COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING

The Community Engaged Learning program is in full swing at TCNJ, as the Bonner Center organized and carried out several CEL projects in the month of October, despite several weekends off due to Homecoming and Fall Break. In total, the Center mobilized over 150 First Year students to complete more than 1,200 hours throughout the month.

The Fall is a particularly busy and productive time as the Bonner Center works closely with faculty to implement the Community Engaged Learning program into half of the First Year Seminar Program (FSP) classes that all First Year students must take. Implementing service learning or community engaged learning into courses is considered a AACU high impact practice in terms of teaching and learning practices. This year, the Bonner Center has worked with over 40 FSP courses to incorporate CEL into the curriculum. Some of these classes include Professor Tarter’s ‘Incarceration Nation,’ Dean Rifkin’s ‘Language and Society,’ and Professor Hagedorn’s ‘Does What We Eat Matter?’ In addition to these courses, Professor Bates’ class ‘New Jersey’s Urban Environment’ and Professor Nordquist’s ‘Environmental Justice’ class worked with the East Trenton Collaborative on community development projects in Trenton, including on a historical African American cemetery in the North Ward of the city.

Additionally, Professor Kamber’s class ‘Morality, God, and Free-will’ co-lead a Socrates’ Cafe session at Mercer County Correctional Center under the guidance of Bonner Community Scholars. Socrates’ Cafe brings inmates and students together to engage in a meaningful, respectful exchange of ideas. The aim of the project is to learn how to think through philosophical discussions. Participants talk openly and honestly with others about important questions such as “what is the meaning of life,” and “is there life after death?” The powerful project is a great example of the many exciting things that the Bonner Center and First Year students do during the Fall semester.

Bonner Events

The Bonner Center hosted and co-sponsored several events throughout the month of October, including a film screening of the documentary “Sexy Baby,” a forum on life after Superstorm Sandy, and the Pop Up Thrift Shoppe. The “Sexy Baby” screening focused on issues around sexuality in the media. Over 60 people, including community members, TCNJ students, and a local high school student, attended the screening and discussion. Penny Ettinger of PEI Kids opened up the event...
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Bonner Events continued…

with Susan Victor of Womanspace. Dr. Sandy Gibson of the School of Counselor Education led a fruitful discussion following the documentary. PEI Kids and Womanspace co-sponsored the event with the Bonner Center.

The forum “Stronger than the Storm?” addressed the politics, planning, and progress after Superstorm Sandy hit the northeast one year earlier. The forum brought together four experts in the field including Diane Bates, Associate Professor of Sociology at TCNJ; Scott Gurian, Sandy Recovery Reporter at NJ Spotlight and NJ Public Radio; Chris Sturm, Senior Director of State Policy at NJ Future; and, Linda Weber, Resiliency Network Manager at the Sustainability Institute, with Michael Nordquist serving as facilitator for the discussion. The event brought over 40 people together to discuss and debate the important issues around the storm and recovery, and attendees were able to participate in the lively discussion. The TCNJ Here for Home Campaign co-sponsored the event with the Bonner Center.

The TCNJ Bonner Thrift Project held its first Pop Up Thrift Shoppe in October, bringing in over $240.00 within just two hours. The Thrift Project collects thrift items and sells them on campus at a pop up shop in the Student Center in; all proceeds are donated to the Rescue Mission of Trenton, a TCNJ Bonner community partner. To learn more about this student-led, social entrepreneurship project, visit http://thriftproject.tumblr.com.

**Cost Accounting Class Partners with Isles Youth Institute**

This year, as a part of the ongoing partnership between Isles Youth Institute (IYI) and The College of New Jersey’s Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement, the Bonner Center has engaged Professor Bea Chiang’s Cost Accounting class to work with IYI students on developing microbusinesses.

IYI’s school curriculum for this year is focusing on a project based learning model that will use five microbusinesses to actively engage students in the learning process.

The project kicked off yesterday at TCNJ where the college students and IYI students met in five groups to begin their businesses: wash and fold laundry service, beds and sheds, a t-shirt business, a small motor and bike repair shop, and a school store. Each business is led by a CEO from IYI. We are excited about this partnership and this project for both the TCNJ students and IYI students!

**Trenton Prevention Policy Board**

The TPPB held its monthly board meeting on October 9, 2013 at Trenton Central High School. The issue-based Working Groups met individually to discuss their set of recommendations for the annual report. Members also discussed some of the accomplishments the Board has had over the past year, including implementing an evidence-based eighth-grade transition program in Trenton, as well as successfully securing funding from the Attorney General’s Office to implement the Trenton Violence Reduction Strategy in the city. The next meeting will take place on November 13, 2013. For more information on the Board, please visit http://tppb.pages.tcnj.edu.

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