



University of Denver
Center for Community
Engagement &
Service Learning

Public Good E-Newsletter

Engaging campus and community for the public good.

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Our mission is to **educate**,
engage, and **equip** the campus
community to accomplish
tangible, public work that
improves the lives of people in
our communities.

Director's Note

By: Eric Fretz, CCESL director

Civic life and a strong democracy depend on professionals who see their work in communal and public terms. In this issue of the Public Good e-Newsletter, we are focusing on civic professionals—professionals who develop and sustain a public culture of collaborative, visible, open work with a wide range of constituents.

What *is* a civic professional?

Civic professionals are facilitators of public knowledge. They seek out common interests that link professional inquiry and local knowledge, and they work to develop systems of communication and knowledge production that involve laypeople in the solution of public problems.

Civic professionals in the academy practice education as a dynamic engagement with the world and its problems. They believe in education for democracy as much as education for the acquisition of technical mastery, humanistic knowledge and credentials.

Civic professionals work *with* citizens, rather than acting *on* or *for* them. They are proud of their knowledge and the craft of their discipline, but they also know their limits.

Citizen professionals are citizens *and* academics who see their specialized knowledge as "on tap, not on top." They recognize that solving the complex problems we face today requires many sources and kinds of knowledge.

The idea of civic professionals in the academy is nothing new. In *Intellect and Public Life*, Thomas Bender uncovered a nineteenth-century university culture that was open to engagement with a variety of publics: "Before the rise of modern professionalism," Bender argues, "there were identifiable audiences that judged and affected the work of American thinkers."

The American academy, however, has drifted considerably from valuing the kind of academic professional Bender was talking about. (continues on pg. 2)



Announcements

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health's 12th Summer Service-Learning Institute

Where: Cascade Mountains, Leavenworth, WA

When: July 24-27, 2009

Application Deadline: May 8, 2009

<http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/servicelearning.html>

The Community College National Center for Community Engagement (CCNCCE) 18th Annual Conference

Where: Scottsdale, AZ

When: May 20-22, 2009

Proposal deadline: March 9, 2009

<http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/other/engagement/2009Conf/CallForProposals.shtml>

The emergence in the early twentieth century of a discipline-based academic professionalism was, in many ways, the result of the early academic freedom struggles that resulted from legitimate threats from industry, government and religious pressure to use academic knowledge for their own ideological and market-driven purposes.

This dynamic, while providing a relatively safe space for faculty to accomplish their research agendas free from public influence, also paved the way for the intellectually isolated, jargon ridden and un-public minded academic departments of the twenty-first century.

In other words, the academy responded to legitimate threats from the outside to create knowledge that served private and selfish interests by folding in on itself, creating structures, products and texts that were impenetrable to outsiders, and creating an intellectual culture that isolated and barred entry to a large sector of the population.

Bender is not nostalgic for a past where intellectual inquiry and public needs were in peaceful harmony. A healthy tension, rather than a great divide between the pursuits of the academy and the needs of publics, may be a useful way of thinking about how universities in the twenty-first century will relate to their publics.

The community learning and public scholarship movements within higher education have played a significant role in helping some faculty members reclaim the kind of civic professionalism that Bender uncovered.

At the University of Denver, civic professionalism often gets classified as public good work and scholarship. In this way, many faculty members at DU are practicing civic professionals. For a list of some of these faculty members and their work, go to the CCESL Public Good website: http://www.du.edu/engage/faculty/faculty_pg_main.html.

In this issue of the Public Good e-Newsletter, we are spotlighting the work of Bonnie Clark, a scholar who accomplishes impactful and scholarly public work with communities.

Faculty Spotlight: Bonnie Clark

By: Eric Fretz, CCESL director



A full 18 miles east of the small town of Lamar lies the considerably smaller town of Granada, Colorado. City folk passing through Granada might think that nothing much happens in Granada these days or ever, for that matter.

But from 1942 to 1945, over one thousand Japanese Americans were interned here at the Amache relocation camp. The history and artifacts they left behind are of great interest to Bonnie Clark, assistant professor in DU's Department of Anthropology.

The memories of the Amache camp are preserved in the Amache Museum. John Hopper, a Granada High School teacher, serves as the museum's *de facto* curator. Hopper and a cadre of his students and local community members form the Amache Preservation Society (APS), and their mission is to maintain and interpret the site and the museum.

