



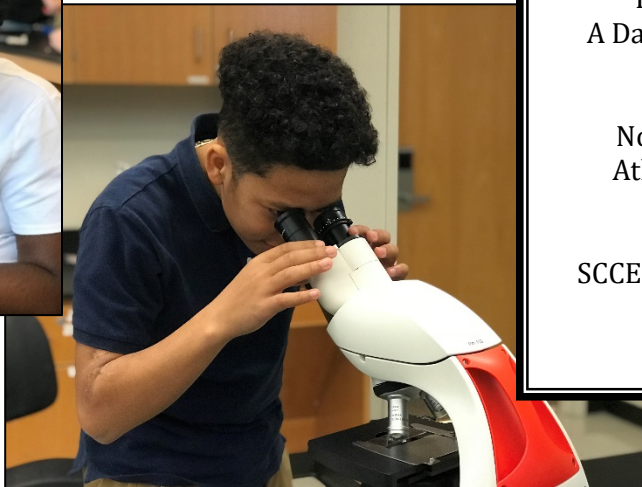
Spring 2018

# News from the Stockton Center for Community Engagement

## SCCE FACULTY FELLOW REFLECTIONS

Dr. Tara Luke  
*Professor of Biology*

Dr. Tara Luke’s second year as SCCE Faculty Fellow involved both continuing previous community partnerships and beginning new collaborations focusing on increasing engagement with STEM disciplines in underserved communities. Students from her Underwater Robotics class once again acted as near-peer mentors to kids at Pleasantville Middle school and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School in Atlantic City as part of an ongoing partnership that has taken place every spring semester since 2012. In March, Dr. Luke and Ms. Linda Dotts organized STEM workshops at Stockton for about 45 students from Winslow Township Middle School, and with Stockton student volunteers taught them to solder and build a small electronics project, and taught them about microscopic animals called tardigrades. She’s also had the opportunity to talk about her deep sea exploration research with children in the SCCE afterschool homework programs at Stanley Holmes, Busby Village, and Pleasantville Library. Although this is the end of her term as Faculty Fellow for SCCE, Dr. Luke is excited to continue bringing STEM experiences to the local community.



Pictured: Two students from Winslow Township Middle School at “extreme science” on march 9, 2018

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# SCCE SNAPSHOTS

## Quick Notes from our Work

We congratulate Student Fellow Bryan Gonzalez-Mejia on receiving the Newman Civic Fellowship for 2018 – 2019. The Newman Civic Fellowship is a one-year fellowship experience for community-committed students from Campus Compact member institutions that supports students' personal, professional, and civic development. We know Bryan will take full advantage of the networking and mentorship opportunities that he will experience next year.



The SCCE is pleased to say that our team has increased to 21 students. We are working with 15 undergraduate Student Fellows, three Alumni Fellows, one MSW intern, one BSW intern, and one MBA intern. This represents the largest staff we have ever had and the results are evident in our ability to manage consistent, evidence-based, and mutually beneficial programs in our community.



On January 20, 2018, The SCCE and Dr. Tara Luke held the Sea Perch Program Kickoff at the Atlantic City Aquarium. Over 40 youth including members of the Atlantic City Boys and Girls Club and students at Pleasantville Middle School came together to see the underwater rover in action and learn about Dr. Luke's work in deep sea exploration.



In February, Dr. Merydawilda Colón and Heather Swenson Brilla attended a conference in St. Petersburg, FL entitled, "Preparing for the 2020 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification" led by John Saltmarsh. Heather and Awilda collected valuable information on how to complete the Carnegie Reclassification application which is due on April 15, 2019. The collaboration of Stockton faculty, staff, and students is essential in the process.



On January 26, 2018, Dr. Tara Luke led, "Dive into Engagement," an open informational session on her engagement work as a Faculty Fellow. Tara outlined the ways in which she engages with the community

and the benefits of her work to both Stockton students and our local community.



