In the next few weeks, JEP Program Assistants will be dispatched to talk with professors about JEP’s service-learning programs and to find out which classes we will be working with in the Fall 2008 semester. Many faculty have worked with JEP for years—a few of them since we were founded 36 years ago!—and for them, this process has become routine. Other faculty are new to the program and need more information about how we operate. This essay draws upon my 14 years of experience working with professors and is designed to help them to think about how to best integrate JEP into their courses. My hope is that it will help newcomers to better understand the program, inform the old-timers about new and different ways of working with us, and encourage everyone to consider some simple course modifications that will help students get the most out of our program.

**Service-learning assignment options:**
JEP offers several different types of service-learning assignments, and faculty must decide which option is best suited for their course(s). One of the most popular, our “mini course” model, involves sending teams of 3-5 students from a particular class (or, in some cases, several related classes) to teach course material to children in K-12 classrooms. This approach is used primarily by faculty in the humanities and natural sciences who wish to offer their students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of their USC coursework—e.g., by teaching a short course on earthquakes or mythology—while supplementing the K-12 curriculum in the process. In the social sciences, the most common JEP placement is as a mentor, tutor or teaching assistant in a school or after-school program. Through their service activities, USC students are able to provide valuable assistance to the community while learning about course material (for example, child development, patterns of language use, or...
ethical decision-making) in a “real world” setting.

The vast majority of JEP students work in schools in one of these basic types of assignments, and we can accommodate nearly everyone who wishes to participate in this way. However, a growing number of students work in special assignments designed to closely correspond with particular course themes. We have designed and facilitated many partnerships with non-profit and governmental organizations that address a particular community or issue that is central to the subject matter of a course. For example, we place dozens of students enrolled in a Sociology of the Family course at nearby agencies that serve children and families in a variety of ways. While we must limit the number of “special assignments” we support each semester, given the significant investment of time that is required to develop and maintain these projects, we nevertheless encourage faculty to think creatively about what type of community experience would best serve the purposes of their course. We also suggest that faculty let JEP staff know as far in advance of the semester as possible if they will need our support in developing special assignments.

Credit issues: Once a professor has settled on the type of service-learning assignment to offer, she or he must settle on the amount of credit students will receive for successfully completing the program. Instructors must determine what constitutes “successful completion” as well as a reasonable amount of credit to assign for the work. In order to do so, it is important to know that JEP students typically spend 20–25 hours per semester providing direct service, preparing lesson plans, and participating in mandatory training sessions and discussions. In addition, students are usually required to submit weekly prompted essays that encourage them to reflect on the connections between their experiences in the community and their learning in the classroom. (Please see http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/jep/jep/partstu.htm for samples of JEP “Reflective Questions” from participating JEP courses this semester.) Students are evaluated by our JEP Program Assistants, who assign points for students’ reflective work, attendance at the site and overall participation. We also get an evaluation of the student’s performance at the site from the teacher or supervisor who worked most closely with the student. (Please see http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/jep/resources/eval_student_sample.pdf for a sample JEP evaluation form.) At the end of the semester, we provide professors with an evaluation for each student enrolled in JEP from their course(s).

When deciding on the amount and type of credit to offer students, instructors should consider the time commitment involved, as well as the student’s score on the JEP evaluation. A common approach is to give all
JEP participants a 1/3 grade extra credit boost to the final course grade, but instructors might consider offering a range of points that correspond with the final evaluation. For example, a student might get 3% extra credit for an evaluation of 90-100, 2% for 80-90 points, and so on. Other faculty offer JEP as an alternate to another assignment, exam or lab. Instructors should make an effort to ensure that the assignment JEP students opt out of is equivalent in terms of the time and effort required. Finally, some faculty offer students the opportunity to use their JEP experiences as the subject of a term paper required for the course. This is a great option, since it encourages students to integrate their in- and out-of-classroom learning. However, if the only credit students receive for JEP is what professors assign to the term paper, this creates a disincentive for students to fully participate in our program. Such students are less likely to submit their weekly essays, which runs counter to our philosophical and pedagogical stance on the importance of regular reflection in service-learning. These students are also more likely to drop out of JEP prematurely once they determine they have gotten what they need from the experience to write the paper, since the site supervisor’s evaluation is irrelevant to their final grade. This creates problems for our sites, which depend on the students’ consistent attendance.

