# Response to Provost Discussion Paper on the Carleton University Academic Plan

## By the Community Engaged Pedagogy Group

The Community Engaged Pedagogy (CEP) group welcomes this opportunity to provide comments on the Provost's Discussion Paper on the proposed Carleton University Academic Plan. CEP comprises a group of academic staff and community-minded individuals who share an interest in promoting student learning and engagement through a variety of means that connect students and their community. These techniques include experiential learning, community service learning, and community based research. The CEP group, chaired by Peter Andrée from the Department of Political Science, has been meeting on a regular basis over the past year to reflect on how best to promote CEP goals at Carleton and in the local community. It operates as a subcommittee of the Initiative on Community University Engagement (ICUE), chaired by Associate Dean Ted Jackson from the Faculty of Public Affairs. Some of the actions taken by the CEP group include:

- organizing workshops through the Educational Development Centre on Community Service
  Learning and CEP more broadly, including a full day of workshops for faculty members in April
  2009 on these topics;
- developing an inventory of CEP initiatives within the university;
- preparation of a survey of faculty designed to assess the extent to which faculty members are using community based-pedagogy in their classes;
- sharing of experiences and best practices in using CEP;
- bringing community partners to the university to speak about the challenges for community groups in working with the university in providing students service learning and research opportunities;
- exploring incentives to encourage more faculty to incorporate service-learning opportunities in their classes, including reviewing tenure and promotion guidelines;
- assessing means by which faculty, staff, students and community partners can share information, through websites, blogs, wikis or other means about community-based pedagogy in general and specific service and research opportunities

We are delighted with the extensive emphasis in the Provost's Discussion Paper on student-centred learning, the student experience, experiential learning (including community service learning), community engagement, inquiry-based learning, creativity, innovation and interdisciplinarity. Our group sees the interconnection of these themes as central to developing a strong and innovative strategic academic plan for the University. We laud the general statements about the importance of these approaches and the concrete suggestions concerning how some of these ideas can be implemented. The University's mission, consistent with Defining Dreams and the proposed Academic Plan must include our best efforts to improve indicators of the quality of life in our community and region, building on

such frameworks as the Vital Signs Annual Report of the Community Foundation of Ottawa and the rich data from the City of Ottawa.

We would encourage the Academic Plan to include the concept of "Community-Engaged Scholarship" (CES), which is scholarship that involves the faculty member in mutually beneficial partnerships with the community in teaching, research, and service. In our view, community engagement not only transcends the traditional divides between the university and the communities that we live and work in. When practiced most effectively it can also transcend the separations that often exist between faculty teaching, research, and service. In other words, community engagement is one way to tie together different dimensions of the proposed Academic Plan, including the strategic goals of enriching the student learning experience, building an integrated research culture, and expanding interdisciplinarity and innovation, leading regional and community development, and even building Carleton as a Global University. Developing an academic career rooted in community engaged scholarship is a challenge, but we see it as rewarding and a laudable goal that fits with Carleton's past as well as the proposed future directions. As such, community-engaged scholarship deserves to be specifically recognized in the university's new Academic Plan as important for Carleton's future.

We note that the major research granting councils are moving to expand their program funding windows for engaged research. SSHRC's architecture for partnered research will build on its decadelong experience with the CURA program. CIHR will continue its robust funding of knowledge mobilization and NSERC will promote greater knowledge transfer. All these programs offer expanded research funding opportunities to Carleton faculty engaged committed to Community Engaged Scholarship.

We realize that it will not be possible to achieve all of the goals immediately, and that efforts to do so may be more challenging in a time that requires the University to exercise some financial restraint. Nevertheless, we wish to reiterate some of the reasons why we believe these initiatives should be a key part of our strategic direction, and we will point to some steps that can be taken to help achieve these goals.

Community-engaged pedagogy can contribute to improving the student experience by making programs more engaging for students. This is likely to lead to improvements in the University's retention rate, and improve our graduation and retention goals. It also contributes the reputation of the University which will facilitate student recruitment which, given the Discussion Paper's emphasis on the need for sustainable enrollment growth in the undergraduate program is an especially important matter to which the University must attend.

