has opened up interesting challenges moving forward with the President's Scholars Program. While continuing to use the mobilizing force of telecommunication to organize and evaluate our service projects, we have committed to finding ways to enhance the mobility of faculty and students with whom we partner in St. Kitts and Nevis. We hope to make it possible for Nevisian students to participate at some level in the St. Kitt's portion of the program, and we hope also to respond to the call of our Caribbean program partners by organizing an exchange so they can bring some of their students to Orlando for research, pre-professional mentoring, and cross-

cultural experiences at campus sporting events, beaches, open mics, etc. We are also trying to extend our involvement with Caribbean partners beyond the comparatively brief sojourn in the summer. Students working with Dr. Naraine on sustainable agriculture have continued refining design plans and grant writing to support scaling up model farms from experimental to production level. The Kalinago Group have identified another school with computer lab needs and have partnered with my colleague Terry Thaxton to develop an international service-learning project focused on creative writing. Enabling our Caribbean partners to enhance their own mobility through access to distance learning opportunities or in other ways remains a key to transforming (rather than reproducing) dominant models of teaching and learning.

Engaged Education: Mock Trial Midterm
Harry Coverston

Harry Coverston is a permanent instructor of Humanities, Religious Studies and the Philosophy of Law. He is a member of the Florida Bar and practiced juvenile and criminal defense law in Orlando five years before moving to Berkeley, CA, to become an Episcopal priest. He earned a Ph.D. in religion, law and society from Florida State University in 2000 and has taught at UCF since 2002. Harry is the pre-law advisor for the College of Arts and Humanities and faculty sponsor for Students Against Slavery and Alpha Phi Omega.

Philosophy of Law, PHM 3401, is offered once each year as an applied philosophy course. Typically about half of any section includes philosophy majors seeking to meet their application course requirement but the course always draws a wide range of students from outside the department, most of whom are considering attending law school. Taught by a former practicing attorney who now serves as pre-law advisor for the College of Arts and Humanities, the curriculum of the course initially focuses on legal philosophical theories as well as larger philosophical questions such as the rule of law. The second half of the course seeks to apply legal theory through analysis of case law and current philosophical questions such as same sex marriage and the death penalty.

Given the intent of many of the students to attend law school, the course is taught using the Socratic method. Students are required to come to class prepared with written assignments that are collected and graded each class, a requirement designed to replicate the briefing of cases required by most law schools. Students are also assigned to groups, designed to replicate work in a firm or public agencies, wherein their deliberations over assigned questions of philosophy and law must then be defended in class discussions much like the courtroom.

With a focus on experiential learning, the course includes an engaged educational approach to the mid-term exam. The first half of the course covers all the legal philosophies as well as larger philosophical questions such as the rule of law. The mid-term exam is broken into two segments. One segment is an open book, take-home essay exam testing class concepts and students' abilities to apply theory to actual cases worth 50 points. The other segment is an oral exam structured in the format of a mock trial worth 100 points.

For the oral exam, students are given a prep assignment which asks them to summarize theories of natural law, legal positivism, legal realism and critical legal theory as well as to create a brief laying out the facts and issues of an actual pending criminal case involving a public official. In addition, each student is required to develop arguments for both the decision to prosecute as well as the decision not to prosecute using each of the legal theories. In total, eight arguments must be developed.

Students are instructed that they will be assigned a legal theory and a position (to prosecute or not to prosecute) in class the day of the exam. As a group they will then be required to advocate and defend their assigned theory and position. Students are encouraged to meet as groups prior to the mid-term to prepare their arguments and counterarguments, a request which students have routinely honored. Indeed, many groups often decide to attend the mid-term in legal profession attire required in courtrooms to enhance the experience of a trial.

On exam day, each group sends a representative to draw a slip of paper containing their assigned theory and position. A typical lineup is Natural Law pro-prosecution v. Critical Legal Theory anti-prosecution. Groups are given 10 minutes to prepare for their assigned roles. Two groups then come to the front of the room and line up in opposing rows of desks. In each of the two 20 minute rounds, opposing groups are given five minutes for an opening statement laying out the group's position (based in their assigned legal theory) and the remaining 10 minutes are spent in arguments and responses alternating between the two groups. The two groups that are not presenting serve as audience for that round.

