

The Institute for Civic Engagement

Service Learning • Community Outreach • Research and Economic Development

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Affiliated with NY Campus Compact & the American Democracy Project

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The Institute for Civic Engagement: A Year in Review

The Institute for Civic Engagement (ICE) is completing its fifth year. This edition of the newsletter highlights some of the activities of the past year. You will read about our Deliberative Polling Initiative, the "Power of 10" project, our Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards, economic development initiatives, activities of our Main Street SUNY Cortland facility, and our service-learning program. In addition to those activities, ICE participated in a number of programs on the campus to promote the civic involvement of our students, faculty, and staff. However, at the heart of our program is student civic engagement. For 2006-2007, we estimate that at least 1,400 students contributed about 41,000 hours of service to the community. The estimated value of these hours to the community is in the neighborhood of at least \$800,000.

The programs we sponsored in 2007-2008 included a Constitution Day presentation on gay marriage and the constitution in September by Chris Latimer (Political Science); a presentation in October before the SUNY Faculty Senate at which four of our students described the impact of their service-learning experiences on their lives; a Provost's forum on civic engagement in November; the opening of the semester event in January focusing on community-based research with Dr. Katherine Briar-Lawson of the SUNY Albany School of Social Welfare; and a visit by New York Times architecture critic, Nicolai Ouroussoff, in April to discuss the topic of "green architecture."

The Institute (with the support of the President's Office and the Provost's Office) continues its affiliation with New York Campus Compact (NYCC) and the American Democracy Project (ADP). The *New York Times* is a partner in the national ADP, and the women's volleyball team distributes 200 copies of the *Times* every day that classes meet. ICE director, Richard Kendrick, and Service-Learning Coordinator, John Suarez, attended the national ADP conference in Philadelphia in 2007. This year, Karen Hempson (Childhood/Early Childhood) and Chris Latimer, the coordinators of the Deliberative Polling Initiative, will represent us at the national conference in Utah. We attend many of the service-learning related workshops NYCC offers, and our VISTA member comes to us through NYCC.

We continue with our efforts to secure external funding. Our programs have benefited from the support of the MacDonald Foundation, the U. S. Elections Assistance Commission, the New York State Music Fund, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. We have a grant pending before the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to support 13 AmeriCorps positions in Cortland, and an appropriations earmark proposal to develop a Community Leaders program is under consideration. There is a team of people at work on a second proposal to CNCS to use social media for recruiting young people for participation in community service. The key to all of this is collaboration, and we thank all of you who have worked with us on our programs.

Recent Service and Awareness Events Experience Success

On Saturday April 26th NYPIRG and CSAVE sponsored the first Earth Day Conference at SUNY Cortland. "*A Green Idea: Moving Cortland to a Sustainable Future*" featured a variety of speakers, lectures, children's activities, discussions, workshops, and entertainment to spread the news about environmental issues that are important to the world we live in. Program leaders included SUNY Cortland faculty, students, and community members. The day ended with a keynote speech made by Bruce Barcott, author of *The Flight of the Scarlet Macaw*. Throughout the day over 60 participants attended workshops on environmental issues, from Saving our Children from Nature Deficient Disorder to Energy and the Climate Crisis.

On Sunday April 27th the Sports Management Club sponsored the *Jimmy V. Walk-A-Thon*. The event raised over \$2,600 for cancer research. There were 89 registered participants, and 75 who made it to the event and completed the walk. Thank you to everyone who donated for research!

Community Outreach

Community Outreach Partnership Center Coordinator & SUNY Cortland
VISTA Member: Kathy Gallagher

The "Power of 10" – VT Engage

SUNY Cortland's "Power of 10" project has found great success as the end of the 2008 semester approaches. Over 300 students, faculty, staff and community members have dedicated at least 10 hours of community service in the Cortland community to those who lost their lives on the Virginia Tech campus April 16, 2007. Almost every department and residence hall on the SUNY Cortland campus has participated. Service projects have included Habitat for Humanity, mentoring, Bridges for Kids, SPCA, foster care, EMS, Festivus, Chill-a-bration, and many more. Community participation has included Catholic Charities, Cortland Jr. /Sr. High, Cortland Career Works, RSVP and more.

