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Why we value our VISTA program

From the Executive Director

As I tried to spot the Supermoon through the cloudy Chicago sky, I couldn't help but think back to the astronomy class that I took as part of my general education requirements.

I was a pre-law/women's study major, so my focus was not on the sciences, but I had heard great things about Professor Richard Berendzen, a man who believes that "Science fact is more engaging than science fiction." Every class, his passion for astronomy would captivate the students and every night I would search the starry sky for proof of what he had taught us.

It's amazing how something we see every single day can look so

different with just a little bit of knowledge.

I get that feeling again after every meeting I have with the ILCC member campuses across Illinois. The exchange of ideas, the excitement you have for this work, and the passion that I have witnessed across the state has been incredibly inspiring and, at times, overwhelming.

Having been part of this community for the last nine years, I thought I understood what was happening on college campuses in Illinois, but I had barely scratched the surface. We are doing so much. We have so much to do. And I am honored to be doing it with you!

One of the best resources that we have for supporting civically

engaged campuses is the ILCC AmeriCorps VISTA program.

Currently, we have 26 VISTAs on 18 campuses doing important work with community partners, supporting students, and creating capacity for your offices. In this issues, you will see information about our recent VISTA training and the VISTA 50th Anniversary Celebration that ILCC VISTA Candace Metcalf helped to plan.

In addition, please be on the lookout for updates to our VISTA Host Campus application that will be coming out shortly.

As always, thank you for hosting me on your campuses and for the amazing work that you do.

- Natalie Furlett

Announcements

Oct. 30: Deadline for submitting [MLK Day Community Partnership Project mini grant RFP](#)

Oct. 24: [SCI-Midwest Fall 2015 regional meeting](#), Harold Washington College

Oct. 29-30: [Campus Compact Heartland Conference](#), Kansas City, MO



ILCC hosts VISTAs on F8 campuses.



Dr. Shelly Lemon, Associate Professor of History at McKendree University, wears many hats. A scholar, educator, faculty advisor and a mother of two, 10-year-old Sasha, and a 19 month-old Ariel. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice, and she is part of the Executive Council and Vice President of the Southwestern Historical Association. Before coming to McKendree in 2010 where she is actively engaged in teaching and scholarship with a primary focus on women and gender issues, she taught at community colleges in Utah and Missouri for 10 years.

Born to a homemaker and a retired army drill sergeant as the youngest of the four children and raised in Fair Grove, Missouri. Shelly completed her doctoral degree in History from Oklahoma State University, M.A in History from Missouri State University, and B.A. in History from Missouri Southern State University.

Shelly, who started doing service learning in her courses during her very first teaching job at the College of Eastern Utah in Price, has successfully incorporated a service learning component in her Women History class at McKendree University. That made us curious to know more about her, so we contacted her for a Q&A.

Embedding service into learning to building civically-engaged, responsible citizens

By Rubina Jabbar

ILCC: What inspired you to incorporate service learning into your class?

SL: I first started doing service learning in my courses at my first teaching job at the College of Eastern Utah in Price, Utah. I had just finished my graduate work and gotten a full time job there. And the community where I lived and worked was very much focused on volunteerism, service and giving back. I had a great success in doing service learning in my Women's History and Modern American History classes where students tended to be more traditional, college age students. I left there in 2004 and took a job at St. Louis Community College. That population was a little bit different. I went from a school that had really supported service learning to where 'you can do what you want to, but it's not our main focus at this time.' In 2010, I took my position here at McKendree, again in a setting where student were more inclined to expect to have a service or volunteer component in what they are doing. The mission at McKendree is more focused on that. Working with our community service center here at the campus I decided to put service learning back into my classes.

ILCC: Are you planning to promote this approach among other faculty members on campus?

SL: Absolutely, Jessica Trout (Center for Community Service) and I did a presentation at our teaching workshop, and presented on service learning and actually talked to a lot of faculty one on one about it. You have to embed it into your course. It

can't be seen as something extra. It has to be integrated in.

ILCC: How do you define service learning, and how is it different from civic engagement?

SL: Civic Engagement is connecting the volunteer work you are doing with the values that you have in your own life. Somehow you are bringing something out of it. Service learning takes it one more level up where it's really connected to core content. It's not a random placement of an outside experience. It really is integrated and embedded in the course. For example, in my course we were talking about how progressive era women in the early 20th Century wanted to 'help' solve problems. But what turned out was that they had successes where they actually 'served' the people they were working with. When you are serving you are actually seeing it more of a give and take.

ILCC: What are the women's issues that Campuses need to be paying more attention to?

SL: I am also faculty advisor for the Young Feminist Organization. We are focusing our efforts this year on two big things that we think are really important for higher education and college campuses across the country. First, recognizing and preventing sexual assault and really educating the student populations on what is and what is not consent. And, second, we work on broader things in political perspective for what are the hot topics out there that might need your support as a registered voter.