At the conclusion of each round, all students engage in evaluations of the exercise designed to insure accountability of each student. Members of each group are given a grid with the names of each student in the group and a set of criteria by which they may award up to 10 points each to themselves and their fellow group members for their preparation and performance. The grid includes space for a required explanation of each grade.

Each student also serves as an audience reviewer for the performance of the three groups other than their own. Here groups are evaluated as a whole, criteria are provided for awarding up to 10 points for each group and reasons for the grade are required.

Ultimately, the final grade for this activity includes five parts. First, the instructor collects the grading grids from students, averages the scores from each group for each individual members to for up to 10 points from the Self-Group Evaluation. Second, audience evaluations for the groups at large are averaged for up to 10 points from the Audience Evaluation. The reasons given for the grades for each group are also copied and pasted into a word document to provide feedback to the groups on their performance as a group. A third grade comes from the instructor's assessment of each student's evaluations themselves to determine whether each student took the evaluative process seriously, grading their efforts on a 10 point scale.

The fourth piece of the grade comes from the instructor who evaluates each student's performance in the oral arguments on a 20 point scale. In total, the oral arguments portion of the exam provides up to 50 points. The remaining 50 points for the oral exam grade come from the instructor's grading of the students' prep assignment for the oral arguments collected at the end of the mock trial.

The learning outcomes of this assignment include the ability to express oneself orally and in writing, the ability to work with others as a team and the ability to critically analyze case law and apply philosophical theory to it. It also includes elements of accountability for one's own and one's group's work. Clearly this is a demanding activity. But, historically, students report this to be their favorite activity in the course. Such is an encouraging sign from students who would undertake the rigors of law school and a career in the legal profession.

Service-Learning in Nursing Education
Diane Wink

Diane Wink is a Professor in the College of Nursing where she coordinates the Family and Adult Nurse Practitioner programs. She has been active in service-learning at UCF for over 15 years and has always integrated community-based activities in her clinical nursing courses.

Engagement of nursing students in the community has always been a hallmark of the College of Nursing's curriculums. This was strengthened in 1997 with the development of our community-based curriculum and Community Nursing Coalitions (CNCs), which now exist in 16 locations in five Central Florida counties. Through these CNCs, undergraduate students, faculty, and community partners work collaboratively to develop, implement and evaluate programs which help individuals stay or get healthy, prevent disease, and more effectively deal with acute and chronic illnesses.

This curricular approach extends to the graduate program where all nurse practitioner (NP) students complete a two semester service-learning project as part of their clinical courses. These projects help future primary care providers extend their clinical work to sites where patients live and work while increasing the students' knowledge of health-related community based organizations and agencies.

At the start of the Adult NP 1 course, students receive a detailed guide for this service-learning project. Students are given a list of community agencies and organizations and UCF CNCs that have new or ongoing projects appropriate for graduate NP students. Students can also identify an agency or group with which they will work. Regardless of source, the project must be requested by the agency and must help meet objectives of the NP course. Thus, students cannot go to an organization and tell them what the organization needs and how they (the students) will meet that need. Nor can students work on projects that are at too low or (more rarely) too high a level for graduate students.

Each student group develops a contract which outlines the scope and time line of the project as well as responsibilities of involved parties. This is signed by each group member and a representative at the agency or community organization. One of the most important contract components is the project objectives which must be from the perspective of the community partner. Thus if the overall goal is improvement of client education programs throughout a clinic system, one objective might be: "Patient education materials on the ten most common diagnoses treated will be available at each clinic site." Finding or writing the actual educational materials are not objectives. They are *activities* which contribute to meeting that objective.

