



Building and Strengthening Communities through Service Learning and Civic Engagement

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Raritan Valley Community College
CNCS and HUD Presentation
October 20, 2011**

Raritan Valley Community College



- Enrolls 8,500 students each semester of which 3,800 are part-time
- Enrolls 18,300 students in non-credit courses, including customized training, workforce development, allied health, professional development and youth programs
- Provides more than 70 associate degree and certificate programs

Mission Statement

Raritan Valley Community College is an educational community that works to develop critical thinking, foster intellectual curiosity, promote leadership, encourage social responsibility, support personal growth, and sustain engaged citizenship within a diverse population of students and community members (2010).



RVCC Service Learning Program Participation

Annual Program Participation:

- **1,000 students** perform community service
- **65 faculty** offer service learning
- **70 courses** from all academic disciplines
- **250 community organizations**
- **30,000 hours** of service provided to community
- **\$600,000** donated as economic equivalent to community



Why Offer Service Learning

- Meets the mission of community colleges
- Links course work to practical applications, career exploration and employment
- Helps to develop student's academic skills, self-esteem and confidence
- Creates a connection between personal development and civic responsibility
- Builds relations with the community
- Promotes student retention



Improving Student Learning Outcomes with Service Learning

American Association of Community Colleges reveals that:

- **Students who participate in service learning score higher on institutional learning outcomes such as critical thinking, communication, civic responsibility, academic development, and educational success.**
- **Students saw themselves as more competitive in the job market than those who did not have service learning experience.**
- **85% of these students believed that service learning should be practiced in more courses at their colleges and 87% would encourage other students to take courses that offer service learning.**



The entire text of the research brief may be found at

www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/horizons/Documents/slorb_jan2010.pdf

Alignment with Learning Objectives

- Critical thinking, problem solving and information literacy skills
- Communication skills
- Diversity/multi-cultural understanding
- Civic and social responsibility
- Career exploration
- Research skills
- Team work

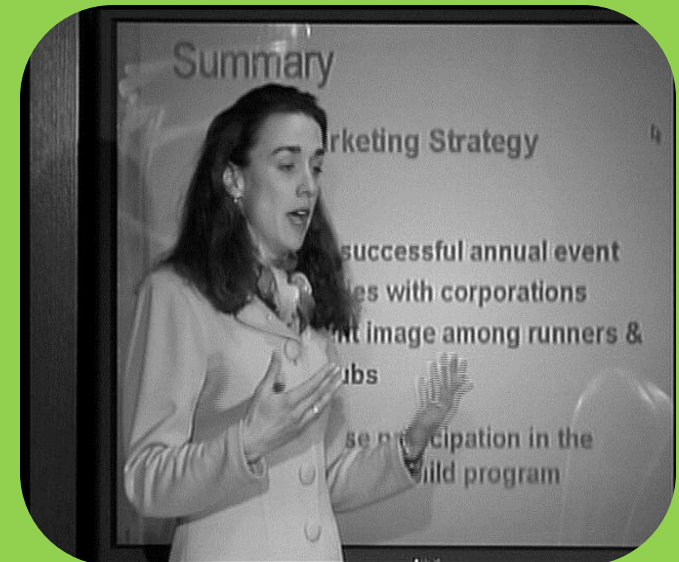


Service Learning Activities

- Providing tutoring, mentoring and recreational activities
- Developing marketing plans and working on fundraising events
- Organizing food and blood drives and pet adoptions
- Providing nutritional plans and implementing low-impact cardiovascular exercise programs
- Tackling issues on recycling and reuse, stream clean-ups, rainforest protection, endangered plant species conservation, land and open space preservation.
- Helping in areas of low-income housing, family law, consumer protection, mediation and tax preparation

Valuable Community Assets

- Skills and expertise from different individuals, associations and organizations
- Knowledge of local, regional and national issues
- Diversity of thought, languages, backgrounds, culture
- Key community leadership



