Q and A with Howard Gillman

The College’s new Dean shares his thoughts on community-based learning

What are your general thoughts about service-learning & community-based research (CBR)?

The USC College has always prided itself on being a great city institution, and not some Ivory Tower experience. We want to bring the classroom into the community and the community into the classroom. Because of JEP’s extraordinary leadership this has been one of the signature features of the undergraduate experience in USC College, and it is vital that we make these experiences even more meaningful in the years to come.

Are there any strategic initiatives in the works through the College to increase or support faculty or students who are interested in service-learning and CBR? For example, making changes to the tenure process to include community-based work?

Every single day faculty and staff are thinking of ways to create exciting new opportunities for students — sometimes by developing new programs, sometimes by building on our strengths. We do not need to create a new strategic initiative for service-learning and CBR because these commitments are woven into the fabric of what it means to be educated at USC.

It was very nice when we were recognized as College of the Year largely on the basis of this community-minded reputation, but we cannot rest on that laurel. To be a leader in this area is to always push ahead, think of new ways to innovate, new ways to make these experiences more meaningful for all involved. We are not going to fundamentally change the process by which faculty gain tenure, but this isn’t necessary; after all, it is a standard part of every tenure decision for us to consider the ways in which a faculty member is contributing to our great teaching and research missions, and we are an institution that knows very well that service-learning and community-based research can be a significant component of these missions.

Our primary obligation is to provide our students with an outstanding educational experience, one that will help them better understand the world, help them find a meaningful path in life, open their eyes to new experiences — and our faculty understand that engaging our community first-hand can be central to that mission.
JEP to be honored at A Day in Troy

All proceeds from the January event will go towards funding JEP projects

BY JACQUELINE WHITLEY

The fourth annual Day in Troy, a half-day event hosted by USC's Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, will be held on January 19, 2008. We are pleased to announce that the Joint Educational Project was chosen as this year’s recipient of the funds raised, with $1 being donated from each ticket sold.

A Day in Troy is geared toward children in the 4th through 9th grade living in USC’s surrounding neighborhoods, though anyone interested is encouraged to attend. The day is designed to educate, entertain, and inspire the local students, as well as to provide a celebration for USC’s traditions of both community involvement and athletic excellence.

The day begins at 9:00 a.m. with registration and a USC campus tour led by USC students and varsity student-athletes, followed by a Trojan pep talk by USC coaches and student-athletes focusing on education, physical fitness, goal-setting, diversity, and good citizenship. Next is an autograph session, and the day concludes with the main event – attending the USC vs. UCLA Women's basketball game, held in our new Galen Center.

Past Days in Troy have been very successful and raised funds for various worthwhile causes over the years. For example, the money from last year’s sold out event going towards USC's Good Neighbors Campaign. Please come and support JEP through your attendance at this fun-filled event.

The regular tickets are $4 each, with the option to add on a healthy meal for an additional $5. There are also $15 tickets available that include premium lower level seats to the game. The deadline to purchase tickets is December 21st.

To purchase a ticket or get more information on the day's events, please call 213.821.0782.

- SPRING 2008 -

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 11 - PROPOSAL DEADLINE FOR THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION (NSEE) CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 7 - THE UNIVERSITY & MULTI-ETHNIC CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM AT UC-IRVINE)

MARCH (TBD) - USC'S READERSPLUS INTERNATIONAL READING FESTIVAL

APRIL 15 - USC'S COMMUNITY SERVICE BANQUET

APRIL 17 - 19 - CONTINUUMS OF SERVICE (WESTERN REGIONAL CAMPUS COMPACT CONFERENCE)

APRIL 18 - CBLC COLLOQUIUM (SEE BOX ON RIGHT FOR DESCRIPTION)

Save the Date!

Service-Learning Colloquium for Faculty, Students & Community Partners

April 18, 2008
8:30am-5:30pm
USC Davidson Conference Center

PARTIAL LIST OF TOPICS:
Approaches to community-based learning, organizational capacity-building, community-based research, international service-learning

Sponsored by the USC Community-Based Learning Collaborative, the Corporation for National and Community Service and California Campus Compact

For more information, please contact Susan Harris 213-740-1830, scharris@usc.edu
JEP at-a-glance

Facts and figures about this semester at the Joint Educational Project.

