The Joint Educational Project

Dr. Sample’s Legacy Stretches Beyond Campus Walls

Retiring President worked hard for the advancement of civic engagement during his tenure as president at USC

BY TAMMARA ANDERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As Steven B. Sample prepares for his impending retirement as president, it is fitting that we reflect on what his leadership has meant to the university’s engagement in service.

Shortly after beginning his tenure as USC’s tenth president, President Steven B. Sample witnessed the chaos of the civil unrest of 1992 and its effect on the community surrounding the main campus, as well as the city of Los Angeles as a whole. Afterward, there were those recommending that USC move to another area in Southern California, away from the “social problems” that plague the university’s neighborhoods. However, instead of retreat, President Sample asked those of us with collaborations in the community to challenge ourselves to be the best, most effective partners possible. He joined us in this task by building a culture of public service and civic engagement on both campuses. As a result, service has become a de facto part of USC’s undergraduate curriculum. Today, students come to USC expecting that some form of public service will be an essential component of their education.

Elson Nash (former executive director of California Campus Compact and the Acting Director of Learn and Serve America in Washington DC) praised Sample’s leadership in his recent comments on the importance of higher education to the civic engagement movement:

Higher Education has a distinct role in service and many higher education institutions have been funded by the Learn and Serve America Higher Education grants. Institutions of higher education serve as a training ground for future teachers and other professionals. In addition, these institutions have faculty and staff with specific expertise in areas beneficial to the community. Service-learning is one of the key ways to involve universities in their role as civic institutions.

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JEP's Trojan Health Volunteers (THV) program celebrates 25 years of placing USC pre-med students in local hospital and clinics.

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Campus Compact, a national higher education association created in 1985, through its thirty plus state affiliates, is a key advocate for using service as a strategy to engage higher education institutions.

California Campus Compact recognizes key leaders of tier one research institutions that embrace the notion of using cross-disciplinary resources for civic engagement. These leaders include former Presidents/Chancellors of Stanford (Donald Kennedy), UCLA (Charles Young) and of course Steven Sample (USC). These universities led the movement of service-learning nationally in the 80’s and 90’s.

Research universities play a key role in integrating civic engagement throughout the institution and evaluating the outcomes of these programs. With the vast resources to engage disciplines from the physical sciences to professional schools, these institutions have paved the way for full institutional embrace of service and service-learning.

Under President Sample’s leadership, USC has established over three-hundred relationships with community partners. He has encouraged and inspired faculty, staff, students and community members to work together to make the communities around USC campuses a better place in which to live, to work, and go to school. These efforts have made USC a celebrated leader in the advancement of civic engagement in higher education. The Joint Educational Project (JEP), as one of the oldest and largest service-learning programs in the country, is an internationally recognized model and a testament to USC’s — and President Sample’s — commitment to civic engagement.

To commemorate this milestone, THV hosted a special event featuring guest speakers Dr. Daniel Potter and Dr. Mitchell Lew. Both doctors are alumni of USC and the Keck School of Medicine.

During his undergraduate years at USC, Dr. Potter founded Trojan Health Volunteers. Dr. Lew participated in JEP during his time on campus.

To read more about the event go to: http://college.usc.edu/news/stories/704
A Successful Partnership with Keck Medical School

USC pre-med students enjoy learning from their mentors' prior experiences

By Holly Villamagna, Assistant Director of Trojan Health Volunteers

Planning a medical career can be a daunting task. Many pre-med students at USC question whether medicine is right for them, what medical school will be like, and if they can even get in.

The Trojan Health Volunteers/Trojan Health Mentors (THM) program was designed with these questions in mind. The program pairs USC undergraduates with a first- or second-year student at USC’s Keck School of Medicine.

The THM program targets students who are unsure if they want to go to medical school or are considering taking time off before going into medicine to pursue other interests such as travel, research, or programs like Teach for America. USC juniors and seniors who are part of Trojan Health Volunteers are invited to join.

In this, its second year of operation, THM again matched USC pre-med students with a mentor from Keck based on the students’ undergraduate majors, hometowns, and interests. Mentors and mentees met for the first time during an afternoon meet-and-greet at Keck on March 3, during which time students and their mentors were given time to speak to each other. The event ended with a medical student panel that allowed USC undergraduates to ask five of the medical students questions about the day-to-day life of a medical student, taking time off, and the admissions process.

“I know some things about the application process and life as a medical student, but the best way to find out the truth is to go to the source,” said Emma McDonnell, a junior majoring in biological sciences and health and humanity.

