Community Connections: Partners for Learning, Service and Research

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Purpose

- This interactive presentation will describe the process of implementing a HRSA funded allied health project grant that has generated numerous and varied opportunities for community-engaged scholarship.

- The session will present an overview of the purpose and evolution of *Community Connections*, highlighting progress, challenges and preliminary outcomes from the project as a whole.

- Examples of community-engaged scholarship will serve as a springboard for faculty in the College of Allied Health Sciences to discuss their current community projects and explore opportunities for community-engaged scholarship.
Intended learning outcomes

• Distinguish between the “doing” of community engagement and the “scholarship” of community engagement
• Assess the potential for scholarship as part of one’s community engagement
• Conceptualize ways to integrate community-engaged scholarship into current and future community projects
• Generate a preliminary plan to pursue activities that will result in forms of community-engaged scholarship valued by their discipline/profession, department, and college
Starting premises

• **Similarities between UC-CAHS and MUSC-CHP**
  – Types of academic programs
  – Range of faculty: junior to senior
  – Community outreach activities
  – Well versed in health care challenges facing the nation
    • Medically undeserved communities
    • Health disparities
    • Access to care
Starting premises

• Health professions education
  – Complex curricula that develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes
  – Students like to see faculty-in-action, modeling what is required of them, especially in a “real world” setting
  – Increase awareness and sense of social responsibility towards unmet health care needs
  – Adequate exposure to future practice arenas
A little historical perspective

• **Mid 1970’s:** BS degrees for OT and PT with a 2+2 curriculum design

• **1997:** Implemented interdisciplinary degree in rehabilitation with a 3+3 curriculum design (9 semesters)
  – Occupational therapy
  – Physical therapy
  – Speech-language pathology

• Interdisciplinary learning in core courses
  – Basic sciences
  – Research, administration, ethics
  – Teamwork, professional issues, health promotion
A little historical perspective

- Profession-specific learning in all other courses
- Elective opportunities for additional interdisciplinary learning, some of which were community-based
- Full-time clinical rotations at end of program
- Curriculum in full swing when we wrote our grant proposal for *Community Connections* in early 2002
A little historical perspective

- **2003**: Engaged in major curriculum review and modification
- **2004**: SLP moved to post-bacc. entry and shortened curriculum to 6 semesters
- **2005**: OT moved to post-bacc. entry and shortened curriculum to 7 semesters
- **2005**: PT moved to post-bacc. entry and retained 9 semester curriculum for DPT
- **2006**: Applications to all three programs have doubled and more!
Allied health project grants

• Funded by HRSA with Title VII money
• National workforce goal: Improve access to quality health care through appropriate preparation, composition, and distribution of health care workforce
• 9 different statutory purposes
• http://www.hrsa.gov
• ysong@hrsa.gov
College track record for allied health project grants

- **1993-1996**: Integrating Geriatrics into Teaching, Service and Research ($438,117)
- **1997-2000**: Problem Based Learning, Distance Education Curriculum ($331,096)
- **2000-2003**: AGEl ink – Advancing Geriatric Education through Community Linkages ($342,072)
- **2002-2005**: Community Connections ($368,906)
- **2005-2008**: Community Connections II ($637,324)
Title VII statutory purpose

- Expand clinical training sites in medically underserved areas (MUA’s)
  - Expand interdisciplinary community-based learning experiences for students and faculty in MUA’s where services are needed
  - Foster reciprocal relationships between academic and community partners to promote delivery of needed allied health services for residents living in MUA’s in the Lowcountry region of South Carolina
Community Connections: Partners for Learning and Service (2002-2005)

• Three-year allied health project grant funded by HRSA for $368,906.00
• Grant personnel
  – PI and project director
  – Project coordinator
  – Community liaison
  – Interdisciplinary curriculum specialist
  – Project evaluator
  – 8 “junior” faculty mentors from Rehab Sciences
  – 2 community educators from Lowcountry AHEC
  – 2 external consultants
Goals

