



# The Joint Educational Project

Spring 2005



Volume 1, Issue 1

## Inaugural Newsletter

The Joint Educational Project (JEP) is a service-learning program that connects USC faculty and students with community-based organizations in mutually beneficial relationships. At the core of this practice is the principle that, when effectively connected, service is more informed by theoretical and conceptual understandings, and learning is more informed by “real world” applications.

This inaugural newsletter is aimed at USC faculty and has three primary purposes: 1) to (re)introduce faculty to JEP, specifically its mission, goals and current projects; 2) to provide information about the logistics of participating in JEP; and 3) to help faculty assess whether service-learning would be an appropriate and beneficial component of their course(s).

**Pages 2-3 of the newsletter provide all of the information faculty need to know to partner with JEP**, from the semester calendar and types of service-learning assignments available, to the requirements for participation and evaluation.

**Page 4 details the role faculty can play within a JEP partnership** and provides questions faculty can ask themselves to assess whether a service-learning assignment would help them meet the objectives of their course.

**Page 5 describes the role of**

*“A growing body of research indicates that service-learning courses, when designed and delivered in accordance with good practices, have measurable benefits, including the opportunities to (a) explore the applied implications of theory and scholarship in a range of disciplines and (b) derive fundamental hypotheses and insights from applied experience. We will ask that every school and department incorporate one or more appropriately designed service-learning courses into its undergraduate curriculum. The goal is to expand the opportunities for every undergraduate student to enroll in service-learning courses preferably related to her major or her minor(s), before graduation.”*

(From the “USC Plan for Increasing Academic Excellence: Building Strategic Capabilities for the University of the 21st Century”; full text available at: [http://www.usc.edu/admin/provost/strategicplan/pdf/USC\\_Plan\\_for\\_Excellence.pdf](http://www.usc.edu/admin/provost/strategicplan/pdf/USC_Plan_for_Excellence.pdf).)

**reflection** in structuring a successful service-learning experience and provides an example set of “Reflective Questions” used to guide students’ community experiences.

**Pages 6-8 and 11 offer a sampling of the diverse array of innovative projects at JEP**, including descriptions of unique course-community partnerships, on-campus collaborations, and the preliminary findings of some of the research projects currently underway.

**Page 10 is a survey about faculty involvement in service-learning and other community-based learning activities.** Please take the time to fill out this survey and return it to us in campus mail (or complete our online version).

USC’s new “Plan for Increasing Academic Excellence” (see box)

has spurred interest in the value of service-learning and we hope this newsletter is a resource for exploring ways to incorporate this pedagogy into your teaching. JEP can provide a range of technical and logistical assistance to faculty members who want to incorporate service-learning into their courses. We can ease the heavy administrative burden that accompanies high quality community-based work. But even if JEP does not directly assist with the management of a service-learning course, we aim to be a resource for those who seek to incorporate community-based experiences into their teaching and research.

This newsletter should answer many of your questions about service-learning and JEP, but if you would like to learn more, please feel free to contact us using the information provided on the back page of this newsletter — or stop by the JEP House for a tour.

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## About the Joint Educational Project

The Joint Educational Project (JEP) is one of the oldest and largest service-learning programs in the United States. It is based in USC’s College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences and works with faculty across the university. The program is de-

signed to connect academic courses with schools and community-based organizations in order to provide students with out-of-classroom experiences that complement and enrich what they are learning in the classroom. Each year, JEP partners with approxi-

mately 50 community schools and agencies and places more than 2500 USC students in the neighborhood as mentors, “mini-course” instructors, translators, research assistants, and aides to teachers and other helping professionals.

# JEP Logistics: Calendar and Courses

## Important Dates

- **September 2**  
Deadline for students to sign up for JEP
- **September 6 & 8:**  
Mandatory TB testing, available at no cost at the JEP House
- **September 21-22:**  
Students pick up their service-learning assignments. Students must bring TB test results
- **September 26-30:**  
JEP assignments begin
- **October 24-28:**  
“Second Training” for JEP students
- **December 9:**  
Evaluations delivered to professors by this

## Planning for JEP— Fall 2005 Calendar

Spring/ Summer	“Planning with Prof” process. Talk with JEP staff about your intentions for the fall semester. Planning far in advance helps us make staffing decisions and gives us time to make any special arrangements necessary for your course.
August	JEP Program Assistants do brief, in-class presentations to describe the program to students
September	JEP staff members train JEP students and coordinate their service-learning assignments  JEP begins the sixth week of the semester*
October	Students submit weekly journals throughout their service-learning assignments  Students attend mid-semester discussion sections (“Second Training”)
November	JEP service-learning assignments end after eight weeks*
December	Evaluations delivered to participating faculty

\* The length of service-learning assignments varies some by course and type of assignment. This calendar reflects the schedule for most school-based JEP assignments. Please see “Advanced’ JEP” (page 3) for information about other scheduling options.