Students then compile and analyze assessment data related to the project, the geographic location of the project, the population served, and the agency or other organizations where the project will take place. This data generally includes census data and information on the nature of the problem such as management of patients with heart failure, or issues related to homelessness or nutrition in a specific population. Details on the origin, goals, population served and programs of the agency helps the students put their project in context within the organization as well as seeing how that organization interacts with the larger community at the local, state, and national levels.

Students then collaborate with the community partner to design and implement a plan to achieve project objectives. This often requires that foundation work be completed. For example a group working with a local hospital to improve communication about their clinical trials programs found they first had to review collected but never summarized or analyzed data on what the existing clinical trial programs were and who was participating in them. Another group needed to determine how often specific interventions (e.g. doing labs, implementing teaching, use of recommended drugs) were done for clients with diabetes as well as barriers to their completion, before making recommendations on better approaches to insure standards of care were met.

During the second semester, students complete implementation of the project and evaluate achievement of objectives. In some cases this is very specific. For example, to what degree did providers change care to better meet practice guidelines as a result of a tool developed by the students? In other cases, the outcome may be the provision of data to the organization which will be used and further evaluated in future semesters. At the end of each semester, all groups submit a report which summarizes work to date. In the first semester this includes the contract, plan, summary and analysis of data about the agency and problem(s) being addressed, and a time line showing work completed and still to be done. The final project report is an edited version of the first semester report. There is also a poster presentation as part of our annual Community Nursing Coalition Day. Both reports and the poster are graded.

The outcomes of these service-learning projects are best seen in the way they have been sustained. Students working with a set of free clinics developed protocols for the care of the most common health problems seen at those clinics. They also completed two quality assurance projects which examined the effectiveness of procedures to communicate lab and diagnostic testing results to providers who determine if follow up is needed and then to the patients themselves. For another project, a student already working with a local group seeking to improve health care for Hispanic individuals collaborated with the organization and a team of his class peers to improve the scope and quality of the group's monthly health assessment event. Data collected as part of this project became the foundation for future projects and grant proposals. In addition, through liaison with the CNC in the location where the organization was based, undergraduate students took over staffing of the health assessment events. This allowed the organization to continue providing this service over subsequent semesters.

Faculty Readiness Survey

New to UCF but experienced at teaching online? The Center for Distributed Learning is recruiting volunteers to test a new instrument intended to determine if your experience is consistent with institutional practices for online teaching here at UCF. If your experience is consistent, you may be exempted from all or part of required faculty development offerings for designing and delivering online courses. To participate or learn more, please contact Tom Cavanagh at cavanagh@mail.ucf.edu.

The Role of Faculty in Engaging Students in Psychological Distress
Andrew Luchner

Andrew Luchner is a staff psychologist at the UCF Counseling Center. He completed his B.A. in Clinical Psychology at Tufts University and his Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology at Argosy University-Atlanta. He has experience both as a clinician and as a professor teaching undergraduate and graduate courses. His research and clinical interests include narcissism, depression, boundaries in psychotherapy, psychodynamic theory and therapy, and supervision and training. He is the counseling center liaison to faculty.

As a professor, what is the likelihood you will encounter a student being affected by psychological difficulty and struggles with mental health? Given that surveys have shown that half of all college students experience stress, anxiety, depression or other psychological difficulties that impacted their ability to complete academic responsibilities or engage in social activities, the likelihood of encountering a student being impact by psychological issues is high. However, the management of students' personal, affective, and interpersonal health is not a role universally accepted by all professors on college campuses. There is concern that addressing the psychological health of students is not part of the job, not within a professor's area of expertise, not an expectation because of concerns about competency and training, and not possible given the increased demand and pressure placed on professors to attend to various academic responsibilities. As a faculty member, you may be questioning the extent of your role or involvement in the mental health concerns of your students and the connection between psychological health and academic success. However, the impact of psychological difficulty on academic functioning is generally recognized by faculty and seen as a barrier to success (e.g. deficits in motivation, attention, concentration, and memory linked to psychological distress). As mental health issues on college campuses become more of a focus of attention and an increasing number of students develop and manage psychological distress as a result of developmental and academic concerns, the role of faculty has become more important in the recognition of impediments to functioning and learning. Therefore, it is imperative to highlight the potentially transformative nature of the relationship between faculty and students that addresses the development of students more holistically. Faculty are encouraged to attend to the psychological needs of students not only to support of the academic mission of the university by enhancing learning in the classroom, but also to help faculty recognize mental health concerns of students and connect them to resources when student developmental concerns and psychological distress emerge.