One thousand, two hundred and two students enrolled in JEP this semester.

292 - FRESHMEN
368 - SOPHOMORES
289 - JUNIORS
157 - SENIORS
27 - GRADUATE STUDENTS
69 - UNKNOWN GRADE LEVEL

We are partnering with 23 different academic departments, and also offer 20 placements not linked to a course through our Volunteer Department and 8 site options for our Trojan Health Volunteers.

Our community partners:

9 - ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
5 - ELEMENTARY THROUGH SECONDARY SCHOOLS
3 - JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
22 - NON-PROFIT & GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES
8 - HOSPITALS & CLINICS
511 - SOCIAL SCIENCES
228 - NATURAL SCIENCES
190 - HUMANITIES
92 - VOLUNTEERS
89 - TROJAN HEALTH VOLUNTEERS
92 - OTHERS (ALL-STAR TUTORS, HEALTH FOR LIFE, PUBLIC ARTS, EDUCATION AND POLICY, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT)

JEP’s newest full-time staff members

Introducing Jacqueline Whitley and Mario Rocha

Jacqueline Whitley joined our staff full-time in May of 2007 as the Special Projects Coordinator. In this position, she acts as the JEP liaison for our non-school community partners.

She started with the Joint Educational Project in Spring 2005 as a Graduate Assistant while working to complete her masters in Post-secondary Administration and Student Affairs.

Jac is originally from Wisconsin. She is a triplet; her identical sister is a speech pathologist in Madison and her fraternal brother is a pediatric cardiologist in Iowa City, Iowa.

She lives in Culver City with her husband Michael and their cocker spaniel, Reiley.

5 - HIGH SCHOOLS
Mario Rocha started with JEP in July 2007.

In 1996, Mario was an original member of the InsideOUT Writers program that today serves the largest underserved youth population in Los Angeles.

A film about Mario -- titled Mario’s Story—won the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the 2006 Los Angeles Film Festival.

In January of 2007, PEN USA awarded Mario with the 2007 Emerging Voices Rosenthal Fellowship.

On top of being the newest addition to JEP’s staff, Mario teaches writing at the Los Angeles Conservation Corps., speaks on issues of social injustice at universities across the country and serves his El Sereno community as a political organizer.
Meet a JEP Program Assistant

*Thomas Chow, international student majoring in Business Administration*

By Alice White

JEP hires excellent undergraduates who have participated in JEP in the past to work as Program Assistants. Collectively, these Program Assistants recruit, train, monitor, and supervise over 1,000 participating JEP students every semester. One such employee is Thomas Chow, a sophomore international student majoring in Business Administration with a minor in Law and Society.

As a freshman, Thomas completed three JEP assignments, and his varied experiences reflect the diversity of JEP assignments open to USC students. In the fall, he taught geology in an eight-week “mini-course” to elementary students through the use of games and other group activities. While teaching another “mini-course” on medieval history to eighth grade students, Thomas and his teaching team were able to integrate many of the lessons learned in their history course directly into their own lesson plans. In the spring, Thomas worked as a teaching assistant at a high school, offering a chance to make observations regarding social issues related to gender. Thomas enthusiastically stresses the academic benefits he gained from these JEP assignments: “Through the preparation of the mini-courses, I had to engage with the material and think of inventive ways to present it. [JEP] helped me to clarify the concepts I learned. For example, in the gender studies class, it helped me to understand abstract concepts by doing close observations.”

Currently, Thomas works as a Program Assistant for students in math, sociology, and gender studies courses. He was inspired by the enthusiasm of his JEP Program Assistants to apply to work for JEP himself: “My program assistants — Elina, Raquel, and Kara — gave me the feeling that they are really enthusiastic about working at JEP. JEP is like a family, and people support one another. That’s why I chose to work with JEP.” So far, Thomas has been impressed with what he has learned from his JEP students’ experiences. For example, with respect to his math students, Thomas is “surprised at the creative methods the JEP students have come up with to teach the community students. It’s interesting to see how the students improve throughout the semester.” He is also struck by some of the resources that JEP works with, such as the vast lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered archive at the ONE National Gay & Lesbian archives where some of his gender studies students work.

