who is helping you go beyond the classroom?

LaB Coordinators

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Not pictured: Meaghan Sych

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Learning & Beyond Annual Report

2012-2013
From the Director

The 2012–2013 academic year was another great success for the Learning and Beyond office. While our focus is on the quality of the student experience and not quantity of opportunities offered, we are happy to report that we have had our largest number of Community Service-Learning placements ever this past year. Placing more than 400 students in the Camrose and Campus communities would not have been possible without the willingness of students to engage in learning outside the classroom, instructors interested in incorporating CSL into their courses and most importantly, community members to capably supervise and mentor our students. Each year many CSL students learn about sustainability first hand on our campus, where we aim to model the sustainability we teach about in the classroom. As this report shows, we have also had great experiences in more distant locations internationally and in the outdoors. We sent students to China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Germany, India, Washington DC, Norway, Hungary and Austria to learn about topics including language, economics, political studies and field research. Students also paddled and hiked in various locations in Alberta as well as skiing and snow camping in the Rockies. In all three of these program areas, the LaB office continues to be impressed by the significant – often life-changing – learning that takes place when students step out of the classroom and engage.

Some of the stories of this past year are found in the pages of this report. If you would like to be involved in these experiences in the future – as a student, community partner or funder – please do not hesitate to contact us!

Karsten Mündel
Director, Learning and Beyond

Sustainability

Sustainability continues to be another important campus initiative supported by the LaB office. Since 2011, LaB has placed 330 students in CSL placements concerned with environmental issues and sustainability. In addition, LaB staff Shara Harke coordinated the first ever Sustainability Fair at Augustana on March 13 in the Forum. The Fair had 12 tables teaching workshops, such as Technology and Learning Services giving tips on how to make your computer less energy intensive or students talking about how to do composting at home, and instigating conversations on sustainability and environmental stewardship. Many of the tables were created by CSL students in environmental studies placements, which provided the students with an outlet to serve the Augustana and Camrose community. The Fair was attended by students, faculty, staff, and members from the Augustana community, including city councillors and the Mayor.
opportunities to learn outside the classroom

Community Service-Learning

This academic year, LaB had 441 CSL placements filled with Augustana students within and outside the Camrose community, creating opportunities for them to learn extremely diverse skill sets, gain valuable academic knowledge, and make connections to the world outside the university. In 2012 and 2013, our students have been: sorting waste and learning about green campus initiatives; mentoring and tutoring elementary, junior high and high school students; leading and learning about healthy lifestyle projects; doing check-ins and attending youth court with a youth probation officer; designing management plans for small businesses and events on and off campus (like Score! - a free marketplace founded and run by students); participating in and leading workshops in young women’s empowerment; and being a valuable presence in the local women’s shelter, to name a few.

Spring Course • Japan-Canada Exchange

Outdoor Education

The May 2012 Spring Course, which had 15 participating students, included:
• One Danish Student
• One Norwegian Student
• One Norwegian Graduate student
• One Swedish professor as a co-instructor and research collaborator

...which Morten Asfeldt, the director of the outdoor education program, says made it a surprisingly diverse and multicultural experience.

In August 2012, seven Augustana students and ten Japanese students spent two weeks canoeing and hiking through the Canadian wilderness, from the North Saskatchewan River to Rocky Mountains. Not only did students gain skills such as paddling, hiking, backpacking, and cooking over the fire, they also gained experience in communicating across language and cultural barriers to achieve common goals as a group.

LaB also introduced a non-profit board internship this January, modeled on an internship at North Campus, which connected 4 Augustana students with the boards of the Camrose Open Door, Habitat for Humanity, Family Violence Action Society, and the Camrose Public Library. One student who participated in the internship stated that:

“Overall, I had a really great experience as a board member for the Family Violence Action Society (FVAS).” This was my first experience working as a board member, and I learned a lot about the governance, structure and types of decisions boards need to make. As an intern I was able to expand my knowledge on issues of domestic violence as well as connect aspects of my politics degree with the experiences I had as a board intern (i.e: policy development).”
-Nafisa Rahman, Non-profit Board Internship, 2013

“There are many volunteers, organizers and local businesses that put this event together to make it such a success. As a management student, experiencing this free marketplace was so neat. It was interesting to see how items have such a great value and it is so unique compared to how our normal economy works (money)!”
-Sarah Warwick, Score!, 2012
This past year alone, LaB has seen 127 students go abroad to have international experiences in Vienna, Hungary, India, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Washington DC, Norway and Germany. From singing for the Augustana Choir in Hungary, to studying bats, moths, and biodiversity in Costa Rica, to winning awards in Washington DC with the National Model United Nations, Augustana students have a diverse range of opportunities for international experiences.

Augustana’s international offerings continue to grow and evolve. Two new courses this year gave students the chance to study politics and economics in China, and the music and culture of Vienna. In addition, a new community service-learning stream was added to the already existing Augustana-in-Cuba program. One half of the 34 students in Cuba in 2013 completed community service-learning placements in areas such as local agriculture and coastal ecosystems.