Not to be served, but to serve
Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that the Wells Fargo Center for Community Engagement at Queens University of Charlotte shares our inaugural newsletter highlighting our fall 2019 semester. You will see that the Wells Fargo Center for Community Engagement has had a phenomenal semester, integrating community engagement across the university in various curricula and with a large number of faculty.

Community Engagement allows our students to utilize course content on a deeper level by creating a dynamic relationship between Queens University and our community partners that facilitate communication, interaction, involvement, critical thinking, and exchange for a range of social and organizational outcomes. You will see projects and partnerships highlighted throughout this newsletter that have engaged our students in opportunities that have meaningfully enriched their perspectives while positively impacting our region.

Our faculty have been excited to add community engagement components to their courses, our students have experienced learning beyond our expectations, and our community partners have received ideas and items to assist in achieving their goals and missions.

I want to thank the Queens’ campus community for their dedication to community engagement, Queens’ leadership for making community engagement an educational priority, and Wells Fargo for believing in the vision set forth by the center. I am excited to continue the growth of our center, and welcome another semester of community engagement for our campus.

In partnership,

Jenn Marts, Ed.D.
Director, Wells Fargo Center for Community Engagement
Border Immersion Trip:
Summer 2019

In May 2019, 11 students and Dr. Maggie Commins, Associate Professor of Political Science, and Reverend Joey Haynes, Queens University Chaplain, traveled to the U.S./Mexico border as part of the inaugural INS 303 Border Immersion Course. The course challenged students to understand immigration from social, political, and religious perspectives. Students spent the semester preparing to meet and learn from those associated with the El Encuentro project in El Paso, Texas. The class learned about and evaluated U.S. immigration policies and the effects of these policies on people (locally, nationally, and internationally). Students framed their study with a religious or spiritual lens, challenging themselves to discern their individual, community-level, and national responsibilities when it comes to migration. Student participants completed reflections, presentations, blogs, and journals to synthesize their experiences. They worked with a variety of partners in El Paso including Cases de Refugio and Annunciation House Ministries. Participants also visited ICE detention centers and met with Customs and Border Patrol Agents. Excited to continue their efforts in supporting asylum-seekers in our local community, the students decided to participate in Charlotte’s Migrant Assistance Program. This program works to collect items that are shared at bus stops with migrants coming through Charlotte. Many asylum-seekers are traveling through our city to reach their sponsors in other locations, and students are providing items including clothing, food, diapers, and a human connection throughout their travels. This course was eye-opening for the participants and the next class have already been chosen to participate in May 2020.

Queens 2019-2020 Common Read:
The New Jim Crow

In Fall 2019, various Queens University faculty incorporated the annual Common Read into their curriculum. Many of the faculty also partnered with the Center for Community Transitions to facilitate in-depth dialogue on issues within America’s prison systems and the need for racial justice advocacy. Courses that utilized the Common Read as part of their curriculum included:

- The Honors Gateway Course utilized the common read to look at the number of systems at work in the local community, with a focus on the roles individuals play within these systems, and how to better the entire community.
- The Center for Community Transitions hosted multiple sustainable dialogues with the Honors Capstone Class and the Storytelling Queens Learning Community (QLC) to encourage students to evaluate their current understanding of racial equality within our prison system and the impact it has on our own community.
- A sociology course used the text to discuss trauma and what challenges the reentry process poses and how these challenges may influence recidivism.
Highlights: Fall 2019

Numerous curriculum-based community engagement experiences were offered at Queens University in Fall 2019. The projects highlighted below are a sample of the experiences from this semester. The Wells Fargo Center for Community Engagement Annual Report will highlight all completed projects.

**Dr. Steve Cox / Marketing Research Course / The Charlotte Ballet**

Students connected with the Charlotte Ballet in order to provide insight and marketing research as it relates to their donors and ticket sales. Students used Tableau software to visualize demographics and trends among those who purchase single tickets and season tickets and compare them with the demographics in Charlotte. Students connected with focus groups to discover if ticket holder may want other ticketed perks (i.e. educational experiences, meet & greet with directors/dancers). The results offered the Charlotte Ballet an understanding of ticket holder likes/dislikes, and recommendations for improvements to increase outreach.

**Dr. Saundra Penn / Introduction to Human Services / Multiple Agencies**

The Introduction to Human Services course partnered with two agencies to host in-class service-learning projects. Materials were provided from the Wells Fargo Center for Community Engagement and each project partnered with an instructional component on the agency being served and the different facets of a career in Human Services. Students chose the agencies to partner with and made 100 Chemo Care Kits for children at the Levine Children's Hospital and reusable feminine hygiene pads for Sew in Peace.

