

SERVICE-LEARNING

Promoting Change for the Better

In the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, students have opportunities to advance their academic careers while gaining real-world experience with local industries and organizations. One avenue of learning they can choose is service-learning.

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (www.nationalservice.gov), service-learning “combines service objectives with learning objectives ... [to] change both the recipient and the provider of the service.” Students engaged in service-learning typically perform volunteer work at a nonprofit organization or agency and then discuss their experiences with peers in a classroom setting.

Margaret Heely, director of the Office of Experiential Learning, says, “Service-learning benefits both the students who participate and the nonprofit or community agencies they work with. Students bring their skills to agencies or organizations and learn how to use and improve them. And agencies gain the advantage of fresh insights and knowledgeable input from students.”

Opportunities within the School of Arts and Sciences include field placement through the Department of Urban Studies and a service-learning seminar in the Public and Professional Writing Program. Some of the opportunities for service-learning include working with America Reads Challenge, helping children from kindergarten through third grade improve their reading skills; promoting social justice at the Thomas Merton Center; and training homeless dogs so they can find loving homes. Students interested in service-learning can choose to engage in adult literacy programs, art and music initiatives, voter education, and more.

Students who have participated in service-learning report that the experiences have helped them to understand how volunteer organizations work, develop a sense of community, and comprehend practical aspects of transitioning from college to career. Scott Nalick, a junior who is double majoring in political science and communications, enrolled in the Public and Professional Writing Program service-learning seminar last spring. “This is by far the most valuable credit I have earned as a college student,” he says of his experience. “Working in a soup kitchen made me realize that a college student’s daily problems do not compare to those of people who walk the streets without a warm place to rest.”

Maura Spillane, another political science major who enrolled in the service-learning seminar, agrees. “It was an enlightening experience to watch [protection from abuse] advocates work with victims. This was my first opportunity to see how the court provides direct services to people in



Shown at the fall 2006 urban studies service-learning seminar are (from left to right) Claire Donato, junior, English (writing) and urban studies major; Carolyn Carson, coordinator, Urban Studies Program; Mark Mulshine, sophomore, urban studies and economics major; Rachel Kohan, senior, urban studies and sociology major; and Raina Rippel, junior, urban studies major.

need.” (Read more about Spillane in the article “Future Leaders Learn Today” on page 3.)

Students can learn about opportunities to earn academic credit through service-learning, internships, and research by stopping by the Office of Experiential Learning, located in B-4 Thaw Hall, or visiting www.as.pitt.edu/undergraduate/experience/index.html.

DID YOU KNOW?

Since the September 2001 terrorist attacks, volunteerism in the United States has experienced a marked increase. The growth rate of college student volunteerism is more than twice that of adults. In fact, more than 30 percent of all college students performed volunteer work in 2005.

- The number of college students who volunteer increased by approximately 20 percent between 2002 and 2005.
- Tutoring and mentoring are two of the most popular volunteer activities among college students.
- Students who work part time volunteer more than students who do not work at all.
- College students are twice as likely to engage in volunteer work as people of the same age who are not enrolled at a college or university.
- More than 8 million people between the ages of 16 and 24 participated in volunteer activities each year from 2003 to 2005.

From *Volunteering in America: State Trends and Rankings* (June 2006) and from *College Students Helping America* (October 2006), [Corporation for National and Community Service] (www.nationalservice.gov)

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Gifts that Build Our Community

Research, education, and service are the three key facets of the University of Pittsburgh's founding mission. But while the University's outstanding accomplishments in our laboratories and classrooms frequently capture the attention of the news media, our commitment to serving the needs of our neighbors in Western Pennsylvania and beyond sometimes flies below reporters' radar screens. In this issue of *Pitt Pride*, we wanted to focus on some of the important contributions that School of Arts and Sciences undergraduate students and their professors are making each day through service-learning opportunities.

Service-learning courses for academic credit are currently offered in the Urban Studies Program and in the Public and Professional Writing Program. By participating in service-learning, students apply their academic skills to volunteer organizations that help the community. Then they discuss and share their experiences in class to better understand what they've learned. We believe that when community service and academic study meet, both students and the community benefit. For many students, service-learning is the first step toward a lifetime commitment to volunteerism.

Undergraduates in the School of Arts and Sciences—like all University of Pittsburgh students—have numerous opportunities to get involved with activities and organizations that support people in need. Through blood drives, literacy initiatives, and Alternative Break trips (which enable students to spend their spring break working to address issues such as poverty, hunger, and homelessness), our undergraduates are gaining leadership skills, sharpening their critical thinking capabilities, and giving a meaningful gift that is generous and lasting. The Student Volunteer Outreach (SVO) program, part of the University's Division of Student Affairs, connects students with some of the many outstanding service projects happening in and around Pittsburgh. If your student is interested in volunteering, he or she can get more information by visiting www.svo.pitt.edu.

During this season, when our thoughts turn to gifts and giving, my hope for you is that the joyful memories you make with family and friends are gifts that will last throughout the new year and well beyond.

