



Hear Our History As You Envision Your Future Chandler-Gilbert Community College

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Session overview:

- Reflection, writing, and discussion for participants to identify challenges and solutions to growing and sustaining their programs
- History of Service-learning at CGCC, focusing on how the program discovered sustainable solutions by adapting to obstacles
- Discussion for participants to learn how their colleagues at other institutions are addressing challenges to sustaining their programs, including time at the end of the session for participants to network with each other and to consult individually with representatives of the SL team at CGCC
- Detailed packets to show participants the nuts and bolts that make our program work

Description:

Service-learning at Chandler-Gilbert Community College began with one faculty, one class, and no budget. Fifteen years later, over 3700 students from more than 70 classes serve over 24,000 hours annually at 200 local agencies. Ours is a story of three keys to sustainability: building the right team, securing resources, and adapting to the needs of faculty and students.

The current CGCC service-learning leadership team, which has been in place for two years, now includes

- One Full Time Program Advisor
- The Director of Student Life and Leadership
- 3 Faculty Liaisons (including 1 dedicated to Education allied courses)
- 2 part-time support staff
- 1 federal work study support staff

In addition to the service-learning team, the CGCC President and the Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs meet once each semester with the service-learning staff to offer leadership, support, and advice on long-term planning. The current service-learning team meets weekly to plan service-learning activities and events and evaluate all aspects of the program. They have included trainings for faculty and staff as well as community partners. The goal of the weekly meetings is to be as inclusive and responsive to faculty, student, and agency needs as possible.

The ability to respond and adapt to the individual needs of our faculty and community partners is the key to the success of the CGCC service-learning program. To meet the needs of our growing number of service-learning faculty, we offer a variety of models for classroom delivery. The program advisor and faculty liaisons work one-on-one with both novice and expert service-learning faculty to mold these models to their individual teaching styles and classroom needs. The models include the following:

Into the Streets

Into The Streets (ITS) is a two-day event organized and implemented by the Office of Student Life that enables the faculty and students to get involved with service-learning through a small, manageable “one-shot” event. ITS is often used by faculty who are attempting to incorporate service-learning for the first time, as well as by longtime service-learning faculty. Faculty and students sign up for an agency, gather on campus in small groups, travel together to their chosen agency, and return to campus for reflection. Currently we average over 500 students on each weekend that we host Into the Streets. Those students contribute over 1500 hours of service during these two days.

Teacher Education

CGCC education students are individually placed at local schools to fulfill their service-learning requirement. CGCC has service-learning agreements with seventeen school districts and charter schools in our area. We currently place over 400 education students each semester in classrooms where they serve over 14,000 hours each year.

Other Models

“Other models” describe service-learning outside of Teacher Education and Into the Streets. These faculty-driven service-learning events are often organized and implemented by faculty with assistance from the Office of Student Life. The many options include

- Individual Placement – Students are placed individually at any of the approved agencies.
- Thematic Individual Placement – Students are placed individually at a limited number of sites decided upon by the faculty and the service-learning program advisor.
- Class Placement – The class as a whole adopts an agency and concentrates on that agency for the length of the semester.
- Group Placement – The class is split into groups that are placed at approved agencies selected by the faculty and the service-learning program advisor.

- Hunger Banquet – a role-playing simulation that heightens students’ awareness of hunger and socio-economic inequities locally and globally. Between 100-200 students and staff participate each semester.
- Generations Prom – This annual event serves local senior centers and assisted-living residences while giving CGCC students the opportunity to learn about the elderly in their community through first-hand interaction. This year 160 seniors and CGCC students paired off to dance at this unique “prom.”

Another unique component of the CGCC service-learning program is having students serve as Service-Learning Assistants (SLA) with faculty who require individual student placements. These students are awarded a stipend of \$100 for their work during the semester. Currently we average approximately 25 SLA’s who support faculty in over 30 sections each semester. The SLA’s are responsible for communication with the faculty, the students, and our service-learning team, as well as for data entry and record keeping.

The annual budget for the service-learning program has doubled three times in the life span of the program, and is funded by fixed budget allocations from the college. In addition, faculty, students, staff, and agencies evaluate our program and events regularly, providing important feedback each semester, which allows the team to assess program needs and also to celebrate the success that our students and community partners make possible.

The needs of the growing number of service-learning faculty and students, while challenging, continue to drive innovation in our program. In 2005-2006, an increase in the number of faculty sending students to the Hunger Banquet led the service-learning leadership team to increase the number of faculty speaking roles in the event from two to seven, which in turn led to a further increase in faculty and student participation. There is discussion of adding a second event each semester focusing on domestic poverty. Similarly, in 2006-2007, the Into the Streets model will be adapted to better serve ever-increasing student participation, changing from a two-day per semester event to a series of Friday events, each focusing on two agencies that address specific issues. Other directions for innovation in service-learning at CGCC include

- An ambassador program that will place highly-qualified retirees in community agencies, where they will serve as liaisons to service-learning at the college
- Participation as a sub-grantee of the first AmeriCorps grant in Arizona
- Increased faculty emphasis on community-based research in cooperation with our agency partners
- Integrating service-learning with campus initiatives focusing on global sustainability and internationalizing the curriculum

In 2005, CGCC was identified as one of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) High Performing Colleges and was named as a Met-Life Foundation Best-Practices College Semi-Finalist for 2005-06. As compared to all colleges, large colleges, and suburban colleges, CGCC ranked in the 90-100th percentile in Active and Collaborative Learning. Those responses that were significantly above the mean indicated that CGCC students were more likely to work with other students on projects during class and to participate in community-based projects. We are extremely proud of this distinction.