An international student from Hong Kong, Thomas was drawn to USC because of the excellent reputation of the Marshall School of Business and because he enjoys the “school spirit of USC.” Thomas credits his JEP experiences with helping him adjust to life as an international student: “JEP reduces my feeling of being a foreign student here. SC is the community where I’m studying. It helps my sense of belonging to the school. It helps me in speaking English — it builds my confidence to speak English to cooperate with students from all over the world, since I have to speak English to teach the mini-course and mentoring.”
JEP site spotlight: School on Wheels
An educational drop-in center for homeless youth

BY JACQUELINE WHITLEY

The non-profit organization, School on Wheels, is JEP’s newest community partner. This semester ten students from Sociology 169gm: Changing Family Forms, were placed with this organization. These students spent two hours a week tutoring and mentoring homeless youth that take part in the afterschool program held in School on Wheels Downtown Learning Center location near skid row.

School on Wheels’ mission is to enhance the educational opportunities for homeless children, from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. The goal of the organization is to shrink the gaps in the education of these homeless children and provide them with the highest quality education possible. This is done through one-on-one tutoring, providing school supplies and uniforms, assistance in entering school and locating lost records, parent guidance on educational matters for their children, and a toll-free number that School on Wheels administers so that children can keep in touch with the organization.

USC students working with the children at School on Wheels had an eye-opening experience which helped them break down many preconceived notions about homelessness. One student stated, “It drove home the idea that although all families are unique and each one is as different as the individual members that compose it, essentially all families are endeavoring to reach the same goals... Besides emphasizing the point of how similar all families are, the eight weeks at the center ended one stereotype that I had. I always pictured homeless people as the dirty people sleeping on sidewalks and park benches. Coming to the School on Wheels center I, thus, expected to be working with a bunch of (similar) children... But they were all dressed in the average clothes you would expect from kids their age. Homeless people are not always people who have given up. It can very easily be a family that is just down on their luck and temporarily lost a job. The center really changed my view of homeless people.”

The students placed with School on Wheels this semester have had a beneficial experience both in relating to their class material and helping children in need. We look forward to similar partnerships in future semesters.

DO YOU KNOW ANY STUDENTS WHO DESERVE TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR SERVICE?

Now is the time!

Extraordinary Community Service Award
A $1,000 cash award is provided to the graduating senior who offers outstanding service to the community.

Grace Ford Salvatori Community Service Scholarship
This $2,500 scholarship is given to up to six sophomores or juniors with majors in the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. It is based upon community service, academic performance, need and civic leadership.

For more information please stop by the JEP House or go to our website at www.usc.edu/jep
READERS PLUS STUDENT STAFF

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
AT WEEMES:
Caitlin Fitzgerald - Site Coordinator
Julia Payson - Assistant Site Coordinator

AT VERMONT:
Marisela Mendez - Site Coordinator
Angela Vimuttinan - Assistant Site Coordinator

AT NORWOOD:
Casey McAlduff - Site Coordinator
Randi Thompson - Assistant Site Coordinator

AT 32ND STREET:
Eric Bruins - Site Coordinator
Alexi Coppinger - Assistant Site Coordinator

AT FOSHAY:
Jose Ortega - Site Coordinator
Lauren Middleton - Assistant Site Coordinator

AT READERS HOME OFFICE (JEP HOUSE):
Nicole Sharma - Central & Literacy Project Coordinator
Vanessa Kuroda - Webmaster

GRADUATE STUDENTS
Lauren Carter - Literacy & AMF Pen Pal Coordinator
Nick Richards - Math Advocate
Matt Jung - Science Education Coordinator

