

THE STOCKTON CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE-LEARNING

The SCCESL Spring 2022 Newsletter



Representatives from the Bangladesh Consulate in New York and the Bangladesh Association of Atlantic County are pictured with Dr. Merydawilda Colón at the May 31st consulate visit at the John F. Scarpa Academic Center

The SCCESL Creates New International Collaborations

During the spring 2022 semester, the SCCESL embarked on two new collaborations, extending the university's service-learning activities to Caguas, Puerto Rico, and its engagement activities to the General Consulate of Bangladesh in New York.

Dr. Merydawilda Colón collaborated with **Edbelinda Nambo** of the Atlantic City Government and **Professor Shah Khan** of Stockton University and hosted a meeting with the Bangladesh Atlantic County Association at the John F. Scarpa Academic Center to learn about the Association's activities and open lines of communication with Stockton University. As a result of the meeting, the SCCESL collaborated with the Bangladesh Association of Atlantic County and hosted the Bangladesh Consulate on May 31st. at the John F. Scarpa Academic Center.

The SCCESL is pleased to have collaborated with the Association to bring the consulate to our local community so the Bangladeshi community members would not have to travel to New York to see the consulate.

Erin O'Hanlon and Dr. Colón, together with **Dr. Arnaldo Cordero Roman**, supported Stockton student **Nathalee Irene**, who was based in Puerto Rico for the spring semester. Nathalee was in **Dr. Gorica Majstorovic's** "Children's Literature in Spanish" class. Nathalee worked with the local school district in Caguas to support children's English-language learning in the classroom. This opportunity to provide service-learning in the local community started a relationship between SCCESL and Academia Regional Adventista Central in Caguas.

IN THIS ISSUE

INTERNATIONAL
COLLABORATIONS

SPRING COMMUNITY
COLLABORATIONS

STUDENT LEADER PROJECT
HIGHLIGHTS

SCCESL FACULTY FELLOWS
UPDATES

STUDENT AWARDS AND
PRESENTATIONS



Stockton student Nand Patel stands with SCCESL Executive Director, Dr. Marydawilda Colón, and USCIS Director Ya-Mei Chen. Mr. Patel became a naturalized citizen at the Naturalization Ceremony held at Stockton on May 6, 2022

Naturalization Classes and 2022 Naturalization Ceremony

Spring naturalization classes at the John F. Scarpa Academic Center concluded on May 24th. To date, the class has had 35 graduates who have become naturalized citizens. The spring classes were supported by MSW interns, Student Fellows of the Center, and Service-Learning students.

The 2022 Naturalization Ceremony was held on May 6th in the Board of Trustees Room on the Galloway campus, and 19 new citizens took the Oath of Allegiance, administered by Mr. Keith Dorr from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office in Mt. Laurel.

According to Merydawilda Colón, “Offering naturalization classes and hosting the Naturalization Ceremony speaks to the vision of our Center, which is to promote the ideals of public service and social responsibility, and serve the public good.”

Homework Completion Programs

The Homework Completion Programs resumed operations on January 31st. Sixty-one youths from the community were registered for the programs at Stanley Holmes Village, Buzby Homes Village, and the Pleasantville Library. The SCCESL celebrated its eighth-grade participants on May 19th and May 26th, and we look forward to seeing them next year when they are in high school. Final data analysis for the Homework Completion Programs will appear in our Annual Report for FY22.

Get Banked

On March 18, 2022, the Student Fellows of the Center met with **Darnell Sutton**, Community Affairs Specialist, Division of Depositor and Consumer Protection at the FDIC, to learn about the Get Banked initiative. Get Banked is an FDIC program that helps unbanked people access low- or no-fee bank account. The Student Fellows will share this information with Stockton students at tabling events in the coming year.

Atlantic County Animal Shelter



Student Fellow **Lauren Whaley** used her graphic design skills in the month of March to redesign photos of the dogs that were available for adoption at the Atlantic County Animal Shelter in Pleasantville. Ms. Whaley recreated all of the dogs' photos to have a St. Patrick's Day theme which aligned with the shelter's adoption promotion for the month.

