



The Joint Educational Project

Promoting Civic Engagement

How the Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences advances the University's mission

BY DR. GEORGE SANCHEZ & DR. LINDA LOPEZ

In 2010, the University was given the honor of being selected by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching for its community engagement. USC was designated with the community engagement classification based on how well the university links its mission statement to community engagement practices. As we prepare a new university strategic plan for the future, it is important to reflect on the university's role in promoting civic engagement within and outside the College and what the future holds in the development of an integrated approach to further our civic engagement mission.



PHOTO CREDIT: USC WEBSITE

Dr. George Sanchez

The Things We Do

While the university as a whole has as one of its core principles **“the development of human beings and society as a whole through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit,”** there are several ways that this main idea gets implemented in practice. Over the years, the Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences has been very active in a number of areas focused on civic engagement and participation in a variety of settings: (1) activities within the College that involve faculty, students and staff (2) external relationships with other departments and schools and (3) College relationships with the community. If one were to group the key areas that the College is involved in, we can point to five broad categories that intersect with civic engagement **(1) community based research (2) curriculum development and student learning (3) service-learning projects (4) global student engagement projects and (5) college access** to name a few. Many examples illustrate the extent to which the College promotes the university's overall mission and how the College supports and nurtures civic engagement practices and programs. One key program that promotes civic engagement for Dornsife College students is the

Joint Educational Project (JEP). The JEP is a key program within the College that places students into the community to work in the schools, hospitals and clinics, homeless shelters and many other sectors. In addition, in the area of student learning and curriculum development, students are able to experience first-hand how to conduct community based research to shape Los Angeles policy through faculty led research. Students also have an opportunity to be engaged in the global community by traveling to other parts of the world to learn about other cultures, their history, and politics. A case in point is the recent trip I led to Japan where Norman Topping undergraduate scholars, all first-generation college students, were able to learn from and directly experience a culture unlike their own, yet interact with Japanese students, civic and business leaders, and USC alumni living abroad to better situate their local world within a global context.

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Linking our civic engagement activities with student learning, community engagement, and access.

As we think about the future role of civic engagement vis-à-vis the university and the College in particular, one area to consider will be how civic engagement is linked to higher education access and the promotion of learning. USC is located in heart of a culturally and ethnically diverse urban area, so it is important to consider how we can strengthen bridges to the community in the foreseeable future. While this may take many formulations, the College has at its disposal an opportunity to leverage existing networks, programs and projects to advance the mission of civic engagement.



PHOTO CREDIT: USC WEBSITE

Dr. Linda Lopez

About the contributors

George Sanchez: As the Vice Dean for Diversity & Strategic Initiatives in the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, Dr. Sanchez has been given the responsibility of supporting and representing the civic engagement efforts in the College, including JEP.

Linda Lopez: As the Associate Dean for Diversity & Strategic Initiatives in the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, Dr. Lopez is responsible for working on programs and projects focused on diversity for the College and on strategic initiatives which include civic engagement.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 6-9

The 22nd Annual National Service-Learning Conference / Atlanta, GA / www.nslc.org/conference

April 25

Conference on Public Scholarship: Engaging Contradictions in the Contemporary University / Irvine, CA / <http://scholarship.ucicope.org/index.html>

April 30-May 1

The Los Angeles Times Festival of Books on USC's campus from 10am - 6pm on Saturday and 10am - 5pm on Sunday

April 27-29

The 14th Continuums of Service Conference / San Diego, CA / www.wacampuscompact.org/cos/2011/cos.shtml

May 16-20

Connecting Campuses with Communities Service-Learning Institute and Research Academy / Indianapolis, IN / <http://csl.iupul.edu/conference>

JEP has grown tremendously since 2001. Currently, we work with over 50 community partners (schools, government/social service agencies, hospitals/clinics) in the Los Angeles area, with the primary emphasis on our local neighborhood.

