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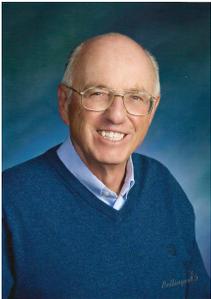
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# Service Learning

COLLEGE FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

## Service Learning Faculty Focus: Joe Carbone Keeps it *Real*



When it comes to his Project Monitoring and Delivery course (MSM 659), Joe Carbone prefers to keep it real. His students have gotten their hands dirty with projects as close to home as revamping the local Dragon Boat Festival, to a project in Kenya working with the local community to build a school and sanitation facilities so children can stay in school longer.

His teaching style has evolved over the years. He used to use Harvard Business case studies, but found he could do more good for the community and his students by engaging them in real-time, real-world projects. “These students can combine theory and practice, it opens up another door for students,” Carbone said.

His classroom operates in the same “real” way. There are no late assignments in his classes. “If you have a proposal that’s due Wednesday, the U.S. government isn’t going to wait until Friday,” Carbone said. When working with a real community partner client, not just the idea of one, there are real timelines and real implications for the work students are doing. Carbone notes that there are challenges that come with that. “Nothing is a silver bullet... a lot of times it’s a little bit of this and a little bit of that, based on the

organization,” he said. But, Carbone’s students say the work involved in taking on a real client is often worth it in the end. “Students have a tendency to say, ‘Wow, I haven’t worked so hard in I don’t know when.’ The challenges involved are considerable, but there is a high degree of satisfaction in that their work resulted in influencing the community,” Carbone said.

Satisfaction for students comes from realizing the real world implications and takeaways from the work they’ve done. And for Carbone, he finds satisfaction in learning right along with his students. “With adult student involvement, I walk away learning just as they learn,” he said.

By the end of their eight week class, Carbone summarizes where they started and where they’ve ended up. “I point out their ability to work as a team, the common look and feel they presented to the client. There’s growth that takes place.” Growth that, in the Jesuit tradition, just might be helping turn these learners into leaders.

### NOTE:

*Joe Carbone engages the support of the CPS Center for Service Learning (CSL) to find community partner clients for his class projects. The relationship has worked very well for his classes, as the Service Learning staff has been able to match the class needs (class size, type of project, course delivery format, etc.) assuring the approach offers the students a real environment that is dynamic with multiple considerations. The CSL is well connected to many organizations within the public, for profit, and not-for-profit sectors and is available as a resource to faculty in CPS.*

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# Communication Course Goes Beyond Simple Speeches

Service Learning in the COM 210 Speech Communication class focuses on social justice at its core by emphasizing contemporary issues and the analysis of public discourse. Previous classes worked with

refugee populations in Aurora. This fall, after working with Regis' College for Professional Studies' Center for Service Learning (CPS SL) staff, faculty Mary Lawrence was paired with Jefferson High School (Jefferson), as their students were also looking for ways to engage in the community.

Lawrence and CPS SL staff met with Jefferson faculty to figure out how to best engage with these students on a mutual project. In order to help raise graduation rates and increase student leadership at Jefferson, they have developed a program called "Streetwise" which offers leadership skills, mentoring and classes for the most at-risk of their at-risk students. Part of this program includes the use of Cowboy Ethics, a program funded by Daniels Fund, that empowers youth and adults alike to decide for themselves what they want to stand for and what kind of person they want to be, based on the unspoken code of cowboy conduct from the old west.

After careful consideration, the two groups decided that their mutual speech project would focus on Cowboy Ethics and how to implement those principles in their own lives. Jefferson students were not thrilled with the project at first, Lawrence said. "They didn't like the term 'cowboy' because they're inner-city, not cowboys." But after focusing on the themes of the program and how they would all be working together, Jefferson students seemed to have more buy-in.

And, this is a communications class, after all. Lawrence used the introduction of new students to help stress the realities of barriers in communication and was able to incorporate the learning objective that asks students to identify key components of

physical, vocal and non-verbal communications and delivery skills. "We talked about what, visually, we can see in our non-verbal communication. We talked about our barriers, eye contact, what we wear, looking down. Many of them (Jefferson students) came with the 'I'm only here because my teacher made me,' attitude. It was nice to see that diffused," Lawrence said.

