FACULTY FELLOWS

Our faculty fellows held a Brown Bag Session – “Building Bridges between Coursework and Community Engagement” on April 22 and had a successful outcome based on the number of faculty members and students who attended.

Emari DiGiorgio

The spring term has been an exciting semester for SCCE Faculty Fellow Emari DiGiorgio. She has continued to expand her community poetry programs in the region and has obtained approval from Stockton University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) to measure the impact of these projects.

A Tour of Poetry, the monthly poetry program for older adults, sponsored by Stockton’s Center on Successful Aging (SCOSA), held at the Otto Bruyns Public Library of Northfield, has had a 22% participant increase in the past six months. Since DiGiorgio has started assessing the impact of this program, respondents have overwhelmingly reported that they have made connections with people from the series who have become friends, that the program has helped them relax and reduce stress, and that series motivates them to read more and be more creative and to seek out other artistic interests.

This year’s guest poets have included Turiya S. Abdur-Raheem, Anna Evans, Gail Gerwin Fishman, Ben Heins, Beth Harrison, Bernadette McBride, Bridget Sprouls, Nancy Reddy, Pat Valdata, and Emily Van Duyne. On Saturday, May 21, A Tour of Poetry will celebrate the Otto Bruyns Public Library of Northfield’s third annual Intergenerational Poetry Festival at Birch Grove Park. The day will include a featured reading of workshop participants’ poetry, community poetry projects, free writing workshops, and the distribution of participant anthologies.

In addition to this successful workshop series, the monthly open mic and featured reading series World Above at Stockton University’s Dante Hall is thriving. Each month 35-50 people attend the series, ranging in age from 11 to 91. Featured poets have included Emma Bolden, Cole Eubanks, Ona Gritz, Therese Halscheid, Lois Harrod, John McDermott, Diane Sahms-Guarnieri, g. emil reutter, Dan Simpson, Donna Vorreyer, and Adam Wiedewitsch. On Wednesday, May 18, the series will feature youth poets who have been participating in a poetry workshop at Covenant House, and we will host an additional poetry event on Wednesday, May 4, The Outlast Project, a poetry event & interactive healing art project designed to empower survivors of sexual assault. This program is sponsored by Stockton University’s Provost’s Office, the School of General Studies, Dante Hall, and several generous community donors.

The third major community poetry project that DiGiorgio facilitates is an extension of GIS 3307 Why Poetry Matters. In this Service-Learning course, juniors and seniors from all majors teach one-hour poetry programs to underserved populations for six weeks. This spring, her students are working with homeless youth at Covenant House, incarcerated teens at Harbor Fields Correctional Facility, children and teens through Family Service Association’s Partial Care Program, and children at Stanley Holmes Community Center, Martin Luther King School Complex, and the Atlantic City Police Athletic League. These programs have brought poetry to young people who may not otherwise have an opportunity to express themselves or to share their stories. Some of the youth are finding therapeutic value in the program, too. Five of the undergraduate groups were recipients of mini grants, made possible through the Activists in Residency Civic Engagement Award, and these funds will pay for anthologies of youth work, poetry mural projects, and/or poetry parties at the individual sites.

We would like to thank our Faculty Fellows, Drs. Emari DiGiorgio and Amy Situ-Liu, who have continued their community outreach initiatives this semester. We also thank our Student Fellows, Melissa Zsitkovsky, Lidia Martinez, Askhia Khawaja, Jessica Webster, Briana Simon, Sarita Ware, Alejandra Londono, John Johnson, Christina Fischer, and Domenico Raddi for their collaboration and hard work this semester. We hope that you enjoy this overview of our progress and invite you to visit our Stockton Center for Community Engagement (SCCE).
FACULTY FELLOWS cont’d

Amy Yingyi Situ-Liu

SCCE Faculty Fellow Amy Situ-Liu has been hard at work this semester, focusing on how to use her community engagement to improve her teaching and thus students’ learning.

To this end, she redesigned her GIS course, Modern China, and renamed it Experiencing China. Though it might seem, at first, a simple nominal change, this edit has impacted the very foundation of the course by putting further emphasis on experiential learning. This approach effectively addresses the connections among watching, feeling, thinking, and doing, and meets the needs of four common learning styles: diverging, assimilating, converging and accommodating. Specifically, under the Experiential learning approach, Situ-Liu expects students to develop their understanding of contemporary Chinese society and culture not only through reading, discussing, and writing, but by directly observing local Chinese-Americans’ families, workplaces, neighborhoods, Chinese schools, and churches; participating in various Chinese social, cultural, and religious activities; and applying projects and services, which aim to help the local Chinese community and make a differences in realities.

Although it is still too early to reach any final conclusions about the impact of the experiential learning on her class, Situ-Liu notes that both the class “Show & Tell” activity and students’ essays have clearly reflected their successful field experiences and their active, cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes. This indicates development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, all of which are characterized by high levels of involvement in learning situations. In fact, as a testament to the course’s success in these areas, students have even proposed three applied projects: a workshop to motivate more students to learn Chinese, a multicultural affair to promote sharing and understanding among the community members, and a program of Dancing Together to build trust and support. All of these suggestions are great examples of building bridges between community engagement and coursework.