To address these issues, faculty might consider requiring students to submit a portfolio of their JEP journals at the end of the semester, perhaps in lieu of a term paper. This will encourage students to take the JEP requirements seriously and give faculty a better sense of what the students learned over the course of the semester. In general, we encourage faculty to find some way to incorporate the JEP evaluation into the course grade, or to take over the academic component entirely. Another suggestion for faculty who link course assignments to JEP participation is to coordinate deadlines for paper topics, outlines, etc., with the JEP calendar to ensure that these deadlines occur after the students’ service-learning assignments have begun.

**Requiring JEP/Service-Learning:** While most faculty offer JEP as an optional component of a course, another alternative is to require all students to participate in a service-learning assignment through JEP. This approach has some distinct advantages, since the service-learning assignment becomes a core component of the course, shared by all students, making it easier for the professor to integrate these experiences more fully into lectures and discussions. Be prepared for some
logistical challenges and a fair amount of whining from students, however. Setting up service-learning assignments, coordinating schedules, etc., can be a monumental effort. While the JEP staff handles most of these issues for faculty, when problems occur (and they will), faculty will hear about it from their students. Some students will also protest being “forced” to do community service as a requirement of the course. Here are some suggestions for faculty who wish to mandate service-learning, although most are applicable to all those who works with JEP in any capacity:

• **Contact the Office of the Registrar to add information about the JEP requirement in the Schedule of Classes.** The Registrar can add a notation in the “Info” section of the online schedule that will let students know that the course includes a service-learning component. In addition, faculty can upload a course syllabus to provide details about the requirement. Another suggestion is to add the course to the list of “Community-Based Learning Courses” on the Schedule of Classes main page: http://www.usc.edu/academics/classes/term_20083/community_learning_courses.html.

• **Make it abundantly clear, in the syllabus and on the first day of class, that service-learning is a requirement of the course.** Carefully describe your expectations so that students may drop the course immediately if they so choose. Since it takes several weeks to coordinate service-learning assignments—JEP assignments typically begin the 6th week of the semester—students will not have the option to try out the service-learning assignment and then drop the course if it does not suit them. So it is important to let students know what they are in for.

• **Provide a strong argument for the service-learning requirement and explain how it will complement other aspects of the course.** This will make students less likely to complain about the assignment or to see it as separate from the rest of the course.

• **Along these lines, find ways to regularly integrate the students’ community-based experiences into the class.** Assign pertinent readings and assignments and deliver relevant lectures and discussions during the service-learning assignment. For example, if you are teaching an ethnic studies survey course and plan to spend several weeks talking about different racial groups, plan to talk about those communities that are relevant to the service-learning assignment prior to or during the assignment. That way, what students learn in your class about central American immigrants, for example, will be especially relevant as they work with Guatemalans and Salvadorans at their sites.

• **Invite guest speakers with expertise about the community**—such as JEP staff, USC faculty, or staff from the service-learning site(s)—to share their knowledge and expertise with your students.

• **If the class is small, consider incorporating the service-learning component into your regularly scheduled lecture/discussion/lab time** and go with your students to the site. This will make the significance of the service-learning project unmistakable to you and to
your students. If you plan to do this, keep in mind the scheduling issues involved. For example, if you wish for your students to work at a school, your lecture/lab/discussion must be scheduled during school hours (approximately 8:00-2:00, excluding an extended lunch hour).

Other tips for making the most of JEP:
Here are a few more suggestions to improve the connection between your coursework and the JEP curriculum:

• Include the Program Assistant and other JEP staff in your correspondence with your students. This will facilitate communication between you, your students and the Program Assistant and will help connect the JEP component more closely to your course.

• Collaborate with JEP in writing grants to support service-learning in your classroom. These funds could be used to provide training to graduate Teaching Assistants on service-learning pedagogy or to embed JEP Program Assistants in your course to assist with logistical support, for example.

• Consider adding a line item to your departmental budget to support JEP mini courses and other service-learning projects. The Department of Geology, for example, loans materials and equipment to JEP students and provides staff support to JEP students seeking resources for improving the geology content of their mini courses. Not surprisingly, our Geology mini courses are especially popular with the teachers at our school sites.