Over 300 students, faculty, staff and community members have dedicated over 5,300 hours of community service in the Cortland community to those who lost their lives on the Virginia Tech campus April 16, 2007

It is not too late to participate, if you have performed 10 hours of community service and would like to dedicate those hours to VT Engage. Contact Kathleen Gallagher (SUNY Cortland VISTA member) at gallagherk@cortland.edu.

Use of Main Street SUNY Cortland Grows

The SUNY Main Street Building at 9 Main Street, downtown Cortland, has been a busy place during the past year. In addition to SUNY Cortland classes filling the second story classrooms, numerous campus and community organizations regularly hold meetings in the building.

Over 25 different organizations have found the building perfect for their purpose. Groups such as the League of Women Voters, the Rotary, Seven Valley's Health Coalition, the Leadership Cortland Program, 40Below Cortland, Family Development Credentialing Classes, Congressman Arcuri, and the Writer's Workshop have held meetings and events upstairs and downstairs.

Campus events hosted in the building include workshops by the Center for Economic Education, the Community Roundtable, the Big Read Project, the writer's workshop and activities of the Institute of Civic Engagement.

Another serendipitous benefit has been the creation and use of the Beard Building gallery. This space displays a wide array of artistic talent from the community and campus. The fall started with the "Faces, Facades and Festivals" exhibit featured the work of community artists in one of those categories. This was followed by an exhibit featuring the best of SUNY Cortland student work in 2007. The Cultural Council of Cortland County launched the first ever Art Trail in the Beard Gallery and then it grew the project out to include the rest of Cortland. The spring semester opened with a solo student show by Nico Culver, "Sayings." This was followed by "Earthly Matters," a show featuring student and faculty work celebrating the environment. Finally the spring season concludes with the 2008 "Iterations" show featuring more than 100 community and campus artists, from age 2 to 92, who collaborated on producing 14 pieces of art.

Increased use is expected for with more classes being held downtown, and additional groups discovering how the space meets their needs.

Office of Service-Learning Annual Report

Service-Learning Coordinator : John Suarez
The Office of Service-Learning: Library Learning Commons

The Office of Service-Learning expanded its outreach to both the campus and the greater Cortland community. The Office of Service-Learning helped increase the number of service-learning faculty from 40 to 45, and helped increase the total number of service-learning courses from 36 to 37. Part of that success is due to the Education Department, which is now encouraging its majors to register for CPN 103, Academic Writing in the Community II; 4 of our 5 sections were filled, for a total of 96 students. This fall, SUNY Cortland's civic engagement success was acknowledged for the second consecutive year when the college was awarded a President's Honor Roll distinction.

We continued our informal Shop Talk chats and our end-of-semester Reflections on Civic Engagement roundtable discussions, and we sponsored three events in our Civics Education Panel Discussion series: Rights in Conflict: The Battle Over Electric Generators (September), What is an Activist? (October), and Democracy and Citizens' Rights and Obligations in a Time of Unlimited News Access (March). These discussions have always been open to, and attended by, people on- and off-campus.

During this academic year, we further expanded our outreach to the campus and beyond. In November and in February, for example, we presented overviews of the Institute for Civic Engagement to the American

Association of University Women (Cortland Chapter) and to the Cortland League of Women Voters. As a result, ICE will soon collaborate with these and other Cortland organizations in a 2008 Electoral Project that involves voter registration, voter education, and get-out-the-vote activities.

Through the efforts of two Office of Service-Learning interns and two Human Resources interns, we conducted a survey of SUNY Cortland staff community service activities. Thirty-two people responded; together, they represent 70 community agencies and individual projects, and their efforts connect Cortland County to places as far away as New York City and the events of 9/11. Based on results of this survey, we recognized with four staff members our Leadership in Civic Engagement award.