Faculty from both schools were excited to have the Jefferson students on campus and to offer them a chance to interact with adults, because as Lawrence pointed out, "They are in need of positive role models and healthy interaction with adults." But it wasn't just about providing role models and reaching out to at-risk youth. In fact, Lawrence points out that the project wouldn't have been successful if her learners thought they were providing some grand service to these underprivileged kids. "I

had a pretty intentional dialogue with the CPS students on how we were going to present ourselves. I really stressed that our goal is not to teach them, not to be above them. We wanted to be at a meeting place that was mutual. Our students really struggled with that because they wanted to be in the teacher role because they are adults," Lawrence said.

The final project consisted of CPS students and Jefferson students pairing together on a persuasive speech. Lawrence tied the learning objectives of integrating the essen-

tial elements used in a persuasive speaking situation to each of the pairs. Students from both schools worked to convince the other in a persuasive manner. "The underlying thread of advocacy is that students in both schools were learning the value of mentoring and being mentored, suspending our prior judgments and assumptions, and collaborating to meet their goals (grades, course criteria and greater good)."

Not only were speeches made and viewpoints argued, but all students gained an understanding of another's journey, goals and community. "Students from both schools expressed gratitude for this opportunity to work and learn together," Lawrence said.

Lawrence is working with CPS SL staff and Jefferson to come up with more course collaboration in the future.

**"Students in both schools were learning the value of mentoring and being mentored, suspending our prior judgments and assumptions..."**



# Regis and Root Down

*A Winning Partnership in Decision Making*

root  
down

Decision making is difficult for everyone.

Weighing all of the options, considering financial and personal impacts, researching why or why not – decisions take time, heart and brain power. It's fitting then that a recent partnership with similar mission-minded people put their heads and hearts together to figure it out.

Kevin Shrum, a Regis affiliate faculty member and Jill Richter, employee of Root Down and Linger Restaurants, embarked on this project together. After working with Regis' College for Professional Studies Center for Service Learning staff, the two were paired to help Richter and company owner Justin Cucci make some tough decisions in partnership with the help of Shrum's Making Decisions in Organizations class (MSM 612).

With the new Affordable Care Act beginning to take effect, small business owner Cucci needed some help. His two restaurants, Root Down and Linger, both located in the Lower Highlands neighborhood, have a philosophy of revitalizing the neighborhoods in which they reside and that includes job creation and retaining great employees. They have plans to open up several new restaurants as well, so the impact of providing health care and other benefits to employees is a big one.

"The project presented by Root Down and Linger easily could've taken four experienced consultants three months. We had inexperienced students and only five weeks!" Shrum said. As faculty, Shrum saw his job as limiting the scope and boundaries. "Limiting scope-creep is a huge issue in decision making," Shrum said.

In the beginning, students expressed concern that they were in over their heads. Not only were they learning about decision making, they were learning about the Affordable Care Act and what that meant to their client. Shrum reminded students that their "focus should be on the decision making process," not becoming experts in human resources or restaurant management.

After tackling scope and learning what issues their client faced, they began their research in hopes of providing ample material for Richter and Cucci to make their decisions. "The topics I gave them were enormous," Richter said, "but the research they did was great. They gave me a great starting point, lots of data to pull from."

**"They had a real world problem to solve and that made them more invested in the process."**

Root Down and Linger are just two of hopefully many community restaurants that Cucci and Richter want to enhance with their newfound knowledge gained through

Regis student research. Partnerships with local restaurants and businesses like theirs help build up the Regis community and students involved in the process will certainly be keeping an eye out for those restaurants in the future.

Shrum feels that the students' experience was richer because of the challenges and the actual implications. "They had a real-world problem to solve and that made them more invested in the process," Shrum said.

But don't take Shrum's word for it. In class evaluations, students rated "This course was relevant to my professional goals," with 3.9 out of 4, and all would recommend or highly recommend the class.

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