## JEP Courses Fall 2004-Spring 2005



JEP Student tutoring a child at one of the elementary schools in USC “Family of Schools”

“Mini Courses”	“Individual Assignments”	“Advanced” JEP and special projects
ANTH 200	FREN 352	EDCO 102 PSYC 336
ANTH 300	GEOG 100	EDPT 310 PSYC 355
ANTH 315	GEOG 255	GEOG 100 SOCI 142
ANTH 316	GEOG 257	LING 115 SOCI 150
BISC 102	GEOG 345	LING 411 SOCI 200
BISC 150	GEOL 105	MATH 108 SOCI 305
CLAS 150	GEOL 107	MATH 116 SOCI 320
CLAS 151	GEOL 108	MATH 117 SOCI 342
CLAS 280	GEOL 125	MATH 118 SOCI 360
EASC 150	GEOL 240	MATH 125 SPAN 220
ENST 100	HIST 102	MATH 200 SWMS 210
EXSC 200	HIST 200	MATH 226 SWMS 225
EXSC 202	HIST 312	MATH 245
EXSC 203	PHYS 152	MATH 458
EXSC 205	POSC 130	PHIL 140
FREN 250	POSC 320	PHIL 141
FREN 300	POSC 439	PPD 372
FREN 330	POSC 439	PSYC 100
		ANTH 315 POSC 335
		EDUC 205 POSC 424
		EDHP 588 PPD 240
		IR 100 PSYC 361*
		IR 101 SOCI 169
		IR 210 SOCI 350
		IR 307 SOCI 351
		IR 310 SOCI 369 *
		IR 315 SOCI 432
		IR 318 SOCI 475
		IR 326 SOWK 305*
		IR 338 SOWK 400*
		IR 343 SPAN 316
		IR 383 SWMS 210
		IR 443 SWMS 499
		IR 499 THV
		LAW 622 URBN 375*
		PAS 371 URBN 475*

\* JEP required of all students (Fall semester only for PSYC 361)

# Service-learning Assignments at JEP

***“Not only did I feel my service-learning work benefited the community, but I also realized how unaware I was towards my surroundings until now.”***  
  
***Spanish 220 mentor, Fall ‘04***

## Mentors, Tutors & Teaching Assistants

**Mentors and Tutors** provide academic assistance and friendship to one or two children over the course of the semester. These assignments provide JEP students with insight into the perspectives and experiences of the child(ren) with whom they are working. Mentor placements work best when the learning objective for the USC course is for students to develop a deeper understanding of the

lived experience of a particular phenomenon (e.g., child development, social inequality, gender identity). Most mentors are placed from social science courses.

**Teaching Assistants (TAs)** help children in nearby schools with various tasks in small-group activities. This type of assignment is the least clearly defined from the outset, as school teachers make requests

for TAs in order to maximize flexibility. Thus, these assignments work best when a wide variety of experiences would contribute to the learning objectives of the course. TAs are more likely than others to have the opportunity to observe groups of children, which is helpful for observing the rules of small group behavior, social psychology, etc.

## Mini Courses

**"Mini-Course"** teams are comprised of 3-5 students who work together to develop and teach a series of lessons in K-12 classrooms using material from a university course or, in some cases, multiple courses. (See, for example, the description of interdisciplinary

French and History mini course teams on page 7.) JEP students gain a more thorough understanding of classical mythology, the principles of nutrition, earthquakes, and the origins of humanity, for example, when they learn how to convey complex material in a way

that school-aged children can understand. These assignments are most appropriate for courses in the natural sciences and the humanities, or courses in which learning through service comes primarily through the act of teaching.

***“It made me very knowledgeable about the subject. It forces you to not only know the material, but to manipulate the information into interesting activities.”***  
  
***—ANTH 200 “mini course” student, Fall ‘04***

***“I learned so much at the women’s shelter; you learn so much information about our city from doing this project.”***  
  
***—PSYC 361 student, Fall ‘04***

## “Advanced JEP” and Special Projects

The majority of JEP students are placed in schools as mentors, teaching assistants or “mini course” teachers. Increasingly, however, USC faculty — and our community partners — are asking JEP to help them develop special projects that involve activities other than mentoring or teach-

ing and which directly relate to course objectives. In recent semesters, JEP has developed a number of innovative partnerships. For example, we regularly place students from a family sociology course at a shelter for battered women and their children. Last fall, we coordinated a poll

monitoring project for students in POSC 335: Political Parties, Campaigns, and Elections. “Advanced JEP” projects vary widely and often take some time to develop, so please let us know well in advance if you would like to develop such a project for your course.

