

Stay Informed

CSL Newsletter

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FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: NAVIGATING THE FORK IN THE ROAD

One of the best, yet most challenging aspects of travel is facing a fork in the road. When options present themselves and there is no certainty of which path to take, the traveler must ask questions, use their best judgment, listen to wisdom of others, and embrace the uncertainty. But ultimately, one needs to take action.

This forked road, according to [John Dewey](#) (1910), is the basis for learning. Dewey argues that it is in ambiguity, when one does not know for sure which direction to take, that learning occurs.

“Thinking begins in what may fairly enough be called a forked- road situation, a situation which is ambiguous, which presents a dilemma, which proposes alternatives. As long as our activity glides smoothly along from one thing to another, or as long as we permit our imagination to entertain fancies at pleasure, there is no call for reflection. Difficulty or obstruction in the way of reaching a belief brings us, however, to a pause. In the suspense of uncertainty, we metaphorically climb a tree; we try to find some standpoint from which we may survey additional facts and, getting a more commanding view of the situation, may decide how the facts stand related to one another.”

Engagement in the community creates many “forked-road” situations that are filled with ambiguity, dilemmas, and difficulties. As a service-learning instructor, I needed to learn early on to embrace the fact that when students are perplexed, or confused, or even frustrated, that many times this is the basis for learning and new insight.

Co-curricular service experiences are rich in terms of their potential for learning. IUPUI students who travel to Detroit on an alternative break service trip encounter new contexts and issues related to social justice. Students who volunteer at the [Student Outreach Clinic](#) on the Near Eastside interact with others whose life circumstances shed light on the complexities of health care. Even students who participate in a short-term event such as a [Day of Caring](#) by serving meals at Wheeler Mission can have their horizons broadened as they come face-to-face with those who are experiencing homelessness.

Yet for community engagement to generate its full potential, it must be combined with critical reflection. Doing is not sufficient. Dewey’s metaphor of “climbing the tree...to find a more commanding view of the situation” illustrates the importance of reflection. Dewey defines reflective thought as the *“active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends.”*

Reflection leads to insight and identifies options for new action. That is why best practice

for co-curricular service at IUPUI also includes reflection. Co-curricular programs through the Center for Service and Learning, including alternative breaks and one time service events, include student-led activities that often provoke thoughtful discussion. If you are looking for creative ways to help students navigate the forks in the road, no matter what the community engagement activity, the CSL staff is ready to assist.

Dewey, J. (1910). *How we think*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath (1910).

MLK JR. DAY OF SERVICE PRODUCES CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES AND INSPIRES MULTI-CAMPUS STUDY

Can a one-time day of service to the community influence a participant's civic-mindedness and likelihood to participate in future service events? The assessment of last year's [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. \(MLK, Jr.\) Day of Service](#) at IUPUI indicates that it can.

The results of IUPUI's MLK, Jr. event in 2014 were attributed to the intentional program planning that began months before the day of the event. Identifying learning outcomes and widely disseminating these outcomes to other program stakeholders (i.e., keynote speaker, community partners, site leaders, and faculty) who have a role in working with students during the service event was crucial to making the events of the day as compelling to students as possible.

For the 2015 event, CSL is sharing its survey instrument with other campuses throughout the country that sponsor an MLK, Jr. Day of Service. The intention is twofold – 1) to provide a reliable measurement tool for other campuses to assess their MLK, Jr. Day of Service and 2) to compare the assessment results from MLK, Jr. events from around the country.

CSL is interested in getting participation in this multi-campus study from a wide variety of campuses. Examining survey results from public, private, urban, commuter, residential and faith-based campuses from around the country will be instrumental in further understanding the influence of a Day of Service. Additionally, CSL is hopeful that this collaboration among campuses will lead to sharing of best practices and further improvements.

Those interested in more information about this study or the results from last year's event are welcome to contact Kristin Norris at norriske@iupui.edu.

OUR FALL ALTERNATIVE BREAK TRIP TO DETROIT, MI

By Marion Muthama and Chris Tyler, Sam H. Jones Community Service Scholars

For this year's [Fall Alternative Break](#) (FAB) we traveled to Detroit, Michigan. Over the course of two days we worked with [Cass Community Social Services](#), a local agency working across the city in areas of concentrated poverty providing programs for food, health, housing, and jobs.

Our two days of service included supporting a Halloween event for Cass and working in the kitchen to prepare meals for the residents, staff, and volunteers. Through these

experiences, we were able to mingle with residents and learn more about the organization and the city. We had the opportunity to interact with the head cook in the Cass kitchen and with another volunteer who gives his time each day to Cass because of the impact the organization has had on his life. Talking with these individuals gave us a different perspective of Cass. It let us go beyond the service work and deeper into the meaning behind what we were doing. Interacting extensively with both the clients and staff of Cass gave us more insight than simply providing two days of service.

