Quality Enhancement Plan Proposal

Knowledge for Social Change: A Faculty, Student, Community Collaborative

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I. Goal and Implementation

At the heart of the University's Mission Statement (and the proposed *Focus Carolina* revision to that statement) is the assertion that USC "provides all students with . . . the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for success and responsible citizenship in a complex and changing world, through engagement in nationally and internationally ranked research, scholarship, service, and artistic creation."[1] *Focus Carolina* goes on to stress the need "to provide excellent service to [our] communities, state, nation, and the world."[2] The university should aim, according to this document, to "dissolve barriers" to interdisciplinarity and to develop "a deeper sense of community" by improving communication among faculty, students, staff, academic units, and non-university partners.[3] In short, the mission statement and *Focus Carolina* each proposes an *intensified integration* of teaching, research/creative activity, and service, and each sees this integration as pivotal to enhancing community within the university and between the university and the larger world.

The **goal** of Knowledge for Social Change is to facilitate this kind of integration. It is in part a service-learning initiative, but one that aims to redefine what we mean by "service learning." It builds not only on the *Focus Carolina* recommendations and the university's Mission Statement but on the Carnegie Institute's designation of USC as a top-ranked university in community engagement. If successfully implemented, the plan would:

• link students from widely disparate disciplines by encouraging participation in a university-wide intellectual collaboration

• expand students' connections to faculty by facilitating work across disciplines

• link students and faulty to the community, both through participation in service-learning courses and through community forums

• facilitate an experience of research as integral to all of these connections, by bringing together students, faculty, and the community for a series of talks by renowned scholars

To achieve these aims, the initiative relies on a plan with several interlocking components:

1. The initiative would organize USC's service-learning courses around **four themes of special relevance to Columbia, SC**, but having implications, too, for the state, nation, and world. These would be ongoing themes, pursued each year so long as interest

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[1] University's Mission Statement, http://president.sc.edu/PresidentMission.php.
[2] *Focus Carolina*, http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/FC_InitiativesMasterDocument_Final.pdf, p. 2.
[3] *Focus Carolina*, p. 1.

remains strong, and thereby allowing for continuity and development of the initiative over time. The themes I propose are **racial equality** (indispensable, in my view), **gender empowerment**, **sustainability** (construed broadly enough to include questions of urban development, poverty, and homelessness), and **global citizenship**. The idea to focus service learning on themes appears in the Service portion of the *Focus Carolina* document: "The university should identify one or several thematic areas that could serve as targets for interdisciplinary service learning and community service."[4] My proposal aims both to implement this idea and to expand it in ways that integrate service learning with faculty research and community involvement (6 and 7 below).

2. The initiative would roster these courses **across the range of disciplines at USC**, with the initial goal of 30 such courses per year (15 each semester), each focused on specific aspects of one or more of the themes. Courses would not need to be devoted entirely to the Columbia/SC component of a given theme—a course whose large focus was race need only devote, say, 25% of its class time to the local component. Similarly, courses need not be focused entirely on one of the themes in order to contribute to the initiative. Devoting 25% of the class to that theme would be enough, provided that this portion of the class did indeed focus on local issues.

3. Each course would have **a substantial service learning component** that would include: (a) class presentations by representatives of local organizations working on the issue; (b) student participation in those organizations' work, with the dual aim of serving and learning from the community; (c) meaningful reflection on, and dissemination of, the knowledge gained through service-learning; and (d) student academic projects that demonstrate knowledge of the issue's complexity while bringing to bear specific disciplinary skills in an effort to address it.

4. Between four and six of the courses each semester would be **interdisciplinary in their conception**. This aim is best realized either through team-taught courses involving faculty from different units, or by expanding the number of "linked" courses coordinated by Kim Lewis in the Office of Student Engagement.

