Unity College Named as Finalist to President’s Community Service Honor Roll

Unity College joins fourteen other colleges across the United States that were named finalists to this year’s Community Service Honor Roll by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Unity’s distinction as an honor roll finalist placed it in the highest award category for a college from Maine. The Honor Roll recognizes higher education institutions that reflect the values of exemplary community service and achieve meaningful outcomes in their communities. This year the CNCS admitted a total of 642 colleges and universities for their impact on issues from literacy and neighborhood revitalization to supporting at-risk youth. Of that total, 513 were named to the Honor Roll, 110 received the recognition of Honor Roll with distinction, 14 were identified as finalists, and five received the Presidential Award.

“Together, service and learning increase civic engagement while fostering social innovation among students, empowering them to solve challenges within their communities,” noted acting CNCS CEO Robert Velasco. “We applaud the Honor Roll Schools for their commitment to service.”

Faculty, Students Honored for Commitment to Service

Kathleen Dunckel receives the 2012 Harward Award for Service Learning.

Every spring, college and university leaders from across the state of Maine gather to honor and celebrate faculty and students who have made outstanding contributions to their campuses and communities through civic engagement work. The Maine Campus Compact Awards were hosted this year on the campus of Bates College, with Unity faculty and students present among the awardees. Instructor Kathleen Dunckel was one of three faculty members selected from across the state to receive The Donald Harward Faculty Award for Service Learning Excellence, which recognizes the integration of public service with teaching. Recipients use service-learning as an innovative teaching tool to engage students in academic and civic learning. Dunckel, who began teaching in Unity in 2009, has been a practitioner of service learning for eight years in her Geographical Information Systems courses where she engages students in regionally focused community and environmental issues. These have recently included study of hemlock ecosystem management practices in collaboration with the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine and others, natural resource inventorying with regional land trust organizations, and land use planning studies for municipal governments and planning boards. Similarly, the President’s Campus Leadership Award recognizes a student organization or campus department for its contributions to community service, service-learning and/or civic engagement efforts. Unity’s Student Government Association (SGA) was celebrated for its work to institutionalize community service among all clubs across campus. Treasurer Rachelanne Vander Werf was present to receive the award on behalf of the SGA. UC Senior Kelly Barber also received special recognition for her individual efforts to institutionalize and expand campus civic engagement within the student body. Congratulations to all and many thanks for such commitment to service and community!
Students Take on Local Issues in “The Environmental Citizen”

Each semester, students in The Environmental Citizen address environmental issues in partnership with community-based organizations. The issues and organizations change from semester to semester. This Spring, course work focused on health and wellness, community literacy, and art.

Finding Voice:
A Project in Community Literacy
~By Sarah Riley

This Spring, students in the Environmental Citizen: Community Literacy, worked with the Captain Albert Stevens School (CASS) in Belfast and the Troy elementary school on formulating ways to improve literacy in the area. The community literacy students have been learning about and implementing a creative approach to writing. “It is a way to start with students’ experiences and interests and get them away from the confines of the computer screen and 8.5 x 11 inch paper, and include multiple literacies in the writing curriculum”, says Stephanie Wade, the class instructor.

Recently, the class hosted a community literacy event which included a showcase of the writing projects produced by the fourth and fifth graders of the Troy and Belfast schools, as well as a poetry reading from the group, Back Forty Voices. CASS 4th grade teacher Melinda Knowles described the experience as an “out of the box” writing project which started from a bird’s-eye view of a special place and grew into a detailed piece of writing. Her students then created tri-fold displays and shared these with UC students in Wade’s course. Knowles noted that she “saw her students become inspired to write in a whole new way.” UC students have gone on to develop extension projects from these, including but not limited to a sidewalk-chalk poetry event and a proposal for a community literacy center in Unity.