The SCCE executed two projects for Stockton's 2018 MLK Day of Service. We prepared and delivered 350 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to the residents of Altman Tower in Atlantic City who were displaced by a building fire and we, in collaboration with Galloway area Boy Scouts, collected, sorted and distributed over 500 pounds of pantry items to the New Day Family Success Center in Galloway. In addition, we collected formula, diapers, baby food and baby wipes that were delivered to Cuddle Me, an organization that distributes the items to parents in need.



Two SCCE Student Fellows, Kayla McDermott-Cobbs and Jason Rehani, presented at the "Sankofa Summit 2018" on March 20, 2018. Their presentation, "Misconceptions in the Definition of Men of Color" was very well-received and they have been asked to present again at future events.



The SCCE was awarded a \$10,000 grant from TD Charitable Foundation to fund our Homework Completion Programs in Atlantic City and Pleasantville. In addition to increasing the overall number of Student Fellows staffing the Homework Completion Programs, the grant provides funding for the implementation of TD Bank's WowZone financial literacy workshops. The first of these workshops were conducted with the youth in the Stanley Holmes Village and Buzby Homes Village programs on March 3, 2018 and at the Pleasantville Library on April, 3, 2018. All workshops were well-attended and the youth who participated learned about saving, budgeting and credit.



The SCCE collaborated with the Institute for Faculty Development on a series of three live-

streamed workshops entitled: “Integrating Community Engagement: Scholarship, Teaching, and Civic Action”. Each topic was addressed at its own session and was taught by different community-engaged faculty or staff. The session on scholarship was held on February 20, 2018 and was presented by Dr. Marissa Levy, the session on teaching was held on March 20, 2018 and was presented by Dr. Tara Luke, and the session on civic action was held on April 17, 2018 and was presented by Daniel Tomé. All of the sessions were recorded and will be available on the IFD website.



On January 26th, Heather Swenson Brilla of the SCCE partnered with Jenifer Robin in the Office of Financial Aid and Heather Medina in the Office of Admissions to present on the financial aid process and the Educational Opportunity Fund program for high school students who are in foster care, are homeless, or are undocumented. Guidance counselors from the Greater Egg Harbor School District attended and the presentation was followed by a robust question and answer session.



The SCCE will be conducting our annual Assessment of Impact surveys for faculty, staff, students, and our community partners in the month of April. The links are available below and will also be in your email.

[Assessment of Impact Survey for Students](#)  
[Assessment of Impact Survey for Staff](#)  
[Assessment of Impact Survey for Faculty](#)  
[Assessment of Impact Survey for Community Partners](#)



Dr. Judy Vogel and Dr. Chia-Lin Wu came to our April Student Fellows and Interns Meeting to educate our staff on the best ways to provide support with math homework at our three homework completion programs. Their guidance was invaluable and was immediately put to use with the children.



The SCCE, in collaboration with Dr. Doug Harvey from the Institute for Faculty Development, Dr. Chelsea Tracy-Bronson from the School of Education, and Tucker Rowlinson from E-Learning collaborated with several faculty and staff members who have done scholarship of engagement to create six professional development videos highlighting

the scholarship of engagement work that these faculty and staff members have done. The videos show examples of scholarship of engagement at the local, state, and global level. Please visit the [SCCE Website](#) and/or the [Institute for Faculty Development Website](#) to see the videos.

