Creating opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to embody community and civic engagement in their personal, professional, and academic lives.

Issue III, November 2013

Upcoming CE Events

11/12/13 11AM-1PM CAFE  Faculty Workshop – "Community Engagement: Pedagogy, Practice,"

11/13/13 11AM-1PM CAFE  Faculty Workshop – "Developing and Implementing a Service Learning"

1/20/14 8AM-3PM  MLK Day of Service

Be Great. Do Great Things

Be Great. Do Great Things is the motto of the Muhammad Ali Center located in Louisville, Kentucky which was the host city of the 19th annual CUMU (Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities) conference on October 27-29, 2013. President Lieberman, Interim Dean of the College of Education and Organizational Leadership, Barbara Poling and I had the opportunity to attend the conference and see how other universities across the nation were interpreting the conference theme of “Transforming and Sustaining Communities through Partnerships” by sharing their community engagement efforts. The conference included a symposium on “Engaged Scholarship” by Barbara Holland, workshop tracks on economic development and revitalization, environmental initiatives, healthy communities and educational partnerships, a poster session and round table discussions.

President Lieberman’s charge to us was that this year she would introduce us to this international coalition that we are now a member university of, where we are “united by a shared philosophy of service to [our] communities,” and that next year and in the years to come the University of La Verne would be there to present our models of engagement. My hope is that we infuse our curricular and co-curricular civic and community engagement efforts with the Ali spirit of “Be Great. Do Great Things” and share what we have done and what we have learned far and wide.

- Marisol Morales

Leopards Reflect

“This national conference (CUMU) was an extraordinary opportunity to hear about successful community engagement activities across the nation. Having the opportunity to talk with leaders in the field of community engagement was exciting.”

– Barbara J. Poling, Interim Dean of the College Education & Organizational Leadership
“Honor the Past – Imagine the Future”

The Imagining America Conference focuses on community engagement for both communities and educational institutions

“Honor the Past – Imagine the Future.” So went the slogan of the White House’s Millennium Council, established in 1998 by President Clinton to commemorate the year 2000, proclaiming its commitment to look back to the country’s past as a way to envisage its future.

One of the organizations to emerge from this initiative was Imagining America, whose mission to foster civic engagement among institutions of higher education embodied just such a vision. This path, Imagining America hoped, would build on the nation’s egalitarian, democratic founding principles, as well as on the more recent achievements of the civil rights movement: to forge an education system that gives all Americans the opportunity to participate fully in college and university. At its heart, Imagining America represents a conviction of the mutual benefit of civic and community engagement both for wider communities and for educational institutions themselves.

Such was the basis for the recent Imagining America Conference hosted by Syracuse University, and attended by President Devorah Lieberman, Peggy Redman, Marisol Morales and myself this October. Unlike typical conferences, sessions here were participatory and discursive, allowing all delegates to contribute ideas to a pool of knowledge and experience, from which emerged a vibrant and practical set of tools for making connections to communities both in and outside of the classroom.

One of the major themes of the conference was how to build an institutional architecture, which allows scholars to engage their local communities in a way that also maintains academic standards of rigor.

Ways to achieve this goal all pointed towards the importance of an institutional framework that integrates the value of engagement through all levels of administration and teaching and rewarding community engaged scholarship on an equal basis with traditional models of scholarly work.

From my perspective, it was heartening to consider how far the recently instituted and still evolving La Verne Experience embraces these ideas and the extent to which the University of La Verne, should we choose to, is well situated to enact the groundbreaking principles espoused by Imagining America.

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“Imagining America advances knowledge and creativity through publicly engaged scholarship that draws on humanities, arts, and design. We catalyze change in campus practices, structures, and policies that enables publicly engaged artists and scholars to thrive and contribute to community action and revitalization.”

- Imagining America’s Mission Statement, http://imagineringamerica.org
The University of La Verne’s football team scores a touchdown with recruiting coordinator and quarterbacks’ coach Brent Baier.

Football coach Chris Krich started a program called “Beyond the Goalpost,” but Baier has helped the program in more ways than one. The program was started as a way for football players to become involved in the community and give back.

“Coach Baier lives the ideals of experiential learning and servant leadership,” director of athletic training program Paul Alvarez said, “showing his student-athletes and others community service and engagement through their active participation. Brent is a highly competitive person who is committed to the success of his student-athletes, but recognizes at the end of the game or season, there are much bigger issues out there than winning or losing.”

“Beyond the Goalpost” made the football program not just about sports, but also about the community.

In September, Baier and some of the football players cut their hair, after growing it out all year, in order to donate the cut hair to the Locks of Love organization that creates hairpieces for children who suffer from long-term hair loss from any diagnosis.

Fifteen individuals donated hair to Locks of Love, which should make one hairpiece valued at $600, and will be gifted to a child in need.

Baier and the football program also participated in Community Service Day in October.

The football team asked parents, friends and alumni to bring gift cards of any value to be donated. They raised $2,000 in gift cards that will be donated to the City of Hope’s pediatric wing.

Baier’s love for giving back stemmed from a personal experience with City of Hope. “I am particularly proud of the work our players did with City of Hope,” Baier said. ”Reason being, my mother was a leukemia patient at City of Hope in 1993. She did not make it, however the facility, doctors, and educators are amazing people, and continue to stay on the cutting edge of cancer research.”

In addition to the money raised, people also donated blood to help the hospital’s bloodstock and signed up for the “Be the Match” donation program.

The “Be the Match” program places volunteers on the bone marrow list to match with a patient who needs a bone marrow transplant. Baier’s mother also used this program when she needed bone marrow.

If selected as a bone marrow match, the volunteer would then go through a surgery to harvest the bone marrow needed to help that patient and potentially save his or her life.

“This is a tremendously worthwhile cause and our players and coach were all for it,” Baier said. “We received 20 donations of blood and had 15 sign ups for Be the Match.”

The “Beyond the Goalpost” program has been an asset to the university and the community.

The program will continue on stronger than ever as they get ready for spring semester and prepare to help Habitat for Humanity in December.

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On Friday, October 25, 2013 the Office of Civic and Community Engagement in collaboration with the Center for Faculty Excellence offered a staff workshop titled “Co-Curricular Community Engagement: A Conversation with and for Student Service Practitioners.” The workshop offered the 14 staff and faculty in attendance the opportunity to take a civic engagement quiz, review documents and materials related to co-curricular community engagement, and review the civic engagement values rubric developed by AAC&U. The activities led to a robust conversation that offered ideas such as the creation of a La Verne Engage showcase where students, faculty, staff, alumni and community partners will have the opportunity to share, present and showcase community engagement efforts happening across the university to further build connections and support.