

Compact Current

CAMPUS COMPACT

INSIDE	
Fighting Poverty in Oklahoma	3
First-Generation VISTAs in Piedmont Triad	4
Mapping Preparation, Pursuit, and Persistence in Mass.	5
“Stand Down” for Vets Brings Healing in Ohio	6

Educating Citizens
Building Communities

SPRING/SUMMER 2011

Compact Current is the newsletter of Campus Compact, which provides leadership, resources, and advocacy to support civic education, community building, and campus engagement for more than 1,100 member campuses.



Campus Compact has received generous support from KPMG for the *Compact Current*.

Concordia provides a great example for institutions in Oregon in terms of servant leadership. It routinely demonstrates the significance that community engagement has on student outcomes.

— Emily Gilliland
Executive Director
Oregon Campus Compact

Concordia's Charles Schlimpert: Making a Campus-Wide Commitment to Service-Learning

Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, is a private, Christian, liberal arts university open to students of any faith, with a mission to prepare leaders for the transformation of society. When Dr. Charles E. Schlimpert was called to serve in 1983 as Concordia's fourth president, the school was wrestling with its identity as a four-year college. He led Concordia through a process that reduced the number of programs offered, and then focused energy and resources on the remaining programs. Those now reflect Concordia's historical strengths and center on areas where the university feels it can positively and significantly impact the educational needs of the Lutheran Church and the surrounding communities.



Concordia's President Charles Schlimpert

CC: What is your vision for student engagement and service at Concordia?

CS: The question at Concordia has always been: What's going to make us a great university? It's about the opportunity to learn, practice, and then develop a mindset about making the communities in which we live, work, and worship better places. Ten years ago we adopted this as a kind of audacious mantra, even articulating it in our Mission Statement. We are committed to transforming society, one student at a time.

CC: What did that look like operationally?

CS: We created a new position of Executive Vice President for External Affairs and Community Engagement whose job it is to help us think institutionally about how we can extend our mission on campus and into the community. A decade later, Concordia provides 223,000 service, practicum, and internship hours annually. For us it's about being a binding thread within the community.

CC: You've said that early on, you were fairly naïve about what Campus Compact was or how it could benefit Concordia. What changed?

CS: Well, to be honest, I was invited to join the Oregon Campus Compact board. I imme-

diately noticed that its mission was nearly identical to our own, and something clicked. Here was an organization whose reason for being was closely tied to ours. Today, we're very involved with Emily Gilliland at Oregon Campus Compact. She helps us figure out how to get where we want to go—I think of her as the “secret sauce.” She helps us focus and brings significant resources to the table like recognition for the school, a concentric and mushrooming circle of relationships, and, of course, the most important benefit—financial assistance for our students. In 1995, Oregon AmeriCorps Education Awards on campus totaled \$93,000. Today, 15 years later, that number is up to \$1,849,883. And here's a number that will grab you: since 1995, Oregon students have received a total of \$17,331,659 in AmeriCorps Education Awards. Can you imagine what a difference this has made in the lives of our students?

CC: What impact do you see in the community due to community engagement at Concordia?

CS: Here's an example that spans multiple disciplines, and it's not atypical. The Faubion School, a public school adjacent to our property in northeast Portland, had suffered severe budget cuts—this in a school that had one of

Continued on page 2



Campus Compact

Campus Compact is a national coalition of more than 1,100 college and university presidents—representing some 9 million students—who are committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education. As the only national association dedicated solely to this mission, Campus Compact is a leader in building civic engagement into campus and academic life. Through our national office and network of 35 state offices, members receive the training, resources, and advocacy they need to build strong surrounding communities and teach students the skills and values of democracy.

Campus Compact comprises a national office based in Boston, MA, and state offices in CA, CO, CT, FL, HI, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, MT, NC, NH, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, UT, VT, WA, WI, and WV. For contact and other information, see www.compact.org.

