



THE UNIVERSITY AS CITIZEN

Cornell's Public Service Center (PSC)

Past Recipients of the Kaplan Family Distinguished Faculty Fellowship in Service-Learning

Liz Holmes



Kenneth Reardon,
City and Regional Planning

CU



Michael Lounsbury,
Industrial and Labor Relations

Robert Barker/CU



Paula Horrigan, Landscape
Architecture and chair of the
FFIS governance committee

Charles Harrington/CU



Carl Batt, Food Science

CU



Therese O'Connor, Hotel
Administration and director
of the Feeding and Housing
the Homeless Program;
not pictured: Winthrop
Wetherbee III, English and
Comparative Literature

As a civic-minded institution, Cornell engages its resources—institutional, teaching, and research—in serving the community. This is at the core of the Public Service Center's (PSC) mission. Cornell's Public Service Center works with local, national, and transnational community leaders in its responsiveness to public and social concerns.

The Cornell Public Service Center was founded in 1991 by President Emeritus Frank H. T. Rhodes to coordinate, expand, and institutionalize faculty and student service-learning and community outreach. The establishment of the PSC was Cornell's response to a growing interest in public service in higher education and within Cornell faculty and students.

Over the past 13 years, the PSC has focused on engaging faculty and students in academic-based service learning; leadership education for democratic citizenship; and facilitating two-way collaborations between the university community and communities in Tompkins County and beyond. The PSC champions the conviction that the Cornell experience upholds service as essential to active citizenship.

In the successful change from volunteer services to public service education and civic engagement, the PSC programming expanded tremendously. The PSC engages more than 3,500 Cornell students annually in public service education through well-planned curricular and co-curricular service actions. These activities support a strong network of faculty in academic service learning and public scholarship, and collaborate with more than 150 local, state, national, and international organizations.

Faculty Fellows-In-Service

Faculty Fellows-In-Service (FFIS) is a vehicle for Cornell faculty and students to work together with communities to meet human needs. It is a network of more than 100 faculty led by a governance committee consisting of a faculty representative from each Cornell college and the director of the PSC.



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Community Partnership Programs

The PSC staff and student leaders develop programs and practices that focus on facilitating two-way collaborations between the university and communities in Tompkins County and beyond.

Community Work-Study Program: Every year more than 300 eligible federal work-study students are employed as part-time staff in 120 local government and other nonprofit agencies.

Community-Based Internship Program (CBIP): CBIP, a comprehensive student volunteer internship program, places students in career-related, academic-based positions in Tompkins County government and nonprofit agencies.

Volunteer Clearinghouse: More than 800 volunteer opportunities are accessible via the searchable database on the PSC web site, providing information and referral services for individuals and groups who want to volunteer for local agencies or events.

Community Internet Connection: In collaboration with Cornell Information Technologies, the PSC offers a high-speed Internet connection for a modest fee to community members for computing services similar to those available to members of the Cornell community.

Staff Development Workshops: In collaboration with Cornell's Office of Human Resources, the PSC offers staff development workshops held for the Cornell administrative and professional staff to community leaders and nonprofit administrators.

Civic Leaders Fellows: Two central New York community leaders in economic and community development join the Cornell community of scholars, as learners and teachers, for an academic year. Receiving a fellowship of \$5,000 and academic appointment as a Cornell Scholar in the Department of City and Regional Planning or the Community and the Rural Development Institute (CaRDI), the fellows conduct a project that enhances individual, organizational, or community capacities for dealing with current social and economic challenges.

The PSC Americorps VISTA Project: This university-community collaboration engages 13 VISTA members in capacity building and indirect service projects in the greater Ithaca community, e.g., the City of Ithaca's Neighborhood Planning Initiative, the McCormick Juvenile Correctional Facility, and the Family Treatment Court of Tompkins County.

K-12 Outreach Programs

Every year more than 400 undergraduate and graduate students participate in the PSC's K-12 education programs. The students provide tutoring and mentoring, teaching and curriculum development, and science literacy for the Ithaca and surrounding school districts.

REACH (Raising Educational Attainment Challenge): The PSC recruits 200 Cornell students as tutors in the America Reads Challenge (ARC) and America Counts Challenge (ACC) for the schools and community organizations serving Ithaca's children and youth.

Let's Get Ready!: Forty Cornell students work as mentors and coaches to low-income and minority students at Ithaca High School to prepare them for successful SAT testing.

Encourage Young Engineering Students (EYES): Cornell's College of Engineering students develop and implement hands-on, interactive engineering activities that teach science and math skills to local K-12 students.

Graduate Student School Outreach Project (GSSOP): About 30 graduate students from all Cornell colleges work collaboratively with teachers and staff to develop curriculum enrichment mini courses appropriate for elementary and secondary school students.