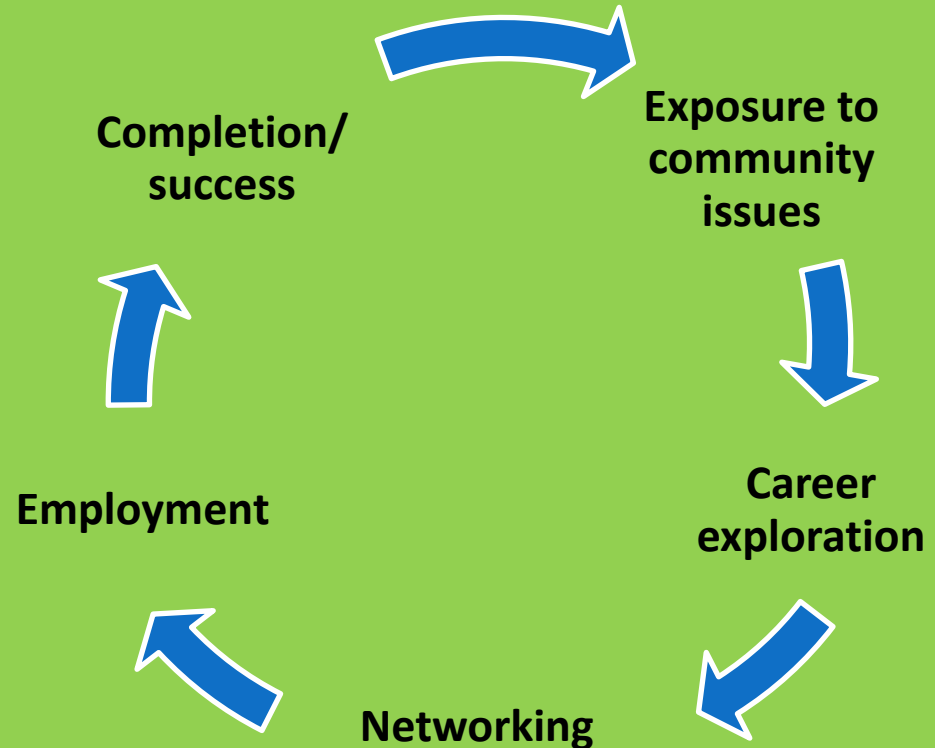
Valuable College Assets

- College students provide targeted assistance at no economic cost and increase diversity of volunteer base
- Active assistance can help organization achieve its objectives and services
- Students can join staff or agency board
- Clients discover there is hope and people care and often learn that others share their interests



Courses Offering Service Learning

- Introductory level
- Capstone
- Career & Technical
- Honors
- Majors
- Independent Study
- Teacher Education
- Developmental



Co-Curricular Engagement

- Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), an international, non-profit organization, that mobilizes students to make a difference in their communities while developing their skills to become socially responsible business leaders
- Student Clubs organize fund-raisers, collections for children, visits to hospitals and nursing homes and service projects. Example: Orgullo Latino Club sponsors a program for 100 high school students to promote post education among Latino students through workshops, testing, advising, counseling, financial aid for college preparation

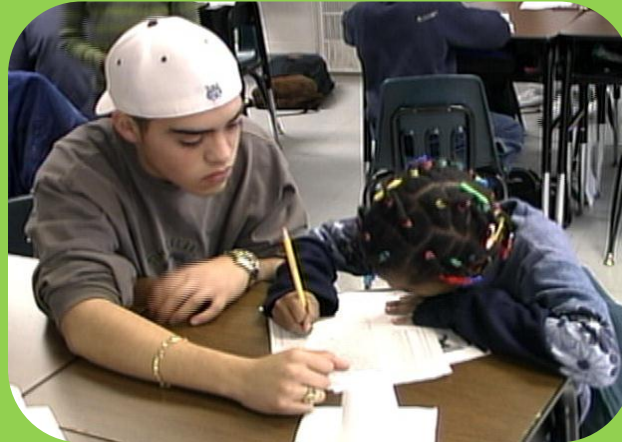


Diverse Community Partners

- Non-profit agencies
- Nursing homes, hospitals and clinics
- Senior citizen centers
- Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples
- Youth-serving organizations (YMCA, Scouts)
- Community centers and civic organizations
- Libraries
- Day care centers and pre-schools
- K-12 schools, ESL centers, after-school programs
- Police and Probation Departments, Court Houses