Katie Cho, a junior majoring in psychology, recently decided to pursue a medical career and plans to take time off after graduation to volunteer and take more pre-requisite classes. After meeting with medical students who pursued research and careers in the entertainment industry before starting medical school, she said she feels more at ease with her path.

“I wanted to participate in the program because I thought it would give me better insight as to how nontraditional students can still make it to med school,” Cho said. “[My mentor’s] stories were quite influential and I can honestly say that they have motivated me to continue my pursuit towards med school.”

Students are encouraged to continue contacting their mentor throughout the year. Future mentoring events are in the works, including a ‘day in the life of a medical student’ event in which mentees will attend class with their mentors followed by lunch together.

The undergraduates agreed that the medical students’ experiences were important in helping them plan their future careers. “I am still questioning whether my heart lies more in education or in medicine,” said Reem Itani, a junior majoring in neuroscience.
The Teamwork of College Admissions & JEP

Assistant Dean shares her personal and professional perspectives

BY KAREN ROWAN-BADGER, ASSISTANT DEAN FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION

With over twenty years of experience in university student services and admission, I can finally tell the truth: I have no idea why a student will pick one school over another.

Don't get me wrong – we try to quantify it all the time. Outstanding faculty? Check. An ideal location? Check. Research, internship opportunities, a robust financial aid program, a diverse student body? Check, check, check. We use data and focus groups – and a number of proven strategies. But, in the end, I have come to understand it is often the simpler things that help a student feel that USC should be her home: a welcoming smile from a parking attendant; the enthusiasm of a tour guide; the perfect extracurricular activity.

It’s amusing to see how the core of this “unpredictableness” hasn’t changed from generation to generation. It was the same experience in my own college search back in the dark ages. My family brought me to visit USC in the spring of my high school senior year, and I was overwhelmed. All the pieces were in place to make the final decision to enroll, but I was a bit reluctant. I wanted to come here, and I knew the classes would be great. I knew I wanted to teach and work in education, but I couldn’t visualize what I was going to DO when I wasn’t in class!

We took a bus tour around the USC campus. The student guide in the front of the bus repeatedly asked me if I had any questions, and I quietly demurred each time. My parents were stunned – I had never been so silent! The bus wound around the local area, and eventually passed 32nd Street School. The student mentioned that undergraduates could get involved in the local elementary schools through a program called the Joint Educational Project. I lit up! I began asking questions, and the student happily launched into her experience with the program and encouraged me to get involved. I found my niche. When I started my first class at USC that fall (a political science class with Professor Mark Kann), he encouraged us to get involved with JEP and provided me the perfect combination – to teach a mini-course at Weemes Elementary. It was the ideal situation for me; I was able to get involved outside the classroom with my fellow students (more people to meet and work with during my transition), receive some extra credit, and be “allowed” to work with 4th grade students in the local community – a dream come true!!! Over the years, I continued my involvement with JEP as a mentor to a student at 32nd Street, and with another mini-course on student health with a group of 3rd graders. This all led to a semester of student-teaching right here in our local community.

We hear from many prospective students that they are interested in our volunteer experiences, and they often describe JEP as one of the programs that interests them the most. The use of the internet and the strength and reputation of the JEP program assist my staff in the College Admission office in recruiting some of the top students from across the country. The exciting news is that JEP doesn’t just attract students to USC – it actually helps us keep students at USC. When I am on the road talking about our great university with students and families, I can still point proudly to JEP as something that has continued to grow and change, but the core has remained the same from generation to generation. Much like the college search process.
Is it Magic? No, its Science!

*JEP’s Young Scientists Program brings science and fun to local elementary schools*

**BY LAUREN CHIANESE, READERSPLUS DIRECTOR & SCIENCE COORDINATOR**

Is it science or magic? Students at Weemes Elementary watched as the Young Scientists Program’s Monica Kreindel, a graduate student in Occupational Therapy, dripped a slimy orb off a spoon that then magically hovered in the air. It wasn’t magic, it was science.

The Young Scientist Program (YSP) is a supplemental academic experience provided by the Joint Educational Project to introduce fourth and fifth graders to the exciting world of science, a world they may not have encountered before. In the age of *Harry Potter* and *Twilight*, real life can seem painfully boring by comparison, but the YSP exposes its students to the real-life magic happening all around them. Through hands-on activities, students interact with labs designed to get them thinking like a scientist.

Four USC students —Yagna Dasgupta, Rebecca Ferdmen, Monica Kreindel, and Jia Jia Zhu — conduct these sessions every two weeks at Weemes Elementary and Vermont Elementary schools. Through YSP, they are able to enrich the education of kids in the USC community, while also getting valuable teaching experience.