Youthnet: This mentoring program links New York City inner city youths with Cornell students via weekly e-mails. The program expands the experience of New York City youth by promoting regular use of the Internet as a medium for informal education about careers, academics, and technology.

Community Partnership Programs are guided by the following principles:

- That communities know best about what is to be done in their neighborhoods, parks, recreation, and development areas
- That universities and communities have substantial resources and assets which can be used with intelligence for the common good
- That both the university and communities have a stake in developing youth as active and productive citizens
- That university-community collaboration should be mutually beneficial
- That collaborations should foster a greater understanding of each of the constituencies involved



Leonardo Vargas-Mendez
directs the Public Service
Center.

The FFIS governance committee awards competitive minigrants for 15 service-learning projects every year for faculty interested in developing courses and projects. FFIS offers assistance with curriculum development and community sites and partners for the course projects. FFIS courses and projects involve more than a thousand students in academic service-learning and works with dozens of nonprofit organizations and local, state, and national government and community development agencies.

In recognition of the importance of the national movement in higher education for greater civic engagement, Barbara Kaplan '59, her husband Leslie Kaplan, son Douglas Kaplan '88, and daughter Emily Kaplan '91 created the Kaplan Family Distinguished Faculty Fellowship in Service-Learning. Two \$5,000 awards were established for scholars seeking to create or expand innovative service-learning projects that actively involve Cornell students in community-based learning, research, and outreach efforts that address important community-identified policy issues. The award reinforces Cornell's tradition of service to society and fosters further extension of public scholarship to all facets of Cornell's mission.

The Cornell Urban Scholars Program

Through the generous support of the Heckscher Foundation for Children, the Cornell Urban Scholars Program (CUSP) is beginning its fourth year. CUSP is a unique academic-based public service education project designed to challenge both undergraduate and graduate students to become more active in direct service, policy analysis, and issue advocacy to address the root causes of persistent poverty in New York City. The program encourages Cornell's top scholars to pursue careers with New York City agencies involved in direct services and policy change efforts affecting low-income individuals, families, and communities.

Over the last three years, more than 250 students have participated in the program. The activities include alternative spring break service trips; public service internships and community-based research during the summer; a graduate fellowship for action research; an academic journal; and a government and nonprofit career fair. Students are well-prepared for the program, which includes an orientation that introduces them to the principles of good practice of community service learning and to New York City's complex urban policy and poverty issues.

The graduate fellowship gives 10 graduate students the opportunity to work with community leaders of direct service, policy analysis, and issue advocacy organizations on collecting and analyzing data on critical economic and social issues confronting New York City's poorest children, families, and communities.

CUSP is a collaborative program of the Department of City and Regional Planning, the Cornell Public Service Center, the New York City Cooperative Extension, the Cornell Graduate School, and Alumni Affairs and Development.

Bartels Undergraduate Action Research Fellows Program

The Henry E. and Nancy Horton Bartels Undergraduate Action Research Fellows Program links a group of undergraduates who are interested in integrating action research-based service learning into their academic preparation. These students work with an organized network of faculty and extension staff who are experts in the practice of action research.

The program emerged out of an informal conversation between a Cornell alumnus and an anthropology professor on ways to enhance the quality of undergraduate education. A proposal was developed offering undergraduates the opportunity to pursue independent research on issues of critical importance

to communities of Cornell, Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York State, and neighboring Canada, using PAR methods. Designed as a three-year demonstration effort managed by a volunteer faculty team and led by Davydd Greenwood, Anthropology, the program is funded through a gift to Cornell. Students selected as Bartels Fellows receive supplemental financial aid and research support. Eight to ten students participate each year in field-based research and a year long, biweekly, two-credit seminar for each semester. The community in which an undergraduate student will be involved identifies a well-developed topic, and the student's proposal provides a plan to ensure the continuity of Cornell's relationship with the community organization or group.

THE BARTELS' PAR SEMINAR: This is an interdisciplinary, inter-college seminar in which a team of faculty coteaches this two-credit course on a voluntary basis in the fall and spring semesters. The course features time for individual problem solving as well as lecture and discussion. Seminar topics include historical origins of PAR, key PAR principles, comparison to positivist social sciences, ethical responsibilities/human subject review, entering the community, quantitative and qualitative research methods, basic research design and data collection, data analysis, and maintaining good partnership relations.

Student Leadership for Social Change

Students have a variety of organized opportunities for leadership development through public service actions. PSC's purpose is to prepare the "leaders of the future" to be socially responsible and active citizens who understand that they can effect positive social change through action, reflection, and organization with others.