We wish to thank the following individuals and organizations who have generously supported our expansion in the last decade:

Anonymous Donor; California Campus Compact; California Community Foundation; Crail-Johnson Foundation; Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation; Dana & David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences; Georges & Germain Fusenot Foundation; Lisa & Douglas Goldman Foundation; Flora Hewlett Foundation; Henry & Paula Lederman; The Lew Family; James Patterson Pageturner Award; Dr. Daniel Potter; Henry Salvatori Estate; Skirball Foundation; Peter Stremmel; USC Good Neighbors Campaign; USC Student Affairs; J.B. & Emily Van Nuys Charities

Helping to Fill LAUSD Furlough Days

JEP's new program 'Open Classroom' gives local high-school students an opportunity to attend a college class on their day off

By SARA KANEMATSU, Director of JEP's Open Classroom

In Fall 2010, JEP launched the Open Classroom Project in partnership with USC's Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI). The JEP Open Classroom Project involves USC College professors opening their classrooms to high school students and teachers from the neighborhood surrounding USC. For the pilot semester of the program, JEP offered the opportunity to students in NAI Foshay classes, who were mentored by USC students participating in the JEP Writing Mentors program (a program that pairs upper-division humanities students with high school literature students).

The classroom visits were a great success, and JEP



PHOTO CREDIT: A. VILLASEÑOR

Professor Collins, NAI teacher Jacqueline Barrios, and students from her Senior AP English and Freshman honors English courses pose for a photo after class.

received a lot of positive feedback from the high school students, high school teachers, and JEP mentors.

“The Open Classroom Project offers our students the opportunity to see themselves as college students,” said Lizette Zarate, the USC NAI Curriculum and Instruction Specialist. “As a result of this experience, college becomes a tangible idea for them, rather than a far-fetched notion – they’ve sat in the seats, they’ve interacted with the professors... they have a sense of what that experience will be like for them, and that makes them want to work twice as hard to make it happen.”

With the support of a remarkable group of USC faculty, current “open classrooms” for Spring 2011 include courses in anthropology, biology, comparative literature, economics, English, geology, history, international relations, mathematics, psychology, sociology, and writing. Many subject areas and course topics being offered are not commonly studied in high school, making the project an opportunity for students to explore new and exciting academic fields of study. JEP provides the course syllabi to high school students and their college mentors ahead of time, so that high school students can choose the course that most interests them. This also allows for high school students to discuss with their mentors how college courses are structured.

JEP hopes to continue expanding the program with the support and assistance of NAI staff and USC College faculty, in order to provide a meaningful and valuable experience for participating high school students and teachers from the USC community. We look forward to many more successful Open Classroom visits in the weeks and semesters to come.

For more information, contact Sara Kanmatsu, Director of the JEP Open Classroom Project, at jepsara@gmail.com.

Thinking of adding a service-learning component to your class?

Let us help!

JEP's Director of Research & Academic Affairs, Dr. Susan Harris, can assist you in creating a service-learning element for your course. She can be reached at: scharris@usc.edu or 213.740.1830.

JEP Partners with Keck to Prevent Skin Cancer

JEP utilizes USC's Department of Preventive Medicine's SunSmart Program to teach local children about the importance of sun safety

By KIMBERLY MILLER, Project Specialist, Department of Preventive Medicine

Since 2006, JEP and USC's Department of Preventive Medicine have collaborated on SunSmart, a sun safety and skin cancer prevention program targeted to school children in grades 4-8. Developed by Professor Myles Cockburn and clinical colleagues at Keck School of Medicine, the program teaches children about the risks of too much sun and offers them a variety of ways to reduce and limit their exposure. Taught by USC undergraduates participating in JEP, the program has reached more than 800 children from 11 local schools to date.

Melanoma, the least common but most deadly form of skin cancer, is a significant public health issue, according to Dr. Cockburn. Because excessive exposure to UV radiation and a history of sunburns in childhood is associated with the development of melanoma in adulthood, school-age children are important targets for sun protection education. The need for primary prevention programs to promote sun safety for children is heightened in Southern California, where high levels of UV radiation and a rising incidence of melanoma in white and Hispanic populations indicate epidemic proportions.