ILCC: Do you have any people that you consider as your role models?

SL: There are so many people that I think so much of. I am very interested in Hillary Clinton as a candidate for the presidency. I am very interested to see what that looks like. There are women closer to me here in the St. Louis metro area that I see as mentors. One of them is Barbra Finch, who is one of the founders of Women Voices Raised for Social Justice. She was active in the 60s as a young woman and now she is active in her older years, as well, leading the charge on education advocacy around social justice issue. And as a historical figure, Alice Paul is somebody I

would always revere.

ILCC: Do you think campuses are effectively promoting the civic mission of higher education?

SL: I think some places are doing it better than others. I feel McKendree is doing a pretty good job in that we tell our students from the very first time they ever even think of going to McKendree up until the day they graduated that we want you to be responsible citizens. We want you to be actively engaged. We want you to be life-long learners. And that responsible citizenship and life-long learning is the core of how I use my service learning components. ■



VISTA 50th Anniversary Celebration Organizing Committee members pose with Certificate of Appreciation at the Sept. 26 event in Chicago.

CNCS Illinois celebrates VISTA 50th anniversary

“The work we do cannot be done without emotion,” said John Hosteny, Director of Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Illinois Office, in his speech at the 50th anniversary of AmeriCorps VISTA program celebrated on September 26, 2015 in Chicago.

Current and former VISTA members and supporters attended the ceremony put together by the Illinois VISTA 50th Anniversary Celebration Committee. Several VISTAs, including Candace Metcalf from ILCC, served on the committee. John also complemented VISTA members and alumni for their commitment and service towards the



CNCS Illinois Director John Hosteny with VISTA alumni during the anniversary event.

elimination of poverty. “It’s (VISTA) the best investment in the world,” he said.

Current and old VISTA members shared their experiences and professional developed gained through service at their respective work site. Sara Stapleton and Meghan Hines from CNCS Illinois moderated the event and conferred Certificate of Appreciation to the members of VISTA50 organizing committee. ■



All members of ILCC VISTA family attended the Sept. 25th training.

ILCC hosts training for VISTAs to serve better

Illinois Campus Compact hosted a daylong training for its VISTA members on September 25 in Chicago. Executive Director Natalie Furlett welcomed the participants and talked about immediate goals and plans for the ILCC VISTA program.

VISTA leaders Rima Nimri and Mike Moran moderated the training. They also made a presentation on the new format of monthly report that ILCC introduced recently to help facilitate its 26 VISTA members serving 18 campuses meet their Assignment Description (VAD) goals successfully.

ILCC Associate Director Amy Ludwig presented the new billing and reimbursement procedure for VISTA service related travel and other expenses.

The training also included a guest presentation on Strength based Leadership by Jason Hanson, a higher education consultant with leadership experience.

The training activity served as a networking opportunity for new and current VISTAs to make connections, discuss challenges, and share project ideas for upcoming service events. The next VISTA training will be held on November 13th, 2015 regionally. ■

ILCC will host Book Clubs for professional development

Illinois Campus Compact is excited to announce a new professional development opportunity for member campuses!

We will be hosting book clubs. Our aim is to give you an opportunity to read, learn and discuss the latest trends and research that is taking place in our field.

Our first book, which is edited by Mandi McReynolds and Iowa Campus Compact Executive Director Emily Shields, is [Diving Deep in Community Engagement: A Model for Professional Development](#).

In order to participate, register by filling out the sign up form posted on our website. Once we receive the details of who is participating, we will send you information about the dates and times of the discussion. Please email Amy Ludwig (aludwig1@depaul.edu), if you have any questions. ■



Candace Metcalf with VISTA Director Paul Monterio and Ken Bedell.

VISTA Candace Metcalf from ILCC presented Social Impact Assessment during the Fifth Annual President's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge gathering in Washington DC on Sept. 10-11 2015. President Obama recorded a message to conference attendees thanking them for their valuable efforts in higher education and emphasizing how religion matters.



Educating Citizens. Building Communities.

Illinois Campus Compact is a coalition of colleges and universities working together to promote the civic mission of higher education through effective civic engagement and service learning practices.

We provide support, workshops, funding, conferences and more for members and community partners, through AmeriCorps VISTA Program, Campus Election Engagement Project, and Community Service Directors (CSD) meetings.

For more information visit illinoiscampuscompact.org

Initiatives

Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP)

campuselect.org helps campuses engage students in electoral process.

AmeriCorps VISTA aims to increase civic engagement on campuses through Tutoring and Mentoring, College Access and Success, and Student Veteran initiatives.

Community Service Directors (CSD) meetings share and discuss updates and upcoming events.

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