

Chapter 6

Bucs Abroad: International Service–Learning at a State College

Katharine O’Connor

Florida SouthWestern State College, USA

Jordan Donini

Florida SouthWestern State College, USA

Michael Messina

Florida SouthWestern State College, USA

Angus Cameron

Florida SouthWestern State College, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on showcasing two case studies of multidisciplinary, international service-learning courses offered on the state college level. The authors will focus on best practices of multidisciplinary, international service-learning such as understanding student demographics in order to recruit and prepare students for study abroad experiences. Preparation of student expectation, cultural mentors, and identifying service-learning partners will be covered. The chapter will also offer insights into creative research projects also known as “UnEssays” as a pedagogical tool.

INTRODUCTION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY, INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING

As a state college, part of FSW’s mission is to “serve as a leader for intellectual, economic, and cultural awareness in the community,” as well as expand access to a world-class education in our community. Service learning, also called community-engaged learning, is a high-impact experiential learning practice that reflects engagement with real-world issues and promotes humanistic values of inclusion and ethical

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-2133-1.ch006

community participation. Community-engaged learning, is a high-impact, integrative practice that leads to positive outcomes such as higher grade point averages, increased retention rates, and increased critical thinking abilities (Kuh, 2008). Community-engaged learning has been found to have a particularly meaningful impact on students of color (Mungo, 2017). Considering FSW's designation as a Hispanic Serving Institute (HSI) and a "First Gen Forward" institution, integrating community-engaged learning into the curriculum is a natural fit.

This chapter will discuss FSW's integration of international service-learning within two study abroad trips. The first trip took place in Italy and the second took place in Costa Rica. This case study is unique because not only will it feature international service-learning, it will also feature multidisciplinary approaches.

FSW Specific Information

Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) is an open-enrollment institution of higher education, with a mission to inspire learning; prepare a diverse population for creative and responsible participation in a global society. This is accomplished, whilst also expanding access to a higher education, with a majority of students not suffering financial hardship. With student loans accounting for the second largest source of debt in the United States today, FSW is proud that 70% of our graduates are able to graduate debt-free and prepared to enter a globally competitive workforce.

The College was formally established in 1961 by the Florida Legislature as Edison Junior College. In 1965 the main campus was established on 80 acres of land located in Fort Myers, Florida, a tropical haven shaped by the keen minds of such winter residents as Henry Ford, Charles Lindberg, Harvey Firestone, and Thomas Edison, for whom the college was originally named. Edison Junior College was renamed Edison Community College in 1972 as a reflection of its expanded mission, and opened centers in Charlotte and Collier counties that same year. The College's service area represents tremendous diversity in both geography and economy, and serves the largest geographic area of any Florida state college. The Gulf Coast counties of Lee, Charlotte and Collier have experienced explosive population growth. In contrast, the rural counties of Hendry and Glades to the East remain rural, predominantly agrarian communities dependent on citrus fruit and sugar cane production. Aligned with area growth, the College opened two permanent campuses, the Collier Campus in Naples and the Charlotte Campus in Punta Gorda. In 2009, the College moved into a 19-acre facility in LaBelle known as the Hendry/Glades Curtis Center. Today FSW's five-county service district comprises three counties along Florida's southwestern Gulf Coast, and two inland counties, representing a total area of 5,448 square miles.

The five counties in FSW's service district are diverse in population size, income, and ethnicities. The rural Hendry and Glades counties' populations are the smallest served by the college, despite a combined area of 2,177 square miles. The three campuses in Lee, Charlotte, and Collier counties serve significantly larger populations, with the largest population being served in Lee County, which has grown by 152,000 over the last decade.

In 2019-2020, 52% of students represented minority groups, 63% were female and the average age was 23. The total headcount of students at FSW was 16,672 with 38% of students studying full-time. FSW remains an open enrollment institution, offering five bachelor programs, 22 associate programs, and 30 professional certificates. Three-year graduation rates for FTIC full-time students have steadily increased by 10% during a monitoring period between 2013 - 2017. Data from Fall 2020 shows that 71.1%

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/bucs-abroad/342775

Related Content

Scaffolding Deliberations: Exploring Engagement Constructs

Anita Chadha (2024). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 1-13).

www.irma-international.org/article/scaffolding-deliberations/356407

E-Tutor Perceptions towards the Star Rural Area E-Learning Project

Chiung-Wei Huang and Eric Zhi Feng Liu (2015). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 20-29).

www.irma-international.org/article/e-tutor-perceptions-towards-the-star-rural-area-e-learning-project/120662

Flipping the Classroom: Challenges of Implementation

Jamie Gardner (2015). *Implementation and Critical Assessment of the Flipped Classroom Experience* (pp. 157-174).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/flipping-the-classroom/123928

An Abridged History of Learning Objects

Robert R. Saum (2007). *Learning Objects for Instruction: Design and Evaluation* (pp. 1-15).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/abridged-history-learning-objects/25528

Barriers to and Strategies for Faculty Integration of IT

Thomas M. Brinthaupt, Maria A. Clayton and Barbara J. Draude (2011). *Instructional Design: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools and Applications* (pp. 1228-1236).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/barriers-strategies-faculty-integration/51880