"In California, we're seeing a troubling trend in an increased incidence of melanoma that can't be explained by more accurate screening and diagnosis," said Cockburn. "And while still rare, the disease is becoming more common in Latinos, an important population for our outreach through SunSmart."

To teach SunSmart, JEP students are trained and then assigned to USC-affiliated elementary and middle schools where they team-teach three one-hour long workshops about sun protection. Topics include the importance of using sunscreen, wearing a hat and other sun-protective clothing, and limiting sun exposure during the middle of the day when UV radiation levels are highest.



Dr. Myles Cockburn working with local students on sun safety.

Additionally, JEP students help collect data to evaluate the program's effectiveness in increasing children's knowledge about sun safety and stimulating behavior change.

Sneha Tambat, a Master's student in Global Medicine at Keck who participated in JEP as an undergraduate, believes that raising awareness about the importance of UV protection is a critical issue for children in Los Angeles. "I absolutely loved my experience teaching SunSmart through JEP's Health for Life program" she said. "Connecting with the local community and teaching kids how to practice sun safe behaviors is exactly what we should be doing as preventive medicine professionals."

From Prada To Nada

Students attend movie premiere for modern day Jane Austen

By DR. ALICE VILLASEÑOR, Director of Public Humanities Initiatives

On January 18, 2011 the JEP van and a big yellow school bus pulled up to the red-carpet premiere of *From Prada to Nada*, a modern-day version of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* set in contemporary Los Angeles. An on-campus screening and Public Humanities event on March 2, 2011 followed the joint JEP and NAI (Neighborhood Academic Initiative) fieldtrip.

The campus event featured a free screening of the film followed by a panel Q&A discussion on the topic of "Adapting Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* for Contemporary Angelenos." Linda McDonough (producer) and Craig Fernandez (writer) answered student

questions covering an array of topics, including the importance of literary reading skills in the workplace, the similarities between the experiences of contemporary Latina women and women in Austen's time, and the technical challenges of filming in Mexico.

The premiere and the campus event were mostly attended by high school students from Foshay Learning Center and their USC mentors who are reading Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* together as part of a freshman seminar class. "Reading Beyond the Boundaries of the USC Campus" connects USC freshmen with local high school students in mentoring relationships built upon literary conversations.

JEP and NAI are grateful to their Public Humanities event co-sponsors—OddLot Entertainment and the USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute—for providing a unique educational experience for JEP and NAI students.

Going Greener -- Supporting Community Roots

JEP's Young Scientists Program teaches sustainability and changes communities through project-based learning

By **NADINE AFARI**, *Director of the Young Scientists Program*

My passion for project-based learning in science and art began in 2007 when I created an integrated curriculum that would enable undergraduates from different science disciplines to teach science and art in elementary schools in Los Angeles. I am passionate about environmental stewardship, sustainability and health/holistic wellness. Growing up in Canada it is engrained in our culture to put our best selves forward, be conscious of our environmental practices, and work well in teams to generate creative innovative solutions to issues in our community. I believe given drive, imagination and opportunity, anything is possible.

After teaching Communication to Engineers and Ethics for Engineers at The University of Toronto, I relocated to Los Angeles in 2008 to join USC's Viterbi School of Engineering as a part-time lecturer to teach senior undergraduates ethics during their capstone senior design classes. In 2010 these workshops were added to the freshman academy curriculum which supports the university's initiative to encourage engineers to see ethics as a variable in their project design processes. It was important to me to teach ethics from a case study basis. One of the case studies we review is the recent BP disaster; the ethical challenges and the effects of the spill on the environment. The case study teaching method helps engineers relate their education to current environmental and ethical challenges.

