Colleges Awarded Presidential Honor for Community Service

Five Schools Receive Presidential Award, 642 Schools Named to Honor Roll

Washington, D.C. – The Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Department of Education today honored the nation’s leading colleges and universities, students, and faculty members, and staff for their commitment to bettering their communities through community service and service learning. Five higher education institutions received the Presidential Award of the 2012 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the highest federal recognition a college or university can receive for its commitment to community service. The five awardees are Carson-Newman College, Miami University, North Carolina State University, Seattle University, and the University of Pennsylvania. The universities will be honored later today at the annual American Council on Education meeting in Los Angeles.

“Through service, these institutions are creating the next generation of leaders by challenging students to tackle tough issues and create positive impacts in the community,” said Robert Velasco, Acting CEO of CNCS. “We applaud the Honor Roll schools, their faculty and students for their commitment to make service a priority in and out of the classroom. Together, service and learning increase civic engagement while fostering social innovation among students, empowering them to solve challenges within their communities.”

“Preparing students to participate in our democracy and providing them with opportunities to take on local and global issues in their course work are as central to the mission of education as boosting college completion and closing the achievement gap,” said Eduardo Ochoa, the U.S. Department of Education’s assistant secretary for postsecondary education. “The Honor Roll schools should be proud of their work to elevate the role of service-learning on their campuses. Galvanizing their students to become involved in projects that address pressing concerns and enrich their academic experience has a lasting impact – both in the communities in which they work and on their own sense of purpose as citizens of the world. I hope we’ll see more and more colleges and universities following their lead.”

The President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll recognizes higher education institutions that reflect the values of exemplary community service and achieve meaningful outcomes in their communities. Inspired by the thousands of college students who traveled across the country to support relief efforts along the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina, the initiative celebrates the transformative power and volunteer spirit that exists within the higher education community.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, which has administered the Honor Roll since 2006, admitted a total of 642 schools to colleges and universities for their impact on issues from literacy and neighborhood revitalization to supporting at-risk youth. Of that total, 513 were named to the Honor Roll, 110 received the recognition of Honor Roll with distinction, 14 were identified as finalists, and five received the Presidential Award. Campuses named to this year’s Honor Roll reported that nearly one million of their
students engaged in service learning and more than 1.6 million participated in other forms of community service, serving a total of more than 105 million hours. For a full list of recipients, visit www.NationalService.gov/HonorRoll.

On campuses across the country, millions of college students are engaged in innovative projects to meet local needs, often using the skills learned in classrooms. Business and law students offer tax preparation and legal services, and college student volunteers provide meals, create parks, rebuild homes after disasters, conduct job training, run senior service programs, and much more. According the annual CNCS Volunteering in America report, 3.1 million college students dedicated more than 312 million hours of service to communities across the country, service valued at more than $6.6 billion.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a strong partner with the nation’s colleges and universities in supporting community service and service-learning. Last year, CNCS provided more than $200 million in support to institutions of higher education, including grants to operate service programs and the Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards for college tuition and student loan repayment. CNCS is a catalyst for service-learning programs nationwide that connect community service with academic curricula. Through these programs, college students serve their communities while strengthening their academic and civic skills.

CNCS oversees the Honor Roll in collaboration with the U.S. Departments of Education and Housing and Urban Development, Campus Compact, and the American Council on Education. Honorees are chosen based on a series of selection factors, including the scope and innovation of service projects, the extent to which service-learning is embedded in the curriculum, the school’s commitment to long-term campus-community partnerships, and measurable community outcomes as a result of the service.

Recipients of the Presidential Awards were honored in four categories:

- General Community Service, which considers the scope and quality of an institution's community service, service-learning, and civic engagement programs;
- Early Childhood Education, with programs intended to improve educational outcomes for young children by enhancing the quality of early learning programs for high-needs students;
- Promise Neighborhoods Model, characterized by coordinated, wrap-around, youth-focused services that work together to support the educational and social needs of children; and
- Summer Learning, which provides a safe, healthy environment for academic enrichment during summer breaks to help students retain what they learned during the academic year.

**General Community Service Award Recipients**

- **Carson Newman College, Johnson City, Tennessee** – Currently, more than 75 percent of the student body is engaged in service, with more than 40 percent contributing more than 10 hours per month. The college and its students have embraced the critical needs of rural youth living in public housing. The college focused on using the resources of the Education, Counseling and Psychology Departments to target juvenile delinquency. As a result of their education programming, more than 65 percent of the elementary students and 96 percent of the high school students have no further delinquency issues.

- **North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina**: More than 21,000 students have served more than 330,000 service hours during the 2010-2011 academic year. Projects focus largely on serving disadvantaged youth and early childhood literacy. With a large number of military families in the community, NCSU initiated the YES (Youth Extension Services) program to engage college students as interns to work with children of service members who are deployed.

**Early Childhood Education Award Recipient**

- **Miami University, Miami, Ohio**: A 10-year partnership with the Talawanda School District anchors Miami University’s work in early childhood education. The partnership engages every division of the
University and every school in the district. University students tutor and mentor 600 children through Adopt-a-School, America Reads, and America Counts programs. During the 2010-2011 academic year, more than 1400 Miami students volunteered for these programs, saving the school district an estimated $1.2 million.

**Promise Neighborhoods Award Recipient**

- **Seattle University, Seattle, Washington**: Seattle University focuses much of its community engagement efforts on Seattle’s Central District, a neighborhood adjacent to its campus with one of the highest rates of child poverty, youth violence, and juvenile incarceration in the city. The SUYI Fund for Engagement made $50,000 available for college faculty and staff to implement projects and engage volunteers in providing multiple facets of support to the Central District neighborhood. Among the projects supported by the Seattle University Fund for Engagement were a college visit program, a tutoring project in which University law school students provided free citizenship classes, and a summer robotics program offered by the College of Science and Engineering.

**Summer Learning Award Recipient**

- **University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia**: The University of Pennsylvania realized that its future is deeply intertwined with that of the surrounding communities, and has been deepening its engagement with the West Philadelphia and greater Philadelphia region since the mid-1980s. The University’s Netter Center for Community Partnerships implements a number of year-round educational initiatives as well as focused summer learning programs. In summer 2010, the Freedom Schools for Grades K-8 served 345 students through a 6-week literacy and math-based program that also incorporates time for project-based learning to address community issues, art, dance, cooking, and field trips.

The Honor Roll announcement coincides with [AmeriCorps Week 2012](#), an annual event to recognize the commitment of AmeriCorps members and alums by highlighting the extraordinary impact AmeriCorps makes across our nation every day. AmeriCorps engages thousands of college students in service, with many colleges and universities hosting AmeriCorps programs and college seniors interested in service join AmeriCorps after graduation.

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The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, the Social Innovation Fund and other programs, and leads President Obama’s national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit [NationalService.gov](#).