

Career Ready: Pursing equity through paid community-based work and learning experiences



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ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY
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Community Work and Learning

Introduction

How can we advance racial equity on campus by making our community-based learning programming more accessible?

- *Underserved students “benefit significantly” from participation in multiple high impact practices (AAC&U, 2013)*
- *However “a majority of college students do not have the opportunity to participate in high-impact activities, and...underrepresented students are far less likely to participate” (Brownell & Swaner, 2009)*

Activity: *Moving from deficit-minded explanations of equity gaps to equity-minded questions*

Reasons for lower participation rates among students of color in community-based internships or other community engagement programming

Barriers identified in AAC&U report

- *Lack of advising or guidance*
- *Inability to commit time/competing priorities such as work*
- *Inadequate explanation of the value of high impact practices for their learning*

How is St. Kate's Career Ready Internship program addressing these barriers?

Background

- Program housed in CWL
- Began as Community Leadership Program (CLP)
 - Support 8-12 students per year to be paid by St. Kate's to intern at a nonprofit community partner
 - Focus on leadership, professional skill development, community impact



CLP student Mysee Cheng '10 at Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE)

OCTOBER 16, 2010

ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY AWARDED NEARLY \$400,000 CAREER READY INTERNSHIP GRANT



St. Kate's students Saida Salah '10 (left) and Cimfort Dombi-Dorway '10 received internships in the first round of Great Lakes Funding.

Background

2014/15 & 2015-2018 grants received from Great Lakes

- Expansion of program and impact
 - 30-40 paid internships/semester with 30+ community organizations/semester
- Administrated by St. Kate's CWL in partnership with community organizations
 - Applications, interviews, payment, reflections, student development workshops, advising
- Designed for Juniors & Seniors with financial need
 - Students paid \$11.25/hour, 12 hours/week
 - Transportation assistance (free Metrotransit/parking pass)
 - Professional attire assistance through partnership with Dress for Success Twin Cities
 - Options for diverse majors; credit optional



2014-15 CAREER READY
INTERNSHIP GRANT RECIPIENT
2015-18 CAREER READY
INTERNSHIP GRANT RECIPIENT

How this addresses barriers

- ***Lack of advising or guidance***
 - *CWL shares opportunity across campus through staff, faculty, advisors & students; program prioritizes students with financial need*
- ***Inability to commit time/competing priorities such as work***
 - *Students are paid competitive wages for their time, and given transportation and other assistance as well*
- ***Inadequate explanation of the value of high impact practices for their learning***
 - *Student understanding of the value of experience for professional development*
 - *CWL staff support to promote student reflection through weekly reflections, advising, and workshops*

How Career Ready is also about racial equity

*Career Ready focused on financial need,
not racial equity...*



- Intersectionality of identity, including race and class
 - 2016 Day students Pell Grant Recipients
 - White-identifying students: 32.1%
 - Students of color: 75.5%

