SCCE Launches Adopt-A-Town Program

The Stockton Center for Community Engagement (SCCE) officially launched last month the Adopt-A-Town pilot program, designed to provide assistance to two towns recovering from Hurricane Sandy.

The Adopt-A-Town program evolved after the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordination (FDRC) approached the SCCE to assist neighboring towns still recovering from Hurricane Sandy. Several meetings and roundtable discussions with the SCCE, faculty and staff, FEMA/FDRC and community representatives were held to determine strategies to assist towns affected by Hurricane Sandy.

As part of the pilot program, the SCCE, under the leadership of Dr. Merydawilda Colón, interim executive director of SCCE and professor of Social Work, is coordinating the efforts of faculty and students providing community outreach and services to Tuckerton and Little Egg Harbortownship. Colón said Stockton is working with FEMA and New Jersey Future to identify areas of expertise that Stockton can provide.

“We look forward to working with FEMA/FDRC and New Jersey Future through the implementation of projects that will aid towns impacted by natural disasters in New Jersey,” Colón said.

Several faculty members from the Business Studies Program have either incorporated or plan to incorporate the Adopt-A-Town program in their curriculum.

Dr. Jennifer Barr, professor of Business Studies, Marketing, is a SCCE faculty fellow who was involved in the initial conversations with Dr. Reva Curry, founding and former director of Stockton’s Center for Community Engagement, and Dr. Joseph Rubenstein, professor of Anthropology and SCCE faculty fellow, and Tuckerton and FEMA representatives.

Each semester, Dr. Barr incorporates a service learning component into her Strategic Marketing course. Last semester, a student team conducted a SWOT analysis to identify marketing challenges in Tuckerton and Little Egg Harbor. This fall, two students in the class are building upon that analysis to focus on branding and promoting the Tuckerton Seaport.

Students in the MBA Marketing Communications and Social Media class taught by Dr. Diane Holtzman, associate professor of Business Studies, Marketing, also work with regional small businesses and non-profit organizations to create integrated marketing communication plans. This semester, a team of students are working with representatives from the Tuckerton
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Seaport to create an integrated marketing plan that incorporates the use of social media to attract new visitors to the Seaport. Dr. Holtzman said the Adopt-A-Town program blends well with the course objectives and addresses essential learning outcomes. Through the course, students gain experience to add to their portfolios, while helping community groups.

“These real-world experiences provide the graduate students opportunities to hone their skills, acquire new skills, and deepen their relationships within the community as well as with non-profit organizations and small businesses,” Dr. Holtzman said. “Importantly, students help the community and see firsthand how their efforts help the organization and the community members.”

Marilyn Vito, associate professor of Business Studies, Accounting, said she was motivated to embrace the Adopt-A-Town program after seeing first-hand the devastating effects of Hurricane Sandy as the treasurer for the Atlantic County Revive Long Term Recovery Group. She hopes to incorporate the Adopt-A-Town program into her classes in the future.

“The students have talents and skills to help,” Vito said. “We want it to be a learning experience for the students.”

Other faculty members are embracing the pilot program. This semester, under the direction of Dr. Patrick Hossay, associate professor of Sustainability, students are designing and installing rain gardens in Tuckerton. Rain gardens are planted depressions that absorb rain runoff and prevent erosion, water pollution and flooding.

“Over the next two years, we expect to expand the Tuckerton marketing plan, assist in creating an economic development plan for the area and build three rain gardens,” Colón said.

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BSN Program Receives Full Accreditation from State Board

Stockton’s four-year Baccalaureate Nursing Program recently received full accreditation from the New Jersey Board of Nursing. The decision was based on a review of the self-study and other documentation submitted to the board by the college. The period of accreditation is from 2014 through 2022.

Dr. Mary Padden, coordinator of the Nursing Program and assistant professor of Nursing, explained that nursing programs are required to be certified by the state’s board of nursing. “It’s a fairly lengthy process to even begin a program. The school has to apply, and the board has to evaluate and approve the program,” she said.

Stockton’s prelicensure BSN program prepares students to become registered nurses while completing the BSN degree. The program is also accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

One of the state evaluation’s criteria includes tracking the program’s nursing graduate licensure pass rate. Since the BSN program’s inception in 2006, the nursing graduate licensure pass rate has consistently ranked high. In 2012, the pass rate for first-time test-takers who took the exam was 100 percent. In 2013, the pass rate was 96.55 percent, the highest pass rate for four-year BSN programs in the state that year, explained Dr. Linda Aaronson, associate professor of Nursing.