A recent literature survey on the benefits of Community Service Learning completed for the CEP group by Kim Davis, with assistance from Isla Jordan, demonstrates that there are considerable benefits to community service learning, ranging from increased engagement, improved student learning outcomes, increased personal and social awareness, and increased rates of retention. The Review is included as Appendix 1 to this Response. For instance, one study indicates that "students evaluating their service learning courses are more likely than students evaluating other courses to report that the courses promoted interpersonal, community and academic engagement, were academically challenging, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Seifer, S. D., K. Wong, S.B. Gelmon and M. Lederer. The Community-Engaged Scholarship for Health Collaborative: A National Change Initiative Focused on Faculty Roles and Rewards. Metropolitan Universities 20(2): 5-2.

encouraged their continued study at the University."<sup>2</sup> Much of the literature assessing CSL draws on the extensive U.S. experience with CSL, and is based on surveys of students, paralleling to some extent the criteria for student success that is explored in the regular surveys on student engagement. An important area for further research, as the Discussion Paper notes, would involve tracking the performance of students participating in CEP, CSL and experiential learning and comparing it with the performance of students who have not participated in such learning opportunities. The goal would be to determine the extent to which participation leads to improvement in qualitative and quantitative measures such as grades and retention rates.

We applaud a range of specific actions suggested in the Discussion Paper including:

- increasing student participation in experiential learning opportunities;
- creating innovative and non-traditional learning environments;
- establishing a service-learning/leadership certificate;
- expanding community-based learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students;
- increasing partnerships to provide expanded co-op and internship opportunities;
- supporting aboriginal students through co-op opportunities;
- providing an opportunity for all students to participate in a CSL or experiential learning experience;
- capstone course or semester focused on innovation, creative inquiry and community partnerships;
- developing research opportunities for undergraduate students;
- prioritizing programs that link the university with the community
- exploring new opportunities for community based programs and initiatives

We are already doing some of these things at Carleton, and doing them very well. Yet there is an appetite to do much more. The issues that must be clearly addressed are the scale at which we can carry on these activities, and the incentives that are needed to encourage innovative efforts in these areas as well as initiating new kinds of programming. To that end, we particularly welcome the proposed Strategic Academic Initiatives Fund. We would hope that this would be quickly established, with clear and not unduly onerous procedures by which individuals, groups, academic and student support units within the University can seek funding. The University must pay particular attention to the needs of our community partners, and it is hoped that available funding could be used in part to assist community partners in building a sustainable infrastructure for collaboration with the University.

We also particularly welcome the proposal to fill the Associate Vice President Student Learning and Development. We would hope that this position will take a lead role in coordinating and rationalizing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Sarah M. Gallini and Barbara E. Moely, "Service-Learning and Engagement, Academic Challenge and Retention" (2003) 10:1 Michigan Journal of Service Learning 5-14.

the activities of many of the current groups at the University currently working on CES/CEP, including our own CEP group, ICUE, and The Local Partnerships Working Group. This AVP position should also work closely with the Associate Vice President Research on common files.

As indicated, the CEP group has already started a number of projects that provide us with a good base on which to move forward with many of these ideas. Nevertheless, more needs to be done, and if we want to be truly ambitious in achieving these goals, a great deal more needs to be done. Some of these include

