The Student Conference on Writing & Social Justice Reinvigorated

by Benjamin Solomon

Last year, in the Spring of 2016, faculty in English reimagined the ten-year-old Student Writing and Social Justice Conference in an effort to explore student-led, project-based approaches to conference organization and planning. Over one hundred students in seven different cultural studies, literature, and writing classes participated in the Writing and Social Justice Course Community, working together—both online and in-person—as collaborators and audiences for one another’s projects.

Students in English 2640: Writing and Social Justice, served as the engine behind course community collaborations, working to generate conversation online, and taking lead roles in planning and organizing five course community gatherings throughout the semester. These gatherings featured a variety of student-led workshops and discussions about social justice, privilege, power, and identity, a panel talk about mass incarceration, and a final showcase of student writing projects and presentations.

For students in the course community at large, the conference served as a basic introduction to the connections between writing, rhetoric and social justice. And for students in English 2640: Writing and Social Justice, the conference offered a series of advanced, hands-on rhetorical opportunities to write and communicate with an audience of their peers.

The upcoming 2017 conference will feature a collaboration between eight classes in English, Sociology, and the Humanities. Each class will work with a small budget to plan, organize and host a student-led event during the semester, sharing with the course community how their discipline responds to the exigencies of social justice and humanitarian causes.

Contact Benjamin.Solomon@slcc.edu for more details.

Upcoming Events

- Community Engagement Fair. January 18, 2017. 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Atrium, South City Campus.
- Community Engagement Fair. January 24, 2017. 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Student Events Center, Taylorsville Redwood.
- Community Partner/Service Learning Speed Networking Event. February 5, 2017. 10:00 am to 11:30 am. Student Events Center, Taylorsville Redwood. TBA.
- Utah Campus Compact Engaged Faculty Retreat. “Natural Bridges: Community as Curriculum.” February 9-11, 2017. Red Cliffs Lodge, Moab, Utah.
- Engaged Learning and ePortfolio Celebration: Community Places in Digital Spaces. February 2, 2017. 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm. Oak Room, Student Center, Taylorsville Redwood Campus.

Civic Engagement Meets Open Educational Resources in New Course Sequence Project

English Faculty involved in the department’s ongoing Open Educational Resource (OER) initiative have begun work on a year-long English 1010-2010/2100 course development project intended to encourage civic engagement and service learning pedagogies in the department’s core composition sequence.

The project is move towards a community-focused, programmatic approach to service-learning. It makes a concerted effort to authentically involve community partners in curriculum development and program goals, while providing better support for part-time faculty and better alignment of service-learning courses with the English department’s emphasis on threshold concepts and open learning pedagogies.

Taught in the Fall and Spring semesters, the 1010-2010/2100 sequence will work to streamline communication channels between faculty and community partners, offer vetted, dependable, year-long service learning opportunities to students, and provide a more consistent number volunteers for community partners. The project will also support part-time faculty with additional pay for meetings, curriculum building, and assessment.

The courses will be taught without textbooks, making extensive use of the Open Educational Resources that the English Department has been developing over the last two years. They will also serve as a centralized platform for encouraging English majors to consider the Civically Engaged English Degree Pathway—an honors program allowing students to earn English degrees with an emphasis in community-engaged writing.

Join the OER Civic Engagement group! Contact Benjamin.Solomon@slcc.edu for more details.

About Reflections

Reflections is a newsletter for and about service-learning in English published twice a year by the SLCC English Department. We welcome submissions on students experiences, faculty perspectives, pedagogical insights, community partner engagement, civic involvement, staff profiles, and upcoming events. Photos or written submissions should be sent to Elisa.Stone@slcc.edu.

Editors: Elisa Stone and Clint Gardner

English Department Service-Learning Committee: Benjamin Solomon (Chair), Jason Roberts, Louise Bown, Lisa Packer, Andrea Malouf, Lucy Smith, Elisa Stone, and Clint Gardner
Transform Your Education: Alternative Breaks

Alternative Breaks inspire and empower students to make a constructive difference in their communities through accessible, affordable, immersive service experiences. They encourage students to commit to the life-long effort of creating positive social change. By practicing leadership, transformative action, and critical reflection, students address important social issues while exploring the diverse culture and history where they serve. Alternative Break participants are dedicated to creating an equitable, engaged, and socially just society.

While the priority deadline has passed for Alternative Spring Break, registrations are still be accepted. Contact Brandon Devlin at brandon.devlin@slcc.edu (801-957-4881) for more information.

Alternative Spring Break 2017

PRIORITY APPLICATION DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2016

Food Access & Sustainability
Seattle, WA
March 12–18
Estimated Cost: $400

Animal Rights
Kanab, UT
March 13–17
Estimated Cost: $200

Immigration
San Diego, CA
March 12–18
Estimated Cost: $400

Homelessness
San Francisco, CA
March 12–18
Estimated Cost: $400

Payment plans available. Call 801-957-4881.

San Diego, CA
March 12–18
Estimated Cost: $400

Seattle, WA
March 12–18
Estimated Cost: $400

San Francisco, CA
March 12–18
Estimated Cost: $400

Kanab, UT
March 13–17
Estimated Cost: $200

Orientation Sessions: Interested students are encouraged to attend an orientation before submitting an application or paying a deposit.

11/14 10–11a.m. South City Campus, East Entrance Conference Room 1-110
11/14 12:30–1:30 p.m. Jordan Campus, Student Pavilion Room 102
11/15 9–10 a.m. Taylorsville Redwood Campus, Student Center Den 1
11/15 3–4 p.m. West Valley Center, Conference Room
11/28 3–4 p.m. Taylorsville Redwood Campus, Student Center Den 1
11/28 10–11 a.m. West Valley Center, Room 105
11/29 2–3 p.m. South City Campus, East Entrance Conference Room 1-110
All applications will be reviewed by the AB Steering Committee before slots are filled. Students who have never participated in an SLCC Alternative Spring Break will have preference.