Director's Note: Service Learning and Transition from College
By: Eric Fretz, CCESL director

Spring, for many college seniors is an anxious time. Enrolling in graduate school, accepting an entry-level position, traveling, serving in the Peace Corps or just dropping out for awhile until the economy perks up again--these are just a few of the options in front of many college seniors.

I often worry about how our students plan to apply their community-based skills after college. What happens when they leave DU and take up professional positions? In my more gloomy moments, I wonder if our former students are taking what they learned in service learning courses and using it to secure careers with companies and organizations that are working against the social justice principles that they developing during their college years.

My antidote to feeling gloomy is to get out and talk to folks, so over the past few weeks I've been chatting with our seniors about their post-graduation plans. Here is what I found:

Gergana Argirova, a piano performance major, is enrolling in a Master's of Education program. Her goal is to open her own school in her home country of Bulgaria, teach kids to play the piano and write papers and do research about her work.

D.J. Close, a Political Science major, was accepted to the El Pomar Fellowship program where he will learn how to oversee community grants, manage a nonprofit, engage in philanthropy and develop as a community leader.

Emelye Neff, an International Studies and Geography double-major, wants to start a farm-to-table local foods program in Denver.

Vinny English, a Real Estate Construction major, will be working in the professional scouting program with the Boy Scouts of America.
(Director’s Note, continued from pg 1)

After these conversations, I feel better. Why? Our students are leaving DU with a tank full of ideas on how to develop a full and meaningful public life.

From these conversations I have become intrigued by the professional paths our students take. As a result, we are implementing a research project that will follow our seniors through their post-graduation years in order to find out how they are using their community skills and developing a public life. I remain hopeful, more on that later.

Public Good Interview:
Adrienne Russell
Interviewer: Jenny Whitcher, CCESL associate director

What is your job and title at DU?
I am assistant professor of Digital Media Studies and Mass Communications. All of the courses I teach are cross-listed between the two.

Tell me about your public good project.
My project has allowed me to both do public good research and support the revision of our journalism curriculum. I started out by establishing relationships with activist media groups or groups that had a media-oriented component. These groups tend to be at the forefront of media innovation because, having never had their interests served by the norms and practices of traditional media, they have nothing to lose in changing things up. My research involved interviewing these activist media groups to find out how they see the media landscape unfolding. I was looking to learn what skills and resources they thought were most important going forward in order to inform our desire to create a program that emphasizes the public service role of journalism. Because of this research I was able to weigh in on the journalism curriculum revision based on what's actually going on in Denver, which I think made the revisions stronger.

I conducted these interviews with several organizations and I ended up getting really involved with the Open Media Foundation - formerly known as Deproduction. The Open Media Foundation is the umbrella organization to Denver Open Media, Denver’s public access station. They have a larger civic mission to get the tools of the media into the hands of the people. They provide video production, website-construction and graphic design support to non-profit organizations. They also have an education arm, providing electronic media production workshops to the community. The station and all the sites they build are created with Drupal, an open source content management system. The fact that it's open source means they can modify and customize the code to make the software more useful and functional, adapting it to different needs in different contexts.

My current public good project is to assess the effectiveness of a set of open source tools that the Open Media Foundation is implementing across the country in local access television stations. After having their operating budget cut because of changes in funding allocation form the city, Denver Open Media developed these tools, which allowed them to do their work at reduced cost. Instead of someone choosing what gets
aired, shows are uploaded into the system and then they are scheduled based on popular vote. It gives incredible empowerment to the people who are using the community because without the management hierarchy in place, and without someone deciding what programming to air and when, the station is entirely in the hands of the community. Denver Open Media received a $380,000 Knight Foundation grant to help stations adopt these tools throughout the country. Ultimately these stations will be able to share content; it's kind of like the YouTube of public access stations.

They have implemented these tools at seven stations. This past summer (2009), I went and met with the people from these stations and did an initial assessment of how everything is going. I've been trying to document the transformation from analog technology to digital technology and what that means in terms of transferring power to the users and how that is impacting station cultures.

What makes it "public good?"
One of the central threads of my research and my teaching is about figuring out how the relationship between media and the public can be best configured to empower people to be able to create places we want to live and find solutions to problems that we have.