• Encourage your students to present their work at professional meetings and conferences. One such opportunity will happen on campus this semester, at the USC Community-Based Learning Collaborative’s Colloquium on Campus-Community Partnerships on April 18th. While the deadline for submissions has passed, we hope you will encourage your students to attend — and that you will join them. For more information about the student poster session and to register for the event, go to http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/jep/cblc/abstract.htm.

The JEP staff has many more ideas and resources for service-learning courses and we are more than happy to help faculty think through curriculum decisions. Give us a call!

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RECYCLE USED PRINTER CARTRIDGES, CELL PHONES & PDA’S

IN CELEBRATION OF APRIL BEING EARTH MONTH, JEP IS HELPING USC’S CHILD CARE CENTER WITH THEIR RECYCLING FUNDRAISER.

Please bring your used cell phones, PDA’s and printer cartridges to the JEP House. We will be collecting these items in a box in the lobby until Earth Day - April 22, 2008.
Bringing Creative Writing to the Community

Two esteemed professors share their expertise of poetry and fiction writing

BY ALICE VILLASEÑOR

At JEP, we are keen to support faculty who are seeking new ways to become actively involved in their students’ service-learning projects. A new course in the English department — English 404: The Writer in the Community — is specifically designed to provide a training ground for creative writing students who wish to learn to lead writing workshops in schools and community settings. Cecilia Woloch and Aimee Bender designed the 404 course when they became aware of the creative writing program JEP was already offering, and recognized that their experiences creating community writing programs could enhance the efforts of JEP. The course provides students with a pedagogical framework for teaching creative writing. Students benefit from opportunities to observe and apprentice with experienced writer-teachers as they gain practical experience leading workshops under the guidance of the instructors.

Woloch, a lecturer in the Creative Writing Program, is teaching English 404 this fall. The founding director of Summer Poetry in Idyllwild, she was for seven years the Los Angeles Project Director for California Poets in the Schools. She also launched a poetry outreach program in Atlanta in conjunction with the Georgia Institute of Technology and Communities in Schools of Atlanta. Woloch has also conducted writing workshops in prisons, hospitals, museums and a shelter for homeless women. This spring she is adapting her successful programs for two 4th grade classrooms and one 7th grade classroom at 32nd Street School. The goals of the workshops are to enhance the elementary students’ communication skills, both written and oral; to help them understand and appreciate literature by experiencing the creative process first-hand; and also to encourage self-expression, self-esteem, self-respect and respect for the creative efforts of others. The objectives for USC students in the course are to gain a sound pedagogical framework for leading workshops in the community, including practical experience in creating lesson plans and designing creative writing programs, anthologies of student work, and events that bring communities together to celebrate the creative efforts of young people.

The USC students are already compiling and editing the 32nd Street students’ poems from each week’s workshops; under Professor Woloch’s supervision, the USC students will make final selections of the poems to be included (one poem from each student). Copies of the poetry compilation will be presented to the young poets as keepsakes of their accomplishments during a culmination poetry reading session. The event is scheduled to take place on the USC campus on Friday, April 25th from 6-8 p.m.

~POETRY READING~

Members of the USC community & 32nd Street School are invited to celebrate the achievements of the English 404 & 32nd Street School students.

THE EVENT IS SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 25 FROM 6-8PM ON USC’S CAMPUS (ROOM SGM 123)
The International Reading Festival

Year two — bigger and better!

BY TINA KONEAZNY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION & EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

On Saturday, March 8th, JEP’s USC ReadersPlus program again partnered with Project Books and Blankies for the second annual International Reading Festival.

This year’s event was an overwhelming success, bringing over 80 students from our neighborhood schools to the campus of USC for a day of literacy, learning and fun with their families. Each student received two free books through donations from DK Publishing and the Ella Fitzgerald Foundation; listened to book readings from a variety of folk tales from around the world; engaged in related hands-on activities presented by their USC ReadersPlus mentors and volunteers; received free event t-shirts; carried passports that were stamped as they traveled to the various world regions; and enjoyed refreshments provided by Nestle, Superior Food Warehouse and Western Bagels.

In all, over 200 community residents — children and their family members — took part in the day’s event traveling from Africa to hear the story of Why Mosquitos Buzz in People’s Ears, to Mexico to hear the Cinderella story Adelita, and to a number of other countries in the Middle East, Asia and Europe to listen to traditional tales from those regions.

