

## **SLAC MEETING**

### **March 24, 2009**

#### **Attended By:**

Dosinda Garcia Alvite, Lyn Robertson, Fadhel Kaboub, Mary Tuominen, Andrea Ziegert, Jack Shuler, Emily Nemeth, Laurel Kennedy, Mary Fox, Susie Kalinoski, Eryn McGowan, Jenny Pearlman

#### **Current SL Classes Update:**

Laurel asked faculty teaching SL classes this term to give an update on their classes.

- Jack's class is working with Newark Health Care Center doing oral histories with the elderly. He said it was initially difficult for them to make the leap from this work to their classroom work, but that the students have now made the connection that both race and the conditions of our elders are topics that society really doesn't want to talk about. He said it's been a good experience and that he hasn't had to do much maintenance since the Center has done a good job of taking care of the planning.
  
- Mary's class in field research methods is working on a financial literacy program. She is now in the process of scheduling interviews for her students with clients, and said that the logistics have been difficult because of coordinating the students' and clients' schedules. Mary is very interested in what they're going to find out about the correlation between financial literacy and income. Mary Fox ('11) is taking the class and interviewing Americorp members who are coaches to research their motivations for being in the program. On May 7 at 2:00, there will be a campus presentation with results of this research.
  
- Fadhel is teaching an intermediate macro SL class and says it is going well. The students are doing work with a variety of organizations and are paid "Denison Volunteer Dollars" for their volunteer work. They are connecting the economic structure of the Economics' department's constructed economy with national economic issues.

#### **Other Announcements:**

Fadhel will be discussing Denison Dollars program at the faculty staff lunch next Tuesday (3/31).

CBR workshop – follow up session with students will be Wednesday, March 25 at 6:00 in Knapp 301. Laurel said students have requested that Randy Stoecker be brought back next year, and Mary said some of her students are now interested in doing community-based research.

Big Red's Big Day – will be this Saturday, with a much greater participation by many student groups and many more projects than there have been in past years. Mary Fox listed some of the participating groups, which include women's soccer team, physics department, Outlook,

football team, and others. DCA cabinet worked very hard to generate project ideas and involve the entire campus this year.

Ashbrook Scholar – this summer will be Nora Deeg, who will be researching Granville Schools' experience with ESL issues and working on how those issues are handled throughout Licking County.

America Reads field trips – Michele Doran has been coordinating AR school trips to Denison every term, and hosted Carson Elementary on March 23. Activities included a campus tour and planetarium show. Some parents of Newark students came along, and it highlighted to Michele how family behavior would be an influence on students' behavior.

Vista applications – 20 have been received for next year. Denison's Vista will work on financial literacy issues and on the "ambassador" program Eryn started this year, and will also work on a team with Vistas from OSU-N and COTC to promote college access to Newark students under the guidance of Janet Schultz with a Call to College.

### **Geographical Focus of the SL Center:**

Laurel asked SLAC members to consider the question of whether we should maintain the Center's focus on work in Licking County. She has had a policy of asking groups to work with community partners in Newark and Licking County rather than Columbus whenever possible. The reasons for this include the demand on our vehicle fleet, the working relationships we have established with Licking County schools and organizations, and John Alford's emphasis on volunteerism in Licking County. Andrea said she agreed that the emphasis should be on Licking County, but that exceptions could be made if learning goals couldn't be achieved in Licking County – for example, working with a large African American population. Mary agreed with this and thought groups should be able to go to Columbus if a compelling argument could be made. Lyn asked for clarification on what qualifies classroom work for the Center's resources; Laurel advised that instances in which Denison stipulates the nature of the experience in a class would be field experience, while experiences that are shaped in response to the expressed needs of a community partner would be service learning.

Laurel said she hasn't really found an instance of a population that is not represented in Licking County; an example would be the Brother to Brother group who had asked to work with an already established group situation of male African American students in Columbus. However, there were several Newark students in this population who were interested in involvement with Brother to Brother, and Laurel felt it is important for them to start the program here, even though it may not be as easy as walking into an established program in Columbus.

