

SLAC MEETING

November 18, 2008

Attended by: Laurel Kennedy, Dosinda Garcia-Alvite, Jack Shuler, Andrea Ziegert, Emily Nemeth, Monica Ayala-Martinez, Michele Doran, Susie Kalinoski, Eryn McGowan, Caitlin Fondessy, Jenny Pearlman

Review of Community Breakfast

Laurel thanked Michele for organizing the breakfast, and also thanked the students like Caitlin who were involved.

The Center is still compiling answers to the reflections questions from the breakfast. Laurel distributed a nearly-complete list of responses and asked the faculty who had attended the breakfast to quickly review them and comment on whether what they had heard as dominant concerns at their tables are accurately reflected in these written comments.

Jack commented that the people at his table were excited to be here at DU and appreciated having the opportunity to gather, and felt that the work Service Learning is doing is really connecting DU to the community.

Emily noted that her table kept coming back to the fact that the housing crisis is so cyclical, and discussion of what issues should be addressed first. She and the people at her table felt it would be great to do a day long workshop to continue the discussion, as the breakfast discussion was so productive.

Mary felt the most important thing was creating the space for the dialogue, that in and of itself makes a statement to the community. Mary and her table had talked about how students have research skills which could be utilized in addition to their direct service.

Michele said that Scott Torguson had commented that our legal aid group had them well covered, and that we should focus on using students in research.

Susie had attended a Save Our Homes meeting this morning where they commented very positively on the breakfast, and also noted that they need help with research and data collection.

Dosy noted that education was a major topic at their table; that we can solve immediate needs but if they don't have an education about financial literacy, the problems will keep being repeated.

Lyn commented that it's important to know what's going on in the community before we send students in to help.

Michele noted that she would have liked to hear more stories about what is actually being experienced as a result of the crisis – where the foreclosed people are going, etc. Laurel suggested that maybe this isn't known and could be a subject for research.

Andrea questioned whether we want to deal with the crisis itself or the follow up from it; we haven't done basic financial planning so there will be both short-term and long-term fallout from this.

Susie said Scott had said there will be many more foreclosures next year, and that self-employed people are just not busy now.

Emily said one student at her table had mentioned that they feel we need basic financial planning education for DU students.

Laurel had spoken to Brad Batemen after the meeting, and he said that as Tim Miller teaches a course in this area, he wondered whether Tim could be induced to teach a service learning course – otherwise, how can students at DU know how to help the people in Newark. Andrea noted that Tim's class is always full, and the Skills Off the Hill group might be a better place to teach practical skills as Tim's class includes some theoretical aspects.

Laurel questioned how we can get substantive things done by student groups when they are not actually part of a class; the students are beyond the limits of their time and should be able to do this work as part of a class. Obama's emphasis on service learning will increase the demand. Dosy suggested it would be good to

plan a systemized way to support schools for next term, and possibly create a 1 or 2 credit course to address these issues.

Laurel said she found the following common themes in her review of the table notes:

- Research on who owns homes and who doesn't
- Helping community partners who already have to gather federal data, but don't have time to use it for their own assessment
- Financial literacy
- Mediation – Scott Torguson had noted that there is only one official mediator in the county. Laurel said there are three levels of mediation, and that our students and faculty might be interested in undergoing training for the lowest level.
- Oversight of research – it was expressed to Laurel that students need a faculty member overseeing research, doing quality control to ensure that it's being done correctly.
- Continued engagement – Laurel is hearing that we have to make sure we're effectively assisting the community.

Laurel asked the question of what is next with regard to these things. What can the Center be doing to advance these goals?

Dosy wondered whether DU could create a task force to buy a house, have students involved in financial planning for it and renovation, and then sell it or rent it to community members.

Susie noted that Licking County Inc is looking for board members. Laurel has spoken to Joe Kennedy of this group about a vacant lot they currently own, and whether it would be possible for DU to design a green house and build it through the Habitat group; Laurel had brought up this idea at DU but it didn't get any traction. Lyn thought that if we could buy a house that needs to be renovated

and put students in charge of the financial aspects, that it would be a wonderful learning experience for them and a good thing for the community.

Emily mentioned that Miami University has a program called Over the Rhine where students live and learn in a low income community. Eryn discussed the possibility of creating a communal living environment in conjunction with this. Dosy discussed establishing a new style of residential community that would be a more communal style. Jack proposed the idea that in trying to attract more diverse faculty to Denison, it could be appealing to have housing options available in Newark and Columbus.

For follow up on the breakfast, the Center is sending out a survey to the partners asking if the breakfast has been effective, and what their thoughts are on more research involvement, student interns, and any other areas. It is hoped that the question about research will provide some target organizations for us to start with.

Andrea noted that we should give examples of what our students can do, because sometimes community partners may not know what we've done in the past and what we can do. Mary thought that if we can list the type of research projects the partners want and provide it to faculty teaching those classes, that would be helpful to them.

Laurel will be writing a breakfast recap, and will send it to faculty as well as partners.

February 9 – Workshop on Community Based Research

Mary is organizing this workshop which will be led by Randy Stoker, a professor from University of Wisconsin. He works with linking academics with communities so that academic research specifically addresses community issues. This event will include a panel discussion, dinner, and then workshop with Randy. There will also be a student workshop on February 10 that Laurel is organizing. Michele is compiling the community partner invitation list which will include partners who attended the breakfasts as well as others who have expressed interest. Mary thought other faculty, especially in the areas of urban planning, social justice and

activism, may be interested in attending the workshop as well and she or Laurel could personally invite them.

Community Capitalism

Laurel talked about a group comprised Licking County Chamber of Commerce, the Newark Port authority, and other organizations, which has formed to track the work that the Kalamazoo, Michigan community had done in trying to revitalize their city, and try to apply the same strategies in Newark. This is the subject of a book, Community Capitalism, that the Newark group has been distributing and discussing at town hall discussions. Laurel has attended one of these meetings, and more discussions are scheduled for tonight and November 19. The Center has details if anyone is interested in participating.

Community Service Directors

Denison will host, with Ohio Campus Compact, a meeting of regional community service directors to discuss the Obama platform in December.

Spanish Language Symposium

The Center will host a symposium on Spanish service learning on January 13.

Newark Schools

The failure of the Newark Schools levy has turned our thoughts to what DU can do to help. Michele had sent an email to her school contacts asking for ideas about supplies they need and has received lists from three schools. Lyn suggested that perhaps departments could adopt schools to foster a personal connection. We discussed various ways of soliciting donations from DU departments, and the consensus was that it would be good to promote this with the theme of “educators helping educators . Emily commented that Anchor Splash always does well, and that it’s good to have a “coach” in each department. Jack suggested finding a lead person in every department to spearhead this, and we agreed that the Center could put together supply bags that the departments could then sponsor by making a donation. As we discussed which schools to include, Lyn suggested that Michele contact Keith Richardson for his input.

Institutional Support for Service Learning

Laurel ended the meeting by noting that one of the pressing things we have to address is institutional support for Service Learning. Laurel is meeting with Brad on a monthly basis to discuss this, and hopes that early next semester SLAC can have a focused conversation on what type of support faculty is now getting, and what type of support is needed.