Mental health on college campuses

The mental health of students has become increasingly important to address on college campuses for a variety of reasons. Depression and anxiety are common reasons students seek out counseling center services; however, increasingly students present with suicidal thoughts and attempts, experiences of trauma and abuse, eating disordered behavior and body image concerns, loss of contact with reality, and emotional dysregulation. Students often initially experience psychological disruption when coming to college, not necessarily as a result of chronic difficulty but as a by-product of expected developmental challenges that they might encounter. As a result of advances in psychopharmacology and psychological treatment, students who may have not been afforded the opportunity in the past due to chronic mental illness are attending college. As the pressure for academic and financial success mounts, students are increasingly susceptible to emotional and interpersonal dysfunction as they generationally may feel less able to address concerns independently and confidently. Lastly, increasingly students are feeling disconnected from others as they move farther away from home and depend more on indirect ways (via technology) of relating to others. If the impact of mental health on academic functioning is clear and the psychological distress is becoming more of a concern across college campuses, what role can faculty play in intervening?

The role of faculty in recognizing students' psychological needs

A number of factors make the relationship between faculty and students uniquely influential and impactful. Primarily, professors are offered ongoing and continuous exposure to emerging student difficulties (behavioral, cognitive and affective) and repeated opportunity to notice change over time. Additionally, professors are looked up to as mentors, leaders and role models, which establishes faculty as a knowledgeable and helpful resource when students have concerns that transcend lecture material and classroom assignments. Students may initially turn to faculty when in distress, may reveal their struggles in class either directly or indirectly (e.g. writing assignments), and may quickly develop a trusting relationship with professors because they are idealized and perceived as fulfilling a parental function. Professors are important gatekeepers who have the distinctive opportunity to recognize distress that a student may experience. Although some faculty might feel that attending to mental health distracts from the requirements of the job, it seems reasonable to believe that any effort made to support students' emotional well-being directly affects the academic performance of the student and in turn positively impacts the success of the professor who hopes to establish an optimal environment for learning and growth.

Impacting the psychological health and academic success of students

Faculty interactions with students who demonstrate interest, caring and support have a strong impact on students' academic, emotional and social development. These positive interactions and experiences make it more likely for students to succeed in learning and create a greater opportunity for students to seek out support and connection when in distress. Addressing the mental health needs of students does not come without its challenges. Large classes create barriers for establishing relationships with individual students; evaluation complicates the ability of some students to be vulnerable with professors; and an inability to promise confidentiality compromises some trust that students have in confiding in their professors. Early detection and referral is crucial when assisting students with managing their psychological concerns, and faculty may find that their ability to reach students academically is positively impacted by their attempts to reach out and establish a trusting relationship. Students may lack the knowledge of psychological services available on campus and may be unable to address concerns on their own without someone showing interest or support. Attention to psychological distress in and outside the classroom may further destigmatize mental healthcare and support students' access to psychological services on campus.

The expectation is not that a faculty member must act as a psychologist, therapist or counselor; the goal is to call attention to the importance of mental health and the negative impact that inattention has on students and faculty, encouraging faculty to err by reacting, not dismissing emerging or repetitive signs of psychological distress and difficulty. The challenge at times will feel daunting and may be approached with uncertainty. Over time, however, the impact of acknowledging psychological difficulty will positively affect the students who come to you for guidance and knowledge and benefit from your attempts to provide an environment for learning and growth. Assisting students in psychological distress may be mutually beneficial and influential, creating opportunities for you to be less distracted, more productive, and more fulfilled in your attempts to create success.

