REFLECTIONS

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

Issue II, October 2013

La Verne Leaders Attend The President’s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge Meeting in D.C.

The 3rd Annual President's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge took place in Washington D.C from September 23-24, 2013 at Georgetown University. Interfaith leaders from various higher institutions across the nation gathered to share ideas and activities they have carried out on their school campuses. These schools included De Paul University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Southern California and many other prestigious schools.

Leopards Reflect

“Attending the conference as student leaders of the University of La Verne, we have been inspired to become stronger interfaith leaders by bringing new ideas and new efforts to influence interfaith service into a social norm on campus and beyond.” - Jacqueline Valencia-Perez & Yelsse Bahena
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As second year students at the University of La Verne, we were given the excellent opportunity to attend the conference accompanied by President Lieberman, Chaplain Zandra Wagoner, and our new Director of Civic and Community Engagement, Marisol Morales. In addition, Eboo Patel—the founder of Interfaith Youth Core—co-sponsored and served as a motivational speaker for the conference.

Patel has faith that community service and interfaith engagement will gradually become part of the social norm as we become more communicative about what interfaith truly means. Interfaith doesn’t solely mean diverse religious groups collaborating together. Interfaith includes the harmony within diverse religions, faiths, beliefs, spiritualties, and secular views.

Patel suggests that as leaders, we must not treat service as a segment of our lives, but rather a social norm in which interfaith service is embedded into our society.

Service has become a large part of our lives that we don’t perceive it as work or labor but rather as an opportunity to join as friends despite our differences in striving for improvement in our communities.

Learning how to bridge cultural and religious differences as young students will create less conflict and less ignorance in the workforce as adults.

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By Jacqueline Valencia-Perez and Yelsse Bahena

Community Engagement Faculty Workshops

On September 25th & 26th the Office of Civic and Community Engagement in collaboration with the Center for Faculty Excellence (CAFÉ) offered a workshop titled Community Engagement: Pedagogy, Practice, and Publications. A total of 17 faculty representing Education and Organizational Leadership, Arts & Sciences, and Business and Public Management attended the workshops. The cross-section of faculty indicates interest across the university for community engagement and the ways that it can be incorporated into teaching, research and service. The discussions were robust and as one faculty indicated from the evaluation “It really got me to think outside of the box. I was only thinking of Community Engagement as Service Learning. It involves so much more. Well done!” Thanks to the faculty who attended. Be on the lookout for our next workshop!
A relationship is built on trust and hope. Trust that both are entering into this relationship with honest intentions and hope that we are working towards building something stronger together than we have alone. The building of a relationship with Pomona contains those same elements, but instead of just seeing this from the individual perspective we see this as institutions.

Universities play a unique role in the community because of our ability to serve as a convener. On Friday, September 27th at First Christian Church’s Fellowship Hall in Pomona, we again convened our Pomona community partners to continue the dialogue on how we build a strong university-community relationship.

With almost 40 people in attendance representing not only community-based organizations in Pomona, but also city government officials, and folks across the University of La Verne, the three hour meeting sought to present a common language around community engagement and identify the elements we need to be mindful of as we develop projects and partnerships, such as the academic calendar and risk management awareness. The signs of honest dialogue do not only involve the wonderful possibilities, but also the intentional discussion of those things that we need to be mindful of.

The interactive meeting presented opportunities for the participants to identify the social justice/community empowerment area they are most involved in and to break into groups for further discussions based on the four identified areas: Education & Youth, Legal and Civil Right, Health & Wellness, and Community Empowerment.

These small groups came up with various ideas that connect students to assist with expungements for job seekers with criminal records to training ULV students to provide human trafficking prevention education workshops at PUSD. In addition the breakouts also identified areas where community organizations could assist the university such as serve as a representative from a health organization serving on the Institutional Review Board to creating internship opportunities for La Verne students. The groups identified areas where faculty or staff expertise could be a benefit to organizations in the form of offering professional development or trainings to their organizations. There is also the possibility of engaging in community-based research to assist the city and organizations have data to provide to funders.
Continued

The possibilities are endless, but the integration and sustainability of these types of community engagement at the university has to be situated in courses and with faculty. The benefit of this type of dialogue is that it invites more dialogue, but eventually in requires connections between courses and community, between faculty and the co-educators who preside over these organization that will assist us in bridging theory to practice and create transformational learning opportunities for our students that will define their La Verne Experience.

If you are interested in developing a service learning course or exploring opportunities for co-curricular community engagement opportunities, please contact the Office of Civic and Community engagement at communityengagement@laverne.edu

Special Thanks to Wytske Visser, Inland Valley Hope Partners for assisting with securing space, Andrea Rico, Youth & Family Master Plan, City of Pomona for assisting with outreach and First Christian Church for providing the space.

11/8/13

HEALTH POMONA-UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Continuing the Dialogue

Please join us as we continue to explore opportunities for collaboration between the University of La Verne and our Pomona community partners. The meeting will allow faculty and staff of the University of La Verne to engage directly with community partners and vice versa to develop mutually beneficial and sustainable partnerships. Please join us for the conversation. Your voice is needed!

Light refreshments will be provided

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