As of this year, students participate in the selections process for these awards and for our Service-Learning Stipends. Two students also volunteered with the Center for Educational Exchange and with ICE to conduct a highly successful, interactive session in the October 2nd High School Leadership Workshop Day.

Many of our students have volunteered extensively; two shared our Institute for Civic Engagement Scholarship, and an incoming student won our first First-Year Student Scholarship. Students were also instrumental in

the success of our Democracy Works If You Do Poll Worker Project, for which we won an extension on our U.S. Elections Commission's Help America Vote Grant. The project's Student Coordinator, Mollie O'Brien, incorporated social networking technology (Facebook) into her recruitment efforts. Her analysis of the project's results confirm the notion that we can recruit Millennials most effectively through a combination of social networking technologies and face-to-face communications. Her observations will inform our approach to our application for the Learn and Serve America College Student Social Media Initiative Grant.

While conducting her study, O'Brien met her goals of recruiting 14 new poll workers and of strengthening campus / community relations. She was able to provide 25 student poll workers and poll worker assistants (including 9 from last year) for the November 2007 General Election and 5 poll workers for the 2008 Primary Elections. In addition, she reported that 88% of the seasoned poll workers (from the larger community) are willing to work with students in the 2008 General Election, and 86% of the students said that they would like to be poll workers in that election.

Research & Economic Development

Community Research and Economic Development Coordinator: Lloyd Purdy
Main Street SUNY Cortland at 9 Main Street

Community Research and Economic Development through the Institute for Civic Engagement has had a very successful year. The SUNY Cortland Main Street building at 9 Main Street in historic downtown Cortland continues to provide a platform not just for SUNY Cortland classes but also for campus and community interactions.

“Through the SUNY Cortland Main Street building students and faculty have turned downtown Cortland into a living laboratory.”

Through the SUNY Cortland Main Street building students and faculty have turned downtown Cortland into a living laboratory. Early in the academic year student volunteers participated in a photo research project in downtown Cortland that documented student preferences, (what they liked and disliked) about the urban core of their host community. This research will be coupled with subsequent data to guide planning and beautification projects in downtown Cortland.

Throughout the fall and spring semesters the Center for Economic Education, 40Below Cortland and the Cortland Downtown Partnership collaborated with Homer High school economic students to develop young entrepreneurs for Cortland. Projects took a

look at countywide economic and marketing trends in order to support business idea development. SUNY Cortland students served as consultants and mentors to these students as they developed their business ideas. These ideas were submitted to the \$5,000 Essential NY business idea competition run by the Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse. Locally, the project culminated at the SUNY Main Street building with a public presentation that showcased four new business ideas for Cortland.

As an example of how important culture is to the economic development of a community the SUNY Main Street building continues its cultural programming in the Beard Building Gallery. The Beard Building Gallery is a collaboration between SUNY Cortland’s Art and Art History Department, the Cultural Council of Cortland County and the Cortland Downtown Partnership. This year the SUNY Main Street building hosted it’s second year of student and faculty artwork in the Beard Building Gallery. Exhibits included the first “student select” juried show that highlighted the best of SUNY Cortland’s student artwork. The gallery also hosted its first

exhibit by a student in the school’s new Bachelor of Fine Arts program. New this year, too, was the environmentally-themed show “Earthly Matters” produced and curated by SUNY Cortland students.

During the spring semester, students in service-learning courses on urban sociology and urban geography had an opportunity to apply classroom training to field research. As the Downtown Data Project develops, student research will be added to a student developed GIS/3-D model of historic downtown Cortland. This model will be web accessible in order to provide a virtual tour of downtown along with descriptive statistics on downtown’s historic buildings. Through the Cortland Downtown Partnership, the SUNY Cortland Main Street building will be home to a GIS intern this summer who will put the final touches on the first version of this planning tool.

“Iterations “ Unveiled Downtown
 For the month of May the gallery at 9 Main Street is “Iterations”. This show features more than 100 community and campus artists, from age 2 to 92, who collaborated on producing 14 pieces of art. The outcome is unique, stop downtown to see for yourself what all the talk is about!