Student–Organized Art Show a Natural Success
~By Sarah Riley

On April 22nd, Tom Mullin’s Nature, Art and Photography class hosted their big show. Student artists and artists from across New England gathered to exhibit, sell and enjoy their art at Unity College in honor of the Earth Day celebration. “Regional community groups like the Sebasticook Regional Land Trust, Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance and numerous community art groups and organizations have been instrumental in helping to produce and showcase the event”, stated Mullin a week before the show. The show included vending booths for the artists, a silent auction, a children’s art activities station, a giant mural and many other activities. Students in the class were engaged in all aspects of coordination. From enlisting artists, to day-of events, they learned everything that goes into presenting a nature art show. “Being the chair of the Artist Recruitment Committee has helped me better understand the importance of organization and leadership,” commented student Lucero Torres. The event had a great turnout and helped bring the class, Earth Day, art and the community all together for a fun, end of the semester experience. Proceeds from the booth fees have been put toward a new student scholarship.
Unity College Launches NorthStar Leadership Program, Promotes Student Success

Unity College’s newly developed NorthStar Program kicked off in January with a student reception and special presentation by Leadership Institute founder Mike Webber. The program provides students with pathways for developing and enhancing a personal philosophy of leadership that includes understanding of self, groups, community, and acceptance of responsibilities. As a co-curricular program, enrollment is optional; students who choose to participate progress through a structured framework for exploring leadership from basic to advanced levels. The program also includes a series of practical applications across four different tracks of interest: Campus Engagement, Service Leadership, Outdoor Leadership, and Women’s Environmental Leadership. The program’s creators (faculty and staff representing Student Affairs, the WE Lead Program, the Center for Environmental and Experiential Education, and the Office of CBL), are enthused about this new model through which to recognize the academic and co-curricular contributions that students make to the campus community. The program provides equal access to leadership development for all Unity students, regardless of major. Kayla Fuller, a sophomore at Unity majoring in Captive Wildlife Care and Education, is enrolled in the Service track, and has used the opportunity to deliver reptile education in area schools. Fuller, who plans to work with reptiles in both rehabilitative and educational settings upon graduation, sees the program as a way to both serve the community and enhance her professional skill set. Kayla has successfully completed the first level of the program and is making plans for phase 2 in the Fall.

The Art of Community
~ By Zeidy Candelario

If you’ve been into the Unity Community Center as of late, you may have noticed a splash of color, texture and earthy creativity in the Galleria. The college’s Art Builds Community class partnered with Unity Barn Raisers (UBR) this spring to create a clay mural representing “the heart and soul of our local community”. The project aimed to have the students make connections within the community and to practice collaborative skills, while producing an art piece that the entire community could enjoy and appreciate. To learn about the work of UBR, instructor Randy Fein had the students participate in a number of UBR initiatives, including the Community Meals program. A series of workshops then brought the class, UBR volunteers and community members together to design and create a collection of relief pieces. UBR Executive Director Tess Woods described the creative process and final product as an “art-o-fact”—one that depicts the facts and history of UBR’s evolution and values through artistic expression and 3-D relief. Programs represented in the clay tiles include the Veggies for All project, Triplet Park, the Community Bridge, Community Gym, Farmers’ Market and Neighbor Warming Neighbor, among others. The finished piece (pictured left), was formally unveiled at the recent May 5th UBR Community Meal. UBR is a nonprofit organization that works with the community to enhance rural and economic vitality, promote health and wellness, and address issues of local and regional concern. Fein will engage a new group of students in the Fall in working with UBR to create an outdoor installation.
Students Design Curriculum for Maine Academy of Natural Sciences

This Spring, students in Curriculum Development and Assessment teamed up with the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS) to develop a project-based and standards-based agricultural curriculum. The course is required for students in the teacher education program and is offered every other year. In January, students in the course spent some time on the MeANS campus, located on Goodwill Hinkley’s grounds. They then got to work unpacking the standards, and drafting and re-drafting units.

The opportunity to develop this curriculum for MeANS has proven valuable for our future educators. The students and program coordinators are looking forward to seeing all their hard work come to fruition in the fall.