During the summer of 2008, Clark held a field course in Granada. Clark, six students, two colleagues from the Department of Anthropology- Christina Kreps and Brooke Rhode, and a host of Granada high school students spent the better part of a hot, dusty summer on the eastern plains of Colorado conducting field research in the mornings and professionalizing the museum in the afternoons. Their work involved inventorying objects and archives, setting up a database and entering object information, re-housing objects and archives in acid free materials and training APS volunteers

Third International Symposium on Service-Learning "Service-Learning in Higher Education: Educators, Communities, and Students"

Where: University of Indianapolis-Athens, Athens, Greece

When: November 22-24, 2009
Abstract deadline: March 30, 2009

<http://www.uindy.edu/issl2009>

Building Community Resiliency: Role of University Leadership

Where: Widener University, Philadelphia, PA

When: October 11-13, 2009

Proposal deadline: April 17, 2009

<http://www.cumuonline.org/conference>

in museum management.

In addition to conducting her own archaeological research, Clark educated the members of the Amache Preservation Society in museum work. Three young people from Granada consistently helped Clark and her colleagues throughout their summer research project. Alongside the DU researchers, these young people collected and archived artifacts, created museum displays for the public and worked to professionalize the museum.

Clark admits that she has never engaged before in field research that was so open in terms of the actual practice. Involving a wide range of constituents in the research process added an extra layer of complexity to the process of her scholarship.

At the same time, she understands that community involvement helped "thicken" the research and make her work relevant to a wider audience. "Opening up your work in that way is how to get people involved," Clark noted. "It's easy to sit down in the room and tell people why they should think things are important, but that doesn't work."

Working in this manner challenged Clark. "The more perspectives you bring into any question, the more the field of work gets altered," Clark observes. Acting like a civic professional means sharing authority-in this case the authority of who owns the past-and while that can be challenging and even scary, it helped Clark and her students realize that, "This was not our site-it was everybody's site, and we were just part of the players there." That did not mean, of course, that she and her students had to keep their expertise back in Denver. "If what we were going to do was going to be beneficial, we needed to be good at our science, but we also needed to explain why that science was important."

Clark realizes that the learning goes both ways. As she was instructing community volunteers on the science of archeology and museum studies, community members were educating Clark and her students about the local soil conditions and farming practices. Such information helped the crew understand how the site was buried.

Working with community members in this capacity has helped Clark think about "where artifacts go after they are discovered and how they relate to publics"- a set of questions, she says, professional archeologists tend to ignore. In her efforts to uncover the tangible history of Amache, Clark has looked beyond the single artifacts toward broader questions that involve the site itself, the museum and its contents, the landscape, the town and its inhabitants.

For Clark, acting like a civic professional is a way to do better archeological research. "If we can get in on the ground floor and think about community involvement, research and interpretation as things that feed into each other, we can do a better job with the archeology." In other words, community involvement and scholarly research don't have to be at odds-they can work together to produce credible and community-oriented research.

This was not just a one-time field course for Clark, but rather, she sees the Amache project fitting into her long-term research goals. She says that she's "sticking with this," and that it fits into her own research agenda about the importance of place to ordinary people. "We were literally a part of the creation of a community of memory," Clark reflected. And in this way, Dr. Bonnie Clark practices civic professionalism.

Interested in developing a service-learning course? Contact us and we'll match you with some of our amazing community partners who have a need for your expertise: engage@du.edu or 303.871.3706.

Service Learning Suite of Opportunities for Faculty Members in 2009-2010

The Service-Learning Faculty Scholars Program is for faculty members who are new to service-learning. Faculty members are required to develop a service-learning syllabus that they will implement within the following academic year.

Advanced Practitioner is for faculty members who have participated in the Service-Learning Scholars Program and have experience implementing community-based learning classes. Advanced practitioners will be expected to organize and participate in informal gatherings with their colleagues regarding pertinent community-based learning issues.

Faculty Learning Pods are small groups of faculty members working together on community-based issues that matter to them. Pods 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 is for faculty members interested in writing about their community-based and/or service-learning work.

Mini-Grants are available for faculty who are looking to travel to conferences, purchase books and journals related to community-based learning, or work with students to implement a service-learning project. *Applications for Mini-grants are accepted on a rolling basis.*

Public Good research involves the production of new knowledge that results from the convergence of academic inquiry and local ways of knowing. Please visit our faculty website for more information on DU's Public Good Fund:

http://www.du.edu/engage/faculty/faculty_pg_main.html

Additional information and applications for all of the Service-Learning programs are available on the **Faculty page** of the CCESL website. Applications for all programs are due by noon on June 17, 2009, unless otherwise noted.

For specific questions or comments regarding any of these programs, please contact Frank Coyne at fcoyne@du.edu, 303.871.2158.

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

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