- meaningful dialogue with community partners about their needs and capacities before we go too far in attempting to shape the initiatives within the University;
- providing coordinated support for faculty who wish to engage in CEP; this may include
  maintaining contacts with community partners, soliciting and developing projects, informing the
  community partners about faculty research and teaching interests;
- we agree that the new post of AVP Student Learning and Development might usefully take a lead role in providing this coordination;
- development of communication tools (including interactive websites) that will facilitate the sharing of information, best practices, research, project proposals and dialogue;
  - this should be a low-cost simple electronic system coordinated with the Department of University Communications, ICUE, OVPRI and community partners
  - A new OVPRI database on researchers and their interests could be linked into such a system
  - At least part-time staffing would be needed to animate the match-making and to monitor the site
- training for faculty members and community partners that draw on experts in various forms of CEP and support for conference attendance to develop relevant pedagogical skills;
- undertaking ongoing assessment and evaluation of best practices in community engaged pedagogy;
- incentives to encourage more faculty to incorporate CEP into their courses; these incentives might include:
  - ensuring tenure and promotion policies that adequately value teaching and community engagement;
  - o other forms of recognition, such as a specified community-engaged teaching award, that emphasizes the value the university places on high quality CEP;
  - grants for curricular development to assist in the establishment of sustainable partnerships;
  - prioritization in assignment of teaching assistants to those courses with a CEP component;

- limits on the numbers of students in courses that have a strong emphasis on community engagement;
- development of cross-disciplinary courses designed to teach CSL-relevant skills;
- CSL initiatives could be tied with other Carleton programs that promote student engagement and retention, such as ArtsOne;
- further initiatives that encourage faculty members to link community-engaged teaching and research across disciplines, such as the Batawa project.

In conclusion, we again wish to urge the adoption of a strategic Academic Plan for Carleton University that places a great deal of emphasis on the student experience, community engagement, and the expansion of experiential and community-based learning opportunities. If we do this and carry out the core tasks described in the proposed Academic Plan, Carleton University will position itself as a national leader in community engaged scholarship, which can only strengthen our capacity to attract more research funding, high-quality new faculty, and good students interested in engaged learning.

We look forward to working with colleagues across the University and in the community in developing a set of initiatives that will significantly enhance Carleton's reputation as a community-engaged institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, and the welfare of its students.

## Submitted by:

Troy Anderson, Assistant Professor, Sprott School of Business

Peter Andrée, Assistant Professor, Political Science

Patricia Ballamingie, Assistant Professor, Geography and Environmental Studies

Daniel Buckles, Adjunct Research Professor, Sociology and Anthropology

Kim Davis, Instructor, Linguistics and Language Studies

Isla Jordan, Systems Librarian, McOdrum Library

Michael Mac Neil, Associate Professor, Law

Sarah Martin, Graduate Student, Political Economy

Leighann C. Neilson, Assistant Professor, Sprott School of Business

Richard Nimijean, Assistant Dean (First-Year Programs), Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Elizabeth Whitmore, Professor Emerita, Social Work

Martha Wiebe, Instructor, Social Work

# Appendix 1

# The Influence of Community Service Learning on Student Engagement, Retention, and Success: A Review of the Literature

The following literature review was prepared by Kim Davis, Instructor III, SLALS, with the assistance of Isla Jordan, Systems Librarian, on behalf of the Carleton Initiative for Community-University Engagement Pedagogy Group in order to explain the benefits of service learning to Carleton University faculty and administrators new to the concept, with a particular emphasis on how community service learning influences student engagement, retention and success.

## **Community Service Learning Defined**

Community service learning (CSL) is a unique form of experiential learning – different from volunteerism, co-op placements, internships, etc. The underlying difference between CSL opportunities and other experiential approaches to learning is that CSL opportunities benefit both the student and the recipient of the service while ensuring that the outcomes are equally shared by both parties involved; a service is provided while at the same time learning is occurring (Furco, 1996). Furthermore, CSL programs, unlike volunteer programs, must have some type of academic context and to be effective, "members of both educational institutions and community organizations work together toward outcomes that are mutually beneficial" (CACSL, 2010). The community organizations tend to be the under-sourced non-profit/NGO sector, but not exclusively so, with some CSL taking place in partnership with public institutions and the private sector. The key to CSL is that the learning experiences are well-connected with the course material in a way that the engagement with the course material aids in more successful and effective comprehension of the content matter being taught (O'Hara, 2001).