5. An additional ten **satellite courses** each semester would focus on one or more of the themes without involving service-learning. The aim of this component is to broaden participation (and to give faculty a kind of stepping-stone into the initiative). Students in the satellite courses would be expected to participate in various of the initiative's activities (see below) and would be given information about how to get involved in community organizations.

6. Knowledge for Social Change would move beyond conventional service learning by **convening public forums** in which community members and local public service organizations shared their concerns with faculty, staff, and students. This would help break down barriers between town and gown and focus attention on the nuances of the problem at hand, while enabling

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[4] *Focus Carolina*, p. 10.

university participants to take stock of the skills that we are uniquely able to contribute to addressing that problem.

7. Similarly, the initiative would include **an annual speaker series** that brought to campus prominent intellectuals whose work addresses one or more of the themes. Students enrolled in participating courses would be expected to attend these lectures, and members of the Columbia community would be encouraged to attend as well. The speaker series would aim to integrate research and service learning in new ways—that is, it would bring internationally renowned scholars into the arena of a service-learning project. The series would have the additional benefit of increasing the university's national visibility, as speakers would leave here excited to talk about the uniqueness and seriousness of our initiative. Finally, the speaker series might serve as a kind of trial balloon for the **Humanities Center** recommended by the Focus Carolina committee on research.[5]

II. Scope

As this description suggests, the initiative is **ambitious in scope** yet **focused** by its thematic conception. It has the potential to reach a substantial percentage of the student population, to involve large numbers of faculty, and to impact the city of Columbia and the state of South Carolina in productive ways.

III. Benefits

If implemented, Knowledge for Social Change would further the university's core mission of "provid[ing] all students with . . . the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for success and responsible citizenship in a complex and changing world." It would develop new forms of community, both within the university and between it and the city/state; it would foster interdisciplinarity; and it would provide new opportunities for faculty to link their research concerns with their service commitments. All of these benefits respond to the recommendations of the Focus Carolina working groups. Finally, the initiative would give the university a unique academic profile, increasing its national visibility and placing it at the forefront of efforts to make service learning integral rather than peripheral to institutions of higher learning.

IV. Institutional Capabilities

The major resources for this initiative are the service-learning structures already in place, the faculty expertise and energy so evident on campus, the intellectual and social curiosity of our students, and the administrative skills of our staff. The aim is to bring those resources together and integrate them in newly productive ways, rather than to develop entirely new capacities and structures. Furthermore, though Knowledge for Social Change seeks in part to inspire new courses and pedagogical experimentation, there are many courses already on the books that could be revised to contribute to the initiative. Such courses are offered in a range of disciplines encompassing many of USC's colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering,

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[5] *Focus Carolina*, p. 6.

Law, Mass Communications and Information Studies, Music, Public Health, School of the Environment, Social Work, and SCHC. I have contacted faculty who teach classes that seem relevant in an effort to gauge support; please see Appendix 2 for a list of those who have expressed interest, along with the titles of courses they have taught that might fit.

Additional resource requirements are these:

1. A reduced teaching load for the faculty member who agrees to serve as the initiative's coordinator. The reduced load is necessary because the coordinator will be responsible for overseeing the rostering of courses, organizing the speaker series, convening the community forums, and publicizing the initiative. Major outreach to departments and unit heads, individual faculty members, community organizations, and students will also be part of this person's job description.

2. A reduced teaching load for a second faculty member who will be tasked with organizing a Center for Service Learning. This office will provide a centralized resource for faculty involved in service learning, saving them from the need to reinvent the wheel each time they teach a course for the initiative. Without this consolidation, I fear, even devoted teachers are less likely to take on the added work of service learning. The director's duties will include establishing contact persons for local community organizations, keeping up-to-date records about the needs of each organization and the procedures each prefers for engaging student volunteers, linking individual faculty members up with relevant organizations, and generally smoothing the pathways between the university and community organizations.

3. Provisions for office space, computers, and phones. (Though it makes sense for the initiative's coordinator and the Center's director to work together and be near each other, I do think these should be autonomous offices—the Center is necessary to enabling the initiative to work, but neither should be administratively subordinated to the other.)