Student Leader Trainings

EngageNJ (formerly New Jersey Campus Compact) provided a student leader training on February 26th at Middlesex County College. Over 12 Stockton students traveled to the conference, including Bonner Leaders, Student Fellows, and Changebuilders. At the conference, students learned about professional presentation skills for job and internship opportunities, and many had their resumes reviewed by a panel of professionals. There were also workshops on how to develop a resume and CV, and leadership and service opportunities.

April 18th to April 22nd marked the Student Fellow Week of Training. In addition to sessions on budgeting, goal setting, and the 40 Developmental Assets developed by the Search Institute, the Center was privileged to have **Dr. Robin Hernandez-Mekonnen** teach the Student Fellows about causes and effects of trauma in youth and adults. The training was very well-received.

Scholarship of Engagement

The SCCESL participated in the Center for Teaching and Learning Design's Week of Teaching on February 18th and hosted the roundtable: Components of Engaged Scholarship and Service-Learning. Our SCCESL Faculty Fellows, **Professor Anthony Disen** and **Dr. Connie Tang** along with **Dr. Merydawilda Colón**, **Erin O'Hanlon**, and **Heather Swenson Brilla** were the presenters.

This semester, the SCCESL launched the series: 15-Minute Splash of Community Engagement. **Dr. Connie Tang**, **Professor Anthony Disen**, and our community partners, **Lt. Will Santiago** from the Atlantic City Police Department and Stockton student **Nichole Data**, among others, were the presenters. We look forward to continuing this series in the fall.

Ukrainian Flags

Led by ChangeBuilder and EOF-AC student Troy Edwards, students across the campus were invited to a special service project designed to focus on the conflict in Ukraine. Students hand-sewed two Ukrainian flags, one to keep for themselves and one to donate during tabling events. Displaying the flags in dorm rooms, bookbags, and common areas show support for Ukraine's independence after being invaded by Russia. In addition to learning about the conflict, students were taught and able to demonstrate hand sewing, an important life skill.



Westside Choice Neighborhoods Grant (Peoples Component)

The SCCESL continues working on the objectives of the Westside Choice Neighborhoods Grant (Peoples component) with the Atlantic City Housing Authority. **Dr. Merydawilda Colón**, **Dr. Helana Girgis**, Master of Social Work interns **Desiree Robinson** and **Maria Castaneda**, along with our SCCESL alumna **Gloria Hamlett** are in the last last phase of the assessment. SCCESL Student Fellows, **Lauren Whaley**, **Kerstin Maguire**, **Christine Whaley**, and **Izabelle DelRoss** are supporting Dr. Girgis with data entry for analysis.

SCCESL Faculty Fellow, Dr. Connie Tang

In the spring of 2022, Dr. Connie Tang accomplished quite a few things. The first was to follow up on the peer reviewing process of the article entitled “Homework Completion Program in Atlantic County, NJ: The First Five Years,” co-written with **Dr. Merydawilda Colón** and **Ms. Heather Swenson Brilla**. After the manuscript was submitted to *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice, and Principles* in the fall of 2021, the editor-in-chief replied that the manuscript could be published without revisions. This was the first time in Dr. Tang’s scholarly writing career that something like this happened, representing the twin achievements of publishing a mixed-methods research project and publishing an article without the need to revise and resubmit. This article has since appeared on the journal publisher’s (i.e., SAGE Publishing) website as an Online First article.



Dr. Connie Tang, PhD
SCCESL Faculty Fellow
2020 - 2021 and 2021 - 2022

Dr. Tang finalized an improved version of the *Homework Completion Program Satisfaction Survey* for the youth participants. After receiving input and consulting with Dr. Merydawilda Colón and Ms. Heather Swenson Brilla, Dr. Tang modified the survey to increase the number of emotional reaction choices for the first question from four to five so as to more sensitively assess children’s strongest emotion when seeing a police officer. Similarly, the number of police job responsibilities has also “grown” from four to five to reflect a broader range of activities police officers engage in. On the other hand, because children almost never chose to find crossing guards when the children needed help, “crossing guards” was removed from the possible choices for the third question.