# The Role of Faculty in JEP

## JEP and Faculty Responsibilities

JEP student evaluations consistently show that the more faculty participate in JEP, the more their students learn from their in- and out-of-classroom experiences. To participate in JEP, faculty must, at a minimum, provide JEP staff with a current syllabus, determine the amount of credit they will give for the JEP assignment, and consider the JEP evaluation in determining their students' final course grades. In addition to these basic roles, faculty can assist in developing community-based projects and may write, review and/or grade students' reflective assignments. Ideally, professors will also incorporate information about the community and students' JEP experiences into course lectures, discussions and assignments to help students connect course content to their service experience. To complement the faculty role, JEP can provide any or all of the following services:

- Provide suggestions or feedback on ways to incorporate service-learning into a course or curriculum
- Coordinate site placements and training
- Develop "Reflective Questions" and other assignments and grade students' weekly responses
- Act as a liaison between faculty, students and community sites
- Evaluate students' academic and service work

## THE "LEARNING" IN SERVICE-LEARNING

To achieve the positive learning outcomes associated with service-learning, faculty members must intentionally incorporate service into the course and be aware of how the students' community experiences will further the desired learning outcomes. To provide a framework for implementing service-learning into the curriculum, Barbara Jacoby, a well-known service-learning author, suggests that faculty should give the same consideration to students' community service assignments that they do to the selection of texts and other coursework. She explains:

It can be useful to think of service as a "text" for the course. There are many reasons this comparison is useful. First, it suggests that service is equal to written work in its learning potential. Second, it implies that faculty must decide what "texts," a.k.a. sites, are appropriate for the course and whether they are required or optional. Third, service as "text" also indicates that it is necessary to provide structured opportunities for students to read, analyze, and discuss the "text." Finally, faculty must evaluate how well students have learned from the "text" (Jacoby, 2003).

## ADAPTING EXISTING OR DEVELOPING NEW SERVICE-LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS

Tailoring service-learning assignments moves us closer to our goal of making students' experiences in the community as informative as the lectures and readings assigned for the course. Whether faculty have new ideas for service-learning assignments or would like to adapt current assignments to best fit their course goals, we are more than willing to consider new proposals.

Consult with us about the placements and course design that will best fit your goals and we will do our best to accommodate your special requests. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to place your students through our program. However, even if JEP does not manage the entire project, we are happy to consult with you and should be able to provide some level of assistance in most cases.

To help you assess the appropriateness of including a service-learning assignment in your course, consider the following questions:

- **How will the community service project enhance the academic learning of your students?** How does the project complement the subject matter of your course?
- **Will the service provide assistance that is of value to the community,** or will it create more work for the site staff to accommodate your students?
- **Will the commitment to the site/project extend beyond the current semester?**
- **Will service-learning be a requirement or an option for the course?**

## SERVICE-LEARNING AND “REFLECTION”



Structuring and guiding the reflective process for students encourages them to learn particular lessons from their community experiences and to develop deeper, more critical, perspectives about the world around them. JEP requires all students in “mini course” placements to turn in weekly lesson plans and journals that reflect on the process of team-teaching college-level material to K-12 students. For “individual” and “advanced” JEP placements, students must respond to “reflective questions” or other writing assignments that ask them to demonstrate their comprehension of course material by applying relevant theories and concepts to their experiences in the community. (See pp. 2-3 for a description of each type of JEP placement and for a list of JEP courses by placement type.) These reflective assignments are developed by JEP staff, ideally in close collaboration with course instructors. Unless other arrangements are made, students’ journals and lesson plans are graded by trained JEP Program Assistants (PAs) based on a previously agreed-upon rubric. See below for a sample set of “Reflective Questions,” developed for JEP students in PHIL 141g: The Professions and the Public Interest in American Life. (*Additional examples of JEP Reflective Questions are available online at <http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/jep/jep/partstu.htm>.*)

### JEP REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS — PHILOSOPHY 141g — PROFESSOR DALLAS WILLARD — FALL 2004

JEP is a *service-learning* program. We provide students with opportunities to learn about a variety of subjects while providing valuable services to the community. For your course on “The Professions and the Public Interest in American Life,” your work as a mentor, tutor or teaching assistant in nearby elementary and secondary schools provides a context for understanding ethical issues in the education profession.