Traditionally journalism has had this dual role, it is supposed to be a public service but it's also market-driven and these roles really conflict. I think now, with all of the technological changes, and because of the widespread business failure of the news industry, there is this moment of opportunity to redefine what journalism is and to move it closer to serving the public interests.

How is your project impacting communities?
What I would hope is that by being an advocate for the value of distributing access to tools and networks of communication, I then lend an educated voice to the debate. For me, it has to do with recognizing the media as a major site of contention, a site where power is developed, challenged, relayed and changed.

All of my media work relates to finding these new opportunities - the moments where there are tears in the fabric of power that create space for new opportunities to engage with one another outside the framework of market driven media, and to create media that fosters engagement and empowers communities. If we can identify and document when and how these opportunities arise, we can understand better how to foster communication environments that serve the public interest.

How do you incorporate students into your public good project?
I oversee the Digital Media Studies department's Digital Media Outreach Center (DMOC). DMOC began as a program that paired DU students looking to gain professional digital media development and design experience with Colorado non-profits that needed digital media like websites, multimedia presentations and videos.

We recently revised how DMOC works by building a partnership with the Open Media Foundation so that we can better address the increased needs in the community. Now DMOC students work with non-profit and small business clients from the web development and design arm of Open Media Foundation. So Open Media Foundation has the clients and has been incredibly generous about training our students and welcoming them into their organization. In turn, the students are working with clients designing and building open source websites and content management systems.
How is this project incorporated into your larger research agenda?
I've always been interested in activist media. I wrote my PhD dissertation on the Zapatista Movement and to me they are a prototype of the sort of online activism we see today. They were circulating alternative news on list serves in 1994, and they really propelled their movement onto the international stage, got support and protected themselves from their own government through these web channels. It was really new and innovative at the time.

Activist media is even more sophisticated today and the public good projects I'm working on help keep me up to speed with that. I'm just now finishing up a book on the transformation in journalism in the last 15 or so years from mass media to network media and all of the changes in news production culture. And I've incorporated a lot of what I've learned studying activist media in the Denver area into the book.

What else would you like to tell me?
Working with CCESL has made me recognize that my work fits into a larger category of cross-disciplinary scholarship aimed at building knowledge that can be used to strengthen public life and social justice. I love that CCESL exists and knowing that there is support for this sort of work at the university. There are so many great projects being supported both financially and intellectually by the Center. I know that my experience at DU over the past couple years since I arrived here has been much richer because of CCESL.

Public Good Student Project
By: Russell Takeall, junior

My name is Russell Takeall and I am currently a junior at the University of Denver, double majoring in International Studies and Sociology. I am involved in S.I.C (Social Identity Collective) and The [451] which is an alternative student based publication. I identify myself as a black student.

For the past two years I have been involved in CCESL’s Public Achievement program at Bruce Randolph High School located in North Denver. Public Achievement involves young people working in teams on a public work project of their choice. Coaches, who are university students, are trained in the process and concepts of Public Achievement. The coaches guide team members through the following stages: exploration and discovery, issue selection and development, problem research, designing a project, implementing the action plan and making the work visible, and celebrating.

Most of my students are of Mexican heritage and struggle in dealing with issues such as racism, poverty and citizenship. During the 2008-2009 school year I was placed into four different classroom periods, whose student groups who were focused on the issues of immigration and racism. These group projects focused on: creating a mural showing the injustices of immigration and racism, a bake sale to benefit Padres y Jovenes Unidos, a play that detailed a day in the life of an immigrant, and a “Know Your Rights” music video.

These projects had a huge impact both internally and externally. Internally, to see the growth in all my students as the year progressed was amazing. The development of
their voices and their ability to critically view situations ultimately allowed them to complete these projects. At the beginning of the year they wavered in their conviction, but at the end they were rooted strongly against the systemic oppression of immigrants.

The external effects of these projects were equally successful as the students were able to inform their classmates, as well as the principal, of the projects they had done. The students were proud to put their hard work on display and show themselves as an example to the student body. Due to the students’ successes we were able to implement stronger strategies for education and change during this school year.

This year my students are creating a documentary that will share the stories of young undocumented students fighting for college access. My other student group will be working on a Job/Research and Internship fair, where the goal is to secure student employment and provide students access to community resources.