This course is a meaningful experiment for both effectively teaching and learning. It provides students with opportunities not only to develop knowledge about China and Chinese culture and language, but also to engage in Chinese-Americans’ lives (thus learning their feelings and behaviors within the context of the Chinese culture), cultivate personal connections, foster cultural understanding, and build the necessary cultural competence to live and succeed in this multicultural world.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Stanley Holmes Village

The Homework Completion Program at Stanley S. Holmes Village, located at 1539 Adriatic Ave, Atlantic City, NJ, continues this semester, with 27 children currently enrolled. The Homework Completion Program’s primary goal is to engage students in their schoolwork and offer them a vision into the potential of a future college education, while also fostering trust in police officers. It is a made possible by SCCE, the Atlantic City Police Department (ACPD), and the Atlantic City Housing Authority. On Mondays through Thursdays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm, volunteers from SCCE, the ACPD, and the AC Housing Authority offer children a period of quiet homework time and help at the community center of the Stanley S. Holmes Village apartment complex. Visit the SCCE Registration Calendar at http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=264&pageID=38 for information on how to volunteer at the Homework Completion Program at Stanley Holmes Village.

Buzby Homes Village

Last semester, SCCE and its community partners launched an additional Homework Completion Program at Buzby Homes Village, located at 600 South Drive, Atlantic City, NJ. This program, which mirrors the goals of the Homework Completion Program at Stanley Holmes Village, currently serves 26 children, and is also a collaboration between SCCE, ACPD, and the AC Housing Authority. Volunteers tutor children at the community center of the Buzby Homes Village apartment complex on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Visit the SCCE Registration Calendar at http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=264&pageID=38 for information on how to volunteer at the Homework Completion Program at Buzby Homes Village.

ENGLISH LEARNERS PROGRAM

Saint Mary’s Episcopal Church

SCCE has continued its collaboration with Saint Mary’s Episcopal Church, located at 118 West Bayview Ave, Pleasantville, NJ, to maintain an English Learners Program for the parents of children who attend an after-school program at the Church. Stockton students work with church staff members on Mondays through Thursdays from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm to provide English instruction at the church. The program will run through June 30, 2016.

Ministerio Por Gracia Sois Salvos

SCCE has continued its collaboration with the Ministerio Por Gracia Sois Salvos church, located at 113 Fabian Ave, Northfield, NJ, to maintain an English Learners Program for members of the Church. Stockton students work with church staff members on Fridays and Saturdays from 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm to provide English instruction at the church. The program will run through June 30, 2016.

NATURALIZATION CLASSES

Naturalization classes continue this semester at Carnegie Center instructional site. Classes resumed on January 19 and continue every Tuesday from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm until May 31, facilitated by SCCE Student Fellow Alejandra Londono. Kelly C. Ayala, the Community Relations Officer of USCIS Newark District, provides class materials, in addition to those from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Website, under Citizenship Resource Center, at www.uscis.gov/citizenship.
FOOD DRIVE

SCCE continues to maintain a monthly food drive for Stockton faculty and staff to contribute. Stockton students assist in collecting and recording faculty and staff food donations. These donations allow the Campus Kitchen at Atlantic City to continue providing meals for families in need within Atlantic City and Pleasantville. Food items are also donated to the pantry at the New Day Family Success Center, Family Services Association in Galloway. Food collection also occurs at Stockton’s instructional sites at Carnegie Center, Kramer Hall, and Manahawkin. Those donations go to the Campus Kitchen at Atlantic City, Hammonton Presbyterian Church, and King of Kings church in Ocean County, respectively. We have collected 615 pounds of food this spring.

CAMPUS KITCHEN AT ATLANTIC CITY

Stockton students and Atlantic City High School students continue to work together under the supervision of a professional chef at the Atlantic City High School on Monday afternoons from 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm to prepare 130 meals for families in need within Atlantic City and Pleasantville. On Tuesdays from 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm, the meals are plated and delivered throughout the community.

EXTREME SCIENCE WITH WINSLOW TOWNSHIP

On Friday, March 11, 60 eighth-grade students and their teachers from Winslow Township Public Schools visited Stockton to participate in Extreme Science, an environmental STEM program sponsored by the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and SCCE. Students accompanied Manuela Tripepi, Linda Dotts, and Tara Harmer Luke to the Unified Science Center for a laboratory experience entitled Extremophiles. During the lab, Manuela Tripepi presented background material and then students were given the opportunity to observe halophilic (salt-loving) archaea and extract DNA. They also utilized microscopes to observe Tardigrades (water bears) and observed bioluminescent bacterial cultures. Bruce Williams, an eighth-grade student, noted that “bacteria can help make light” in a process called bioluminescence. Students also accompanied Elizabeth Lacey and Gina Petruzelli on a field trip to Lake Fred for an up-close and personal look at some “wet and wild critters and plants” in an activity entitled Peek at the Pinelands. During the field trip, students identified ecosystems, including plant species, and collected samples.

LAUNCHING IMPACT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF ASSESSMENT

In an effort to assess the impact of community engagement on Stockton students, faculty, and staff, the Center for Community Engagement has released a survey. The Center will continue to gather data until May 31, so if you have not yet responded to the survey, here is the link.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/survey-taken/?sm=psfik7tNRAX810pmEHv_2BG7ICgsMsnLwebefcburgGnRk9PKqttFQR2IdJpPJmgfeqgk-3fei5_2BXuAEkymcDM6w_3D_3D.

DAY OF SCHOLARSHIP

On Friday, April 1, as part of the 16th Annual Day of Scholarship, the Student Fellows of SCCE gave a presentation about their ongoing commitments to the community and how these commitments have impacted them. The Student Fellows also screen, for the first time, a video clip by Student Fellow Alejandra Londono. This video clip, which featured short statements from Student Fellows and pictures of them in the community, has also been shared with faculty and staff via their email interface. If you have not yet seen it, it can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvnY1k4x7F8.