Ferdman, a Junior Environmental Studies and Neuroscience Major, is excited to be spreading her passion to a new generation: “Every lab experiment leads to new discoveries, both for me and for the students.” Students explore concepts such as “Where does wind come from?” and “How was the Grand Canyon made?” by conducting hands-on experiments. This year students have created their own mini Grand Canyon using sand and cups of water with holes in the bottom to recreate the effect of water erosion. They have also built a heart-like pump using cups, balloons and straws. Furthermore, they have learned about the periodic table by making candy models of the elements — they got to eat them at the end!

These experiments help students understand the world around them using scientific principles. “The great thing about the labs is that the kids can actually do experiments that are related to the lessons so that it’s not just a concept but something tangible that makes it easier for them to remember things,” notes Dasgupta, a Junior majoring in Psychology and Economics, about the activities.

Observing the students in these labs reminds us what it was like to be curious and think creatively about the world around us. Students come up with predictions that are as much creative as they are deductive (such as exploring wind as something that happens because the sky is breathing hard,)

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and imaging that the dinosaurs dug the Grand Canyon.

Recently the White House launched the “Educate to Innovate” Program that aims to improve science education in the United States. "It goes beyond the facts in a biology textbook or the questions on an algebra quiz," said President Obama. "It is about the ability to understand our world, to harness and train that human capacity to solve problems and think critically -- a set of skills that informs the decisions we make throughout our lives." (www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/educate-innovate) This is exactly the goal of the Young Scientist Program: to teach children how to act and think like scientists in and outside of the lab while also providing them with mentors who are pursuing science careers at USC.

**CONGRATULATIONS TROJANS!**

For the fourth consecutive year, USC has made The President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

This recognition, launched in 2006, annually recognizes institutions of higher education for their commitment to and achievement in community service. The Corporation for National and Community Service (in collaboration with the Department of Education, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Campus Compact and the American Council on Education) announces the annual Honor Roll award recipients.

Honorees are chosen based on a series of selection factors including scope and innovation of service projects, percentage of student participation in service activities, incentives for service, and the extent to which the school offers academic service-learning courses.

After many years (and break downs) the old JEP van has been retired.

The Joint Educational Project would like to say thank you to Dr. & Mrs. Mitchell & Deena Lew for their generous donation of a Ford Windstar mini-van.

This mini-van will allow transportation of JEP students from campus to community sites.

Thank you for your continued support Lew Family!
JEP’s Multifaceted Evaluation Process

Sharing examples of the various ways that JEP evaluates service provided

BY SUSAN HARRIS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

We are often asked how many students participate in JEP and from what departments. After an upsurge in participation in the early 2000s—likely corresponding to USC being named Time Magazine’s “College of the Year 2000” for its community outreach efforts—enrollment in JEP has hovered around 1100-1200 students every semester (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: JEP student enrollment: Spring 2003-Spring 2010

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Since JEP is housed in the College, most of our students come from schools and departments in the liberal arts and sciences. However, an increasing percentage of our enrollment is made up of students who enroll as non-credit volunteers. Many of these are past participants, but increasingly they are students seeking volunteer experiences not available through courses. For example, in the last few semesters, we have started programs for students in the performing arts, archeology and art history and who wish to share their talents and avocations with the community.

Every semester, JEP asks students to evaluate their experiences in our program. Figure 2 summarizes a portion of our student evaluation data from the last 12 semesters, focusing primarily on USC student learning outcomes. We ask students to indicate their level of (dis)agreement with the following statements using a 6-point Likert scale (with 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree):

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• Service-learning through JEP helps me see how the subject matter I learn in the classroom can be applied in everyday life.
• I learned something new about the community from my JEP experience this semester.
• I learned more about how to work with people different from myself (in terms of race, class, culture, gender, age, etc.) through my experiences in JEP.

In addition, we ask students how well their experiences in JEP are integrated into their course work. Specifically, students use a 6-point scale, where 1=poor and 6=excellent, to assess the “professor's efforts to help students relate their JEP experiences to course readings, lectures, discussions, etc.”

Figure 2: JEP student evaluations (average scores, Fall 2003-Fall 2009)

By and large, students think they benefit from their experiences in JEP, especially with regard to learning about diversity and the community. An apparent weakness in our program is the direct link between the JEP and classroom experiences, which consistently rate lowest on our student evaluations. We are using this feedback to develop more nuanced tools to identify more specific and less subjective student learning outcomes. In addition, we welcome the opportunity to work more closely with faculty to help them find ways to integrate service-learning into their course curricula.

Come celebrate with the 4th Annual International Reading Festival!
Learn about cultural diversity through folk tales, ethnic food, and activities from around the world at the Fourth Annual International Reading Festival.
Sunday, April 18th from 12 - 4pm.
Founder’s Park on USC’s University Park Campus
Free books! Free food! Lots of fun!

*This event is co-sponsored by JEP's USC ReadersPlus program, the USC College Francophone Research and Resource Center, and Project Books and Blankies
Reflections From a Local Elementary Student

My name is Kaylie Koneazny and I am a 5th grade student from 32nd Street School. I have been lucky enough to have USC students come and teach in my classroom. This year, I have had two different mini-teams come to my class. The two subjects I learned were Poetry and Earth history and they both were great.

Early in the year, we had the Earth science mini-team. They taught us all about volcanoes, earthquakes, subduction, and more. My favorite thing to learn about though, was lava. I liked learning about the types of lava and how it forms. I really liked this mini-team but I liked the next team even more.

More recently, we had a poetry team come in. I really liked that they read a poem to us from other poets, and then we had to write one ourselves. I liked writing poems because I never thought writing it would be so easy. One of my favorite parts was at the end of the mini-team assignment when we did our poetry reading. It was cool showing off my work.

JEP mini-teams are required to develop evaluations for classroom children to complete at the end of their 8-week teaching assignments. Below are some examples of these evaluations which inform our USC students (and JEP staff) what knowledge the community students gained from the mini-course.
Student Service Opportunities

Here is a list of some opportunities available to both undergraduate and graduate students.

**Skirball Summer Public Service Internship Program**

This internship is a 1/4- or 1/2-time paid summer internship for JEP students to expand on the service-learning assignments they had with community organizations during the F09-Sp10 school year. Applications are due April 23rd and can be downloaded from JEP's website: http://college.usc.edu/assets/files/docs/jep/applications/app_skirball_psi.pdf

**Director of Service-Learning for Oakwood, a private K-12 school, in North Hollywood**

Establish and operate service-learning programs for the secondary school. Develop partnerships with students, faculty, administration, non-profits, and government agencies to integrate service learning into the secondary school curriculum and to provide community-based educational opportunities for secondary school students. For more information contact Susan Harris at: scharris@usc.edu

**California Campus Compact Announces New Student Leadership Initiative Grant**

California Campus Compact, with support from the Corporation for National and Community Service, Learn and Serve America Higher Education, is pleased to announce the Student Leadership Initiative. This 15-month grant program encourages and supports change-making student-led service and service-learning projects that will not only aid those hardest hit by California’s economic crisis, but also help California emerge from the crisis with a more innovative, green and sustainable economic future.

The proposal deadline is Wednesday, May 5, 2010 at 4 p.m. For more information go to: www.cacampuscompact.org

**Summer 2010 Research Assistant**

The Joint Educational Project (JEP) is a service-learning program housed in the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. JEP was established in 1972 to link traditional classroom-based learning with educational experiences in the community surrounding USC’s main campus. The program seeks to foster the intellectual, social and ethical development of USC students while providing needed services for community organizations.

Each semester, JEP places more than 1000 students in community service assignments that complement their USC coursework.

JEP is looking for a graduate student to work with JEP’s Associate Director for Research & Academic Affairs to evaluate the learning outcomes of JEP’s 1000+ service-learning students.

For more information contact Susan Harris at: scharris@usc.edu
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Marissa Monteiro - SPAN P.A.
Stephanie Norman - Placement Coordinator
Jonathan Ou - GEOL P.A.
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Nannapas Phawanaph - MATH & CSCI P.A.
Joshua Real - Youth & Family Agencies P.A.
Rachel Thom - HIST P.A.
Holly Villamagna - THV Assistant Director
Camille Waddell - POSC, CLAS, ENGL P.A.
Anna Whitmey - GEOG, SOCI, EDHP P.A.
Are You a USC Faculty or Staff Member Looking to Get Involved in Our Neighborhood Community?

Then the USC Literacy Project is for you!

JEP's USC ReadersPlus program places faculty, staff, alumni and graduate students in our local schools through the USC Literacy Project. Volunteers spend 1 - 2 hours a week at a local school reading to and with a child in need, sharing the joy of reading and encouraging literacy growth and confidence. All volunteers will be provided with a pre-service orientation which will introduce various techniques and strategies for tutoring students in the area of reading.

If you have an hour or two per week to spend with a child, please contact Gwen Randolph at gwen.randolph@hotmail.com or at 310.612.1825