“We had to document that we meet the criteria for a fully accredited program in both academics and clinical education,” explained Dr. Aaronson, who wrote the self-study. “There’s usually a site visit as part of the accreditation process. We were able to document so well that they did not require a site visit.”

Dr. Theresa Bartolotta, dean of the School of Health Sciences, said the self-study was accepted in the summer with no revisions and no site visit. She credited the efforts of Dr. Padden, Dr. Aaronson and the entire nursing faculty.

“This is evidence that our outstanding curriculum and clinical training meet the highest standards that are set by the state Board of Nursing,” she said. “It is a testament to the excellent reputation of our program and faculty, and our extraordinary pass rate.”
Make A Difference Day Draws Over 80 Stockton Volunteers

More than 80 Stockton staff and students joined the Office of Service-Learning for their second annual Make A Difference Day on Oct. 25. Stockton participants joined the millions of volunteers for the day of service, a nationwide effort by USA WEEKEND magazine.

This year, Service-Learning offered 10 different service projects in two counties, Atlantic and Ocean. Volunteers worked on projects which included long-term post-Superstorm Sandy recovery and historic landmark restoration, digital archiving, and food organization and distribution.

Stockton’s role in Make A Difference Day is an effort to make an impact in the community based on the needs requested by the college’s community partners.

“Our focus for this event is service,” said Diana Strelczyk, Service-Learning program assistant. “Our students never fail to impress with their willingness to volunteer their time and to get their hands dirty for meaningful work.”

Strelczyk and Daniel Fidalgo Tomé, assistant director of Service-Learning, began organizing the event immediately following the Fall Day of Service in September.

The entire planning process for Make A Difference Day takes about two months, explained Strelczyk. “It is designed to be a little smaller and more intimate than the Fall and Martin Luther King, Jr. Days of Service. We had great student support without incentives other than giving back to community.”

Volunteers participated in activities with organizations such as the Tuckerton Seaport and Baymen’s Museum in Tuckerton, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey in Egg Harbor Township, The Arc of Atlantic County, and the Boys and Girls Club in Atlantic City. Rona Whitehead, activist-in-residence, served as a project leader for the on-campus Girl Scouts digital archiving project.

“In Service-Learning, we are interested in selfless service to help meet community goals. Stockton is a part of that larger community. We would love to have more faculty and staff participate as service project leaders in the future; the faculty/staff and student collaboration benefits everyone involved,” Strelczyk said.

If faculty and staff members are already involved in community service, the Office of Service-Learning is interested in helping to support local projects. Contact Diana Strelczyk at Diana.Strelczyk@stockton.edu or ext. 4256 for more information.

Dr. Pedro J. Santana Receives PRAC Lifetime Achievement

Dr. Pedro J. Santana, dean of Students, received the Puerto Rican Action Committee of Southern New Jersey’s Hispanic Lifetime Achievement Award on Oct. 24 for his lifelong dedication to educating others.

As a college student, Dr. Santana had a “wonderful educational opportunity counselor” who guided, supported and challenged him, all while mentoring him in the right direction.

“At the end of my college experience, I said to myself, ‘That’s what I’m going to do.’ From that point, all I wanted was to work with people and help them to achieve their goals and reach their dreams,” Dr. Santana said.

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Israel’s Mazal Renford Speaks to Dr. Marcia Fiedler’s Class

Mazal Renford, immediate past director of the the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center (MCTC) in Haifa, Israel, told students in class with Dr. Marcia Fiedler, assistant professor of Jewish Studies, about the center’s work on Oct. 24.

The MCTC, started by the late Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, works with the United Nations, the World Bank, and many government and non-profit agencies in over 140 countries, under the auspices of MASHAV – Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The center’s primary focus is empowering women and eradicating poverty and hunger through socio-economic development.

“This program was designed to present a balanced picture of Israel that transcends conflicts and reflects contributions in science, medicine, education and technology towards global needs,” Dr. Fiedler explained.

“We show people how to start something from nothing,” Renford said, teaching business and managerial concepts such as how to write a feasibility study and a business plan, along with marketing and production techniques. The center supports budding entrepreneurs in “business laboratories” where they have access to resources a single start-up would not have.

In developing training programs for Palestinian women and women in various Arab countries, it is often necessary to get their husbands’ or parents’ approval. She explained that it is necessary to include men in its programs in many different countries, making its message about “gender equality, not just women’s issues.” Renford’s presentation was sponsored by Stockton’s Department of Jewish Studies and the Consulate General of Israel.

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News about distinguished students can now be found at Distinctive Stockton Students. To contribute a news item for the blog, please contact the editor at distinctive@stockton.edu

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