Please read through all of the Reflective Questions prior to beginning your JEP assignment. The questions are related to and build upon one other. We encourage you to refer back to previous responses and to take seriously your PA’s feedback each week. Doing so will help you to develop your ideas and arguments over the course of the semester and learn more from your experiences.

**WEEK ONE (September 27-October 1) – First Impressions:** Describe your initial experience at your JEP assignment. Include a detailed description of the responsibilities and activities involved in your particular assignment. What are your most vivid impressions of the site? How do your experiences during this first week compare to your expectations prior to beginning your assignment?

**WEEK TWO (October 4-8) – The “Professions” at the Site:** Describe the social context of your JEP site. Try to be as specific as possible about the various roles played by people at your site (e.g., teacher, student, administrator, janitor, social worker, child care provider, counselor, etc.). Which of these roles would you describe as “professional” and what makes them so? (Please note: the Bayless essay on “The Professions” in Callahan, pp. 27-30, may be helpful in answering this question.)

**WEEK THREE (October 11-15) – The Ethics of Service-learning Assignments:** Your professor is offering extra credit for providing community service. Consider the potential ethical and moral value of this practice. Can you think of any ethical arguments against asking students to do community service for credit and/or any circumstances in which this practice might be unethical?

**WEEK FOUR (October 18-22) – Ethical Dilemmas:** Have you observed any ethical dilemmas while working at your site? If so, please describe the circumstances and how they were addressed (if at all). If not, what might you imagine are some of the key ethical issues faced by the professional staff at your site? Discuss the moral considerations relevant to these issues.

**WEEK FIVE (October 25-29) – Professional Ethics:** Go to the National Education Association’s website and read the organization’s code of ethics: <http://www.nea.org/code.html>. What are the core ethical values and principles expressed by the code? Have you observed any of these principles (or any violations of these principles) in practice in the classroom in which you are working? Assess the NEA’s code in light of some of the criticisms of professional codes you’ve read about in class (e.g., Kultgen and Bowie). Do you think the code does a good job of providing educators with guidance in resolving ethical dilemmas that arise in their professional lives? Why or why not?

**WEEK SIX (November 1-5) – “Disabling Profession”:** Briefly explain Illich’s concept of the “disabling profession.” Apply this concept to your experiences at your site. Do you think the education profession is a “disabling profession?” Why or why not? Provide concrete examples from your JEP experiences to defend your point of view.

**WEEK SEVEN (November 8-12) – Professional Politics:** The set of readings in Chapter Nine of *Ethical Issues in Professional Life* addresses the question of “whether professionals should (or, indeed, must) use their professional positions to try to influence the political process” (p. 301). In your opinion, should teachers lobby Congress and other policy-making bodies to institute changes in the educational system? If so, based on your experiences working in a school setting, what issues do you think they should focus on and why? If not, what do you see as the primary ethical problems with this practice?

**WEEK EIGHT (November 15-19) – Final Reflections on the Professions & the Public Interest in American Life:** Think back over the last eight weeks. How have your experiences in the community helped you learn about the education profession? What have you learned about the U.S. educational system, ethical issues, the public interest, and/or about yourself that surprised or challenged you? How has JEP supplemented your classroom experiences? Highlight a noteworthy experience to illustrate your response.

## Featured Courses and Projects



Service-learning students at APCH

Photo by Phil Channing

### CST Jumpstart Grant Supports e-Journal Project

Last year, JEP received a “Jumpstart” grant from the USC Center for Scholarly Technology (CST) to create an electronic journal system for JEP students during the 2004-05 academic year. The system, which was piloted in several JEP courses and is part of a larger initiative to develop a university-wide platform for learning journals, allows students to post weekly reflective work on-line and receive electronic feedback from the JEP Program Assistants (PAs).

The system offers several benefits to JEP students while addressing some of the challenges we face as an academic program with limited opportunities to meet regularly with students:

**Students get immediate feedback on their journals.** Currently, most JEP students turn in hard copies of journals at the JEP House. The Program Assistants read and make comments and the students pick up the graded journals when they turn in the following week’s assignment. Thus, by the time the student is able to read and respond to the PA’s feedback, two weeks have passed. The e-journal system allows students to receive immediate feedback and facilitates dialogue between the student and PA. Immediate feedback is often critical, especially in a short eight-week program, to help students develop more analytical ways of thinking about their community experiences.