4. Two full-time staff members to assist the faculty coordinator and the director of the Center.

5. Two GSA positions to help with the logistics and day-to-day running of the initiative.

6. $105,000 for 30 course development grants, each funded at $3500 during the summer prior to the initiative's implementation. These will be competitive grants; faculty would apply for them, but all new courses for the initiative's first year would be funded. This outlay is an essential incentive for faculty who take on the extra work of turning their courses into service-learning courses.

7. $14,000 (recurring for five years) for course development. (We won't want to run the same 30 courses forever, and there should be incentives for developing new ones, bringing different faculty members into the initiative.)

8. $5,000 for faculty training seminars in the summer before the initiative begins. These funds would pay for campus visits by representatives of Campus Compact and/or other organizations that specialize in helping faculty maximize the potential for success in service learning.

9. $40,000 in each of the first two years for the speaker series (to pay for honoraria, travel, hotel, and meals). The calculation here is 8 speakers at $5000 each (overestimating in order to be safe). By the initiative's third year, it should be possible to support the speaker series with grant money.

10. $20,000 (recurring, for five years) for team-taught courses. The rationale here is that such courses will in some cases, for specialized seminars, require the buy-out of a faculty course in order to enable small classes. (The figure is especially malleable, as the cost of buy-outs varies significantly from department to department.)

11. $5,000 (again, for each of the first two years) for the community forums. These funds will be used to pay for receptions and small honoraria.

V. Empirical Data: please see Appendix 1.

VI. Plan of Assessment

The Office of Student Engagement already requires service-learning courses to "creat[e] learning outcomes that reflect the Carolina Core General Education requirements."[6] One way to assess individual courses would thus be to use the instruments developed on campus so far to measure the achievement of such core competencies as "effective, engaged, and persuasive communication," "global citizenship and multicultural understanding," and "analytical and statistical reasoning and problem solving."[7]

A more comprehensive kind of assessment would consist in a committee that, toward the end of each year, developed and administered questionnaires for all relevant constituencies. The committee would be responsible for "digesting" the information obtained through the questionnaires and drafting recommendations for improving the initiative's effectiveness. The Office of Student Engagement has already developed surveys for students and faculty involved in service learning; these can serve as templates for the questionnaires just described.

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[6] Service Learning Outcomes, http://www.housing.sc.edu/servicelearning/pdf/Service-LearningOutcomes.pdf.
[7] From the Proposed Carolina Core, http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/carolinacore.html.

Appendix 1: Empirical Data

There is now a substantial body of research that suggests the positive impact of service learning on students, participating universities, and local communities. Among the most ambitious is the RAND Institute report, *Combining Service and Learning in Higher Education: An Evaluation of the Learn and Serve America, Higher Education Program* (RAND, 1999), available online at http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/2009/MR998.pdf. This study is unusual for its focus on all three major constituencies involved (students, communities, universities). It combines extensive quantitative analysis with qualitative research to assess the claims made on behalf of service learning—and its conclusions are largely a vindication of those claims (though stated in characteristically cautious language). Perhaps most striking, the study finds that, compared with a control group that did not participate in service learning, those who engaged in such learning had greater success in their college careers, as measured by grades, rate of retention, degree aspirations, tolerance of others, time devoted to schoolwork, and satisfaction with their courses. These findings are confirmed and extended by USC's own data, especially as gathered in the document prepared by the Provost's Task Force on Service Learning (2007): http://www.housing.sc.edu/servicelearning/pdf/SLTaskForceReportJune2007.pdf.