Russian Culture Night

Please join us in the Faculty Center on October 13 at 5:00 pm for our first Russia Night, an informal gathering of Russophiles and curious travelers. We will show the film *Face of Russia,* a documentary about Russian culture, and we will serve some traditional Russian dishes as snacks. For more information, please contact Alla Kourova at akourova@mail.ucf.edu.

If you have an interest in organizing a similar event at the Faculty Center, please contact us at fctl@mail.ucf.edu.

Sustainable University-Community Partnerships through a Replicable Model of High-Tech, High-Touch Service-Learning
Trae Stewart and Rebecca Hines

Trae Stewart is Associate Professor in the School for Teaching, Learning & Leadership in the College of Education. He earned a Ph.D. in International & Intercultural Education from the University of Southern California and researches service-learning and teacher education. He is Co-Director of Teachers in Action.

Rebecca Hines is an Associate Professor in Special Education. Her primary academic interests involve preparing educators to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Other research interests include working with students with emotional/behavioral disorders and instructional technology.

Shawn Eigenbrode is Project Coordinator for Teachers in Action, providing student support, webcourse maintenance and event planning. He earned a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Maryland, where he worked in undergraduate admissions, marketing & communications, and arts administration prior to joining UCF.

In 2009, faculty in the College of Education received a Learn & Serve America federal grant to create and implement a model for infusing service-learning into preservice teacher preparation programs. The result, *Teachers in Action with Persons with Disabilities through High-Tech High-Touch Service-Learning*, emerged from "Make a Difference" projects used in select regional online exceptional education courses. Previously, projects were largely ad hoc and based on volunteerism, rather than best practices and goals of service-learning (e.g., civic responsibility), and student collaboration was impeded by geographic distance. However, student feedback about the "Make a Difference" experience was so positive and effective in shaping dispositions toward disability that exceptional education faculty partnered with service-learning faculty to develop a more systematized structure that could then link to any course. Faculty partnered with UCP of Central Florida to address the needs of its educational centers and programs for persons with disabilities.

The *Teachers in Action* project ensures that approximately 1,000 preservice teachers will have a direct and personal experience with persons with disabilities. The project employs numerous technologies for content delivery including a website, email, videocasts, social networking sites, Blackboard webcourse, and Adobe Connect. Through the webcourse, students complete several modules comprised of video-based tutorials (e.g., basics of service-learning, working with persons with disabilities, designing and implementing a collaborative service-learning project) before engaging in a 15-hour service-learning project with persons with disabilities.

Students are encouraged to create projects in teams. Team formation is supported through online discussion boards arranged by city/country. Guidance is available from project personnel and peer facilitators through synchronous video chats, phone calls, and e-mail. Projects have included dance classes for children with disabilities in Melbourne, afterschool programming for adolescents with disabilities at a community center in downtown Orlando, a walking club in Deltona that includes persons with disabilities, and mentoring and instruction for college-aged students with disabilities at the East Orange/Bailes UCP campus.

After completing their projects, students create narrated PowerPoint presentations summarizing their service activities and critical reflections on service-learning as a pedagogical tool and working with people with disabilities. Students upload their presentations to slide-hosting sites (e.g., SlideBoom, AuthorStream), and then share the custom URLs with *Teachers in Action* staff and course instructors.

Educational and Community Impact

By supporting engagement with persons with disabilities through service-learning, *Teachers in Action* fosters project management and organizational skills that future educators will transfer to their classrooms. Service-learners practice effective communication, scheduling, reporting, and goal-setting. Skills in collaboration, project development/implementation, and assessment design are enhanced. Furthermore, students utilize numerous educational technologies, which may increase their confidence in incorporating technologies in their future classrooms.

Preservice teachers also develop a clearer and richer understanding of course content through contextualized experiences. In this experiential approach, they witness an immediate application of their learning. They increase their pedagogical knowledge by having to design, implement, and assess varying instructional strategies and management styles. This impact is particularly important considering that future teachers must feel efficacious to work with exceptional learners in inclusive classrooms. By working with persons with disabilities now, preservice teachers develop more respectful attitudes toward diverse groups and have an enhanced ability to connect academic learning to societal issues and concerns. One student's discussion board posting captures this sentiment:

I think, subconsciously, I used to put distance between myself and another person who was different. I didn't avoid anyone, I just didn't make an effort to include anyone... It's amazing how a person's perception changes when you see the person, not the disability.