One of the highlights of this year’s International Reading Festival was the special involvement demonstrated by one of JEP’s financial donors. Deena Lew and her husband Mitchell are both USC alumni and together have made generous financial contributions to JEP programs over the past two years. In addition to the monetary support given by the Lews, Deena has become even further involved in the work of JEP through the personal time she dedicated to both the planning for the International Festival and to its success on the day of the event. Deena and her family are true JEP partners, helping to make our programs, like the International Reading Festival, better and better year after year.
JE P BE UL TIM E STAFF
Brenda Pesante
Director of Community Partnerships
Jacqueline Mitchell
Office Manager
Jacqueline Whitley
Coordinator of Special Projects
Jameson Yu
Office Technology Coordinator
Mario Rocha
Administrative Assistant
Susan Harris
Associate Director, Research & Academic Affairs
Tammara Anderson
Executive Director
Tina Koneazny
Associate Director, Administration & Educational Outreach

READERS PLUS STUDENT STAFF
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

JE P STUDENT STAFF
Aakriti Garg - Trojan Health Volunteers Director
Abhinay Jhaveri - IR Program Assistant
Adam Hutchison - ENST/ GEOG Program Assistant
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Clare Velasquez - ANTH Program Assistant
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Elizabeth Hoberman - LING/PHIL Program Assistant
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Joshua Real - PPD Program Assistant

Kaelin Burns - Youth & Family Agencies Program Assistant
Kaetlin Miller - SOCI/GEOG Program Assistant
Kelsey Kopro - GEOL Program Assistant
Lindsay Palmer - Youth & Family Agencies Program Assistant
Lori Itagaki - PSYC Program Assistant
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Megan MacMillian - Youth & Family Agencies Program Assistant
Monica Bennett - SPAN Program Assistant
Raquel Lucente - Program Assistant Coordinator
Sabrina Fung - Volunteer & All Stars Program Assistant
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Stephanie Norman - EASC/ ENGL Program Assistant
Taylor Somach - GEOL Program Assistant
Thomas Chow - SOCI/ MATH/PPD Program Assistant

GRADUATE STUDENTS
Alice Villaseñor - Service-Learning Liaison
Marc De Jong - Service-Learning Liaison
Carol Brown - Research Assistant
Ferdinand Lewis - Salvatori Community Scholar
It is unusual for doctoral students to have assistants for their dissertation research. Most often, we are quite alone during this period of our academic training. In my case, however, the Salvatori Community Scholar Fellowship provided undergraduate researchers to help with my dissertation research, in return for which I provide the students with training in field research. From my perspective, the experience has been invaluable for two reasons.

First, the Fellowship has given me a way to work out my methods in a ‘real world’ situation that I could not have done by myself. Developing the research “instrument” is one of the hardest parts of the dissertation, and testing it in the field is a big part of the process. Having a research team gave me a way to find out what works and what doesn’t — much more efficiently than I could have done alone. Also, the undergraduate students brought much more than their commitment and enthusiasm to the table — they also brought alternate perspectives and opinions, which I would not have had on my own.

Equally important, though, is the opportunity I’ve had to train undergraduates in the process of advanced research. There is an aphorism that ‘teaching a subject is the best way to learn it.’ I am convinced of the truth of this. Training the undergraduate students for my project has trained me for this research more effectively than I could have imagined.

There is a gap between our experiences as undergraduates and as doctoral students, it is true, but the gap is only as wide as we assume it to be. Graduate students have the benefit of specialized training that is not available to undergraduates, but this experience has shown me that as an undergraduate I had access to instincts and curiosities that are too easily forgotten in the grind of doctoral training. Given the right opportunity, this sort of learning can lift us all up at whatever level we are working.

JEP is currently taking applicants for next year’s Salvatori Community Scholar.

Do you know anyone qualified??

The 2008 Salvatori Community Scholar(s) will work with JEP’s Director of Research and Academic Affairs, The USC faculty, and one or more community organizations to develop service-learning projects for undergraduate USC students. Projects are to be jointly determined by the needs of the community, 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 Scholar in a community-centered project.