In December 2010, I contacted Tammy Anderson (JEP Executive Director) and Tina Koneazny (Associate Director of Administration and Educational Outreach) to inquire how I might support JEP initiatives and apply my knowledge of project-based learning with a focus on sustainability to help the USC community. Ms. Anderson and Ms. Koneazny immediately saw the passion and expertise that I had to offer to the three-year old Young Scientists Program (YSP), which is now funded through the generous support of the Lisa and Douglas Goldman Foundation. YSP places undergraduate students majoring in the natural sciences as Teaching Assistants in fourth and fifth grade classrooms at Weemes and Vermont Elementary Schools implementing hands-on, project-based science labs. I took over as director of YSP this past January, and am excited about what the program has to offer to students. I want both student groups to be able to apply what they are learning in the classroom to the real world. In addition to the two YSP programs currently running at Weemes and Vermont, I plan to expand to Norwood Elementary, 32nd Street USC MaST, and Foshay Learning Center for the 2011-12 academic year.

Beyond the project-based science lessons offered to neighborhood students and teachers, an additional outcome of the program is that our USC undergraduate students learn environmental stewardship by teaching younger students and becoming successful mentors while they gain valuable teaching experience, and learn how to directly respond to the needs of the schools' communities and families.



Nadine Afari

I find that one of the most rewarding parts of my job has been finding ways to energize students so that they can learn how to think through sustainability problems together. This reciprocal learning

will culminate in May, when YSP holds its first ever "Sustainability Workshop" at each of the two schools which will tie directly into health and wellness labs taught to the fourth and fifth graders by our YSP TAs.

Together, both student groups will develop a children's recycling center and sustainability mural that is directly related to recycling. The mural will act as a daily instructional tool, teaching kids (and school staff members) how to reduce, reuse, and recycle effectively and how it relates to health and wellness. After seeing high rates of obesity among the youth in California, I recognized a gap between how students take care of themselves and how they relate wellness and sustainability to their natural environment. Some elementary school students I've worked with thought pepperoni grew on trees and did not know a lot about sustainability, reducing waste, reducing material consumption, reusing, recycling and making better consumer choices. I believe that education is vital to helping people realize their potential, and that collaborative learning is a key to individual fulfillment and societal success. We should be the change we want to see in the world.

For more information about The Young Scientist Program at USC please contact Nadine Afari at nafari@usc.edu.

USC Students Learn About Immigration First Hand

JEP has partnered with CARECEN since Fall 2010 to place Spanish-speaking USC students at the agency. Students enrolled in SPAN 413 (Social & Geographic Varieties of Spanish, Prof. Carmen Silva-Corvalan) and SOCI 155 (Immigrant America, Prof. Jody Vallejo) received course credit for their work at CARECEN.

BY MARGUERITE BOWEN,
JEP Program Assistant & CARECEN volunteer

Many students are aware of the large Hispanic presence in the neighborhoods surrounding USC. Unfortunately, however, most of them never have the chance to interact with this part of our community. I have been a JEP volunteer at multiple sites during my two years at USC. While all of them have been unforgettable experiences, none has given me as great an understanding of the lifestyles and culture of Latino residents in Los Angeles as my time at the Central American Resource Center, also known as CARECEN.

CARECEN was founded in 1983 by a group of Salvadoran refugees who were seeking to obtain legal citizenship status for the thousands of Central Americans who were fleeing disastrous civil wars. This mission, to achieve permanent resident or legal citizenship status for all Latinos living in Los Angeles, still forms a huge part of the core services that CARECEN offers to its clients and guests. During my time there, I helped various individuals to prepare for their citizenship examinations by going over United States geography and history, English dictations, and mock interview questions. CARECEN's staff provides classes that work on all of these things in both group and individual settings.



Marguerite Bowen.