**Dr. Tiffiny Shockley / Introduction to Health Sciences / NC Mission of Mercy (MOM) Dental Clinic**

Students in Dr. Shockley's Introduction to Health Sciences course completed service-learning at the NC Mission of Mercy. Students were given this assignment to demonstrate the disparities of health care access in North Carolina. NC MOM is a free dental program of the NC dental society. This clinic provides free dental services to those in financial needs with few or no other options. 2,500+ North Carolinians will receive assistance over the span of the 2-day clinic. Students assisted with registration, clinic set up and take down, triage scribes, patient information and orientation, patient escorts, patient checkout, and data entry.

**Professor Nina Bailey / Introductory Statistics for the Social Sciences / Sierra Club**

Students from MAT 131, Introductory Statistics, served as statistical consultants for the Sierra Club in their endeavor to fully close the G. G. Allen Steam Plant near Belmont, NC earlier than anticipated. In small teams, students developed guiding questions and performed descriptive statistics. Some students investigated air quality and pollution rates before and after the creation of the plant, other students drew comparisons with cities who have closed a similar plant, some examined hospital data on asthma and cancer rates, and others assessed the feasibility and cost of renewable energy sources. After compiling their reports, students shared their findings with the Sierra Club who will utilize this information to secure a complete shutdown as scheduled, if not sooner.

**Dr. Beth Schneider / MBA Strategic Management / Multiple Agencies**

The Queens University McColl School of Business MBA strategic management students conducted a non-profit consulting project. The semester long project required students to work directly with pre-screened local non-profit in assessing and solving challenges faced by the organization. The Fall 2019 nonprofits that students partnered with included: South End Arts, Make it Work, and Beds for Kids. The projects provide a unique and expanded dimension to the student’s learning experience while providing business acumen, expertise and solution plans that most non-profits would not be able to otherwise afford. The professional graduate students provide a valuable service while obtaining insights into charitable giving and social responsibility.
Carolina Breast Friends, Queens Learning Community

Contributed by Tracey Perez, English Faculty Member

At the 300 level of the General Education Program at Queens, we ask students to engage with the larger community as part of the learning process. In my course (Fairytales, Folklore, and Fantasy), we read stories through the lens of transformation: transformation as an element within the tales, transformation of stories across place and time, as well as our own transformations as readers. The challenge of the community project was for the students to become storytellers themselves and transcribe real stories of transformation from within the Charlotte community.

Through my own journey as a breast cancer survivor, I heard stories of transformation and renewal from others on the same path – in doctors’ offices, at radiation appointments, and during events at the Pink House. I recognized the common threads running through so many of our stories: the desire to be heard; the need to be seen as a whole person (not just some victim of a disease); and the mission to support, inspire, and educate others.

Many breast cancer survivors in the Charlotte community find their way to the Pink House and Carolina Breast Friends where they will discover educational materials, rejuvenating programs, and voices narrating stories much like their own. I knew I wanted to find a way for my college students to hear and connect with these narratives. Thanks to the Wells Fargo Center for Community Engagement and Executive Director of Carolina Breast Friends, Lynn Erdman, we were able to generate a project that allowed survivors to tell their stories in their own words, educate young people about breast cancer prevention, and provide some surprising connections between students and members of the greater Charlotte community.

The project was conducted in two parts: students worked in pairs to interview survivors and then crafted profiles which they presented at an event on the Queens campus. Initially, some of my students were worried that this project would be sad and depressing. They were quickly disabused of that notion. As one student commented in her written reflection, “I had in my mind these hardened, stoic people, but I found them to be just like me.” Others found some common ground, literally: one student discovered that she and her interviewee were from the same New Jersey town. The students also received an education regarding the breast cancer survivors’ communities when they discovered one of their interviewees was a man.

By the night of the profile presentations, the students were excited to tell the survivors’ stories through words and images. I also was gratified to see the survivors’ pleasure at hearing their own stories told with humor, empathy, and truth. Needless to say, the focus was on the person – not the disease. We learned about Charmaine’s favorite wine, Stu’s golf game, and Wendy’s love of true crime podcasts.