These programs and projects provide students with opportunities for service exploration and discovery, career exploration, critical reflection, and community building. They can be one-time service experiences, weeklong service actions in diverse communities, and on-going service efforts in the local Ithaca human service community. Students find a service option that matches their curiosity and interest and that challenges them to deepen their commitment to public work.

POST (PRE-ORIENTATION SERVICE TRIPS), A FIRST YEAR PRE-ORIENTATION PROGRAM: Incoming first-year and transfer students perform hands-on community service projects each day of the program, fulfilling the service tradition that is part of Cornell's mission. POST provides incoming students an opportunity to become familiar with Ithaca—the community that they will be a part of during their time at Cornell. It also gives incoming students the chance to meet new Cornellians and get a head start on making friends at Cornell.

POST, Pre-Orientation Service Trips

Incoming first-year and transfer students participate in hands-on projects in the community.



At the Sciencenter
Background: Niiamah Ashong '08 and Kalisa Martin '08, team members; foreground: Beau Brinker '05 and Sorbrique Grant '07, POST team leaders



Jon Reis Photography



At Loaves & Fishes
(l. to r.) Soyen Yu '08, Marisa Davies '08, Patricia Catauro '08, and team leader Katherine Drew '06 prepare salad for the day's lunch at Loaves & Fishes, while a staff member looks on.



Jon Reis Photography



At Loaves & Fishes
Alex Haber '08 and Bradley Owens '08 work with Loaves & Fishes staff.



Jon Reis Photography



At DeWitt Middle School
Jennifer Rosenbaum '06 builds a path for the Ithaca City School District at Dewitt Middle School.



Jon Reis Photography

CUSP, Cornell Urban Scholars Program

The LIFT Project



Graduate student Steve McFarland works with children on video cameras and computers.

T.R.U.C.E. Fitness and Nutrition Center, Part of the Harlem Children's Zone



Grant Harrell '05 and Alexandra Bohler '05 work with children reading books.



The Housing Department of the New York Society for the Deaf: Graduate student Neejra Vasishtha works with seniors.



The CUSP Group

Former POST participants lead POST teams of eight to ten new students. Project sites and evening activities take place in the greater Ithaca area. Last year's POST service included light demolition work and painting, trail maintenance, visits to seniors at area nursing homes, and grounds work. Projects vary from year to year, depending upon the needs of the local community.

THE STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: The PSC Student Leadership Program fosters student leadership and social responsibility. It is a leadership program that introduces student coordinators who run PSC student organizations to service-learning theories and practices, project and volunteer management techniques and practices, and larger societal issues of social and economic inequalities and power differentials. The program consists of a student leadership council made up of all student leaders of PSC organizations and a 2-credit course, Service Learning and Active Citizenship Seminar.

Starting in Fall 2004, members of the student leadership council have been required to take a 2-credit seminar based in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The course helps students to gain skills, tools, perspectives, and knowledge in order to become change agents and critical thinkers. The course links local service projects with larger social issues through the tools of evaluation, work plans, and issue briefings. The course entails seminar discussions, readings, reflective writing, film screenings, and community partner roundtables.

PSC Alumni Programs

The Cornell Public Service Center works with Cornell Clubs and regional alumni offices and to plan alumni-student community service events. This annual tradition—now in its fifth during winter break. They help their home communities with brief volunteer projects, while making friends and networking with fellow Cornellians. Service events take place every year during the first weekend of January in New York City, Boston, Chicago, Washington D.C., and San Francisco. Austin, Texas, and Hartford, Connecticut, were added this year. Last year, more than 120 alumni and students participated.

Leonardo Vargas-Mendez, Director
The Public Service Center

Cornell Club of San Francisco

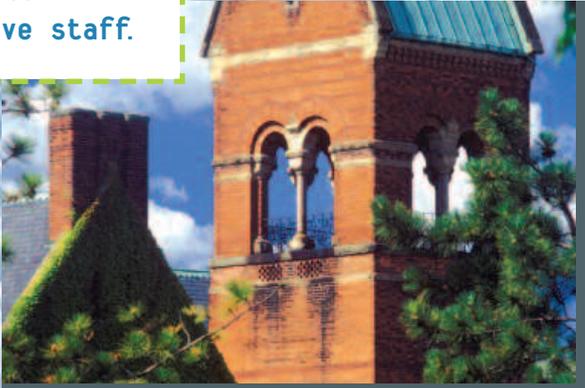


Cornell Cares Day, a student-alumni service event (with the Cornell Club of San Francisco): Students work at a food bank in San Francisco.



psc holds alumni-student community service events in several cities.

barnes hall houses the public service center administrative staff.



Barnes Hall



Davydd Greenwood, Anthropology, leads the Bartels Undergraduate Action Research Fellows Program.

For more information: 
www.psc.cornell.edu