Stay Informed

CSL Newsletter

VOLUME 4
ISSUE 1

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH AND DARK CHOCOLATE

I always appreciate reading the latest research on dark chocolate, especially when the research confirms what I want to believe about one of my favorite things. And, perhaps this is why I also appreciate reading the current research on service learning. As an educator, I have seen and experienced the power of this teaching strategy in higher education, and when research reconfirms the validity of my personal experience, I take pleasure in the confirmation. As a campus Signature Center, we work with others to increase understanding of service learning through scholarship and research. A growing body of evidence confirms that participation in service learning courses has a number of positive outcomes for college students. Some of these outcomes include:

- Discipline-specific cognitive gains (Burns, 2011; Conway, Amel, & Gerwien, 2009; Novak, Markey, & Allen, 2007);
- Advanced critical thinking skills and ability to see diverse perspectives (Finley, 2011; Hahn & Hatcher, 2013);
- Integrative learning that is enhanced when service learning is done within a themed learning community (Hahn, Hansen, & Chism, 2014);
- Deeper understanding of social issues and problem solving (Mobley, 2007);
- Retention (Gallini & Moely, 2003) and persistence in the first year (Bringle, Hatcher & Muthiah, 2010) and among first-generation college students (Yeh, 2010);
- Decline in social dominance orientation, which is associated sexism and racism (Brown, 2011)
- Increase in perception of their ability to improve the community through active engagement (Moely, McFarland, Miron, Mercer, & Ilustre, 2002; Steinberg, Hatcher & Bringle, 2011).

Students report that service-learning has four major benefits: practical skills, citizenship, personal responsibility, and interpersonal skills (Burns, 2011). Many of these outcomes align with the goals that our faculty and staff have agreed upon, as evidence in the Principles of Undergraduate Learning, Graduate Learning, and Co-Curricular Learning. One way that together we can achieve the campus strategic plan for student learning is to further support the integration of service learning across the curriculum and in ways that make sense for each department and program.

Yet, like chocolate, there are variations among types of service learning that yield these benefits. Variations such as types of reflection, role of the community partners, interaction with community members, faculty participation at the community site, student's perceived value of their contribution, and dialogue across difference matter. So just like with dark chocolate, we will continue to dive into research to understand just why service learning is such a good thing. If you have ideas for collaborative research, let us know.

Visit our website for a complete bibliography of these and other student outcomes in service learning.

RECORD BREAKING GROWTH IN COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING IN 2013-2014

Findings indicate 2013-2014 was a record breaking year for community-based learning courses at IUPUI. Each year the Center for Service and Learning asks instructors to provide additional information about their community-based learning courses. The information collected serves as a critical piece of evidence that demonstrates the depth and breadth of community engagement linked to key campus initiatives. For more information about data collection and to access reports that contain these findings, view the full report.

Highlights from the 2013-2014 academic year include:

- An estimated 8,602 students contributed 308,921 hours of service to the community. The number of hours represents an 8% increase compared to 2012-2013 and a 61% over the last four years.
- Based upon the national volunteer and pro bono rates, IUPUI students contributed approximately $12.7 million in service hours to the community. This represents a 32% increase compared to 2012-2013.
- A higher number of community partners were cited (n=438). This represents a 33% increase compared to 2012-2013.

The CSL has been collecting this data for the campus since 2001, and these graphs illustrate the trends associated with community-based learning over time.

IUPUI TESTING SOFTWARE TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

IUPUI was recently invited to serve as one of four campuses to beta test The Community Engagement Collaboratory ("The Collaboratory"), which was originally created at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and is being developed by TreeTop, LLC. The Collaboratory is a cloud-based software application for higher education that seeks to improve scholarship and practice by developing a comprehensive description of institutional community engagement and public service activities. It provides participating institutions and their communities the opportunity to understand their full engagement footprint and to deepen partnerships through feedback mechanisms.

Kristin Norris, CSL Assessment Director, believes that the system has the potential to drastically improve our ability to tell our story. By capturing who is doing what, where, with whom and for what purpose, we will increase our capacity to connect community-identified needs with faculty expertise. It will also support interdisciplinary research by helping faculty find partners or projects related to their area of interest. Some of the key features include the ability to:

- Document and share the full scope of community engagement
- Publicly display activities for all stakeholders and shareholders to explore, with no login necessary
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>   Easily run descriptive statistics and visually display community engagement data in tabular and graph formats at the individual, department, or unit level
> - Create reports that align with accreditation, award and recognition program requirements, or data reports to support grant and gift proposals
> - Integrate with and pull data from existing institutional systems using a single sign-on authentication
> - Collect impacts and outcomes
> - Auto-generate tools to gather feedback and input from diverse stakeholders including students and community partners

Faculty and staff interested in testing out the system or learning more about IUPUI's involvement as a beta campus are welcome to contact Jennifer Boehm (jrboehm@iupui.edu) or Kristin Norris (norriske@iupui.edu) who have been working with TreeTop, LLC to provide feedback to the developers to improve the system for widespread application. The developers and representatives from the four beta campuses convened on September 28th, 2014, prior to the start of the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement conference in New Orleans, LA, to make recommended changes and discuss best practices for use of the system on campus. You can also discover more about the Collaboratory at the Assessment Institute Open Reception, which is open to the IUPUI community and its partners.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTED AT THE INDIANAPOLIS ASSESSMENT INSTITUTE

The Assessment Institute is the nation's oldest and largest event focused exclusively on outcomes assessment in higher education. The Institute is designed to provide opportunities for (1) individuals and campus teams new to outcomes assessment to acquire fundamental knowledge about the field, (2) individuals who have worked as leaders in outcomes assessment to share and extend their knowledge and skills, and (3) individuals interested in outcomes assessment at any level to establish networks that serve as sources of support and expertise beyond the dates of the Institute.

This year's institute includes a special focus on community engagement. Anyone interested in monitoring and measuring the impact of community engagement or struggling to capture information about community engagement that occurs inside and outside the classroom to tell your story would benefit by attending the pre-Institute workshops. Visit the conference website for details.

Even if you aren't registered for the conference, we invite you to attend the Open Reception on **Sunday, October 19th from 4:30-6:30pm** at the Marriott Downtown, where attendees will get a first look at the *Community Engagement Collaboratory.* The Collaboratory is a next generation, web-based platform to track and monitor partnership and public service activities among universities and communities that will serve as the basis for a research program to strengthen institutional and international scholarship and practice. It will facilitate measurement of activities, identify patterns of engagement, and provide ongoing data collection and convene people and resources around important community priorities.

<u>Pre-Institute Workshops on Community Engagement:</u>

From the Ground Up: Assessing Community-Based High Impact Practices
 Presenters: Kristin Norris and Mary Price, IUPUI; J.R. Jamison, Indiana Campus
Compact

**Building Institutional Capacity to Monitor and Assess Community-Engaged
 Learning**
 Presenters: Kristin Norris and Mary Price, IUPUI; and Kristin Medlin and Emily Janke,
 University of North Carolina-Greensboro

EVENTS AND MORE INFORMATION

10/17/2014

IUPUI Fall Alternative Break

10/30/2014

Service Learning "The Basics": Designing Developmentally Appropriate Projects with
 Community Partners

11/17/2014

Hunger and Homelessness Week

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