Populations Served

- Minorities
- Low-income
- Immigrants
- International
- Incarcerated
- Disabled
- Homeless
- Elderly
- Children, youth, families and single parents



Community Issues Addressed

- Literacy
- English as a second language
- Environment
- Health and safety
- Housing and development
- Hunger and homelessness
- Legal rights
- Multicultural understanding
- Substance abuse
- Child Care



Student Leadership Transcript

RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PO Box 3300 - Somerville, NJ 08876-1265

Student Leadership Development Transcript

Glenn
Fleethinton, NJ 08822

Raritan Valley Community College

Fall 2009

Workshop Training	RVCC/CIH Care Conference - 10 hours
Service Learning	Introduction to Psychology - Somerset Hills YMCA Child Care - 20 hours
Service Learning	Foundations of Education - Van Dusen Elementary School - 20 hours

Spring 2010

Original Intent Club	RVCC/CIH High School Outreach Program - 40 hours
Service Learning	International Experience - Habitat for Humanity, Somerville - 30 hours
Service Learning	Nature Systems - North Lister High Youth Center - 10 hours

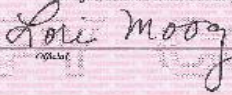
Fall 2010

Phi Theta Kappa	Executive Member
Service Learning	Chilobegany - North Lister High Youth Center - 20 hours
Service Learning	Introduction to Public - Spring Hill Assisted Living Center - 15 hours

Spring 2011

Phi Theta Kappa	Fundraising Committee Member - 15 hours
Service Learning	Problem Solving Strategies - Learning Skills the School - 20 hours
RVCC Student Association	Treasurer
Service Learning	Introduction to Spanish II - Somerville Public Library Story Hour - 20 hours

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September 26, 2011
Signature Date

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Institutional Support

- Maintains centralized offices and full-time staff committed to engagement efforts
- Develops forms and procedures to document and assess community-based work
- Recognizes and celebrates community involvement
- Seeks funding for scholarships to support engagement efforts
- Develops integrated and complimentary engagement activities

Assessment of Student Learning

- Reflection Activities
- Student Surveys
- Open Letters
- Agency feedback surveys
- Community Advisory Boards



“The Service Learning program at RVCC has given us the opportunity to work with dedicated young people who are the future for social responsibility and a better community. Making a difference for them now means having them make a difference for us and our clients in time to come.” (Resource Center of Somerset, serving victims of domestic abuse)

Campus Compact

Expanding Opportunities

- Developing a New Jersey State Campus Compact with 19 institutions including two and four-year public, private and independent
- Linking presidents, community service directors, faculty and students with a statewide network of practitioners
- Programming for awards, conferences, grants, trainings through National Campus Compact
- Building an infrastructure for sustaining civic engagement in higher education

Resources

- Corporation for National and Community Service: www.nationalservice.gov
- Campus Compact: www.compact.org
- Community College National Center for Community Engagement:
www.mesacc.edu/engagement
- American Association of Community College:
www.aacc.nche.edu/servicelearning
- National Service-Learning Clearinghouse:
www.servicelearning.org

The Challenge

What can we do together?

- How can community colleges be a resource for the larger community that they serve?
- What can community colleges be doing to prepare for the future needs of the community?
- How can the community help their local community college serve them better?



**President's Higher Education
Community Service Honor Roll**



Award Winner 2006 - 2010