But since Knowledge for Social Change is more than a service learning initiative, the available studies don't fully apply to it. It is modeled on a recent endeavor at Lehigh University, the South Side Initiative (SSI), co-organized by Seth Moglen and John Pettegrew. That initiative fosters democratic forums for discussing the past, present, and possible futures of Bethlehem, PA (where Lehigh is located) in the face of the city's recent and quite radical transformation. The SSI has had a significant impact on the local and university communities. Though empirical data to substantiate its success are not yet available, Moglen was awarded a fellowship at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study partly on the basis of the initiative, and the news coverage of the initiative alone suggests how transformative the plan I outline could be for USC. (Samples of the press coverage can be found at http://cas.lehigh.edu/casweb/content/default.aspx?pageid=729).

Appendix 2: Interested Faculty and Courses

Kate Adams, English and WGST   WGST/POLI 307: Feminist Theory
       ENGL 437/WGST 437: Women Writers

Drucilla K. Barker, WGST   WGST 381: Gender and Globalization

Gary Beckman, Music   SCHC 467G: Community Leadership Exposed: The Reverend
           Bowman Project

Deborah Billings, Public Health   HPEB 621: Maternal and Child Health

Elise Blackwell, English   ENGL 439: Narrating Others in Contemporary Fiction

Ed Carr, Geography   GEOG 228: Sub-Saharan Africa
       GEOG 569: Environment and Development

Debra Rae Cohen, English   ENGL 419: Multicultural Britain
       ENGL 419: Literature of London

Kim Connolly   LAWS 804/ENVS 804: Advocacy Seminar

Heidi Cooley, Art/Film and Media Studies   FILM 555/MART 590: History and Theory of Documentary
       MART 110: Introduction to Media Culture

Mark Cooper, English/Film and Media Studies   FILM 597C: Cinema, Sex, and the City

Susan Courtney, English/Film and Media Studies   FILM 566F/ENGL 566F: The South on Film

Bobby Donaldson, History   SCHC 425H: African American Documentary History in SC

Kirstin Dow, Geography   GEOG 321: Cities, Environmental Transformation, and Sustainability

Stan Dubinsky, Linguistics   LING 405/ANTH? Language Rights

Mindy Fenske, Speech   SPCH 340: Literature and Performance
       SPCH 230: Business & Professional Speaking (themed to globalization
           and sustainability)

Greg Forter, English   ENGL 429P: Men, Women, and Freedom in American Literature
       ENGL/FILM 566P: Masculinity in Contemporary American Film

Jill Frank, Political Science   POLI 300: Social and Political Philosophy(themed to law and citizenship)

Darcy Freedman, Social Work   SOWK 734: Social Work Community Practice

Erica Gibson, Anthropology   ANTH 552: Medical Anthropology

Lawrence Glickman, History   HIST 407: The U.S. Since WWII

Tony Jarrells, English   ENGL 382: The Enlightenment

Laura Kissel, Art   MART 553: Documentary Production

Thomas Lekan, History   HIST 498W: Local Environmental History

Ed Madden, English   WGST 404: Community Activism
       ENGL 457F: AIDS Literature

DeAnne Messias, Nursing   WGST 404: Community Activism

WGST 702: Research in Women's and Gender Studies
NURS 505: Caring for Limited English Proficient Patients