Have You Seen ‘Em?
Unity Service Squad Making the Rounds
~ By Zeidy Candelario

This year saw the birth of a very promising club. Started by seniors Kelly Barber and Chelsea Ardle, the Unity Service Squad is dedicated to serving the community, both locally and throughout the state. Kelly was inspired to form the squad after the devastation in New England from Hurricane Irene. The group has served with various organizations such as Unity Barn Raisers, Volunteer Regional Food Pantry, Avian Haven, Addie’s Attic Clothing Bank, Viles Arboretum and others. The Service Squad is also serving as the start of a disaster relief group that will hopefully evolve into its own club. Led by Kelly, this past April four of its members attended a disaster relief training sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention, where they were trained in different areas such as mud-out techniques and chainsaw use. The club will also be sponsoring a service competition for Dean’s Cup, which they hope will further promote service within the student body. Although this is Kelly’s final year at Unity she is confident that the students left in office will continue to nurture her ‘baby’ and that the club will continue to grow and inspire students.

Get the Guide!
Waldo County Area Local Food Guide!

The third edition of the Waldo County Area Local Food Guide, a print directory that helps citizens locate and purchase local foods, will soon be available. Produced in partnership with MOFGA every other year, you’ll be able to download the guide from the UC website:

www.unity.edu/Academic/CommunityBased/Special Projects

Please contact the Office of CBL if you require a print copy.

Farmers and producers located in or selling in the Waldo County area are encouraged to contact the CBL Office to be listed at no cost.

Thank You!

To all UC Clubs and others who have provided service this year, and to the many organizations who have hosted Unity groups, shared their expertise and enriched our student programs!
National Park Service Technical Grant supports regional collaboration

With the help of a National Park Service Technical Assistance Grant, the recently formed Waldo County Trails Coalition (WCTC), has been busy hashing out the details for a trail system that will link Unity to Frye Mountain. The Coalition includes six organizations, five of which cur currently manage hiking trails in the region between Unity and Frye Mountain. These are Unity Barn Raisers (UBR), Sebasticook Regional Land Trust (SRTL), Unity College (UC), Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance (SWLA), and Maine Farmland Trust (MFT). Together, they currently maintain more than 40 miles of trails on lands owned by the organizations and by private landowners. The project, which will link these existing systems, will promote and support health and wellness, recreation, non-motorized transportation, and opportunities for economic development and education. The overall initiative is organized into a three phase effort: Phase 1 will connect Unity’s CommUnity Trails to MOFGA; Phase 2 will connect SWLA’s trails to the Mt. View School Complex and; Phase 3 will bridge the middle distance between Mt. View and MOFGA.

Since November, WCTC members have been scouting, planning and routing trails for Phase 1, and reaching out to area landowners who may be interested in having a portion of new trail pass through their property. Other activities underway include creation of a comprehensive trail management plan, preparation for several volunteer work days, designing outreach materials, signage, and more. Trail construction for Phase 1 is slated for Fall 2012. Stay tuned for more information about how you can become involved.

Students Give Back Over Spring Break

Eight days, eight organizations. During the second week of their Spring Break, a group of 17 Unity Students set out on a week-long service trip around Maine. Led by seniors Kelly Barber and Tim Godaire, they started working locally with the Volunteer Regional Food Pantry and ended with Habitat for Humanity. In its fourth year, the Alternative Spring Break experience brings students together for an opportunity to serve their community while visiting new places. Other organizations students worked with included the Bangor Homeless Shelter, Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance, and Newforest Institute. Work ranged from trail work to cleaning to stacking wood. “I liked working at Sheepscot because I like trail work and the people were super nice and let us walk on the trails,” reflected first year student Maike Smith. “I did it because Spring Break was two weeks and I wanted to do something worthwhile with my time”, commented Summer Nay, also a first year student. Kelly, who has participated on the trip since its beginning four years ago, is excited to see a growth in the number of students who take part, and hopes that it continues to be a tradition at Unity.

Contact Us!

To learn more about the Office of Community-Based Learning, contact Jen Olin: jolin@unity.edu or call 948.9273