For more information please see page 11.
Questions and Answers with Dr. Brett White

He reflects on his time with JEP as an undergraduate and how it influenced the person he is today

Last spring Dr. Brett White, a physician with the Keck School of Medicine came to the JEP House with nine other medical professionals to administer free physicals for the middle school boys participating in the Youth Impact Program (a summer program focusing on football and academics, offered through JEP). While Dr. White was here volunteering his time, he mentioned he had worked as a teaching assistant in a local school through the Joint Educational Project while he was an undergraduate at USC. We were intrigued and decided to learn more.

Below is the Q and A we had with Dr. White about his experience with JEP and how it shaped who he is today.

When did you do JEP?


What was your JEP assignment and do you think it helped guide your choice of profession?

Every week I would ride my bicycle from campus to the Manual Arts School south of campus where I would assist in teaching. This was a great experience and opened my eyes to the community around USC through direct participation. I am sure in some way this experience kindled my interest in teaching, which I continue to do as a faculty physician.

When you did JEP, what struck you most about your community assignment?

I was most struck by the disparity that I observed between the strong academic environment on the USC campus and the struggling educational atmosphere at the local high school. I had always hoped that if I could bring a small piece of the excellence from USC out into the community, I would be contributing in a very positive way to the neighborhoods surrounding the University.

How did you feel coming back to campus and volunteering to do the physicals for the Youth Impact Program?

Doing volunteer work as a physician is one of the most rewarding experiences. It was fantastic working with such a committed group of people (medical students, residents and faculty) from the Keck School of Medicine, working together as a team, having fun and providing this much needed service to a large group of excited young athletes.
DO YOU HAVE ANY STUDENTS THAT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THESE POSITIONS?

PLEASE PASS ON THESE OPPORTUNITIES TO THOSE WHO MAY BE QUALIFIED

THE JOINT EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

THE SKIRBALL PUBLIC SERVICE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Skirball Public Service Internship Program is designed to give undergraduate JEP students a deeper understanding of the community-based organizations they worked with through their service-learning courses at USC. It provides funding for students to build on their service-learning experiences by becoming 25% or 50% time interns at their JEP sites. The internships will vary, depending on the needs of the organization, but most will involve helping the organizations with fund-raising, grant-writing, program development, or other activities that are core to the agency’s operations.

Students are eligible to apply if they participated in a service-learning course or other community-based project sponsored by JEP during the 2007-08 academic year. Eligible courses include, but are not limited to: GEOG 100, PPD 227, PPD 372, PSYC 361, SOCI 169, SOCI 350, SOCI 351, SOCI 475, SOWK 400, and SWMS 384. Internships must be approved by the sponsoring site.

Applications are due April 21.

For more information and to apply for the program, please visit JEP’s website: www.usc.edu/jep. The Summer Public Service Internship Program is funded in part by a generous grant from the Skirball Foundation.

THE SALVATORI COMMUNITY SCHOLAR

The Salvatori Community Scholars program is intended to provide support to advanced graduate students who are doing community-based research whose experiences with community-based organizations can lead to new opportunities for service-learning students at USC.

The position requires:
- Experience with community-centered projects
- Strong qualitative and/or quantitative research skills
- An ability to manage diverse tasks and responsibilities
- Strong communication and collaboration skills
- An understanding of service-learning pedagogy and practice
- Attendance at pre-semester training/retreat and periodic meetings, schedule TBA

Job responsibilities include:
- Taking a cooperative leadership role in the implementation of the service-learning project
- Providing supervision and support to the undergraduate service-learning students
- Developing and grading weekly reflective essays submitted by the service-learning students
- Acting as liaison between the community, USC faculty and JEP staff
- Assisting in the recruitment and training of USC service-learning students and other volunteers
- Assisting in the evaluation of USC service-learning students and other volunteers

Remuneration consists of either 2 units of tuition for one semester or an equivalent stipend. The position requires approximately 20 hours per week, most of which can be devoted to the Scholar’s research activities.

Applications are due May 19.

Please call Susan Harris (213-740-1830) for more information about the position.

THE USC READERSPLUS GRADUATE POSITIONS

The USC ReadersPlus program is seeking three graduate students to assist in program development and support for its reading and math tutors who are placed in our neighborhood schools.

Job descriptions and applications for the following positions can be found on the JEP website: www.usc.edu/jep
- Science Education Coordinator
- Literacy Specialist
- Math Advocate

For more information, contact Tina Koneazny: koneazny@usc.edu or 213.740.1834. Applications are due May 16.
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 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