JEP STUDENT STAFF
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
Aakriti Garg - Trojan Health Volunteers Director
Abhinay Jhaveri - IR Program Assistant
Briana Mitchell - GEOL Program Assistant
Charlotte Tilles - SOCI Program Assistant
Cody MacLake - FREN Program Assistant
Daniel Cousineau - Placement Coordinator
Drew Bennett - IR Program Assistant
Elina Khodorkovsky - HIST Program Assistant
Jordan Scott - ANTH Program Assistant
Kaelin Burns - SOCI 169 Program Assistant
Kelsey Kopro - GEOG/ENST/GEOL Program Assistant
Lori Itagaki - PSYC/SOCI/GEOG Program Assistant
Marisol Siegel - SPAN Program Assistant
Marissa Monteiro - SOCI/LING Program Assistant
Megan MacMillian - SOCI 169 Program Assistant
Michelle O'Meara - VOL/EDHP/All Stars Program Assistant
Monica Bennett - IR Program Assistant
Natalie Moran - SPAN Program Assistant
Raquel Lucente - Program Assistant Coordinator
Sophia Kokores - EXSC Program Assistant
Stefanie Gopaul - BISC/PPD/CLAS Program Assistant
Stephanie Norman - EASC/ENGL Program Assistant
Taylor Somach - GEOL Program Assistant
Thomas Chow - SWMS/MATH Program Assistant

GRADUATE STUDENTS
Alice White - Service Learning Liaison
Marc De Jong - Service Learning Liaison
Carol Brown - Research Assistant
Ferdinand Lewis - Salvatori Community Scholar
JEP FULL-TIME STAFF

Tammara Anderson  
Executive Director

Brenda Pesante  
Director of Community Partnerships

Susan Harris  
Associate Director, Research & Academic Affairs

Mario Rocha  
Administrative Assistant

Tina Koneazny  
Associate Director, Administration & Educational Outreach

Jacqueline Whitley  
Coordinator of Special Projects

Jacqueline Mitchell  
Office Manager

Office Technology Coordinator

Trojan Health Volunteers enters 12th year
Program started by pre-med student in 1995 serves more students than ever before

BY JACQUELINE WHITLEY

The Trojan Health Volunteers (THV) Program was started as a student-run club in 1995 by pre-med student Daniel Potter. Daniel felt that volunteering in a medical setting was a crucial aspect of the pre-med college experience, a sentiment shared by many students interested in medicine. As a 2007 participant stated, “I feel like I’m doing myself a service for when I’m practicing so that I already know what I’m doing.”

Upon his graduation in 1997, Daniel requested the Joint Educational Project to take over the administration of THV so that it would continue to have a home at the University. Although the program is managed by JEP, it continues to be primarily student-run. This year’s THV Director, Aakriti Garg, is majoring in Biological Sciences and Economics, and minoring in Bioethics. She administers the program, coordinates with the medical sites, and manages the seventy-eight students participating as Trojan Health Volunteers this semester.

THV, now in its twelfth year, gives pre-health students the opportunity to obtain valuable experience in eight different hospital and clinical settings. Since its inception it has been an extremely popular program, and each semester is the first JEP opportunity to reach capacity, often within the first two-days.

Between 70 and 90 students enroll in the THV program each semester, numbers that Aakriti hopes to grow in future semesters. The students start their experience with both on-campus and on-site orientations. Once they begin volunteering they are required to reflect on their experiences in written journals and group discussions – both facilitated by Aakriti, the THV Director.

THV introduces undergraduate students to many areas of the medical world with which they would not normally have access. As a student this year reported, “Through the first surgery, I was pleasantly surprised and shocked as to what I was allowed to see.”

At the various sites students learn from doctors, nurses, hospital and clinic administrators, various therapists, and patients; valuable experiences for those looking to medicine as a future occupation. As a student participating this year stated, “Obviously medicine extends much further than just the doctor treating the patient, and it is interesting to see the ‘behind the scenes’ of medical research.”
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 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 and places nearly 2500 students in the neighborhood as mentors, “mini-course” instructors, translators, research assistants, teaching assistants, and aids 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