#### **Background on Community Service Learning**

CSL has been developing for more than fifteen years in the US; however, in Canada, the adoption of CSL is a fairly recent development. "Although there have been examples of small initiatives in Canada over the past decade, only in the last few years has this pedagogical approach gained more widespread recognition and support on Canadian campuses" (Denby, 2008). CSL pedagogy in Canada is increasing steadily with the support of The Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning (CACSL) which was created in 2004 with the mandate to support, educate and network with students, educators, and communities to ensure the effective growth of CSL in Canada (CACSL, 2010).

#### **Benefits of Community Service Learning on Post-Secondary Studies**

There is a growing body of literature in the field of CSL in post-secondary pedagogy which documents the benefits of CSL during undergraduate studies (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Singleton, 2007; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Studies indicate that "students evaluating their service-learning courses are more likely than students evaluating other courses to report that the courses promoted interpersonal, community and academic engagement, were academically challenging, and encouraged their continued study at the University." (Gallini & Moely, 2003). Furthermore, there appears to be a correlation between CSL and increased personal awareness, increased social awareness, and improved student learning outcomes that are all rooted in learning conditions that ultimately engage and retain students in post-secondary institutions (Prentice & Robinson, 2010).

#### **Increased Personal Awareness**

There is extensive evidence in the literature that illustrates "service-learning has a positive effect on students' personal and interpersonal development, including a sense of personal identity, spiritual growth, moral development, the ability to work well with others, and leadership and communication skills" (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray., 2001). Students are empowered when they realize how their knowledge in a subject area can benefit the community at large and that they themselves can benefit society – something that they often neglect to realize prior to their experiences within the community (O'Hara, 2001). Furthermore, it is illustrated in numerous studies that students benefit personally with regards to an increased sense of efficacy (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Conway, Amel, & Gerwien, 2009; Eyler, Giles, & Schmeide,1996). Although there are students who find these experiences to be frustrating and/or boring, the majority of the students feel that through these experiences, they achieve personal satisfaction for the tangible work they are doing and they feel a sense of accomplishment for what they have contributed (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000).

#### **Increased Social Awareness**

With regards to social outcomes, in particular to increasing students' social awareness and understandings, a survey of the literature finds that CSL increases students' awareness of their community and its needs, helps change stereotypical beliefs, reduces ethnocentrism, and increases understanding of social and cultural diversity (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Matthews, 1999; Borden, 2007; Denby, 2008; Duffy et al., 2008). In an extensive study conducted by Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee (2000), qualitative findings suggest that students develop an increased awareness of the world and of their personal values when engaged in CSL opportunities that allow them to interact with and apply their knowledge to real world problems. Furthermore, Eyler, Giles, & Schmeide (1996) provide student testimonials clearly illustrating that CSL helps students connect with each other, with faculty members, and with their communities as they take greater interest in social and community issues and develop commitment to active citizenship.

#### **Increased Student Learning Outcomes**

Academically speaking, many educators who have evaluated CSL within post-secondary institutions have concluded from their research that CSL helps students retain more information learned in class, achieve higher course grades, and have greater satisfaction with the course (Astin & Sax, 1998; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000; Gray et al., 1998; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Strage, 2001). One study in particular reports on how CSL experiences lead to improved problem-solving, critical-thinking, and rhetorical skills (Matthews, 1999). In O'Hara's (2001) study of CSL in an Applied Communication course, students reported that they gained a much richer understanding of the organizational communication concepts that they were studying in class and that they had greater confidence in their communication skills than they possessed prior to their CSL experiences. The development of these skills is further believed to lead to career development, as students have a better understanding of the "real world" and they are better able to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in their university courses to their future careers (Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001). It should also be noted however, that after a three year study that surveyed over 1300 students at 28 institutions, Gray et al. (2000) more cautiously concluded that student participation in service-learning courses had only modest effects on students' civic participation and life skills, but no effects on their academic and career development.

The findings of Gallini and Moely's (2003) extensive study illustrate that CSL students evaluated their course experience more positively than did non-service learners and they scored significantly higher on

all five scales: community engagement, academic engagement, interpersonal engagement, academic challenge, and retention than non-service learners. It was also reported that students in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year courses with CSL components consistently spent more hours studying than non-service learners. Another research study examining the effects of CSL on exam scores and emotional empathy of students in a life-span development course, found that students who partook in the service-learning project options instead of an interview project and a research paper scored significantly higher to those who completed the non-CSL choices on all but their first exam and they demonstrated a significant increase in emotional empathy as measured by the Emotional Empathetic Tendency Scale (Lundy, 2007).