Warm wishes for the holidays,

Regina Schulte-Ladbeck
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies



Kathleen Blee, professor in the Department of Sociology, talks with freshman Grant Twyman.

FACULTY PROFILE

Teaching through Research

Kathleen Blee, professor in the Department of Sociology, is a nationally recognized expert on racist American hate groups. A prolific scholar, Blee has published numerous books and articles about the role of women in hate groups and has also been awarded the Chancellor's Distinguished Research Award.

Blee teaches classes that focus on global feminism, gender and social movements, and the family, but her work with undergraduate students extends far beyond the classroom.

The current focus of Blee's qualitative research is the study of the origins of social movements, for which she has been awarded several National Science Foundation awards, including a Research Experiences for Undergraduates award that enables more undergraduate students to collaborate with her on this work.

According to Blee, "I've been a teacher for a very long time, and I like the classroom experience. I decided that if the idea [of hands-on research] could be extended to undergraduates...students would be more excited about what they learned in classes and what they learn in sociology."

John Nigro (A&S '06), who conducted undergraduate research with Blee, agrees. "It proves to graduate schools or to future employers that you have experience and you know what you're doing. Rather than sitting in classes, [you're gaining] a hands-on learning experience."

To read more about Blee's work with the National Science Foundation, visit www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04219/nsf04219.pdf.

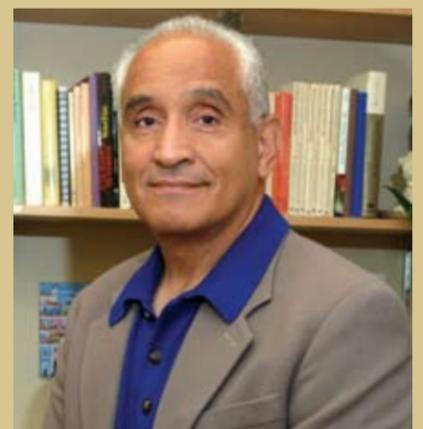
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: HELPING STUDENTS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

Most great achievements are the result of people working together toward a common goal. For Student Support Services in the University of Pittsburgh's School of Arts and Sciences, the goal is to help students realize their academic ambitions and graduate from college.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Student Support Services, a program of the Academic Resource Center, provides mentoring, tutoring, academic advising, and learning skills instruction to hundreds of first-generation college students and students who meet economic guidelines for program eligibility. Through workshops and excursions, Student Support Services supplies its enrolled students with opportunities to increase their participation in cultural events in and around the city of Pittsburgh.

In addition to the individual support it provides, the program coordinates Right Start study skills courses. These one-credit courses, offered in the fall and spring terms, first help students develop their academic skills, then enable them to explore options for majors, minors, and certificates in preparation for their futures.

For more information about Student Support Services in the School of Arts and Sciences on the Oakland campus, visit the Student Support Services Web site at www.as.pitt.edu/undergraduate/success/student-support-services.html, or call 412-624-6588.



Ariel Burgos, director,
Student Support Services



Maura Spillane

While conducting research for a paper on legal options for domestic abuse victims, Maura Spillane, a senior majoring in political science, discovered a wealth of volunteer opportunities that enabled her to study firsthand the services provided to victims. By engaging in service-learning with Crisis Center North (CCN) in its legal advocacy department, she was able to observe legal advocates as they assisted domestic abuse victims in navigating the confusing process of filing for a protection from abuse order.

As part of her service-learning experience, Spillane had to complete a 48-hour training program before shadowing the legal advocates, helping them prepare for consultations, and assisting victims in finding the resources they needed. The experience gave Spillane insight into the legal advocacy process so she could describe it more effectively in her paper. In addition to the academic gains, Spillane experienced personal rewards. "Service-learning provides an opportunity for students to work beyond campus boundaries and to experience the real-world workings of the nonprofit sector. My time in the service-learning program was very rewarding."



ENJOYING WINTER BREAK WITH YOUR RETURNING STUDENT

by Teddy Fakles and Mary Koch-Ruiz, University Counseling Center

The year-end winter break can be stressful for both students and their parents. It is a period of adjustment because it is the first time since classes began that more time can be spent with each other.

Students and their parents can have different expectations regarding how much time to spend together. Students may envision spending more time with former high school friends, while parents look forward to more time spent with their adult child.

Conflicts can emerge because house rules for the student have remained the same since high school. Students may perceive that their parents are reluctant to view them as adults.

It is also possible that changes in the family may have occurred while the student was away. A single parent may have started dating. Parents who put divorce aside while the children were young may have decided to end their marriage. For students with blended families, decisions have to be made regarding how much time to spend with each parent.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Plan Ahead: Talk in advance about your adult child's plans for the break. Recognize the importance to your child of reconnecting with old friends. Include your child in the planning stages of home projects and other activities if you want assistance or just time spent together.

Be Realistic: Look forward to seeing your returning student, but expect some old struggles for the bathroom, car, and remote. Reconsider the house rules and whether they can be changed.

Set Aside Time to Deal with Potentially Explosive Topics: Discuss important issues directly and sensitively; don't let disagreements about money, grades, and house rules pervade the entire break.