Andrea mentioned that some faculty may be already comfortable with an established relationship with a Columbus CBO or school, and that they could be more likely to offer a SL course if they could work with groups they're familiar with. Lyn commented that turf issues

could make working with Columbus more difficult; OSU and Columbus colleges may have established relationships with Columbus schools.

Laurel commented that we don't have the contacts in Columbus schools and don't have the resources to build a network in Columbus. Mary likes the approach of asking people to consider Licking County first but keep the option for Columbus open.

### **Research Workshop in May?**

Laurel asked everyone to consider whether the Center should offer a two day workshop about research for CBO's in May. The focus could be to think through the language and basic concepts of community based research, with more of an emphasis on quantitative rather than qualitative approaches to research. Three questions need to be answered: 1) Should we do this? 2) When should we do it, and 3) Who should be invited?

Laurel has reviewed funding and said the Center could compensate faculty for prep and the workshop participation, which would help demonstrate to the Denison community the faculty is a resource that has applications to community. Laurel has spoken to Brad about the role of SL in tenure, etc and Brad reflected that as long as faculty members are using their professional skills in the community, that is valuable and will be a factor in tenure evaluations.

Fadhel asked about acquiring data sets that could be used for the workshop. Mary feels it is important to find out from potential participants about what they really want from a workshop, so we can be clear about what their expectations are and the skills that they could come out of the workshop with. Lyn commented that in two days a person couldn't become an expert in research, but it could be instructional to inform them what is available. Laurel had said that Shane Lightle had expressed an interest in having a "Research 101" workshop, to learn what research is and how they could do it on their own. Andrea felt we should explain different types of questions and which types of research would apply to answer the questions. Emily thought it would be effective to assign a faculty mentor to the participating CPO's to work on follow up after the workshop with them. Fadhel thought the workshop should include the kinds of tools that they can use with a focus on research for advocacy purposes. Jack said instruction on how to obtain and use information and assessing the results should be included. Andrea thinks we should ask the CBOs what the questions for their own agency are, what their main research question is, and then use those questions for the workshop to teach them what the methodology can do.

Fadhel talked about a group he had worked with in NY that felt that predatory lending was occurring, but didn't know how to prove it so they could work with their politicians on getting the issue addressed. A research workshop could have been helpful in this circumstance.

Mary liked that idea of asking the CBOs in advance for a question they'd like to have answered; and also Emily's idea of faculty follow-up sessions. She said it has been her experience that CBOs can get overwhelmed in workshops, and that it is important to have very interactive,

hands-on sessions. Lyn suggested we get the questions and from them, choose a central question in terms of data and simulate the research. Andrea feels the CBOs are often not familiar with basic data that is available for their use, such as Licking County income from the census, and that we could teach them how to find this information; and they should actually work on computers finding this data during the workshop.

Laurel asked, as a result of this discussion, what SLAC members were now envisioning in terms of a workshop. Emily felt the focus could be on understanding data and impacting the community, and it could be a long-term, hands-on summer workshop. Laurel had talked to David Edelblute, who had mentioned that he hoped CBOs would get enough information from a workshop like this to be motivated to go back to school and learn more. Mary thought that the Center and faculty should look at the CBOs' advance questions and start with a question in the workshop, and working on redefining the question, addressing it with existing databases, accessing community survey data, and then showing them how to use it, and include a little exposure to assessment of a project. Laurel thought you could include ways in which you'd use research; how to use research to advocate for a grant, etc.

Laurel said that she can go back and ask the CBOs about their questions, or a SLAC member could take the workshop on as a project and be compensated by the Center. She asked everyone to give this some thought, and she will put together a potential list of CBO questions and mail them to SLAC members.

### **Planning for Next Year:**

Fall Community Partner Event for Next Year – we will be considering what our fall event could be. Jack mentioned that he had a contact in New York at Brooklyn College who runs a community partnership program and could be probably be engaged to do a program with our partners; she conducts very interactive sessions. Lyn and Mary liked the idea of using a workshop format. Laurel said we can consider this and will think about whether it would be schools or more broadly community-partner oriented.

Next SLAC Meeting: Tuesday, April 28 at 11:30am in the Shepardson College Room