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Civic Engagement Scholars Initiative (CESI)

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UMASS BOSTON

Purpose

UMass Boston received a Performance Incentive Fund grant to institutionalize and increase teaching and learning that promotes civic and community engagement. Specifically the funds are being used to support the implementation of the Civic Engagement Scholars Initiative (CESI), which supports faculty and community partners on how to effectively engage undergraduate students in service-learning and community-based research activities that reinforce classroom learning, foster civic habits and skills, and address community-identified needs.

This enhancement will be accomplished through implementation of a professional development program that improves the efficacy and assessment of faculty-driven community-engaged instruction and undergraduate research. CESI, as part of the larger PIF grant, will improve the delivery of civic-engaged instruction that connects student learning to real-world challenges while also contributing to UMass Boston's efforts to increase student success and graduation rates, produce graduates for key areas of workforce need, and improve assessment of learning.

Goals

CESI seeks faculty/department-community partner teams to re-design or implement a new syllabus for a course so as to:

• increase opportunities for undergraduate students to participate in meaningful experiential education (i.e. internships, service-learning courses, participatory action research) that builds civic skills, habits, and knowledge through addressing community issues;
• create new models for student learning through civic engagement;
• increase students' knowledge of and ability to critically examine public policy issues and/or civic concerns;
• establish an assessment of student learning outcomes and performance indicators for service-learning and civic engagement; and
• advance the field of community engaged scholarship through publication of innovative practices.

Assessment

Evaluation and Learning Outcomes Assessment Program Leader, Meghan Hollis-Peel, is leading the CESI project team in identifying, defining, and operationalizing key performance measures designed to assess the program.

Metrics are currently being developed. Once developed, the evaluation team will assess them before, during, and (at appropriate follow-up periods) following program implementation.

Next Steps

CESI is on target for starting the first cohort in our professional development program. Dates, locations, syllabi and facilitators have been set for the first series of 5 workshops on re-design. Planning and coordination is starting for recruiting the second cohort of CESI teams, which will re-design their courses in the fall of 2013. As the first cohort enters into the implementation phases, the second cohort will begin re-designing their courses.

We have structured our program so that preceding cohorts will help and serve as examples for future cohorts. As each cohort goes through the program, it will lead to the institutionalization of this pedagogy in departments and the University.

2013 Awardees

• **Carol Chandler-Rourke**, Senior Lecturer, English
• **Stephen Silliman**, Graduate Program Director and Professor, Anthropology
• **Shirley Tang**, Associate Professor Department, American Studies
• **Paul Watanabe**, Department Chairman, Political Science

Additional Resources

http://www.compact.org/resources-for-faculty
http://www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning
For questions contact: camille.martinez@umb.edu