**The online system makes it easier for faculty and teaching assistants to access their students’ work in JEP.** Last fall, Amy Fiske, the instructor for Introduction to Clinical Psychology (PSYC 361), alternated the grading of her student’s JEP e-journals with the JEP Program Assistant, although each had access to all of the students’ journals. As a result, Dr. Fiske had a much better sense of what the students were learning — and not learning — through their experiences working with “at-risk” youth. This allowed her to integrate the students’ reflections into lectures and work more closely with our Program Assistants to achieve her pedagogical goals for the course.

**The system allows for better assessment of learning outcomes.** The e-journals are archived in a database, allowing students and JEP staff to review students’ progress over the course of the semester as well as offering JEP the potential to track groups of students over several semesters. The archive is also searchable, allowing for more sophisticated analyses of all students’ learning processes.

JEP is currently reviewing the pilot e-journal project and will be working this summer with CST and USC’s Information Services Division to determine the future of e-journals at JEP. If you would like more information about the system, or if you are interested in having your JEP students’ journals submitted on-line, please contact Susan Harris (213-740-1830, [scharris@usc.edu](mailto:scharris@usc.edu)).

### SOWK 305 and 400: Learning about Collaboration at A Place Called Home

“Collaboration can be taught as a theory, but it needs to be experienced to be learned,” says Wanda Jewell, LCSW, instructor of SOWK 305L: Children and Families in Urban America – Integrative Seminar. Thus, Jewell partners with JEP to provide her students with first-hand experience of collaboration at the nearby agency, A Place Called Home (APCH), a organization that provides a wide range of services to “at-risk” youth. Jewell uses students’ APCH experiences to enhance the course curriculum because “it brings the concepts to life.” Rather than talking about collaboration as a remote theoretical principle, Jewell uses APCH to illustrate specific strategies for inter- and intra-agency collaboration. “I see students responding to the structure and really learning from the incorporation of their fieldwork into the course,” she says. As for making the service-learning component effective, Jewell notes that “It’s good to coordinate with JEP. They help you think through the course process and make the learning experience more meaningful. My experience with JEP is that they are very organized, relevant and efficient.” One way Jewell achieves this coordination is by incorporating JEP trainings into the class, which results in a common understanding and awareness about the service-learning experience for the JEP Program Assistant, Jewell and her students. SOWK 305 is part of the Children and Families in Urban America minor, an interdisciplinary program that also includes SOWK 400, the capstone course for the minor, taught this semester by doctoral student Harold Pyun. Describing his class and the minor in general, Pyun says, “I feel that one of the key goals is to expose the student to the field of social work so that they can make an informed decision about pursuing a career or furthering their education at the graduate level.” In this sense JEP not only enriches the classroom curriculum but can also further students’ personal and professional development.

## Featured Courses and Projects *(continued)*

### Special Event for Trojan Health Volunteers

On Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup> 2005, the JEP Trojan Health Volunteers (THV) hosted a guest speaker for student-volunteers in the program. Dr. Nupur Kumar, a USC alumna and physician at the nearby St. John's Free Clinic, spoke to approximately 50 pre-med students about the importance of looking at medicine from a patient-care perspective, rather than as a customer-based or profit-driven field. She also answered many questions posed by students about the process of applying for medical school, life as a medical student and resident, and various aspects of being a doctor. Dr. Kumar has worked with many THV volunteers over the years and is regarded by many as a "great doctor." Her talk reinforced one of THV's primary missions: to help prepare students to become ethical and responsible physicians. The catered event also served to recognize the THV volunteers for their hard work and many hours of hospital service.

*THV is a student-run program at JEP that offers pre-health students the opportunity to volunteer in a variety of hospital and clinical settings. Students gain hands-on experience in the 10-week, 40-hour program, while learning from biweekly journals and discussions about the ethical and practical dimensions of their experiences in the field.*



Dr. Nupur Kumar, addressing THV students

Photo by Nisha Hakhu

### Partnership with the USC Francophone Resource Center

Last September, JEP and the newly established USC Francophone Resource Center inaugurated a joint program that offers USC French and History students the opportunity to teach French language, culture and literature to children in nearby schools. During the eight-week program, students form interdisciplinary teams and develop a variety of hands-on activities for the children ranging from developing a French travel brochure to compiling French music for a CD to teaching children how to prepare crepes. The program has been deemed a success -- both by the USC students who have found their experiences to be personally rewarding and academically enriching, as well as by the school teachers and students who enjoy learning about French culture. The program is unique in that it sends USC students into the community while also creating opportunities to bring the community to USC. Last semester, for example, students from Manual Arts High School came to the University Park Campus to participate in a workshop on the making of perfume. The number of JEP students participating in the program nearly doubled in the spring 2005 semester. We anticipate that the program will continue to grow in the coming academic year since Béatrice Mousli Bennett, Director of the Francophone Center, recently received a grant from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs that will help pay for teaching materials and other resources for the service-learning students.