Deliberative Polling “Day of Dialogue” by Dr. Christopher Latimer

The Deliberative Polling Initiative offered a “day of dialogue” at the SUNY Cortland campus on Saturday, April 19 from 9:00am until 2:30pm. Dr. Christopher Latimer, a SUNY Cortland assistant professor of political science and Karen Hempson, a Childhood/Early Childhood Department faculty member, coordinated the Deliberative Polling Initiative not only to strengthen the relationship between the college and its surrounding community but also to enhance civic engagement. President Bitterbaum spoke to the participants stressing the importance of such a civic minded event for the surrounding community as well as SUNY Cortland. He hopes to continue these dialogues in the future. Dr. Bob Spitzer, Professor of Political Science, acted as the Master of Ceremonies.

SUNY Cortland was one of only 15 campuses selected nationally by Stanford University last fall to participate in the Deliberative Polling Initiative. The Deliberative Polling Initiative is a project of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities’ American Democracy Project. The initiative was created by James Fishkin of Stanford University in an effort to determine if the opinion of a citizen changes after being exposed to information on either side of an issue and participating in

group deliberation, instead of relying on media sound bites or headlines. The project was supported by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President’s Cabinet, the Institute for Civic Engagement, and the Cortland College Foundation.

The event featured discussions among a random sample of 74 participants, including Cortland community members and SUNY Cortland students, concerning the economic impact of Wal-Mart. The event utilized 12 small-group moderators and 6 experts. The moderators facilitated groups ranging from 6-8 participants. The panel of Wal-Mart experts testifying in favor of Wal-Mart included Cortland Mayor Tom Gallagher, Cortlandville Town Board member Ron Rocco, and John Carroll, of Virgil, NY. Representatives of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., were invited to join the panel, but they declined. The panel of experts arguing that Wal-Mart would be detrimental included Dr. Jamie Dangler, Associate Professor of Sociology/Anthropology; Dr. Tom Pasquarello, Chair of the Political Science Department; and

“...a number of issues that were raised by the participants throughout the day including: why Wal-Mart has such a bad reputation in relation to other big box stores and whether or not local businesses would be positively or negatively impacted.”

Dr. Stephen Halebsky, Assistant Professor of Sociology/Anthropology.

There were a number of issues that were raised by the participants throughout the day including: why Wal-Mart has such a bad

reputation in relation to other big box stores and whether or not local businesses would be positively or negatively impacted. After speaking informally with the moderators of the small-group discussions, both Latimer and Hempson believed that some participants were made more aware of issues concerning Wal-Mart, both pro and con, during the discussion sessions with their peers. A cursory review of the completed surveys demonstrated that some of the people had altered their opinions over the course of the event. Final results of the poll will be compiled and presented at the American Democracy Project annual conference in Snowbird, Utah, in June 2008. The organizers received positive feedback from the moderators, experts and participants and hope to continue similar dialogues in the future.



<http://www.cortland.edu/civicengagement/>

Cortland Housing Study

Institute for Civic Engagement housing intern, Shawn Smith, presented the result of her research as her capstone project for her Master's in Public Administration degree at Binghamton University on April 28. Ms. Smith did research on housing policy over the summer of 2007 in order to answer the question, what housing policies or practices could be adopted by the Cortland community to improve the quality of housing? She researched policies of communities across the country, many of which include large student populations. Then she devised policy recommendations in four areas: housing affordability; code enforcement; issues of housing in a college town; and issues of community attachment and neighborhood improvement. These recommendations were presented to the Cortland community at a Housing Confab last fall and at the annual Community Forum in January of 2008. Her internship research was supervised by Dr. Craig Little, Professor of Sociology/Anthropology.