Local communities also benefit from *Teachers in Action* through increased program offerings at non-profit agencies and a sustainable volunteer force. By engaging in collaborative service projects and developmentally-appropriate programming, clients with disabilities can develop interpersonal and job skills that are essential to their acceptance and self-actualization as contributing members of society.

Value for the Educational Institution

Teachers in Action promotes UCF's aim to "Be America's leading partnership university." Higher education is also strengthened by a replicable program infrastructure and management system for infusing service-learning into any course, thereby reducing pressure on faculty to individually develop service-learning projects. Furthermore, such partnerships generate sustainable, long-term, continuous programming that contrasts with an exploitive drop-in and serve approach.

Strategies for Forming Partnerships

Various strategies have enabled *Teachers in Action* to form partnerships with community non-profits. First, faculty identified prospective partners from their professional networks and then conducted face-to-face meetings. Familiarity with each other's mission and working style then allowed quicker asynchronous communications (e.g., email), while *Teachers in Action* faculty and staff often correspond with one another synchronously using Adobe Connect.

Students also coach and mentor one another by recruiting peers to work with non-profits they already serve. Media attention attracted other nonprofits to participate. By the end of the pilot semester, students partnered with 55 organizations. These organizations included public schools in eight counties, individual disability-specific organizations (e.g., Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida, Autistic Society of Greater Orlando), therapeutic organizations (e.g., Freedom Ride, Marion Therapeutic Riding Association), and programs to develop community involvement and social skills (e.g., Special Olympics, Best Buddies UCF). Numerous organizations have communicated their desire for ongoing placement of Teachers in Action students.

To date, 520 preservice teachers have engaged in service-learning activities through *Teachers in Action*. If you are interested in becoming a *Teachers in Action* partner, don't hesitate to contact us at <www.teachersinaction.org>.

Student Engagement During Online Class Meetings

Deirdre Englehart

Deirdre Englehart is an Instructor in the Early Childhood Development and Education Program in the College of Education. She earned her doctorate degree in 2008 while working at UCF. Her research interests include online learning, pre-service teacher dispositions, science education and children's literature.

As an early childhood educator, I am aware of the significance of engaging young children in their learning. In my teaching at the university level, I have tried to keep that same focus in working with undergraduate students. At the same time, I am a coordinator of a small program at a regional campus and I am concerned about promoting and continuing my degree program. It is an ongoing challenge to maintain and often increase enrollment while maintaining the pedagogy that is advocated and central to our program. One important consideration is how to offer programs and coursework in ways that meet student needs, promote our program and also facilitate student engagement. Specifically, how can technology be used to support student learning in innovative and engaging ways that align with the program philosophy? Technology is rapidly increasing our ability to connect with students and to facilitate learning in a variety of unique and interesting formats. The Early Childhood Development and Education program on regional campuses saw the need to combine programs at two different campus locations to increase overall enrollment and to reduce costs. This project explored how the use of the Adobe Connect meeting platform could support student engagement and learning during online class meetings.

Distance education is described as instructional delivery that takes place when learners and teachers are separated during the process of instruction by time and physical distance. Due to updated computer technology, synchronous learning and video conferencing are an important format for teaching. Using online delivery is one way to help learners connect with the content. Web conferencing and video conferencing are becoming increasingly popular to support teaching and learning at higher education institutions.

In this project, students attended online class meetings using the Adobe Connect platform. Adobe Connect is a Web-based collaboration system that helps to connect participants virtually as well as to support multi-media presentations and collaborations. Students log into a website that has the potential to use video and audio conferencing, chat tools, presentations and other multimedia that is downloaded to the website. Additional features of Adobe include a survey tool, breakout group options, web links, computer and document sharing and other related features.