### Public Art Studies at Pio Pico Span School

With the help of USC's Public Art Studies (PAS) program and JEP, Pio Pico Span School is undergoing an artistic renovation. Warm and Fuzzy — a design collaborative founded by Jeannie Olander, a graduate student in Public Art Studies and Landscape Architecture, and Joanna Hankamer, also a graduate student in Landscape Architecture — is working with Zipporah Lax, Assistant Director of the USC Public Art Studies program, architect Bianca Siegl, and administrators at Pio Pico Span School to infuse the school with a new aesthetic appeal. JEP is collaborating with the project by bringing undergraduate students to Pio Pico to teach children about public art and help them create their own works of art that will eventually be installed in an outdoor classroom space. Tariku Shiferaw and Malinda Blank — two students in PAS 371, taught by Zipporah Lax and Caryl Levy — worked with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade art class to create and decorate concrete tiles with designs that reflect the students' interests and identities (see photograph). Two other students from the course, Kate Balug and Peggy Pabustan, worked with a 5<sup>th</sup> grade class to paint ceramic tiles with designs that reflect the school's rich history. The PAS 371 students enjoyed having the opportunity to take part in a public art project and learned more about public art in the process. Malinda Blank describes what she learned through her participation: "I was expected to teach students who knew little or nothing about public art, not only what it is but how to create it. It forced me to examine my own knowledge of the material and come up with an age-appropriate way to present it." Before the tiles are permanently installed in the outdoor classroom space at Pio Pico Span School, the tiles will be featured in an exhibition at USC's Hillel Gallery in May.

**Tile designed  
by a Pio Pico  
student**



Photo by Alice White

## What do JEP Students Think (and Know) about Politics?

### Survey of Students' Political Attitudes

JEP and the Marshall School of Business conducted a survey of nearly 800 USC students prior to the Presidential election in 2004. Preliminary findings of the study, which is designed to assess how USC's efforts to encourage service-learning and community involvement may influence student political attitudes, appear to challenge the common perception that college students are apathetic about politics.

Of the JEP students surveyed (N=175), only 4% said they cared "not very much" about the Presidential election and more than 60% said they cared "a great deal" about who won. The JEP students polled were a relatively liberal bunch: 46% identified as Democrats, compared to 25% as Republicans and 14% as Independents. Of those who indicated they were eligible to vote (self-reported, linked to age and citizenship data), 92% said they were registered to vote and 85% intended to vote in the upcoming election.

These findings are consistent with other analyses of anticipated voter turnout among college students. For example, a nationwide survey of more than 1200 students conducted in October 2004 by the Harvard Institute of Politics found that 84% of students said they would "definitely be voting" in the November election, up from 50% of students surveyed in April 2004 ([http://www.iop.harvard.edu/pdfs/survey/fall\\_2004.pdf](http://www.iop.harvard.edu/pdfs/survey/fall_2004.pdf)). In fact, voter turnout among 18-24 year-olds was up nearly 6% from the 2000 election and more than three-quarters of all college students actually voted ([http://www.aacu-edu.org/aacu\\_news/AACUNews04/December04/facts\\_figures\\_print.cfm](http://www.aacu-edu.org/aacu_news/AACUNews04/December04/facts_figures_print.cfm)).

Despite their interest in the Presidential election, a preliminary analysis of the 2004 USC data suggests that JEP students are relatively cynical and uninformed about government and the political process. For example, 29% of students strongly agree with the statement, "Lawmakers only listen to people with money," and another quarter strongly disagree that "Americans care about each others' problems." This may not be altogether discouraging, however. Previous research using the cynicism scale (Lee, 1999) revealed that college students may express profoundly cynical beliefs, yet still feel compelled to vote, to stay informed about national political debates, or to take action on a local issue of importance to them. How does political cynicism coexist with a spirit of civic commitment in some students but not in others? Might political cynicism actually serve as a catalyst for some kinds of civic engagement? These are some of the questions the current study seeks to address.

The 1999 study by Lee operationalized the abstraction of "political cynicism," measured it among college students, and examined its antecedents and behavioral correlates. Political cynicism was defined as an enduring negative attitude about one or more of the following:

- The power of the *individual* citizen to influence government, encompassing attitudes about voting and keeping up with politics;
- The power of the *community* to influence government, especially through local activism;
- The power of *elected officials* to influence government through effective legislation and other policies.