During our time at Cass, we had the chance to dine daily with the residents and really talk with them. We learned how Cass is helping them as well as what this organization is doing in their communities and in the city overall. We heard individual stories of hardship as well as the dire effects of poverty in Detroit. These opportunities for interaction with the residents impacted our group, as it gave a personal touch to all of our pre-trip education and intentional work on the trip.

Our time spent with Cass and interacting with its residents, staff, and volunteers allowed our group to receive a well-rounded service trip. Experiencing first-hand the work that Cass does, interacting with those served by Cass and working with those dedicating time each day to impact their community and the city allowed us to move beyond the simple knowledge of social issues and struggles of Detroit to the values of the organization and real need of the community. These experiences allowed us to see the impact that one organization is having on a city and the impact that volunteers have in helping an organization like Cass accomplish all they need to do.

CO-CURRICULAR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT IUPUI EXPANDS ITS REACH THROUGH NATIONAL INITIATIVE

By Lorrie A. Brown, CSL Associate Director

In 2001, I was appointed the first full-time Coordinator of Community Service at IUPUI, in a shared position between units in the Division of Student Life and Diversity and the Division of Academic Affairs. Former Vice Chancellor  **Bill Plater's** vision was to create a co-curricular community service effort that was seamlessly supported across the campus. Even now, when attending national conferences, I have yet to find another colleague who serves in a similar "shared" position that includes sustained commitment from academic and student affairs in collaborative supervision, budget, and mission-based programming and assessment.

Long acknowledged for its excellence in curricular service learning research and practice, IUPUI's co-curricular service programs have also increased in scope and depth in the last 13 years. This summer, IUPUI's community service efforts were recognized by the premier student affairs association, **NASPA**—Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education, through the selection as a **Consulting Institution for the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement** (CLDE) Lead initiative. The CLDE Lead network currently includes 92 higher education institutions and includes a summer conference, online resources, and a supportive community of colleagues who are interested in student engagement both in and outside the classroom.

As a **Lead Consulting Institution** (LCI), IUPUI is tasked with providing advice to the NASPA national office on CLDE initiatives, and leading a cohort of 9 institutions from across the country in information exchange and learning opportunities. Monthly Google Hangouts are focused on hot topics in the field and are open to anyone on campus.

On campus, the **Division of Student Affairs** (DSA) and the Center for Service and Learning (CSL) have embarked on a collaborative effort to explore more intentionally the intersections of our respective work, beginning with a mapping of student learning outcomes through guiding constructs—the Principles of Co-Curricular Learning (DSA) and the Civic-Minded Graduate.

Our next steps will include the formation of a joint Civic Engagement working group, under the Lead Initiative. We are inviting others with a stake in meaningful co-curricular service and have an interest in our next phase of work to contact Lorrie Brown ([lorrbrow@iupui.edu](mailto:lorbrow@iupui.edu)) about the IUPUI CLDE Lead initiative.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN IUPUI'S INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

Community engagement is a defining attribute of IUPUI with a rich history that has continued to grow over time. Our approach to engagement is strategic; it is a powerful tool which permeates the university to achieve our strategic institutional goals and leverage our intellectual capital to achieve community goals. The purpose of the **Dean's Report** is to capture this work and recognize the accomplishments of IUPUI faculty, staff, and students. The report illustrates the value of community engagement and how it has become part of the institutional culture over time.

The following types of information can be found in the **2013-2014 Dean's Report**:

- Number of students enrolled in service learning courses
- Number of service hours completed
- Economic impact of service to the community
- Number of service learning courses offered
- Number of faculty teaching service learning courses
- Community partners cited

EVENTS AND MORE INFORMATION

[Nomination and Application Open for Plater Civic Engagement Medallion](#)

[Accepting 2015-16 Sam H. Jones Community Service Scholarship Applications](#)

[CSL Dissemination Grant Applications Now Open](#)

[Our Friends at NearWestIndy Have Been Selected Indy's #GreatPlaces2020](#)

[This #GivingTuesday, Your Gift Will Help Us Transform Communities and Lives](#)

Robert G. Bringle Civic Engagement Showcase and Symposium to Feature Keynote by Dr. Greg Lindsey

12/05/2014

Westside Windshield Tour

01/19/2015

IUPUI Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

01/23/2015

The Campus Kitchen at IUPUI: Engagement Opportunities for Faculty, Staff, and Students