One course that used the Adobe Connect for an online class meeting was Curriculum Activities in Early Childhood. In the spring term of 2010, over 20 early childhood students logged in to Adobe Connect for an online class meeting. Students were provided a link, a list of materials to gather from their home, and specific directions about Adobe Connect in preparation for the meeting. When students logged in to Adobe we began with a video about how teaching and learning have changed over the last 20 years. This video was a discussion starter and students were invited to chat about their ideas about how education has changed and about how the video connects with curriculum and teaching young children. Next students participated in a series of integrated activities related to buildings and structures. We started with a joke and looked at pictures of interesting structures. Students worked in groups to discuss the best shapes for structures. They created a concept web with what they knew about structures in breakout groups which were pulled up for the whole class to view and discuss. Next, students used toothpicks and gum drops to build structures in their own homes while discussing online. We read *The Three Little Pigs* and students participated in an online poll to find out the most popular character from the story (the third little pig!). Students were challenged to create a structure using only toothpicks and gum drops that could withstand the "big, bad blow dryer." Groups of students outlined what they learned about structures from their experiences and how the integrated activities could be used with children. A PowerPoint presentation reviewed important information related to curriculum for children. For the last activity of the night, students worked in breakout groups to address common challenges that teachers face when trying to implement developmentally appropriate practices. Each group was given an issue and they developed a response to overcome the obstacle in order to implement best practices. These responses to common challenges were shared with the whole group. The night ended with students reviewing the various topics from the night and commenting on how they relate to curriculum.

Students from this course and others in the Early Childhood Development and Education program have been surveyed to ascertain their feelings regarding the online course meetings. Half of the students indicated that they had similar interactions with the teacher and other students in this format. Students also provided comments in class reflections for the course. Some of the responses include:

> Overall, I thought the night went well and I was so amazed that we could do so much without even leaving our home. We had everything and everyone all right there and could interact with each other in basically the same way.

> Overall, this was the most fun class of the semester and I really enjoyed learning about structures and buildings.

> I also have really enjoyed learning new things, not only from the text books, but also from my peers. I believe even though our class was online, our meetings and discussions were thorough and allowed us to express ourselves as well as interact with others that are working towards the same goals.

Based on my experience with online class meetings, I believe they have the potential to support student learning and that the example provided here did include a multitude of avenues for student engagement. I look forward to continued explorations of the potential to teach in the online format while keeping the focus of student engagement and supporting enrollments in our program.

The Real Value of Engagement
Mary Ann Eastep

Mary Ann Eastep has been the Internship Coordinator for the Criminal Justice Undergraduate Program since 1997. She has supervised the academic component for over 1,000 Criminal Justice interns, who have been placed in local, county, state and federal justice organizations in Florida, in other state, and even in other countries.

At one time or another during their years at UCF, students are usually encouraged to get involved in some kind of experiential learning. Messages are sent from a variety of sources, particularly in a very competitive economy, that pre-service experience is a good way to achieve any number of objectives. Students are told to complete internships and to find places where they can get some experience to "beef up" their resumes, or to "get a foot in the door," or to simply make contacts and get a good reference. So, in efforts to make themselves more desirable candidates in an economy laden with diploma-toting grads, our students set their sights on engagement opportunities.

But a transformation occurs somewhere between the pragmatic decision to engage in an opportunity to link classroom with community, and the realization that the student can successfully handle a role in the great world beyond. The transformation occurs when the student is no longer trying to understand how things are going to work or how s/he might ultimately fit in, and begins to actually envision himself/herself as a full participant. The real value of engagement is that of a change agent. Engagement can transform students from dreamers to doers, from promising to accomplished. Of the various roles I play, by far my favorite is mentoring students as they take that huge step in their development from college student to rising professional.

Interns progress through a succession of changes, and no two students progress at the same rate. For some, trading in their jeans, covering their midriffs, and learning to keep their phones turned off for eight hours is a transformation in itself. For others, the internship is the culmination of everything they have been working toward, and they come to their initial appointment suited up for an "Apprentice" appearance.

