

University of Washington *Institutional Initiatives*

Rachel L. Vaughn

In May 2011, the Center for Experiential Learning (a unit of Undergraduate Academic Affairs) joined with colleagues from the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity to create the Center for Experiential Learning and Diversity. The new center is located within Mary Gates Hall, a location for many undergraduate resources at the University of Washington. The center provides students one centralized location to learn about community engagement, to become involved in undergraduate research, and to seek out scholarship opportunities to support their engagement, scholarship, and future graduate studies.

The Center for Experiential Learning and Diversity develops reciprocal partnerships among students, communities, mentors, and faculty in order to help students take academic risks, actively engage in their own learning, explore the world and their place in it, and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their goals.

Programs housed in the center include

- the Carlson Leadership and Public Service Center;
- the Pipeline Project, a K-12 outreach program;
- the Jumpstart program, a national program that engages teams of college students in low-income pre-school classrooms;
- the Undergraduate Research Program;
- the Early Identification Program, which helps undergraduates from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds enter graduate school;
- the Ronald E. McNair Program, which prepares undergraduates for doctoral study;
- the Mary Gates Endowment for Students, which provides scholarships for undergraduates;
- the Global Opportunities program, which helps undergraduate students access international learning opportunities; and

- the Office of Merit Scholarships, Fellowships and Awards, which helps students pursue scholarships appropriate to their goals.

By co-locating these programs, the University of Washington is demonstrating the value of experiential learning in undergraduate education for students while creating a centralized location for students, staff, faculty and community partners to work collaboratively on programs that include engaged scholarship as part of the students' educational journey. Additionally, the collaborative work between Undergraduate Academic Affairs and the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity enriches the student experience for all University of Washington students.

The Carlson Leadership and Public Service Center, the primary resource for service-learning at the University of Washington, benefits greatly from being located within the Center for Experiential Learning and Diversity. Effective coordination among community-engaged programs is enhanced as the center works collaboratively on programs that benefit community partners, students, and faculty. In addition, it is able to cross-pollinate resources and programs with experiential learning and diversity programs that are not explicitly community-engaged. For example, the Carlson Center has engaged in on-going conversations with the Undergraduate Research Program regarding potential community-based participatory research projects, and in winter 2012, a service-learning faculty member teaching qualitative methods required her students to apply to present at the annual undergraduate research symposium. Finally, collaboration with programs through the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity allows the center to reach populations of students who have been less engaged with Carlson Center initiatives in the past.

For more information, contact

Rachel L. Vaughn

Director

Carlson Leadership & Public Service Center

rvaughn@uw.edu

(206) 685-2705

<http://expd.washington.edu>