Analysis of responses to the 12-item cynicism scale are expected to support the notion that cynicism is not necessarily a proxy for disengagement or lack of knowledge about political affairs. In fact, students who score as "highly cynical" may fall into two distinct groups: those who are very involved in and informed about political issues, and those who conform more to assumptions about "apathetic" young people.

### More Civic Education Needed

The 2004 Marshall-JEP political attitudes survey (see "Survey," above) included a "quiz" that asked students to identify the offices associated with five well-known public officials: Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, William Rehnquist, Tom Ridge and Barbara Boxer. Were this a real quiz, the JEP students would have failed miserably. Only 6% of JEP students were able to correctly identify the roles of all five officials as of October 2004, while more than 25% of students were unable to correctly identify the position of even one official (median score = 2).

Apparently aware of their short-comings, 58% of the JEP students surveyed said they needed "more information in order to form opinions about national political issues." These preliminary findings suggest that we, as educators, have a long way to go in helping students get where they need to be in order to make informed political decisions.

<b>COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING SURVEY</b>
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As noted in the feature on p. 11, the USC Community-based Learning Collaborative (CBLC) seeks to document and archive the wide range of community-based learning activities on campus. JEP is working with the CBLC to survey faculty about teaching and research projects involving the community and the organizations with which they work. We are also interested in hearing from faculty who currently do *not* use, but are interested in, such approaches. We'd like to learn about the obstacles and challenges faculty face in doing this work to determine what is needed to better support faculty.

**Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey on this page, detach it, and drop it in campus mail. Or, if you prefer, you may visit JEP's website and take an online version of the survey: <http://www.usc.edu/jep>. (Click on the link for "Community-based Learning Survey for Faculty.) PLEASE RESPOND BY APRIL 29th. Thank you!**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Department: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Email: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Campus extension: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does your department require an internship for majors or minors?  Yes  No

6. Does your department offer a capstone course or another type of integrative seminar for majors or minors?

Yes  No

7. Do you engage in applied research, participatory action research and/or another kind of community-based research that involves working directly with community members or organizations?

Yes  No

8. Do you use service-learning, experiential learning, or other pedagogical approaches that involve students in community-based learning projects?

Yes  No

9. **Regardless of whether or not you currently use community-based learning (CBL) in your research and teaching, what do you see as the major obstacles or challenges to using such approaches? Please check all that apply:**

No interest in CBL

Lack of familiarity with CBL approaches

Lack of time to coordinate the logistics of CBL projects

Lack of institutional support for CBL

Concerns about academic rigor

Concerns about how to evaluate CBL work

Difficulty integrating in- and out-of-classroom learning

Lack of control over learning outcomes

Transportation problems for students

Student resistance to CBL

Concerns about safety

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Have you ever worked with any of the following organizations *for academic or scholarly purposes* (e.g., for a service-learning course, internship program, research project, professional development, etc.)? Please check all that apply:

Asian Pacific American Student Services

Career Planning and Placement Center

Center for Black Cultural and Student Affairs

Center for Religion and Civic Culture

El Centro Chicano

Office of Civic and Community Relations (CCR)

Center for Excellence in Teaching

USC External Relations

Joint Educational Project (JEP)

Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender Center

Office of Religious Life

Sustainable Cities program

Volunteer Center

Center for Women and Men

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Is there a staff or faculty member in your department who helps to coordinate CBL projects?

Yes: (name: \_\_\_\_\_)  No

12. Please describe your community-based teaching or research projects. Include the title and a brief description of the course(s) or research project(s) and the community-based organization(s) with which you work(ed). (Please continue on back or insert additional pages, if necessary.)

13. How could JEP and/or the CBLC help support you in your community-based teaching and research activities?

14. May we include information about your CBL projects in the Community-based Learning Collaborative's database and website?  Yes  No

15. May we contact you for further information regarding this survey?  Yes  No

*Please detach, fold and drop in campus mail*

**Community-based  
Learning  
Survey**

**JEP House  
801 W. 34th Street  
MC 0471  
Attention: Susan Harris**



## Pilot Evaluation Project Underway

As USC moves toward a "learner-centered" approach to education, JEP is stepping up efforts to understand what and how students are learning from their experiences in the community. We currently are conducting a pilot study to assess changes over the semester in JEP students' perceptions of race and ethnicity, civic responsibility and career plans. In addition to surveying JEP students enrolled in GEOL, EXSC, PHIL, PSYC and SOCI courses, we will be comparing the academic outcomes of JEP students and non-JEP students in two specific courses: Developmental Psychology (PSYC 336L) and Social Problems (SOCI 150gm). Our pre-test reveals a few interesting differences between the JEP and non-JEP students in these two courses:

**Year in School:** JEP students are significantly younger than non-JEP students enrolled in the same course ( $p < .05$ )

**Religion:** JEP students are significantly more likely to be Christian (Protestant or Catholic) than non-JEP students, and non-JEP students are significantly more likely than JEP students to report not having a religion ( $p < .05$ )

**Social Class:** Non-JEP students have a significantly higher (self-reported) family socioeconomic status than JEP students ( $p < .05$ )

**Civic Responsibility:** JEP students had significantly higher scores on a scale of civic responsibility than non-JEP students ( $p < .001$ )

We will report our post-test findings in the next JEP newsletter.

## The Community-based Learning Collaborative

JEP is a core member of the **USC Community-based Learning Collaborative (CBLC)**, a campus-wide initiative whose mission is to promote public service as an integral part of education and to foster reciprocal relationships between the university and the neighboring community. Specifically, the CBLC seeks to:

- Increase awareness among students, faculty and community members about service-learning and other volunteer opportunities
- Develop and maintain a centralized source of information about community-based learning projects on campus
- Facilitate the development of new, innovative and interdisciplinary community-based learning projects for students and faculty
- Connect on- and off-campus resources in mutually beneficial partnerships
- Document and archive in a searchable database the wide range of community-based learning activities on campus (*please see "CBLC survey"*)

If you are interested in learning more about the CBLC, or if you would like to attend CBLC events, please contact Tammy Anderson (213-740-1824, [tanderso@usc.edu](mailto:tanderso@usc.edu)) or Susan Harris (213-740-1830, [scharris@usc.edu](mailto:scharris@usc.edu)).



## Open Graduate Student Positions at JEP

Please let the graduate students in your department know about the following part-time positions available at JEP during the 2005-2006 academic school year:

**Service-learning Liaison:** The Service-learning Liaison works with JEP staff, USC faculty (primarily in the social sciences), and community-based organizations to develop service-learning assignments that help students connect what they are learning in the classroom with what they are learning in the community.

**Research Assistant:** JEP is looking for a graduate student with quantitative research skills to work with JEP's Director of Academic Development to research and evaluate the learning outcomes of JEP's 2500 service-learning students.

**Psychology Service-learning Consultant:** The Psychology Service-learning Consultant works with JEP staff and faculty in the Psychology Department to develop reflective assignments that help psychology students connect what they are learning in the classroom with what they are learning in the community through JEP.

**Salvatori Community Scholar:** The 2005-06 Salvatori Community Scholar(s) will work with JEP staff, USC faculty, and one or more community organizations to develop mutually beneficial service-learning projects. Projects are to be jointly determined by the needs of the organization, the academic goals of the service-learning course, and the abilities and interests of the Scholar, and might include participatory action research or direct service activities. All projects must involve undergraduate students in work that builds their knowledge and skills while supporting the agency in achieving its mission. Ideally, the service-learning projects will closely correspond to the scholarly activities of the Salvatori Community Scholar.

Applications and additional information about these positions are available on JEP's website: [www.usc.edu/jep](http://www.usc.edu/jep).

**The deadline for submission is Friday April 29, 2005.**

## The USC Joint Educational Project

JEP House  
University of Southern California  
801 West 34th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0471

Phone: 213-740-1837  
Fax: 213-740-1825  
e-mail: [jephouse@usc.edu](mailto:jephouse@usc.edu)  
[www.usc.edu/jep](http://www.usc.edu/jep)



**Come visit us!**



**The JEP House  
34th St. & Trousdale**

## JEP Full-time and Senior Student Staff, 2004-05

Archana Agarwal, Political Science Consultant

Tammara Anderson, Executive Director

Ashley Borders, Psychology Consultant and Research Assistant

Ilene Cooper, Science Specialist

Johann Diel, Social Work Intern

Cristina Garcia, Math Advocate

Susan Harris, Director of Academic Development

Cassady Hastings, Service-learning Liaison

Tina Koneazny, Readers<sup>Plus</sup> Program Director

Vince Lazalde, Program Assistant Coordinator

Jacqueline Mitchell, Office Manager

Ashley Oaks, Placement Coordinator

Brenda Pesante, Coordinator of Community Programs

James Thing, Salvatori Community Scholar

Jacqueline Von Bergen, Coordinator of Special Projects

Alice White, Service-learning Liaison

Jameson Yu, Office Technology Coordinator