Interns rarely emerge from their internships feeling ambivalent about what they have experienced. At the least, the process serves as a soft barometer measuring the suitability of their choice of major, and at the most it is a life-changing episode, ushering in the next chapter. What is entirely clear is that students cannot get enough engagement. They love having the opportunity to "get their hands dirty," linking what they are learning in the classroom with what is out there in that world they are so anxious to enter. In preparing to write this article, I looked back over some comments submitted on an alumni survey we sent out in late 2007. Here is a representative response that summarized more than one retrospective interpretation of the undergraduate experience:

> Loved the UCF Criminal Justice Program … But I do wish there would have been a little more hands on with the classes on victims or computers or something that would had made us look more ready for the job than just book smart. I mean I know stats and figures but do you really need to know that when you're dealing with people hands on.

About two years ago, I took a group of students to Costa Rica on a social justice service-learning study abroad program. The students spent a month in a small Pacific coastal village in the central area of the Guanacaste province and studied the various aspects of social justice, including the philosophical foundations of justice. In so doing, they reflected on the meaning of good global citizenship, and engaged in projects and activities that had been coordinated with community partners there. For example, with an understanding that rapid development and tourism in the area has made English a survival skill in a community with very few resources to effectively teach English to all students, one of our projects was to help teach English in elementary and junior high schools. Another project was the designing, reproducing and distribution of flyers about environmental dangers associated with burning plastic, a practice that is fairly widespread in the area. Since the flyers were in both Spanish and English, they were used in educational sessions. Other projects were offered to and accepted by students, and all gave students opportunities to fully engage as productive and appreciated citizens. Students later reflected on our text readings about various attributes of justice and "just" citizenship. On the flight back to the United States a short month after we left, the students (and the instructor!) were transformed. They did not simply speak the phrase, "global citizenship"; they had embraced it, engaged in it. From that day forward, each one of those students would self-identify as a good global citizen. And, each would be accurate in that assessment.

For the students who traveled to Central America, as well as the students who travel to their local justice internship during their senior year, the real value of engagement can be seen in the informed, confident and inspired citizen who emerges from the experience.

UCF

Service-Learning Day 2010
Engaging STEM
and
Creating Sustainable Partnerships
October 8, 2010
UCF Teaching Academy

8:00–8:30 Registration

8:30–8:50 Opening Remarks

9:00–10:00 Introductory Sessions
- What is Engaging STEM?
- What is Sustainability?
- What is Community-Based Research?

10:15–11:15 Plenary Session: *The Future of Education in STEM* and *The State of Civic Engagement in Florida*

11:30–1:00 Lunch Panels (lunch provided)
- Interdisciplinary partnerships and community-based research: Case study—electronic health records
- Best practices in STEM service-learning at UCF: Chemistry, biology, and mathematics
- International projects to promote sustainable partnerships

1:30–2:30 Keynote Address: *Moving Undergraduate Research from the Periphery to the Center*, Dr. Beth Paul, President Elect of the Council on Undergraduate Research and Provost of Stetson University

2:45–3:45 Panel Presentations
- Best practices for partnerships: Florida High Tech Corridor and Teachers in Action programs
- Community-based health services: UCF Colleges of Medicine and Nursing
- Interdisciplinary research: Sustainability and campus life

4:00–5:00 Workshops
- Creating sustainable community-based projects and partnerships
- Promoting meaningful reflection in service-learning courses: Meditation and writing
- Using social media and other technologies to engage students

To register, please go to this URL:
http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/Surveys/engagingstem/registration-2010.php

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Florida | **Campus Compact**

Karen L. Smith
Faculty Center
for Teaching & Learning

OUR

Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full-time and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university's community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty members to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The *Faculty Focus* invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at <http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/Publications/FacultyFocus/submission.php>. Please send your submissions to fctl@mail.ucf.edu.

Faculty Center

UCF
Stands For Opportunity

Check us out online!
www.fctl.ucf.edu

Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning
P.O. Box 160066 CL1-207
Orlando, FL 32816-0066
407-823-3544