These projects allowed me to grow a great deal myself. The other DU coaches and I all come from very different life paths and we have been able to grow and learn from one another as the year has unfolded. We also became much tighter as a group and were better prepared as the year continued. We were as immersed as our students were in making change on their issues which allowed us to connect with each other on a deeper level.

This work is important to me for a multitude of reasons. The ability to even have a Public Achievement program in a high school is a revolutionary thought alone. I have lived in a community and worked in many different occupations besieged with racism and discrimination, and I have suffered mentally and physically for challenging dominant theories about what it means to be a person of color. I work with the motto “Teach the babies” because I was raised to believe that children are the greatest. By working with these students I hope they are enlightened to delve deeper into their own self-understanding, which will allow them to be successful individuals no matter what situation confronts them in life.

Although I have my own self-interest in these projects, I believe it’s not hard for others to see why it is critical to be involved in programs like Public Achievement. Youth consistently bear the weight of adult decisions, but if we act swiftly and consciously we can help create not only sustainable community projects, but help the youth to uncover the strengths that lay within them.

Others, can get involved with projects like these by contacting Frank Coyne, CCESL associate director, at fcoyne@du.edu, 303.871.2158; or you can reach me at russell.takeall@gmail.com.

Service Learning Course Spotlight
By: Lahleh Mehran, School of Art and Art History and Chris Coleman, Media, Film and Journalism Studies

During the Fall and Winter Quarters we team-taught three community engaged learning courses.

The first was a collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver to design an interactive handheld device to disseminate and instigate conversations. Students in
this course worked together with the museum director and staff to assist the museum in making the content of the artworks more accessible to the public.

In conversation with the museum we designed and coded a software application for mobile devices which the visitors can checkout and while touring the museum they can learn about the artwork with this new technological method. Based on our introduction of the mobile devices and their understanding of the multi-media interactions (e.g. artist interviews) that the devices can provide, the MCA is rethinking their practice and the way they engage their audiences to now incorporate this new technology.

Our community partner for the Winter, Spring, and Summer quarters is the Living City Block, an actual city block in Denver where you can have a tactile, real-life experiential demonstration of things that are possible today. Things that range from "last mile" mobility solutions and energy capturing sidewalks, to living roofs and vertical gardens, to onsite renewables and co-generation, to home metering and IT driven consumer behavioral change.

Together with our partners we are creating relevant and memorable experiences to bring the issues of cultural, economic, and ecological sustainability to the general public. We are in the process of creating five interactive, informational "games" on kiosks on the themes of water, community, renewable energy, energy efficiency and transportation.

Our students have stepped up to the challenge in working with our community partners, remaining nimble with shifting timelines and learning how to deal with materials and information currently beyond the scope of the course and the students. Much of their feedback about the courses showed that they understood the value of the very applied nature of Community Engaged Learning.

Community-Learning Opportunities for DU Faculty

The Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning offers DU faculty members a variety of ways to get involved with community-based initiatives on campus.

Service-Learning Scholars Program
The Service-Learning Faculty Scholars Program is for faculty members who are new to service-learning. Participants receive a $1200 stipend and participate in a 2-day workshop then meet as a group three times over the course of the academic year.
Faculty members are required to develop a service-learning syllabus that they will implement within the following academic year.

Applications for the Service-Learning Scholars Program are due by noon, on June 24, 2010.*

**Faculty Learning Pods**
Faculty Learning Pods are small groups of faculty members working together on community-based issues that matter to them. Pods are designed and created by DU faculty members, and they receive strong support from CCESL staff, as well as financial support from the faculty development fund.

Applications for Faculty Learning Pods are accepted on a rolling basis.*

**Community-Based Learning Writing Group**
This group is designed for DU faculty members interested in writing about their community-based and/or service-learning work. Meeting times are used to review drafts, brainstorm ideas and discuss pertinent issues that will lead toward the writing and publishing of community-based learning essays. Participants receive a $750 stipend.

Applications for the Community-Based Learning Writing Group are due by noon, on June 24, 2010.*

**Mini-Grants**
Service-learning Mini-grants are available for faculty who are looking to: travel to conferences, purchase books or journals related to community-based learning, or work with students to implement a service-learning project. Mini-grants are designed to allow faculty to be innovative in promoting their Service-Learning work to a broader audience.