As a follow up, the students wrote reflections on their experience with the project. “Be your own advocate,” the Pink House seems like an amazing resource for those diagnosed with breast cancer;” and “I have become more aware and will start doing self-examinations” were just a few of the takeaways. More significantly, however, were the connections that were made in the process. One class member summed it up this way: “after hearing first hand from people who have been through it, cancer . . . is about a transformation in an individual; the diagnosis is just that, but there is a person living through it. I suppose I understood this going in, but putting a story and journey to a distant term like cancer puts it in perspective for me.”
Special Projects

Books and Buddies

In December of 2019, the Queens University of Charlotte Wayland H. Cato School of Education engaged in a service initiative called “Books and Buddies.” This project, initiated and implemented by the students and faculty of Cato, involves a multi-week collection of children’s books and new or gently used stuffed animals. The hundreds of donations of these items are categorized and organized until each one is bagged up in an exciting display for a child. The bags, each holding a book and a “buddy”, are then labeled with an inspirational Dr. Seuss quote and the encouragement to read. Cato students and faculty, along with the Queens mascot and cheerleaders, personally delivered the packages to the children of Nations Ford Elementary School. In fall 2019, over 900 “books and buddies” packages were distributed to the eager and excited Pk-5th grade children at this school. The Cato faculty would like to thank all of the community businesses and members who have generously supported this exciting project.

Queens’ Choral Performances

Members of the Queens’ Choral Union / Women’s Chorale / Chamber Choir, lead by Dr. Justin Smith, participated in two services caroling to members of the Charlotte community in December 2019. They performed for residents of Aldersgate Retirement Community and for attendees of the Supportive Housing holiday party. At both events, about a dozen singers sang familiar holiday carols to a receptive and smiling audience. The object of these events was to allow students to exercise their musicianship singing in unaccompanied smaller numbers, while at the same time serving the surrounding community by providing
Sed Min Day of Service

Contributed by Ginger Marr, Manager of Presidential Relations & Events

In Fall 2019, Queens University celebrated the inauguration of the 21st President, Daniel G. Lugo. The Queens community spent a week celebrating and welcoming President Lugo and one of the components of the week was a Day of Service. The Wells Fargo Center for Community Engagement collaborated with multiple departments at Queens University to sponsor the first-ever Sed Min Day of Service on Monday, October 15, 2019. This event was designed to engage faculty, staff, and students in an opportunity to live out Queens’ motto, “non ministrari, sed ministrare” (not to be served, but to serve).

Multiple service events were planned both on and off-campus. One group of volunteers traveled to Second Harvest Food Bank to sort food and supplies and another group visited Crisis Assistance Ministry to inspect and sort donations. On campus, a variety of projects were offered that benefited local non-profit organizations Classroom Central, Urban Ministries / Men’s Shelter of Charlotte, Project Linus, and Promising Pages. Faculty, staff, and students enjoyed preparing more than 400 sandwiches, making educational flashcards and bookmarks for local students, and creating blankets. In total, more than 100 Queens community members volunteered and spent upwards of 300 hours of time serving the community.

“What a privilege it was for my wife and me to work alongside so many Queens volunteers during the Sed Min Day of Service,” said President Lugo. “To honor my inauguration as Queens’ new president in such a meaningful way was just incredible. I was able to see first-hand what a sense of community we share on the Queens campus, and how our faculty, staff, and students are committed to doing their part to improve the lives of those in our city and beyond who are less fortunate.” Lugo added, “I am so proud to be a part of this organization that includes service to others as a central tenet in their core mission. Community service is so important to me personally, and I look forward to many other opportunities to partner with the Wells Fargo Center and other campus groups and individuals to continue this important work.”
Community Partnerships: Center for Community Transitions

Contributed by Kevin Walsh, Program Director

The Center for Community Transitions (CCT) is a non-profit organization with a mission to strengthen our community by helping people with criminal records and their families find a healthier and more productive way of living. Our work provides employment and transition services; supports alternatives to incarceration; and restores and strengthens family bonds. CCT meets its mission through these three programs.

The LifeWorks! Program’s goal is to provide the conditions for clients to shift their thinking and behaviors to one that better matches their personal values (that of seeking happiness and a healthier way of living). The belief is that if the client can match their behaviors with their values, it can decrease the likelihood of recidivism. Staff work with clients on evaluating their belief systems, which can then have them discern who they want to be and what they are doing to be that person.

The foundation of the LifeWorks! Program is a two-week long workshop that prepares individuals for the process of introducing themselves to potential employers, rebranding themselves, and marketing themselves. Participants in this class learn how to interview successfully, answer the conviction question, network with employers, and develop better decision-making skills. While in the program, clients develop their own goals for different areas and use action plans to document their progress. These areas are: financial stability, relationships, employment and career, school and education, health and wellness, spirituality, thinking, attitude, recreation, and time management. In order to become more equipped to reach their goals, clients are welcomed to participate in other programs as well. LifeWorks! also offers Working Smart, FIT (Formerly Incarcerated Transition), and Seeking Safety. Working Smart is a sixteen-lesson course that focuses on the soft skills that employers look for when hiring. Clients that participate in this class learn about how to communicate effectively, problem solve, manage their time, and hold themselves accountable. The Formerly Incarcerated Transition (FIT) Program connects formerly incarcerated individuals who have a chronic disease, mental illness and/or substance use disorder with appropriate health care services and other reentry resources. Seeking Safety is a supportive group led by a skilled facilitator that guides participants through difficult discussions and topics. Together, participants learn new tools to help navigate everyday life and manage the effects of trauma and substance use. Through Seeking Safety, clients can learn to build a life of wellness and stability.

The Center for Community Transitions works closely with agencies across the Charlotte area. Through a partnership with Queens University, CCT was able to bring in observational learners to see firsthand how incarceration has influenced clients’ mental health. During their time with CCT, students sat in on the initial assessment for new Seeking Safety clients while also being introduced to the Addiction Severity Index. Learners assisted with CCT’s programmatic offerings as allowed through the community engagement portion of their QLC. Students also collaborated with CCT to explore the Common Read and discover how CCT works with the Charlotte prison system in offering services to recently released individuals. The Center for Community Transitions partnered with 5 different courses throughout the fall 2019 semester, creating a dynamic and sustainable partnership with students, faculty, and the Wells Fargo Center for Community Engagement. Students were a great help to the team at CCT and presented a high level of professionalism and energy to their work with CCT.
Civic Engagement: QU Votes

The Wells Fargo Center for Community Engagement is committed to voter education, student voter engagement, and voter registration. Every year, a Civic Engagement Fellow is chosen from our student body to support these nonpartisan initiatives and increase efforts at Queens through democratic engagement.

In 2019, Civic Engagement Fellow, Deanna Rohrer, was awarded this position to increase these efforts around Queens and in the local community. Rohrer established partnerships with local non-profit agencies to encourage civic engagement, managed the #QUVotes social media pages, and created all advertisements for events. She also planned multiple voter registration drives and collaborated with the College Democrats, Young Republicans, and other student organizations across campus.

Rohrer also hosted the “Meet the Candidates” event in conjunction with the Jewish Federation of Charlotte. This event was attended by Charlotte City Council members, mayoral candidates, and school board officials who were running in the local election. This event allowed students and community members to participate in “Speed Networking” with the candidates and have their specific questions answered. During timed rounds, candidates spoke to a cluster of 5-6 voters, and when time ended, candidates moved to another group of voters.

On Election Day, Rohrer hosted a Stroll to the Polls event where voter engagement efforts came full circle. Students registered to vote locally, gathered during set times and went to the polls together, which is conveniently located next door to Queens University. All voters were given pizza, Queens Votes t-shirts, and encouraged to tell their friends.

Rohrer also gathered a group of civically minded students to participate in the Community Change Collegiate Challenge (4C) with North Carolina Campus Compact. 4C was created to help students discuss urgent challenges that our state is facing, and develop measures to civilly discuss and weigh options of action for these issues. Rohrer, Alyssa Pochecho, Liv Fried, and Flor Arenas, competed against 16 other NC colleges and universities in this challenge. These students were taught the basics of Deliberative Democracy and then challenged to use this skill set and problem-solving abilities to address food insecurities across the state. Although Queens did not win the competition, the students worked hard at the challenge and learned a lot through their experience.
Special Thanks to our Fall 2019 Community Partners:

- Aldersgate Retirement Community
- Alexander Youth Network
- Beds for Kids
- Carolina Breast Friends
- Catawba Riverkeepers
- Center for Community Transitions
- Charlotte Ballet
- Charlotte Mecklenburg City Council
- Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools
- Charlotte Strategic 2040 Plan
- Charlotte Urban Design Center
- Classroom Central
- Crisis Assistance Ministries
- Discovery Place Nature
- Jewish Federation of Charlotte
- Justice Ministries, Inc.
- Lakeview Community
- Latin American Coalition
- Leading on Opportunity
- Levine’s Children Hospital
- Make it Work
- North Carolina Mission of Mercy
- OurBRIDGE for Kids
- Project Linus
- Promising Pages
- SAFE Alliance
- Sew in Peace
- Sierra Club
- South End Arts
- Stan Greenspon Center for Peace and Social Justice
- Supportive Housing Communities
- Sustain Charlotte
- The Bulb
- Urban Ministries / Men's Shelter of Charlotte