• Increase clinical training sites in MUA’s in Lowcountry region in which interdisciplinary, community-based learning experiences take place for OT, PT, and SLP students and faculty
• Create a dynamic and comprehensive system of community partnerships among three constituent groups to enhance delivery of needed allied health services
  – Prevention and health promotion
  – Education and intervention
Connections among constituent groups

Lowcountry Area Health Education Center

Community Organizations

Needs Projects Outcomes

Department of Rehabilitation Sciences

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Making the connections

• Faculty initiated
  – Looking for opportunities for students to engage and gain professional experience
  – Responding to requests from community groups and organizations for service
  – Expanding relationships with teaching patients

• Community initiated
  – LCAHEC aware of unmet needs in region
  – Link faculty and community organizations
Developing the projects

• Exploring faculty expertise and practice areas of interest
• Examining overall scope and sequence of curriculum for student preparation and readiness
• Identifying courses suitable for community-based learning experiences
• Embedding projects within course objectives rather than volunteer experiences
• Facilitating opportunities for interdisciplinary interaction beyond the classroom
Determining need

- Informal interactions
- Needs assessment
- Expectations
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Reciprocal appreciation
- Partnership formation
Implementing service

• Logistics
  – Scheduling, timing, travel, supplies

• Site readiness
  – Amenities, personnel

• Participant willingness
  – Attendance, follow through

• Sensitivity to context
  – Community focus not medical
Evaluating outcomes

• Selecting suitable methods and tools
  – Quantitative
  – Qualitative

• Measuring a variety of perspectives
  – Participants
  – Organizations
  – Students
  – Faculty
Types of projects

• Single engagement
  – Athletic screenings
  – Functional status assessment for seniors
  – Work site evaluation
  – Brain injury prevention education

• Short-term engagement
  – Week long summer camps
  – Weekly respite programs for families with kids

• Long-term engagement
  – Health education seminars for aging in place
  – Exercise and health promotion for support groups
Meanwhile…

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Concurrent mitigating factors

- College formalized workload expectations
  - 60% teaching (18 credits a year)
  - 20% research/scholarship
  - 20% service/practice
- Baseline with some individual variation
- New salary generation requirement very challenging for junior faculty
- New department chair expectations
- Search for creative solutions and better return on investment
- Community Connections the answer to prayer!
Community Connections: Structure

- Judicious use of grant funds to
  - Defray personnel costs
  - Offset faculty salary generation requirements
  - Support faculty development activities
  - Support faculty release time
  - Support faculty travel to conferences
  - Pay for faculty travel to community sites
  - Pay for supplies for implementing projects
Community Connections: Structure

• Enabling mechanisms
  – Served as the maiden voyage for junior faculty participating in a funded grant
  – Provided a mechanism for collaborative faculty development while meeting the goals and objectives of the grant, and legislative intent of the funding agency
  – Conceptualized scholarship in the context of community engagement as an emergent and unfolding process
Community Connections: Structure

• Distributed leadership
  – Steering committee
  – Peer mentors
  – External consultants
  – Community partners advisory council
  – Colleagues at annual colloquia
  – Guest speakers at regular grant meetings
Community Connections: Strategies

- Embedding scholarship within the grant
  - Clarifying annual expectations for participation
  - Reframing the boundaries for scholarly endeavor
  - Promoting knowledge and skill development
  - Developing and disseminating of scholarly work
  - Reviewing and celebrating progress
  - Providing sustained collegial support
### Clarifying annual expectations for participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish community campus partnership</td>
<td>Expand community campus partnership</td>
<td>Sustain community campus partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design community based learning experience</td>
<td>Enhance community based learning experience</td>
<td>Embed community based learning experience in courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conceptualize scholarly potential</td>
<td>Develop scholarly trajectory</td>
<td>Disseminate scholarly product</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate in meetings and annual colloquium</td>
<td>Contribute to meetings and annual colloquium</td>
<td>Influence meetings and annual colloquium</td>
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Reframing the boundaries for scholarly endeavor