Board of Directors

CHAIR

John J. DeGioia Georgetown University

VICE-CHAIRS

Jane A. Karas Flathead Valley Community College

Richard R. Rush California State University Channel Islands

James T. Harris Widener University

SECRETARY

James B. Dworkin Purdue University-North Central

TREASURER

David L. Giunta Natixis Global Associates

MEMBERS

Lawrence S. Bacow Tufts University

Wilson Bradshaw Florida Gulf Coast University

Warrick L. Carter Columbia College Chicago

Carole Falcon-Chandler Fort Belknap College

Anthony DiGiorgio Winthrop University

Karen Gross Southern Vermont College

JoAnn Haysbert Langston University

Alex Johnson Community College of Allegheny County

Mary E. Lyons University of San Diego

Sally Mason University of Iowa

Bernard Milano KPMG Foundation

Preston Pulliams Portland Community College

John Sirek McCormick Foundation

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Maureen F. Curley President

Sue C. Kelman Director of Communication

Amy Smitter Director of Institutional Development

Continued from page 1

the largest free-lunch program in the state! It had to cut all art, music, drama, and health programs. Five years ago students from our College of Education offered to help. Through their volunteer work, we've brought back the art, music, and drama curricula. Then our nursing students asked what they could do. They now conduct all health screenings and sex education for the school—again, all on a volunteer basis. But it didn't stop there. Our athletes wanted to get into the game. Working with the principal, they designed a structured recess program; in its first semester, discipline referrals dropped by 85%. This thing just gains momentum.

Through our business school we created a partnership with AARP and CASH Oregon (Creating Assets, Savings and Hope—a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization) to provide free income-tax preparation services focused on obtaining tax credit returns for low-income families and individuals. So far, from our \$500 investment, we've helped return \$120,000 to the community.

CC: Who inspires you around this work?

CS: One of my heroes is Wendy Kopp at Teach for America (TFA). She recruits students to teach in underserved areas. Building off the TFA model, I asked the faculty to start a volunteer teacher corps in Portland. Our Concordia Teacher Corps now works with about 100 students in Portland's elementary and middle schools. We've also partnered with De La Salle North Catholic High School, a private Catholic school with a unique niche: tuition is free, but students have to be at a certain poverty level and on a college or work-prep path. At De La Salle, our faculty and students serve as teachers, tutors, and mentors. And while the emphasis is on increasing math and reading skills, the new-found confidence that the ninth graders describe at the end of the program is an added benefit.

CC: How did you convince faculty to become leaders in this movement?

CS: I challenged them by letting them know

that their reputation was at stake. I asked how it would reflect on their programs if we didn't train our students to be leaders and problem-solvers. It would be a black eye for us. More positively, wouldn't it be terrific to begin to see other states sending their students to us so that they could go back home and initiate similar programs? What an honor that would be. Faculty get it. They know that change starts small and moves slowly, but not at a snail's pace. It becomes viral. We're not saying our goal is to change the world, just that we want to teach people how to change one person or one community at a time.

CC: We're curious. How does this translate to student recruitment and to alumni?

CS: Because we've institutionalized community engagement in a positive and deliberate way, at the presidential, staff, and board levels, we've created a market advantage that helps recruitment and results in a special kind of student who seeks us out. Alumni (and lots of other people) think very differently about Concordia now than they did ten years ago. I had an amazing experience that blew me away last year. There was a quiet young student from a very small town in Washington state. She grew up very sheltered but had a great heart for service. She came by to tell me that she had been accepted to Teach for America and that she was teaching in one of the toughest inner-city schools in Washington, D.C. This was not the life she had imagined for herself, but it is a life that enriches and nourishes her today.

CC: Finally, Dr. Schlimpert, what role do you feel your Lutheran roots play in your passion for civic engagement?

CS: They play a significant role. We don't have an exclusive environment, nor do we educate only Christian students. But when students come to Concordia they find an environment that is infused by our deeply held Christian beliefs that it's our faith that drives us to serve and our faith that gets us there. **CC**

Compact Current, the national newsletter of Campus Compact, is distributed three times a year to all Campus Compact member institutions.

Editorial Correspondence: Address all correspondence to Sue C. Kelman, Editor, *Compact Current*, Campus Compact, 45 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111. Email: skelman@compact.org

In Appreciation of our Supporters and Sponsors

In addition to member support and our wonderful donors, Campus Compact receives generous support from our sponsors, including KPMG Foundation, USA Funds, Jenzabar, Inc., and Georgetown University, among others. Campus Compact appreciates program support from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Jenzabar Foundation, TOSA Foundation, and Lumina Foundation for Education. For a full list of donors and supporters please visit us online at www.compact.org.

Fighting Poverty in Oklahoma through Health and Financial Literacy Initiatives

*Addressing awareness of health care services, financial literacy, and tutoring and mentoring in communities allows Oklahoma Campus Compact (OKCC) to focus higher education support for issues endemic to poverty in their area through its AmeriCorps*VISTA program. OKCC Executive Director Gina Wekke notes that two of the three action plans, community health outreach and financial literacy, emanated from the participating colleges.*

Addressing Health Disparities

The health status of Oklahomans presents a unique opportunity to fight poverty through community-building and health education initiatives. Research shows that health disparities are often a result of poverty, but the opposite also holds true. Poor health leads to higher medical expenditures and reduces the potential to work and earn, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Children living in poverty are at increased risk for many adverse conditions including learning disabilities, mental health problems, asthma, and obesity.

Research conducted by Steve Godecke, OKCC's AmeriCorps*VISTA state coordinator, showed that Oklahoma has demonstrated consistently high health needs compared with other states. Although providing free and low-cost care is vital to addressing community health needs, it will take more than the availability of care to solve Oklahoma's health problems in low-income communities.

As a result, Community Health Network VISTAs are cataloging available free and low-cost health care resources. VISTAs will then partner with state and local social services, faith-based organizations, nonprofits, and others to increase community awareness of those resources. Among the activities are establishing referrer relationships and network-building.

These VISTAs are also conducting a community health assessment to better determine the health needs of their host communities and to identify barriers that interfere with low-income populations' access to appropriate health care. Their findings will help set goals and plan future health action in the community, including planning for future AmeriCorps members.

Financial Literacy

The poverty rate among Oklahoma primary and secondary students (as measured by eligibility for free or reduced-cost lunch) was 56.25% in 2008–2009 (or 362,697 of 644,758

students). While Oklahoma has mandated teaching financial literacy in the secondary school curriculum, the first group of students to receive this education won't graduate until 2014. Gina Wekke thinks that's too late and says it's important to provide financial education right now for students in the system who would otherwise go unserved and be at risk for remaining in poverty and passing it on to their children.

By college, most students are already on their way to dangerous levels of debt. Half of all undergraduates have four or more credit cards, and 82% carry balances (and incur finance charges) on those credit cards every month. The mean average balance is a whopping \$3,173.

Godecke said Oklahoma's students are asking for financial literacy help. In data from a recent study, 60% of undergraduates were surprised at how high their balance had grown, and 40% said they've charged items knowing they didn't have money to pay the bill. The VISTA Financial Literacy action plan offers inclusive programming to anyone interested in improving his or her money-management knowledge and skills. The critical juncture between high school and college is where resources can most easily be mobilized, and partnerships established. Through these VISTAs, OKCC is initiating or expanding financial literacy programs that educate residents and students, enabling them to manage their money more effectively and thus helping to reduce poverty and debt.

Program Costs

A third OKCC AmeriCorps*VISTA action plan addresses tutoring and mentoring needs in K–16. Together, state and federal resources for the Oklahoma AmeriCorps*VISTA program total \$354,000 for the current year, with OKCC supplying \$55,000 of that amount in personnel time, state coordinator benefits, travel, and materials. Federal funds provide living allowances for 15 VISTA members and one state program coordinator. **CC**

Retention Project Strategy: Document & Share Models

The **AmeriCorps Retention Project** has 45 full-time AmeriCorps members at 27 colleges and universities in Washington and Oregon. The Retention Project is a college-based mentoring program that utilizes service-learning as a strategy to

- ▲ Improve retention and academic advancement rates of middle school, high school, and college students at risk of dropping out of school by providing them with a college student mentor and engaging them in service-learning activities.
- ▲ Improve retention and academic advancement of college students by engaging them in mentoring and other service-learning activities.
- ▲ Develop both civic and work-force skills for all students.
- ▲ Build sustainable partnerships among colleges, middle schools, and high schools.

In Campus Compact's white paper, *A Promising Connection: Increasing College Access and Success through Civic Engagement* (available from Campus Compact), data confirm that college students who mentor others show improved academic success as well as progress attaining their own degree.

To support the AmeriCorps Retention Project, Washington Campus Compact (WACC), in partnership with the Higher Education Coordinating Board and its College Access Challenge Grant, is developing statewide strategies to improve college access and success of low-income, first-generation, and minority students. Efforts will improve college access and success through the use of effective campus-based mentoring programs. The program design will include opportunities for our current campus partners to enhance their existing AmeriCorps Retention Project programs, participate in statewide activities/training coordinated by WACC, and increase program alignment with college student-to-youth mentoring initiatives and partnerships per the requirements of the AmeriCorps Retention Project grant. **CC**

First-Generation VISTAs Leave Legacy in North Carolina's Piedmont Triad

An investment from CNCS (the Corporation for National and Community Service) resulted in 12 first-generation college students serving as North Carolina Campus Compact (NCCC) VISTA Summer Associates in North Carolina's Piedmont Triad. The Triad is a north-central region within and surrounding Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and High Point. It is also an important educational and cultural region, occupying a prominent place in the history of the American civil rights movement.

Associates in the pilot program at the University of North Carolina (UNC)-Greensboro and at Elon and Wake Forest Universities worked directly and indirectly to engage students. Based at campus multicultural affairs, service-learning, and leadership offices, they mentored and tutored youth, implemented literacy projects in housing developments, advised summer bridge program leaders, and coordinated service-learning and community service programs. In the process, they gained experience that will contribute to their college success and entry into the workforce.

On average, each associate supported 60 volunteers who contributed a total of 8,232 hours over eight weeks. To name just a few of their accomplishments, they:

- Created a community service project for African-American males at UNC-Greensboro.
- Researched and assisted with an Elon University Campus Kitchen project proposal to address local poverty by recycling food from cafeterias, and having student volunteers prepare and deliver meals to the community.
- Collaborated with Alamance Community College to provide English literacy education for children of ESL students.

- Helped Elon University's Multicultural Affairs Office collaborate with UNC-Greensboro to plan a student-run multicultural conference.
- Developed 20 Wake Forest first-generation upperclassmen as mentors for incoming first-generation freshmen.

VISTAs work in a professional environment, gain skills that will prepare them to enter the full-time workforce after graduation, and further their success in college by participating in volunteerism. Weekly trainings helped build a network of support and included financial literacy and planning, identifying possible career paths through the Myers Briggs and Strong Inventories, professional interview etiquette, serving beyond college, and life transitions and management.

In a post-service survey, 100% of respondents said they were interested in serving again and pursuing a full-time service opportunity after college. This was a life-changing summer for many. One shared, "I have gained an understanding of professionalism that I did not expect to achieve. I believe this is a big step forward for me in obtaining a respectable career that I also enjoy."

"We believe the VISTA program made a significant impact in the Triad," notes NCCC executive director Lisa Keyne. "Not only did campuses provide real resources, such as food and volunteer commitment, and build stronger programs that will result in increased college access and success for underrepresented populations, but 12 first-generation college students headed back to school with a renewed understanding of how they can make a difference and the importance of completing their college education. Their impact is only beginning to be felt." **CC**

Thinking Aloud...

A Deep National Resource

Campus Compact's serious commitment to students and to newly graduated students—in the form of AmeriCorps State and National programs and AmeriCorps*VISTA—represents the very essence of what Campus Compact is today. It also reflects our philosophy of education: that higher education is called upon to serve a larger, more fundamental public purpose. Collectively, Campus Compact is proud to have the largest AmeriCorps Education Award Program in the country. The impact of these programs is deeply felt by participants, by their families, and in the communities where participants are serving and learning to become involved citizens.

In 2010 alone, 12,667 students received education awards or other financial aid that made college more accessible and provided a strong incentive for them to remain in school through graduation. Equally important are their experiences along the path to graduation that prepared them for the working world and gave them first-hand knowledge about community problem-solving.

Programs that emphasize service-learning in the classroom and in the community, like AmeriCorps*VISTA, enable a

Maureen Curley,
Campus Compact President



new generation to appreciate its own power to make positive change... see Campus Compact's 2010 white paper "*A Promising Connection: Increasing College Access and Success through Civic Engagement*" at: <http://www.compact.org/resources/college-access-and-success/presidents-leadership-summit/14988>.

In this issue of *Compact Current*, we focus on some of the more compelling stories from our member institutions that participate in these programs funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

As you will see, their value is felt, and returned, manyfold and in many directions, not the least of which is by helping to prepare and cultivate a new generation of committed citizens. We cannot afford to allow these programs to wither. We owe this to communities, to students, to their families, and to the future of this country. **CC**

Mapping Preparation, Pursuit, and Persistence in Massachusetts

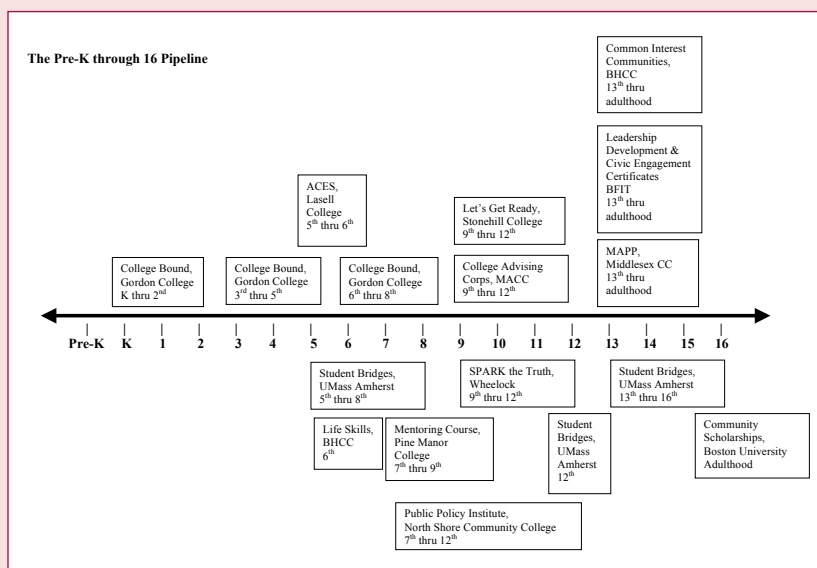
In January 2011, a focus group of 11 Massachusetts Campus Compact (MACC) VISTAs convened around the topic of access, success, and education to share information about their work on each campus. They also mapped these programs along a Pre-K through 16 pipeline to see how they were addressing the issue holistically. They discussed areas of future cross-campus collaboration and produced a guide that documents each program the VISTAs work on. The VISTAs chose to explicitly define three key terms:

Preparation: Students' academic preparation, including managing learning styles; emotional preparation, including learning to manage expectations, advocating for your interests, being confident in diverse social and cultural settings, and choosing among competing interests; and financial preparation, including financial literacy and decision making.

Pursuit: Students' knowledge about college, including visits to campuses; completion of the college application; understanding how to finance college, including completing the FAFSA and financial literacy; choosing a college; enrolling and transitioning to college; and starting the semester.

Persistence: Students accessing the support they need to succeed, including academic, financial, emotional, and leadership support; fall-to-fall reenrollment; financial literacy; and degree completion.

"Visually mapping out programs across the state helps us ensure that we're reaching students all across the spectrum, prevents us from mistakenly duplicating efforts, and fosters improved sharing among program providers," explains MACC Executive Director Barbara Canyes. **CC**



Ohio's "Stand Down" Brings Support, Services, and Healing to Veterans

Northwest Ohio has been hit especially hard by the recession, causing high unemployment. Veterans are having an especially rough time. VISTA Corps member Katrena Kugler was asked to think programmatically about meeting veterans' and job seekers' needs while strengthening campus-community ties and creating new pathways of communication to these targeted populations. Defiance County's day-long "Stand Down" was the result.

"Stand Down" is a military term that means a time set aside from daily activities to take care of a group of people—in this case, veterans. Defiance's "Stand Down," held on March 24, 2011, was open to all area veterans in Northwest Ohio, no matter where they served or when.

Kugler brought Defiance College and the local Veterans' Service Commission (VSC) together to sponsor the event, which provided benefit-eligibility awareness to 225 veteran's families in nine counties. As part of this process, Kugler conducted a needs assessment of key community

partner organizations, particularly Northwest Ohio Community Action Commission, Defiance Public Library, and the local VSC. Together with Tanya Brunner, benefits counselor at the veteran's office, Kugler co-planned and hosted Ohio's "Stand Down" to connect veterans with the benefits they are eligible for and the community services they need. Veterans came together for fellowship, healing, and sharing mutual experiences. Twenty-eight service providers attended, addressing a variety of veterans' needs: college access, health care, legal advice, homeopathic healing alternatives, massage therapy, disability assistance, free haircuts, free breakfast, lunch, and refreshments. The VSC even called it a "million dollar event"!

As Richard Kinsley, executive director of Ohio Campus Compact explains, "Ohio Campus Compact AmeriCorps*VISTA strategically connects college resources with communities in need. Corps members gain valuable experience and education awards. Campuses expand their civic outreach. And community partners receive critical support." **CC**

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1232
Boston, MA

Campus Compact
45 Temple Place
Boston, MA 02111
617/357-1881
campus@compact.org
www.compact.org