Communicate: Conversations within families can be very comforting and rewarding. Winter break can be a good time to reflect on the semester, affirm your adult child, and acknowledge changes that have occurred.

RESOURCES

College Parents of America
www.collegeparents.org

University Counseling Center
334 William Pitt Union
412-648-7930
www.counseling.pitt.edu

When Kids Go to College: A Parent's Guide to Changing Relationships

Barbara M. Newman and Philip R. Newman

News

& ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dean's Stars

A \$50 University of Pittsburgh Book Center gift certificate will be mailed to undergraduate students in the School of Arts and Sciences who complete the spring term with a minimum of 12 credits and a term grade point average (GPA) of 4.0. The certificate will be mailed in mid-May. If your student qualifies for a gift certificate but does not receive one, contact us at pittpride@as.pitt.edu.

April Graduation Celebrations

Academic departments often host special receptions to recognize their graduating seniors. If you have a senior graduating this spring, please contact your student's academic department for more information about planned festivities. A complete list of Arts and Sciences departments is available at www.pitt.edu/academics.html.

Sophomore Honors Reception

On February 20, 2007, the Arts and Sciences Office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies will host the annual reception to celebrate the achievements of those students who have earned 30 credits or more and have a 3.5 or higher GPA. Eligible students will receive an invitation.

Dean's List Certificates

Arts and Sciences students whose grades indicate outstanding academic achievement for the fall 2006 term are recognized on the Dean's List. To be placed on the Dean's List, a student must have earned at least 12 credits (not including courses taken with the satisfactory/no credit option) with a term GPA of at least 3.5 and no grade earned in the fall 2006 term lower than a C. Dean's List certificates will be mailed to students' home addresses in January.

Summer Sessions

The School of Arts and Sciences will once again offer summer session classes to interested students. Students can choose from hundreds of four-, six-, or 12-week courses to meet academic needs in most disciplines. Many students take advantage of summer courses as a way to complete general education requirements and ensure that they are on track to graduate in four years. Registration for summer sessions begins in February. For more information, visit www.summer.pitt.edu.

New Web Site

This fall, the School of Arts and Sciences launched a new undergraduate studies Web site. Our URL is www.as.pitt.edu/undergraduate. We encourage you to visit us online to learn more about the activities and events happening within the school. Send us an e-mail at pittpride@as.pitt.edu to let us know what you think of our new home in cyberspace.

Recognizing Religious Observances

The University of Pittsburgh has a tradition of recognizing religious observances of members of the University community in instances where those observances may conflict with University activities. When such conflicts occur, students and faculty should make every effort to come to mutually agreeable arrangements to reschedule the academic activity or provide a substitute activity or evaluation. Students are encouraged to alert faculty to the potential for such conflicts as early in the term as possible.



University of Pittsburgh

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- Advising Center412-624-6444
- Academic Resource Center412-648-7920
- Office of the Associate Dean
for Undergraduate Studies.....412-624-6480
- Office of Freshman Programs412-624-6828
- Office of Experiential Learning.....412-624-5428
- Office of Student Records412-624-6776

www.as.pitt.edu/undergraduate

Questions or concerns? E-mail us at pittpride@as.pitt.edu

HISTORY OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS TAKE REMBRANDT ROAD TRIP

The Office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies in the School of Arts and Sciences sponsors class-related off-campus experiences that allow students to make connections between classroom learning and the real world. This fall, Ann Sutherland Harris, professor in the Department of History of Art and Architecture, took her small class of students in Approaches to the History of Art: Rembrandt to New York City to see paintings, prints, and drawings by Rembrandt (1606–69) currently on exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Frick Collection. There are no paintings by Rembrandt in Pittsburgh and only one in Cleveland, Ohio, so New York was the best place to see a lot of his work quickly; these museums together own more than 20 paintings by Rembrandt. The Met had also mounted a special exhibition of etchings and drawings by Rembrandt and his students to honor the 400th anniversary of his birth.

To find out more about the Department of History of Art and Architecture, visit www.haa.pitt.edu.



The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission. This policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs and activities. This is a commitment made by the University and is in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.

For information on University equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and complaint/grievance procedures, please contact the University of Pittsburgh, Office of Affirmative Action, William A. Savage, Assistant to the Chancellor and Director of Affirmative Action (and Title IX and 504, ADA Coordinator), 901 William Pitt Union, Pittsburgh, PA 15260; 412-648-7860.

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CIDDE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December	24	Winter recess for faculty and staff begins
January	2	All University offices and buildings, including residence halls, reopen
	3	Spring term registration period ends;
		spring term classes begin
	15	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday observance—University closed
	16	Spring term add/drop period ends
	9	Spring Holiday—University closed
	14	Spring term deadline for students to submit Monitored Withdrawal forms to the dean's office
	15	Fall term registration and add/drop period begins; first two days reserved for seniors
February	19	Summer term registration and add/drop period begins
	23	Honors Convocation
March	4-11	Spring recess for students—no classes; University offices and buildings remain open