- Embracing teaching-learning as scholarly work (Boyer, 1990; Glassick, 1997; Hammel et al, 2001)
- Seeing value of scholarly work
- Reconceptualizing the learning experience (Hammel et al, 2001)
- Anchoring the learning experience in course objectives
Promoting knowledge and skill development

- Scheduling speakers to attend regular faculty mentors’ meetings on key topics
  - Navigating through the IRB
  - Understanding AHEC as a bridge to the community
  - Defining service learning concepts
  - Understanding the nature of community engagement
  - Writing concept papers
  - Reviewing the literature
Promoting knowledge and skill development

- Bringing in consultants during annual colloquia to address key concerns
  - Year 1 - Barbara Brandt, PhD
    - A Personal Journey with the Scholarship of Teaching/Learning and Engagement
  - Year 2 - Sarena Seifer, MD
    - The Evidence Base for Outcomes of Community-Academic Partnerships
  - Year 3 – Barbara Brandt, PhD
    - Community Engaged Scholarship
  - Year 3 – Sarena Seifer, MD
    - Sustaining Community-Campus Partnerships
Promoting knowledge and skill development

- Organizing individualized peer consultation/review for faculty mentors
  - Describing projects to grant team
  - Writing concept papers
  - Submitting conference abstracts for peer review
  - Presenting papers and posters at professional conferences
  - Preparing papers for submission to peer reviewed journals
Development and dissemination of scholarly work

- **Presentations**
  - National: 6
  - Regional: 1
  - State: 1

- **Posters**
  - International: 4
  - Regional: 2

- **Publications**
  - In preparation

Year 2 | Year 3
---|---
6 | 4
1 | 
1 | 1

Presentation prepared by Mitcham & Steelman, February 2006
Collaboratively reviewing progress

- Setting annual expectations for grant
- Discussing semester progress
- Evaluating annual accomplishments
- Celebrating grant accomplishments
Providing sustained collegial support

- Coaching through distributed leadership
  - Diverse skill set of steering committee members
  - Meeting individual faculty mentor needs
- Scheduling regular faculty mentor meetings
- Valuing talk about work in progress
Successes: Learning

• Increased courses with community-based learning experiences from 6 to 13
• Increased faculty mentors implementing community-based learning experiences from 6 to 11
• Delivered over 700 student community-based practice interventions
Successes: Learning

- Demonstrated positive responses from OT, PT and SLP students to
  - Participation in community-based learning experiences
  - Exposure to preclinical training in MUAs
  - Early interaction and collaboration with other professions
  - Opportunities to work directly with faculty members
Successes: Service

- Developed community-campus partnerships with 10 key community organizations
- Reached almost 2000 community participants in over 100 different sites
- Expanded projects into 10 of 12 counties in the Lowcountry region
Successes: Service

• Demonstrated that recipients of our services
  – Enjoyed their interactions with students
  – Benefited from the programs offered
  – Requested more offerings
• Demonstrated that community partners
  – Appreciated their involvement with the university
  – Responded favorably to the programs offered to their organizations
  – Requested more offerings
• Demonstrated that Lowcountry AHEC
  – Welcomed further collaboration with the university in innovative ways to meet their mission
Competing continuation grant

http://people.musc.edu/~mauldinm/community_connections/community2.html
Purpose

• Expand the scope of Community Connections
• Add a new component that connects science to service
• Develop a mechanism for collaborating with a variety of academic and community constituents
• Establish a “center for community engagement” to coordinate, develop, disseminate model allied health programs that provide prevention and health promotion services in MUAs and HPSAs
Focus

- **Learning** that promotes social responsibility and influences future practice patterns for graduate occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology students
- **Service** that builds on mutual interest and fosters dynamic, reciprocal partnerships between academic and community organizations
- **Research** that embraces the development of community-based participatory approaches and measures the efficacy and effectiveness of graduate student learning and service delivery outcomes
Further questions
Acknowledgements

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