Applications for Mini-grants of up to $1,000 are accepted on a rolling basis*

**Research and Scholarship (see Public Good Funds)**
The University of Denver supports community-based research projects through the Public Good Fund. Public Good research involves the production of new knowledge that results from the convergence of academic inquiry and local ways of knowing. For more information please visit: [http://www.du.edu/ccesl/pgfund.html](http://www.du.edu/ccesl/pgfund.html)

*Applications for all of the Service-Learning Programs are available on our website: [www.du.edu/ccesl/faculty](http://www.du.edu/ccesl/faculty)

For specific questions or comments regarding any of these programs, please contact:
Eric Fretz at eric.fretz@du.edu; or
Frank Coyne at fcoyne@du.edu
Teaching a Service-Learning Course?

Get support from a Service Learning Associate

Service Learning Associates (SLA) can help faculty to build their service-learning capacity and implement high-quality service-learning components that enhance students’ learning.

An SLA is a student who has completed a service-learning course, demonstrates leadership among their peers, and has been trained by CCESL staff to work with service learning faculty members who are teaching service-learning courses.

SLAs can assist faculty in the planning, implementation and assessment of service learning courses. Primarily concerned with the service learning component of the course an SLA may do things like:

- Research the practical and local knowledge of social justice issues;
- Build relationships and develop partnerships with community organizations;
- Plan and implement off-campus service learning activities;
- Develop appropriate reflection tools for student learning styles;
- Facilitate reflection at the community partner site or in the classroom;
- Conduct assessment and evaluation with community partners and students;
- Travel with students to service activities;
- Engage students in candid discussions about their service-learning experiences; and/or
- Problem-solve with students, community partners and faculty.

If you are interested in an SLA for the 2010-2011 academic year please email Sarah McCauley at sarah.mccauley@du.edu.

Please provide as much of the following information as you can:

- What service-learning course(s) are you teaching and in which term(s)?
- What term(s) would you like to work with an SLA? Will the SLA be doing preparation before a course, participating in course implementation, and/or assessing a course from the previous term?
- What tasks will your SLA be responsible for and how will this improve your service-learning instruction?
- What skills will your SLA need to be trained in to be successful?
- Have you participated in any CCESL service-learning or public good programs?
Support Student Community-based Research and Public Work

If you have students in your department who are doing community-based research or a public work project point them towards the Community Scholars program.

Community Scholars is for DU students interested in moving their academic experience of critical thinking into critical action by providing the opportunity for students to take their big idea to address a social justice issue in the community and make it happen.

CCESL provides the support structures to empower students to turn their big ideas related to their academic field of study into reality. Throughout the academic year CCESL organizes a curriculum of trainings, group reflection sessions, mentoring and partnership advising.

Each Community Scholar has the support the Community Scholars community, CCESL staff and a faculty mentor.

Community Scholar Faculty Mentors provide critical feedback, advice and accountability around project development and implementation.

Please consider being a faculty mentor by suggesting this program to your students.

Student applications are due 12 noon, Monday, May 17, 2010.

Applications and Faculty Mentor Letter of Support forms are available online at:
www.du.edu/ccesl/communityscholars.html

Database of Faculty Mentors and Portfolio Reviewers
www.ccph.info

Are you a faculty member, graduate student or post-doc who seeks a community-engaged career in the academy?

With few established mentoring and career development programs in place, community-engaged scholars are often left to piece together their own career with little guidance or support.

Building a portfolio for promotion and tenure review can be daunting for those focusing on community-engaged scholarship, particularly when review committees and external reviewers are not familiar with this form of scholarship.

The Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) Online Database of Faculty Mentors & Portfolio Reviewers is a new resource that can help address some of these challenges.
The database is designed to be used by community-engaged graduate students, post-docs and faculty who are searching for faculty mentors; and by deans, department chairs and others seeking external experts to review portfolios of community-engaged faculty being considered for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure.

The database can be searched by keyword, faculty rank, tenure status, discipline/profession, gender, state, country, race/ethnicity, methodological approaches, and areas of experience.

To search for mentors and portfolio reviewers, or to apply to be listed in the database visit: www.facultydatabase.info

If you have story ideas for the Public Good E-Newsletter please contact:

Jenny Whitcher, CCESL associate director
Jenny.Whitcher@du.edu
303.871.4281