The SCCE would like to thank the following faculty and staff members for their support and participation in the videos:

Dr. Victoria Schindler	Dr. Chelsea Tracy-Bronson
Dr. Tara Crowell	Linda Dotts
Dr. Marissa Levy	Dr. Dave Burdick
Dr. Christina Jackson	Dr. Arnaldo Cordero-Roman
Dr. Jessie K. Finch	Daniel Tomé
Dr. Diane Falk	Dr. Mary Lou Galantino
Dr. Meg White	Dr. Mary Kientz
Emari DiGiorgio	Dr. Tara Luke
Dr. Amy Situ-Liu	



Stockton University collaborated with the Diplomacy Lab to develop a new video to help Spanish-speakers to complete passport applications. Dr. Jessie K. Finch, Assistant Professor of Sociology, and Dr. Merydawilda Colón, Executive Director for Stockton’s Center for Community Engagement, led a team of Stockton students, faculty, and staff creating the 7-minute film that walks viewers through a 10-step process to obtain a passport for the first time. The video would not have been possible without the participation of:

Dr. Tina Zappile, Assoc. Professor of Political Science  
Andrés Rodríguez, Passport Service  
Rebekah McNeely, Passport Services  
Jeffrey Topping, Stockton Production Services  
Amanda Martinez, Stockton Production Services  
Shannon Aungst, Stockton Production Services  
Mark Jackson, Dir., Stockton Production Services  
Scott Huston, Stockton Information Technology  
Alejandra Londoño, Stockton Student  
Rodrigo Londoño, Community Member  
Lidia Martinez, Stockton Alumna  
Amado Placencia, Jr., Community Member  
Gloria Guzman, US Postal Clerk  
The video can be viewed here: [“Explain a Complicated Process – Passport Website Instructional Videos in Spanish”](#)



# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN SCCE STUDENT FELLOW

## 9 Questions with Bryan Gonzalez-Mejia

**What does a typical day as a Fellow look like?** A typical day as a fellow looks like a day in Congress, but more effective and more efficient. I love helping the kids with their homework, permanent residents with studying the questions for their citizenship test, and playing bingo with older adults. I engage with the community around me more than the U.S. representatives. I've always said that changing the world doesn't have to be done at a global level because when I change one person's life that, to me, is changing the world.

**What are examples of projects you are working on?** The projects I work on through the Stockton Center for Community Engagement are: the Homework Completion Program where I assist kids in completing their homework, the Naturalization classes where I help permanent residents study the questions they must know to become citizens and practice their English and the Afternoon Teas. At the Afternoon Teas I play bingo with the older adults living in subsidized housing in Pleasantville and Atlantic City. On a personal level, I have been working on amending the curriculum at Stockton University by adding civics as a requirement because I believe that students have to know how imperative it is to be engaged in our community and politics.

**What are the skills and experiences you use daily?** Knowing a second language, Spanish, has been extremely helpful to communicate with the parents of the children I aid with homework. Almost everyone is Hispanic or Latino in the citizenship classes and by speaking Spanish I am more helpful when answering their questions. I myself moved to this country in March of 2010, and I understand what it feels to not understand a new language and culture. I want to facilitate this process for others and help them understand that it is okay to struggle but it's important to push through and succeed.

**What attributes does someone need to have to be really successful in this position?** The biggest attributes needed to succeed in this position are patience and willingness to help and change our communities. We must understand that individuals learn differently from each



other. We must recognize and identify the issues in our communities and attempt to address them. That's the only way our communities can thrive, be engaged and succeed.

**What are the biggest challenges that someone in this position would face?** The biggest challenge in this position would be not understanding where an individual is coming from. In many occasions we fail to understand others because we haven't had the same experiences. We must listen and try our hardest to understand other people and why they behave or do certain things in a certain way.

**How could you use this experience for advancement or professional development?** I dream of advocating for the underrepresented groups in the United States. There are many underrepresented groups based on age, education, gender, skin color, ethnicity, socio-economic status... the list is endless. Whether as a lawyer, a judge, or a politician, experiences with the SCCE have highlighted the changes that need to be made. There is a lot of work that must be done to lift the underrepresented, and I will try my best to see these groups raise to the top. I know it will require dedication and collaborative work, because we all must work together to achieve community goals.

**Why did you come to this project?** I came to this project through Heather when I was experiencing some difficulties within my personal life. I was



introduced to Heather and she helped me through my issues and she said that I would benefit communities that the SCCE serves and she offered me a place as a Fellow.

**What's your favorite part about working here?**

My favorite part of working at the SCCE is that I have become more engaged with the citizens in the community around me. This Center has enabled me to help others through my skills, knowledge, and experiences. I love all the other fellows, volunteers, interns, and the staff that work with me. They are kind people who want to make a difference in the community by helping others.

**What gets you excited about SCCE's future?** What excites me about the SCCE's future is that it will continue to expand and it will continue to make a difference in our communities. The programs have helped many children and adults who truly need to be aided and guided. The SCCE will become the foundation for better and more engaged communities.



Keith Dorr, Supervisory Immigration Services Officer, presents on the process of naturalization at the February 6, 2018 Naturalization Class at the Carnegie Center in Atlantic City where Bryan is a facilitator.

## NOTES FROM ATLANTIC CITY with Trish Collins

Since joining the SCCE staff in May of 2017 as the Community Engagement Liaison, I have broadened my skillset, knowledge and experience regarding the importance of community engagement. I have first-hand knowledge about working with the Center's partners within the Atlantic City and Pleasantville areas. I also have an unambiguous understanding of the role and value community engagement plays with SCCE's internal and external stakeholders. The meaningful work the Center does with our Homework Programs, Adult Teas/Game Days, Naturalization Classes, Campus Kitchen, and Food Drives is invaluable because of the impact and footprint we leave within the community. Working shoulder-to-shoulder with the children in our Atlantic City Homework Programs at Stanley Holmes Village and Buzby Homes Village, allows me to plant seeds and provide reassurance to young people that they can be whatever they want and that college is within their reach regardless of what challenges they may face. Spending time with seniors, reminds me of the importance of just sharing a conversation with older adults—reaffirms their value. In many instances, seniors don't get visits from family and friends—interaction with them confirms others care about their well-being, which helps them connect to the outside world.

I am so excited about our future programs and initiatives as we continue to strengthen our existing relationships and build new long-lasting partnerships with our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members.

# SCCE PROGRAMS IN REVIEW

## What We Have Been Doing This Semester

### HOMEWORK COMPLETION PROGRAMS

The Homework Completion Programs at **Stanley Holmes Village** and **Buzby Village** continue to be well attended and successful in helping our youth in those neighborhoods.

At the request of the Pleasantville Police Department and in collaboration with the City of Pleasantville, the SCCE has expanded the homework completion at the **Pleasantville Public Library** that began in the fall from one day per week to four days per week. The program is now held from Monday to Thursday from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. This program is open to all students in Pleasantville and we are actively seeking Spanish-speaking Stockton volunteers to tutor the youth who participate.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS CLASSES

ELL classes continue to meet at Saint Mary's Episcopal Church: 118 West Bayview Ave., Pleasantville, 08232 on Thursdays from 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm and at Ministerio Por Gracia Sois Salvos: 111 North 3rd St., Pleasantville, 08232 on Fridays from 5 pm to 7 pm and Saturdays from 10 am to 12 pm.

### AFTERNOON TEA AND OLDER ADULT GAME DAY

The SCCE has increased the number of program days in Atlantic City and Pleasantville and now brings a team of Stockton volunteers, Student Fellows, faculty and staff to Housing Authority five residential complexes in Atlantic City and one in Pleasantville three Fridays each month. In addition to their work with the Atlantic City and Pleasantville Housing Authorities, the SCCE has collaborated with Community Havens, an older adult housing facility in Atlantic City, to bring social programs on the first Friday of each month. These programs are well-received by the residents and the number of Stockton volunteers keeps growing!

### NATURALIZATION CLASSES

Taught by Student Fellows Jessica Perez and Bryan-Gonzalez-Mejia and supported by Dr. Jessie K. Finch, the SCCE's Naturalization Classes continue to meet at the Carnegie Center every Tuesday from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. The program had its 14<sup>th</sup> graduate in April as two more students passed the Naturalization exam to become US Citizens.