Most notably, in Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee's (2000) substudy of 433 students from 19 American post-secondary institutions, four students out of five (79.9%) reported that the connections between their service and their course materials enabled them to provide a better quality service, and 82.8% reported that the service experience enhanced their understanding of the academic course material. These results show clearly that both the service and the academic components of CSL courses are greatly enhanced by each other. However, a valid point is raised in MacDonald's (2009) study, which conducted a series of interviews with CSL partners in the Edmonton region, by those on the community side who stated that sometimes the costs of the CSL experience for the organization and for the students outweigh the benefits if the experiences are not long enough to allow for proper implementation and reflection. Conway, Amel, & Gerwien (2009) who conducted a meta-analysis of 103 different samples of CSL studies that occurring between 1968-2006 also reported the importance of enhancing CSL through structured reflections in classes. When students are given the opportunity to reflect on their experiences, the impact on their learning outcomes is even greater.

## Benefits of Community Service-Learning on Student Engagement and Retention

There is an overwhelming consensus among educators using CSL in their classrooms that the aforementioned benefits lead to increased student engagement, improved academic outcomes and ultimately, to increased rates of retention (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; O'Hara, 2001; Duffy et al., 2008; Prentice & Robinson, 2010). In a recent study conducted in the field of Engineering from a representative sample of 369 students across 4 years and 5 departments, 64% reported that CSL had a positive impact (25% reported that the impact was very strong) on the likelihood that they would continue in Engineering, while only 3.5% reported a negative impact, with the rest neutral. Females and underrepresented groups by race indicated that CSL had a significantly (5%) more positive impact on retention. The report also concluded that underrepresented groups in Engineering appear more motivated and concerned about helping others as a result of partaking in service-learning projects (Duffy et al., 2008). These findings correlate with a study conducted by Matusovich, Follman & Oakes (2006) that examines the Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS) program at Purdue University and suggests that women in the fields of Science and Engineering are attracted to and are more engaged in learning situations in which there are personal interactions, hands-on learning with real applications and authentic contexts.

It is ultimately the simple realization that they can "make a difference" that often ignites a sense of social engagement within students that continues throughout their lives. Few educational goals are more important than having students appreciate the extent to which the topics they study are relevant to their lives and to the lives of others (O'Hara, 2001). A review of the literature illustrates numerous accounts from faculty members stating that when they incorporated service-learning components into their classes, the students were more motivated and responsible for their learning, more engaged in the readings and more participative in class lectures; students who had failed or dropped their courses in the past excelled in this type of learning environment, and many students who may not have otherwise

done so, went on to pursue master's degrees in similar fields (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Prentice & Robinson, 2010).

Based on their research, Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee (2000) reported that "both the qualitative and quantitative findings provide strong support for the notion that service-learning courses should be specifically designed to assist students in making connections between the service experience and the academic material." This therefore illustrates the worthiness of adopting service-learning pedagogy into university teaching as it has much greater potential to be beneficial to a student's development than volunteerism or non-academically lead types of service which have no connection to academic content.

#### References

Astin, A. W., & Sax, L. J. (1998). How undergraduates are affected by service participation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 39(3), 251-263.

Astin, A., Vogelgesang, L., Ikeda, E., Yee, J. (2000). How service learning affects students. *Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA* 

Borden, A.W. (2007). The impact of service-learning on ethnocentrism in an intercultural communication course. *Journal of Experiential Education*; v30 n2 p171-183 Fall 2007

Canadian Alliance of Community Service Learning (CACSL). Retrieved March 18, 2010, from www.communityservicelearning.ca

Conway, J. M., Amel, E. L., & Gerwien, D. P. (2009). Teaching and learning in the social context: A meta-analysis of service learning's effects on academic, personal, social, and citizenship outcomes. *Teaching of Psychology*, *36*(4), 233-245.