For her capstone project, Ms. Smith developed a survey to learn which of the many ideas generated during her internship research might be support by Cortland residents. She disseminated her survey to the Cortland community via e-mail, Main Street SUNY Cortland, and social service and not-for-profit agencies. She received 175 responses, cutting across all of the city's wards and including respondents from a variety of income levels. The ideas that seemed to have the most support included giving homeowners tax breaks for improving their properties; consolidating city and county services to reduce costs; finding ways to decrease the property tax burden; strengthening penalties for housing code violations; requiring annual occupancy inspections for rental units; making public the names of chronic housing code violators; focusing code enforcement and police officers on high problem neighborhoods; making community beautification a priority by setting aside a percentage of development funds for beautification programs; requiring out-of-town landlords to have a local contact; and requiring rental properties to have one on-site parking spot per tenant.

Ms. Smith is a resident of Cortland employed at Cornell Cooperative Extension. She is on the housing subcommittee for the Cortland city council and she is on the Steering Committee of Cortland Area Communities That Care.

The activities of the Institute for Civic Engagement and Main Street SUNY Cortland are made possible through the support of the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Associate Provost, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, the Faculty Development Committee, the MacDonald Foundation, the New York State Music Fund, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, the Division of Institutional Advancement, and the Auxiliary Services Corporation.

2008 Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards Ceremony

On Wednesday, April 16th the SUNY Cortland Institute for Civic Engagement celebrated the fourth annual Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards at a ceremony in Brown Auditorium on the campus of SUNY Cortland. The Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards were presented to nine faculty and staff members, four community members, and twelve SUNY Cortland students. This award is given in recognition of individuals who have stepped up in a leadership role to provide a needed service to the campus, community, or world. The recipients dedicated time and energy to accomplish a wide range of projects and services. The winning individuals are listed below:

Faculty & Staff: Lori Burns , Shelia Cohen, Elizabeth Davis-Russell , Kathy Gallagher, Amy Henderson-Harr, Martha Howlett, Larry Jebbett, Craig Little, & Marthe Seales

Community Members: Christina Catalano, Kim Huffman , Garra Lloyd-Lester, Douglas VanEtten

SUNY Cortland Students : Chad Christensen, Lauren Davis, Lisa Davis, Eric Hankin, Chase Harper, James Lehman, Matthew Meade, Mark Morrell, Cassandra Peters, Mallory Prain , Brittany Sage, and Christine Schacht

A special Leadership in Civic Engagement Award was presented to **SUNY Cortland's 'Project LEAPE**. This project is dedicated to involving undergraduate Adaptive Physical Education students in community service. They provide services throughout the Homer and Cortland communities to students with physical and mental disabilities. It received the program of the year award from the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. LEAPE provides opportunities for individuals to come together and realize that "nobody is disabled; we are all differently-abled." Two devoted faculty members coordinate Project LEAPE, Luis Columba and Tim Davis. The student participants recognized include: William Brownell, Margaret Burrows, Marcy Clawson, Allyson Donofrio, Emily Driscoll, Ryan Fries, Christopher Galano, Colleen Horan, Nicole Kanehl, Stephanie Kessler, Jesse Levy, Janice Meyer, Jennifer Murphy, Anthony Nuara, Bryan Shea, Andrew Trauber, and Ira Wisla.

The *Don Wilcox Civic Engagement Award* recognizing service toward ameliorating the problems of hunger and homelessness was presented to faculty member **Jim Miller** who

has been involved in the CROP Walk for over 20 years. *The Institute for Civic Engagement Scholarship* was presented to two students this year, **Alina Ruggieri** and **Timothy Rodriguez**. *The Judson H. Taylor Awards* were presented to **Michelle Housworth** and **Michael Pierce**. The *Community Scholarship for Interns and Volunteers* and a *Judson H. Taylor Award* was presented to **Valerie Winberry**.

The ceremony concluded with a celebration of the students, faculty, staff and community members who dedicated at least 10 hours of service in remembrance of the members of the Virginia Tech community who lost their lives April 16, 2007. A similar project is taking place on the Virginia Tech campus this year, called VT Engage. The **Cortland "Power of 10"** project attracted over **300 Cortland citizens** to complete volunteer service to the community, resulting in over **5,000 hours** of service at last count, dedicated in memory of students and faculty who lost their lives because of campus violence.



Thank you to everyone who attended and congratulations to all the award winners.