Mar 25th, 8:00 AM

The Engaged Department Initiative: GVSU, GRCC, and Aquinas Join Forces for Place-Based Impact

Gloria Mileva
Grand Valley State University

Danielle Lake
Grand Valley State University

Heather Carpenter
Grand Valley State University

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/chr_symposium

Part of the Civic and Community Engagement Commons, Community-Based Research Commons, Community Health and Preventive Medicine Commons, Education Commons, and the Translational Medical Research Commons

Mileva, Gloria; Lake, Danielle; Carpenter, Heather; Lancaster, Paula; Carr, Dillon; and Yarbrough, Todd, "The Engaged Department Initiative: GVSU, GRCC, and Aquinas Join Forces for Place-Based Impact" (2016). Community Engagement and Research Symposia. 2. http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/chr_symposium/2016/posters/2

This material is brought to you by eScholarship@UMMS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Community Engagement and Research Symposia by an authorized administrator of eScholarship@UMMS. For more information, please contact Lisa.Palmer@umassmed.edu.
Presenter Information
Gloria Mileva, Danielle Lake, Heather Carpenter, Paula Lancaster, Dillon Carr, and Todd Yarbrough

Creative Commons License

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License.
The Engaged Department Initiative: GVSU, GRCC, and Aquinas Join Forces for Place-Based Impact

Gloria Mileva (EDI Research Assistant, GVSU); Danielle Lake (Public Philosophy, GVSU); Heather Carpenter (Public, Non-Profit and Health Administration, GVSU); Paula Lancaster (Education, GVSU); Dillon Carr (Anthropology, GRCC); Todd Yarbrough (Economics, AQ)

Abstract

The Engaged Department Initiative (EDI) is a place-based cross-institutional collaboration located in the Grand Rapids region. Participating organizations include Michigan Campus Compact (MiCC), Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC), and Aquinas College (AQ). This innovative ethnographic case study is focused on evaluating how well the initiative completes its goals of increasing faculty knowledge and skills, expanding students’ community engagement opportunities, fostering intra- and inter- collaborations between the three institutions of higher education, and enhancing community partnerships. The hopes of this initiative is to make a real difference in the community and to create engaged citizens. By disseminating this research, we aspire to offer recommendations for people interested in spanning boundaries and working on place-based change in their own region.

Methodology

Our multi-site ethnographic cross-disciplinary research team evaluated this initiative through utilizing both traditional research methods and systemic action research practices (Burns, 2014). This approach allows us to conduct our research and give real time feedback designed to help participants respond to issues as they emerge. Data was collected through qualitative and quantitative measures, building upon previously methodology (Vogelgesang & Misa, 2002; Howe et al., 2010). Qualitative measures included observational data collected at meetings evaluating faculty, community partners, and students. Quantitative measures encompassed surveys, interviews, and calculations on retention rates.

Recommendations

Faculty -to- Community Collaborations

We must consider how faculty expertise and connections may be a valuable resource.

Inclusion of Students in Planning Process

Students experience the curriculum first-hand and could be consulted more directly and consistently throughout the EDI process.

Assessment of Community Member Needs

What the organization wants and what the user wants are not always synonymous.

Cross-Institutional Teamwork Potentially Lost

Centered cross-institutional collaboration has been stymied by the challenge of curricular change.

Movement Beyond Disciplinary Lens

The EDI recognizes the need for transdisciplinary, place-based engagement, but has not been able to foster it.

Initial Findings

As a collaboration between GVSU, GRCC, AQ, and MiCC, the engaged department initiative was created in order for participating departments to integrate community engagement within their courses. The research team was given the task to evaluate this initiative as an ethnographic case study and utilize systemic action research (SAR). Participating departments are GVSU’s Anthropology, Geography and Planning, and Hospitality and Tourism Management; GRCC’s Exercise Science and Biological Sciences; and AQ’s Sociology and Biology. The research team assigned to this initiative has cross-disciplinary training in Anthropology; Economics; Education; Public, Non-Profit, and Health Administration; and Public Philosophy and are spread throughout all educational institutions.

Acknowledgements


A special thanks to Grand Rapids Community Foundation and Michigan Nonprofit Association for providing funding for this project.

This project has been approved by Grand Valley State University’s HRRC after meeting the requirements of IRB approval for exemption under category 2, 45 CFR 46.101.