Denby, R. (2008) Impact of service-learning on student's sense of civic responsibility masters in education, Faculty of Education, The University of Western Ontario, London

Duffy, J., Moeller, W., Kazmer, D., Crespo, V., Barrington, L., Barry, C., West, C. (2008). Service-learning projects in core undergraduate engineering courses. *International Journal for Service Learning in Engineering*, 3 (2), 18-41.

Eyler, J. S., & Giles, D. E., Jr. (1999). Where's the learning in service-learning? San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Eyler, J., Giles, D.E., & Schmeide, A. (1996). A practitioner's guide to reflection in service-learning: student voices and reflections. Nashville: Vanderbilt University.

Eyler, J. Giles, D., Stenson, C., and Gray, C. (2001). At a glance: What we know about the effects of service-learning on college students, faculty, institutions and communities, 1993-2000: third edition. Retrieved from: <a href="http://servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/aag.pdf">http://servicelearning.org/filemanager/download/aag.pdf</a>

Furco, Andrew. (1996). Service-learning: A balanced approach to experiential education. Expanding Boundaries: Service and Learning. Washington DC: Corporation for National Service, 2-6. Retrieved from:

http://www.ucalgary.ca/servicelearning/files/servicelearning/Furco 1996 A Balanced Approac h.pdf

Gallini, S.M., & Moely, B.E. (2003). Service-learning and engagement, academic challenge, and retention. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 10(1), 5-14.

Gray, M.J., Ondaatje, E.H., Fricker, R., Campbell, N., Rosenblatt, K., Geschwind, S., Goldman, C.A., Kaganoff, T., Robyn, A., Sundt, M., Volgelgesang, L., & Klein, S. P. (1998). *Coupling service and learning in higher education: The final report of the Evaluation of the Learn and Serve Amercia Higher Education Program.* San Francisco: Rand.

Gray, Maryann J., Elizabeth Heneghan Ondaatje, Ronald D. Fricker, Jr., and Sandy A. Geschwind. (2000). "Assessing Service-Learning: Results from a Survey of "Learn and Serve America, Higher Education." *Change*, March/April: 30-39.

Lundy, B.L. (2007). Service learning in life-span developmental psychology: Higher exam scores and increased empathy. *Teaching of Psychology*, 34(1), 23-27.

MacDonald, Wendy. (2009). Too much of a good thing? Refocusing the benefits of community-engaged learning. *Trends & Issues*. HR Council for the Voluntary & Non-Profit Sector. Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.communityservicelearning.ca/en/documents/Refocusingthebenefitsofcommunity-engagedlearning.pdf">www.communityservicelearning.ca/en/documents/Refocusingthebenefitsofcommunity-engagedlearning.pdf</a>

Markus, G. B., Howard, J. P. F., & King, D. C. (1993). Integrating community-service and classroom instruction enhances learning - results from an experiment. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 15(4), 410-419.

Matthews, C., & Zimmerman, B., (1999). Integrating service learning and technical communication: Benefits and challenges. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 8 (4), 383-404.

Matusovich, H., Follman, D., & Oakes, W. (2006). Work in progress: A student perspective – Why women choose service-learning. *36<sup>th</sup> ASEE/IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference, S2G-7*.

O'Hara, L. S. (2001) 'Service-learning: Students' transformative journey from communication student to Civic-minded professional', *Southern Communication Journal*, 66: 3, 251 — 266

Prentice, M. & Robinson, G., (2010). Improving student learning outcomes with service learning, American Association of Community Colleges. Retrieved from:

http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/horizons/Documents/slorb jan2010.df

Singleton, Judy L.(2007) 'Taking the class to the community with service-learning', *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 50:1,105-118

Strage, A. (2001). Service-learning as a tool for enhancing student learning outcomes in a college-level lecture course. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning*, 7, 5-13.

Vogelgesang, L.J. & Astin, A.W. (2000). Comparing the effects of community service and servicelearning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*; v7 p25-34.