Allen Miller, LLC	CPLT 301: Great Books I (themed to ancient/modern citizenship)
Amy Mills, Geography	GEOG 311: Cultural Geography GEOG 228: Geography of the Middle East
Agnes Mueller, LLC	CPLT 415: Representations of Race in German and American Literature
Todd Shaw, Political Science	POLI 457P: Black Activism
Stephen Sheehi, LLC	ARAB 398/SCHC 381: The Culture of Arab Food
Daniel Smith, English	SCHC 467A: Public Culture and Democracy
Suzanne Swan, Psychology	PSYC 589C/WGST 430S: Men and Masculinity
Mindi Spencer, Public Health	HPEB 492/SOST 500: Public Discomfort: Public Health in the American South
Scott Trafton, English	ENGL 428A: African American Literature I
Mary Baskin Waters, WGST	WGST 112: Women in Society
Robert Weyeneth, History	HIST 498Y: Local Public History
Qiana Whitted, English	ENGL 430K/AFRO 398K: Black South Carolina Writers ENGL 428B: African American Literature II
Jerry Wallulis, Philosophy	PHIL 370S: Choosing to Help the Disadvantaged
Laura Woliver, Political Science and WGST	WGST 352: Gender and Politics
Various English GSIs	ENGL 102: Themed sections (Christy Friend, First-Year English Director, is planning a dozen or so service-learning 102s)
Various Anthropology Professors*	ANTH 102: Understanding Other Cultures ANTH 201: Anthropological Inquiry in Undergraduate Research ANTH 208: Anthropology of Globalization and Development ANTH 212: Food and Culture ANTH 213: Ethnobotany: Plants and Peoples ANTH 302: Multicultural Perspectives on American Society ANTH 303: African American Cultures ANTH 304: Contemporary Cultures of South Carolina ANTH 310: Cultures of Islam ANTH 318: Material Culture ANTH 358: Gender and Culture ANTH 551: Medical Anthropology: Fieldwork ANTH 581: Globalization and Cultural Questions

* the Chair and several faculty in Anthropology endorsed the proposal and suggested these courses

Appendix 3: Local Organizations

It will be important to hold community forums in the semester prior to implementing the plan, in order to maximize the university's responsiveness to the actual needs of the community. Still, I have begun to make contacts with relevant community organizations and their representatives. Below is a very partial list

A. Racial Equality

A. Philip Randolph Institute: 534-0837 or Curtis Randolph, 1135@bellsouth.net

NAACP, SC: Lonnie Randolph or Dwight James, 754-4584

NAACP, Lower Richland: 776-2792

Representative Joseph H. Neal, 734-2804

Children's Defense Fund, SC: 479-5310

Eau Claire Promise Zone: contact through Facebook

Eau Claire Health Cooperative: 754-0151

Columbia Urban League: 799-8150

SC African American Heritage Commission: Archives and History Center, 896-6100; Joseph James, 462-0153

SC Council for African American Studies: Valinda Littlefield, 777-2747

Columbia Writers' Alliance: 699-3297

The NiA [Theater] Company: Darion McCloud, 553-2536

B. Gender Empowerment

SisterCare: Kathleen Shaw, 781-9073; Tamika Sims, 926-0505

Grimke Sisters: 808-3384

Women's Well-Being Initiative: Beth Fadeley, 777-5694

Planned Parenthood: 803-256-2600 or Vicki Cannon, vicki.cannon@pphsinc.org

SC Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse: 256-2900

Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands: Katie Reid, 790-8208

Family Shelter (for homeless families with children): 771-7040

USC Office of Sexual Health and Violence Prevention: 777-8248

SHARE: Men & Women Sharing Responsibility to Make a Difference: contact through USC Office of SH&VP

C. Sustainability

Green Quad Learning Center for Sustainable Futures: David Whiteman, 7-2093; Jason Craig, 7-1994

Environmentalists, Inc.: Ruth Thomas, 782-3000

GROW Food Co-Op (affordable groceries for low-income families): Glen Davis, 776-2372

Refresh Services – Food Residual Recycling Program: Renee, 413-3392

SC Association of Community Development Corporations (promotes development in impoverished rural areas) 843 579-9855 or Bernie Mazyck, bmscacdc@bellsouth.net

Rosewood Community Garden: Paul, 446-2772

Central South Carolina Habitat for Humanity: 252-3570

Gills Creek Watershed Association: Jessica Artz, 727-8326

Students Advocating for a Greener Environment: Dan Cicala, cicala@mailbox.sc.edu

NetImpact, SC: netimpac@gwm.sc.edu

Sierra Club, SC: 256-8448

Conservation Voters of South Carolina: John Ramsburgh, 799-0716; john@conservationvotersofsc.org

