

SLAC MEETING
February 24, 2009

Attended By:

Dosinda Garcia Alvite, Lyn Robertson, Fadhel Kaboub, Laurel Kennedy, Mary Fox, Michele Doran, Eryn McGowan, Jenny Pearlman

Laurel introduced student Mary Fox ('11), who is responsible for outreach to faculty as part of her DCA cabinet responsibilities.

Mission statement: Laurel provided the following draft of the Center's mission statement and asked for comments:

We strive to insure that all students have opportunities to engage in constructive community service. We coordinate with partners in the community, the faculty, and the staff of the college to structure those experiences to achieve learning goals specific to individual courses, as well as the broader learning objectives of critical thinking and moral discernment with regard to social, economic, political and environmental issues facing our community. Students have opportunities to reflect upon these issues and upon their individual and collective roles and responsibilities as learned persons and as engaged citizens.

Laurel noted that the Center has multiple constituencies, with goals related to each, and because of this the statement draft may be too lengthy. Mary said she felt that the mission statement should include a statement that defines service-learning, and that it would make sense to add the word "reflective" alongside "constructive" in the first sentence. Dosy noted that she'd like to see the first sentence to be more affirmative – "we offer the students...". Laurel would welcome SLAC faculties review and suggestions.

Venture Philanthropy Group: Laurel reported on the decision of students in this group to solicit projects that tied in with our year-long focus on housing issues. They asked for proposals from community partners to fund projects dealing with these issues, and received five responses with proposals. The project they selected for funding was a "Borrowers Fair" sponsored by the Save Our Homes Task Force, which will bring homeowners at risk of foreclosure together with lenders and financial counselors. The students will donate \$2500 for the event and will assist in planning and hosting the Fair.

CBR Workshop: In addition to the Center staff, Lyn, Fadhel and Dosy had attended this workshop. Fadhel felt it was helpful to brainstorm in terms of connecting with the community, and wondered if in the future we could come up with a way of matching faculty and community interests via a website.

As a result of the workshop, Lyn is working with a contact she met regarding one of her fall courses. Fadhel commented that access to information is important, that we have resources

that community partners need but don't know we can provide. One insight from the workshop was that the partners really want feedback on students' experiences. Laurel said she had sent out a survey to the partners asking for feedback and what their current needs are.

One need described during the CBR workshop was for additional training in research methods. Shane Lightle had brought up the idea of Denison hosting a nuts and bolts research workshop that would help provide community leaders with the skill sets to implement new programs and assess their effectiveness. He suggested a two day workshop with training, exercises, and mock data sets. He thinks there would be a wide interest in this, and thought that with the bailout money there might be external funding for this. Steve Garnack had also expressed interest in this. Laurel thought this could be a good workshop for mid-May. Andrea suggested that if faculty would be paid for this, then the funds should come from the Center, as this would help send a message to the DU community that SL is a valued resource. She thought we should go ahead and identify 5 faculty members who would be presenting. Laurel felt we needed more discussion with SLAC and the community partners before we engage faculty to serve as instructors. Lyn felt this workshop could help bridge the divide between the community and DU. This could help raise the visibility of the curricular component of service learning. Laurel will be discussing this with community partners to see what kind of questions they want answered, and then will get ideas from SLAC. Andrea thinks it's important to try to deliver on a few things and not extend beyond what we can deliver. Laurel agreed that we don't want to overpromise, but that we have been supporting the community effectively and reaching our goals with our partners, and if this is something they feel they need, she thinks we can provide it.

We then discussed the Center's visibility among faculty and at DU in general. Laurel feels that the way we can demonstrate our value is to make sure the work we do really is important and substantive. Andrea feels that the average faculty doesn't have us on their radar, and isn't aware that research opportunities in the community that could help their career are available. Conversation produced a series of ideas for outreach and awareness, either in progress or possible for the future, such as: Eryn's discipline-specific resource guides to raise awareness; presentations of accomplishments at general faculty meetings; a faculty community service award might help raise visibility; a review of our graduates and how SL helped them in work related to their careers would be helpful; participation in the orientation and monthly meetings for new faculty; presentations at Tuesday lunches; get a key faculty member from each department involved, that they will then promote it to other faculty within their departments, and will advertise how their skills can apply to service.

Big Red's Big Day -March 28: The goal is to find many ways of involving students in the community—to have this be a day when Denison is very visible active in the community, a day of lending a hand. Students are soliciting interest from faculty in participating in the events of the day. Many will be “kid-friendly.”

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 24 at 11:30 in the Shepardson College Room, Slayter Hall