Our Katies are increasingly diverse



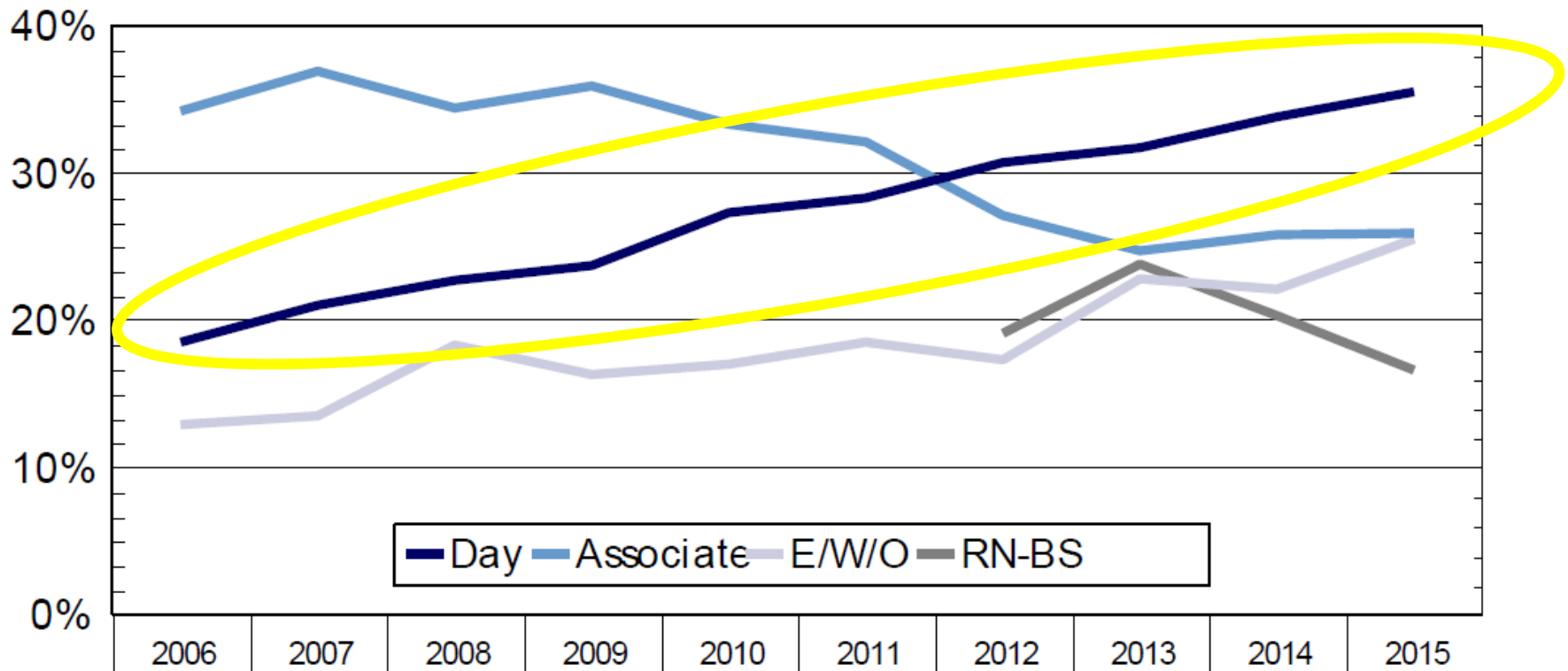
Fall 2016 Enrollment

- 1,956 total undergraduate, Day students
- Undergraduate Class: 412 First-time, First-year (FF) Day students
- **44.5% of this class identifies as students of color**

STUDENTS: Demographics

St. Catherine University 2015 Fact Book
Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment

MULTICULTURAL ENROLLMENT Undergraduate Students, Fall Census Data



- ***Our students of color value community engagement***
Based on Fall 2015 service-learning evaluation data, participating students of color responded:
 - **96.1%** felt service-learning is important to a St. Catherine University education (n=106)
 - **89.7%** believed service-learning enriched their overall experience at St. Kate's (n=102)
- ***Many of our most diverse majors require an internship***
 - Costly
 - Paid internships oftentimes not with nonprofits
- ***Our students of color with financial need bring assets and strengths to our community partners***

Benefit of program for Community Partners

“[Our Career Ready student] was a quick learner and worked independently which was a huge support for our organization during a time of staff transition.”

“Our partnership [with St. Kate’s Career Ready] allows us to bring in new people with diverse experiences allowing our work to benefit from those different perspectives.?”

“For a women-centered nonprofit, it's wonderful to be able to connect with young, talented women from diverse backgrounds. St. Kate's interns expand our organization's ability to fulfill our mission.”

“[Our] partnership with St. Kate's has proven to be crucial to the work which we do! The students that are matched with our sites are consistent, dedicated, and hard working. Their diverse experiences, ideas, and ways of being add much value to the relationships which we hold with participants. Students also act as wonderful role models for the youth which we serve. ”

Interns’ strengths described by sites:

- Bilingual
- Background in working with immigrants
- Experience in advocacy and organizing on issues related to race and gender discrimination. Knowledge on injustice and disparities.



Career Ready Intern Sadia Salad '17 working with children at HCMC

Stephanie Herr, '17

- Started interning through Career Ready in Spring 2016
- Why did I choose to apply to a Career Ready internship
- Internship sites
 - Keystone Community Services
 - Fairview Health Services



Significance of work experience in a field related to my major

- **Keystone Community Services**

- Experience working in with clients from all demographics
- Firsthand experience with food insecurity relating to other health disparities



- **Fairview Health Services**

- Experience with data collection and reporting
- Experience in the planning and implementation of programs in communities
- Experience working alongside community members to help build capacity in the communities they come from

Kalice Allen '17

- ❖ Began as an Career Ready Intern Spring 2017
- ❖ Choosing to work with Career Ready
- ❖ Internship Sites:
 - West Side Community Health Services (Spring 2016)
 - Continuum Care Center (Current)



A Reflection

"Listening to the needs of patients was the most important part of my job, and second was helping them get the resources they needed. Working primarily with the Latino, Hmong, and Homeless populations throughout my internship, forced me out of my comfort zone and made me think critically and reflect on the relationship between culture, Race/Ethnicity and health. In this position I was able to use the skills and knowledge that I gained from my Public Health/Community Health Worker courses out in the field, and through this experience I now feel ready to join the workforce."

The Most Important Takeaways

Learned

- ❖ The role of a Community health worker on a health care team
- ❖ The role of data in health care
- ❖ Compromise
- ❖ Community Partnership

Impact

- ❖ Intangible results- Just as important
 - Patient interactions
- ❖ Pre-conceived notions - Comfort
 - Societal norms

Successes & Challenges

- Successes

- Student-community collaborations
- Student growth
- Deepening of CWL-community partnership
- Student contributions to community
- Increased accessibility of internships/community-based learning

- Challenges

- Funding/budget
- Staff capacity
- More community interest in hosting an intern than positions available

Depth of engagement

One-time
service-learning

Small group,
multiple time
service-learning

Project-based
service-learning

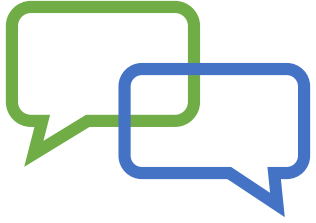
Career Ready
12 hours/week

Ongoing individual
service-learning
20-25 hours

Student employment
as America Reads
tutor



Discussion



Given the student population at your campus, what barriers might some of your students be experiencing to community engagement and experiential learning?

What approaches have you used to engage underrepresented students in community engagement programming? Are these efforts having the effect you hoped they would?

What are some ideas you have after hearing about St. Kate's efforts? What questions were raised for you that you want to explore?

What recommendations/ideas do you have for us and the Career Ready program?

References

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