Student Conservation Association (national): 603 543-1700

D. Global Citizenship

Coalition for New South Carolinians: 429-8742 or Emily Stanek stanek@coalitionfnsc.org

SC Progressive Network: 808-3384

Carolina Peace Resource Center: Gerry Rudolph, 446-2772

ACLU South Carolina: Victoria Middleton, 843 720-1423

Center for a Better South: 843 670-3996

Nickelodeon Theater (to organize film series on global issues): Larry Hembree or Andy Smith, 254-8234

Amnesty International, USC: contact through Facebook or at amnesty@gwm.sc.edu

Appendix 4: References (adapted from documents at USC's Service Learning Website,

http://www.housing.sc.edu/servicelearning/howto.html)

1. Sources on Best Practice

Praxis I: A faculty casebook on community service-learning, ed. Jeffery Howard, Ann Arbor, MI: Office of Community Service-Learning

Press, University of Michigan, 1993.

"Principles of Best Practice," adapted from the above book, USC Service Learning Document,

http://www.housing.sc.edu/servicelearning/pdf/Principles.pdf .

2. Additional Sources: Books

Accounting: Learning by Doing, ed. D.V. Rama, AAHE, 1998.

Biology: Life, Learning and Community; ed. David C. Brobaker and Joel H. Ostroff, American Association for Higher Education

(AAHE) and KPMG Peat Martwick Foundation, 2000.

Communication Studies: Voices of Strong Democracy, ed. David Droge and Bren Ortega Murphy, AAHE and National Communication

Association, 1999.

Composition: Writing the Community, ed. Linda Adler Kessnat, Robert Crooks and Ann Waters, AAHE and National Council of

Teachers of English, 1997.

Environmental Studies: Acting Locally, ed. Harold Ward, AAHE, 1999.

History: Connecting Past and Present, ed. Ira Harkavy, and Bill M. Donovan, 2000.

Management: Working for the Common Good, ed. Paul C. Godfrey, and Edward T. Grasso, 2000.

Nursing: Caring and Community, ed. Jane S. Norbeck, Charlene Connolly and JoEllen Koerner, AAHE and Community Campus

Partnerships for Health, 1998.

Peace Studies: Teaching for Justice, ed. Kathleen Maas Weigert, and Robin J. Crews, 1999.

Philosophy: Beyond the Tower, ed. C. David Lisman and Irene E. Harvey, AAHE, 2000.

Political Science: Experiencing Citizenship, ed. Richard M. Battison and William E. Hudson, AAHE, 1997.

Religious Studies: From Cloister to Commons, ed. Richard Devine, Joseph A. Favazza, and F. Michael McLain, 2002.

Sociology: Cultivating the Sociology Imagination, ed. James Ostrow, Gary Hesser and Sandra Enos, AAHE and American Sociological

Association, 1999.

Spanish: Construyendo Puentes (Building Bridges), ed. Josef Hellebrandt and Lucia Varona, AAHE, 1999.

Teacher Education: Learning with Community, ed. Josef A. Erickson and Jeffrey B. Anderson, AAHE and American Association of

Colleges for Teacher Education, 1997. (2 Copies)

Women's Studies: The Practice of Change, ed. Barbara J. Balliet and Kerrissa Hefferman, AAHE, 2000.

    3. Additional Sources: Journals

American Behavioral Scientist, "Service Learning Pedagogy as Universities' Response to Troubled Times": Vol. 43, Number 5:

    February, 2000.

Cityscape: A Journal Of Policy Development and Research, "Community Outreach Partnership Centers: Connecting Communities and

    Institutions of Higher Education": Vol. 5, Number 1: 2000.

Journal of General Education: Special Invited Issue.

Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community, "Educating Students to Make a Difference: Community-Based Service

    Learning," Vol. 18, Numbers 1-2: 1999.

Journal of Public Affairs: Supplemental Issue 1: Civic Engagement and Higher Education, Vol. VI: 2002.

Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning.