Momentum Builds for Community-Engaged Learning

Research and Courses Span Disciplines and Cultures for Real-World Learning and Impact

To understand sustainable cities in the global context, students in a new urban studies service-learning course are focusing on urbanization in the world's two largest economies and biggest emitters of greenhouse gases: China and the United States.

Stanford students form interdisciplinary teams with students from Tsinghua University's Academy of Arts and Design to collaborate on sustainability projects related to air pollution, green trucking, walkability, and youth hostels. Clean Air Asia provides input and guidance as the community partner for the projects.

In this inaugural pilot class, students from across the Pacific meet real-time via videoconference, and student teams connect regularly through smart phone apps, Skype, and e-mail. Together, they are investigating tradeoffs and choices related to land, energy, and water resources, and the need to balance economic vitality, environmental quality, cultural heritage, and social equity. In June, Tsinghua University faculty will come to Stanford University to meet the student teams in person as they showcase their projects at a public exhibition and symposium on campus.

Multicultural exchange and cooperative design projects are the backbone of the interdisciplinary course, *International Urbanization Seminar: Cross-Cultural Collaboration for Sustainable Urban Development.* The class is co-taught by Stanford urban studies lecturers Deland Chan and Kevin Hsu, and Zhiyong Fu and Mustafa Kirwan of Tsinghua University.

Hsu explained, "Truly sustainable cities incorporate promising international practices while remaining sensitive to local conditions and the reality of citizens' lives. Engaging with communities and inviting their participation can help generate solutions that are more likely to be implemented and successful in the long run."

Chan added, "We hope to train the next generation of thinkers and doers to take this approach in addressing urban sustainability. Our goal for this course is to offer students the experience of working on cross-cultural teams with access to both local and global stores of knowledge, training in empathy and community-engagement techniques, and positions of deep mutual respect—the building blocks for effectively navigating sustainability efforts in the future."

> "Community-engaged learning not only advances the fundamental aims of a Stanford education, it also exemplifies the fundamental character of the institution."
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> *– Study of Undergraduate Education at Stanford*

As part of designing the course for spring 2014, Chan and Hsu participated in a Haas Center Service-Learning Faculty Development Seminar and were recipients of a course development grant. The course also leverages what the team has learned from teaching the service-learning course *Sustainable Cities* with Bay Area partners.

These courses, which incorporate interdisciplinary faculty research and teaching; campus-community partnerships; and rich, hands-on learning for students, exemplify what the Haas Center's Community-Engaged Scholarship (CES) program aims to achieve.

For nearly three decades, the Center has worked to catalyze community-engaged learning on campus through helping professors integrate transformative service-learning experiences into courses and offering a continuum of support for Stanford students to produce scholarship that addresses real-world issues.

Directors of Community-Engaged Learning Join Stanford

In the last few years, this work has gained considerable momentum, in part due to the 2012 *Study of Undergraduate Education at Stanford* (SUES), which lays out an ambitious agenda for Stanford to remain at the forefront of teaching and research of public importance through "thoughtfully and purposefully connect[ing] students' service in the community with their academic work."

Based in part on recommendations in the SUES report, in 2013, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (VPUE) Harry J. Elam, Jr. launched a partnership with the Haas Center to expand these learning opportunities, including service-learning courses and internships across academic programs.

Bottom: Students and faculty connect weekly via teleconference. Photo courtesy of Kevin Hsu.

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The expansion included the doubling of the CES team in 2013-14. With funding from the Raikes Foundation, VPUE, the School of Humanities and Sciences, and the Office of the President, three directors of community-engaged learning (DCELs) were hired: Suzanne Gaulocher, who focuses on health; Luke Terra, who focuses on education; and Sarah Truebe, who focuses on environmental sustainability. The DCELs support faculty in creating new courses or modifying existing ones to integrate community-based learning components that meet both academic and community learning goals. They also work to expand opportunities for rich and rewarding undergraduate internships.
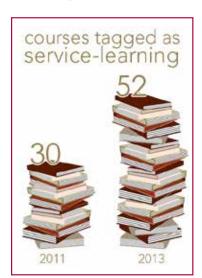
Haas Center Executive Director Tom Schnaubelt explained, "Community-engaged learning is very relationship intensive, and having deep content knowledge is also essential. The DCELs, who have a deep understanding of both academic and community contexts, play critical roles as connectors and have significantly increased the support for this work among diverse stakeholders."

Elam and Schnaubelt presented on the expansion of community-engaged learning to the Faculty Senate in February 2014. According to the *Stanford Report*'s coverage of the Senate session, Al Camarillo, American history professor and Leon Sloss, Jr. Memorial Professor, urged faculty to take advantage of the expanded community-engaged learning opportunities.

"It makes you a better teacher," Camarillo said. "It enhances the intellectual vitality of our classrooms. And it prepares these students to be better citizens once they leave Stanford."
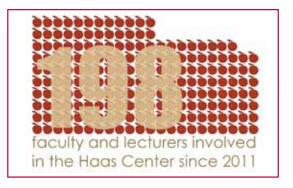
Successful Pilot and Expansion of Fellowships

There has also been significant momentum in CES fellowship programs. June 2014 marks the conclusion of the three-year pilot period for the Graduate Public Service (GPS) Fellowship, which continues to be made possible with support from the Vice Provost for Graduate Education. The program has helped graduate students across disciplines consider how to integrate their professional and scholarly interests with their civic goals, and has included 51 students from every Stanford school.

courses tagged as service-learning

52
30
2011   2013

Fellows develop a deep understanding of community-engaged scholarship practices, resources to support this work, and strategies for disseminating their research findings for maximum public impact.

198 faculty and lecturers involved in the Haas Center since 2011

They also gain skills in mentoring undergraduates, including through designing new learning experiences and serving as TAs for service-learning courses.

As one GPS fellow noted, "[T]he fellowship illuminated the many paths available to me as a PhD student interested in engaged scholarship. I would not have known about these options and opportunities had it not been for the fellowship, and feel much more aware of the public service community and its offerings on campus."

The Haas Center also launched two new fellowships this year. The Roland Longevity Fellowship is made possible by The Miriam Aaron Roland Fund Focusing on the Elderly and offered in partnership with the Stanford Center on Longevity. It supports Stanford students doing research on issues of aging or providing services to older adults to enhance their quality of life and participation in the community. The Public Scholarship Summer Fellowship, made possible by The Public Service Scholars Fund, supports graduating seniors or coterms in disseminating robust research that serves community partners or public constituencies.

Research with Impact as a Collaborative Enterprise

Whether international courses or local fellowships, collaborating with community organizations and members gives students a unique vantage on how to conduct rigorous scholarship that changes policy, practice, and people's everyday lives.

Catherine Heaney, associate professor of psychology, medicine and human biology, and a long-time champion for service-learning, was awarded the 2014 Miriam Aaron Roland Volunteer Service Prize. She noted that community-based learning experiences "enable students to understand research as something that can both broaden your worldview and enable you to take an evidence-based approach to social change."