What I discovered was that the citizenship examina-



PHOTO CREDIT: CARECEN WEBSITE

CARECEN students study for their citizenship exam.

tion is a long, strenuous, and challenging test. There were many practice questions that I myself did not know before reviewing them, and I wondered how many of my friends would be able to pass it if they took it today. This experience showed me how hard people going through this process are working to try to learn a language, culture, history, and national identity completely separate from their own.

In addition to citizenship preparation, CARECEN also provides legal services, education programs, and opportunities for civic participation. The latter helps the group to build a stronger community with a proud sense of identity. Only through this strong community can people from Central American cultures continue to celebrate their traditions, culture, and language in the way that they rightfully should. One of the things I loved about volunteering at CARECEN was that I got to learn more about these aspects of people's lives. I learned about how people celebrate birthdays in El Salvador, what makes the Cuban accent distinctive, and what the common holidays and festivals are in Guatemala, among many other things. It was these small details that I loved the most- seeing how with the help and support of CARECEN, Central Americans are able to feel right at home even in a new country.

TEACHFOR AMERICA

The Joint Educational Project has always had a large number of our student workers apply for and be accepted into Teach For America (TFA). That being said, the 2010-2011 year was a banner year with 9 of our JEP Program Assistants and USC's Readers^{Plus} Coordinators getting offered positions with TFA.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

**ANJALI GILL - ARIEL WILLIS - BRITTANY BURNS - CAMILLE WADDELL - CHELSEA SNYDER
 DENVER GUESS - JACKIE TOBIN - KYNDAL HARGROW - RACHEL THOM**

We would like to congratulate these students on this accomplishment and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors as teachers and as advocates for high quality education for all.

Service-Learning Outcomes

COMPILED BY DR. SUSAN HARRIS, *JEP's Director of Research & Academic Affairs*

A recent editorial in the *Daily Trojan* argued that JEP students should not receive academic credit; instead, the author suggested that students should be motivated by a “spirit of charity” since the primary benefits of service (according to the author) are the “personal gains and reflections about citizenship, community service and possible career paths” rather than measurable academic outcomes.

Several decades of scholarly research provides an alternative point of view. Consider the following outcomes taken from Eyer, Giles, Stenson & Gray (2001), which are consistently reported in studies of service-learning:

- Service-learning participation has a positive impact on such academic outcomes as demonstrated complexity of understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking, cognitive development, application of knowledge across contexts, and writing ability
- Service-learning has a positive effect on student personal development such as sense of personal efficacy, personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development
- Service-learning has a positive effect on interpersonal development and the ability to work well with others, leadership and communication skills
- Service-learning has a positive effect on reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural and racial understanding
- Service-learning has a positive effect on students' sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills
- Service-learning has a positive effect on students' commitment to service, during and after college
- Service-learning contributes to career development, particularly in service careers
- Students engaged in service-learning report stronger faculty relationships than those who are not involved in service-learning
- Service-learning improves student satisfaction with college and those engaged in service-learning are more likely to graduate

JEP PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Tammara Anderson - *Executive Director*

Susan Harris - *Associate Director, Research & Academic Affairs*

Tina Koneazny - *Associate Director, Administration & Educational Outreach*

Brenda Pesante - *Director of Community Partnerships*

Emma Rendón - *Administrative Assistant*

Alice Villaseñor - *Director of Public Humanities Initiatives*

Jacqueline Whitley - *Director of Non-Profit Partnerships*

Jameson Yu - *Office Technology Specialist*

ABOUT THE JOINT EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

The Joint Educational Project (JEP) is one of the oldest and largest service-learning programs in the United States. JEP is based in USC's Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences and works with faculty across the university. The program is designed 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 while simultaneously providing a valued service to the community. Each year, JEP partners with approximately 50 schools and agencies to place nearly 2,500 students in the neighborhood as mentors, "mini-course" instructors, translators, research assistants, teaching assistants, and aides to other helping professionals.

For more information about the services available through JEP, please contact our staff or visit our website at www.usc.edu/jep



PHOTO BY PHILIP CHANNING

The JEP House at 801 West 34th Street



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