Dr. Tang also participated in and co-lead involved two types of public presentations. The first was to serve as a roundtable panelist on the “Components of Engaged Scholarship and Service-Learning” panel for Stockton’s Center for Teaching and Learning Design’s Week of Teaching. The second was for the inaugural “15-Minute Splash of Community Engagement,” where on two occasions, Dr. Tang presented on and discussed her experiences in publishing community-based scholarship and the rewards and methods of successful planning in community engagement.

Dr. Tang reviewed and shared feedback on the Community Leadership and Social Change (CLSC) minor proposal spearheaded and written by **Dr. Christina Jackson** and her core team of collaborators. Finally, Dr. Tang assisted in the development of the very first SCCESL Student Leader Exit Survey, culminating in an efficient but comprehensive 15-item questionnaire.

Click the link below to read the full published article

Tang, C. M., Colón, M., & Swenson Brilla, H. (2022). Homework completion program in Atlantic County, NJ: The first five years. *The Police Journal*. DOI: 10.1177/0032258X211066033

SCCESL Faculty Fellow, Anthony Dissen



*Anthony Dissen, MPH, MA, RDN, CPH
SCCESL Faculty Fellow 2021 - 2022*

During this academic year I have been able to complete work on a number of different projects for the SCCESL. I was able to continue the work of the Community Outreach and Scholarship Initiative (COSI) that I originated through the Bonner Foundation. In COSI, interested students are taught basic principles of community-based research, and how to design, develop, and implement an original project to benefit a community organization or partner. A goal of mine was to further reinforce COSI by creating a more structured way that could become a “turn key” independent study-style course. Working with **Nichole Data**, a psychology student, I was able to create the foundation of a Community-Based Research Course that can now be used as a way of engaging future students who work with the SCCESL to begin to think of themselves as young scholars, and see how they can be more purposeful in the ways in which they engage in and serve the community. Working with Nichole, she was able to create an independent study project that exemplified Community-Based Research with the Salvation Army.

Additionally, I worked with **Dr. Merydawilda Colón** and with **Dr. Connie Tang** to create a series of educational sessions that we called “15-Minute Splash of Community Engagement” to bring together faculty members, staff members, and community partners to discuss the role of the SCCESL, and the ways in which the work of the SCCESL can serve the institution, Stockton University faculty and staff, and the members of the community that engages with Stockton University. These splash sessions focused on best practices in community engagement and service-learning, sharing lessons learned, and also gathering feedback from community members and faculty on how the SCCESL can continue to serve its stakeholders in the best way possible.

An important outcome of these sessions has been the direct requests from attendees, particularly faculty members, regarding how the SCCESL can further enhance and support faculty engagement in service-based teaching and in scholarship of engagement. From discussing best practices in these areas to reflecting upon common pitfalls and difficulties, as well as how to build a scholarly agenda that is focused on scholarship of engagement, these sessions have been doorways into hearing directly from faculty in a way that cannot always be captured via a survey assessment.

Lastly, again working with Dr. Colón and with Dr. Tang, as well as with **Erin O’Hanlon** and **Heather Swenson Brilla**, I was able to assist in the development of the Student Leader Exit Survey. This survey will allow for data to be collected from the SCCESL Student Leaders, which will not only provide significantly important insight into their own experience, learning, and growth, but also insight into those areas in which the SCCESL is thriving, and in what areas to further refine and enhance work and direction when working with each subsequent cohort of student leaders. This continues to the thread of the work that I have focused upon during this past year; finding ways to create evidence-based means of facilitating engagement with the community across multiple fields that will have continuity and longevity going forward.

Student Leader Awards for Spring 2022

Stockton University sophomore **Azra Mahisa**, a native of Atlantic City, recently received the annual Changebuilder Scholars Award for her work as a student and engaged member of the community. Mahisa was chosen as Stockton's recipient through the Engage NJ's *AmeriCorps Changebuilders* program and received a \$1,000 scholarship. The Atlantic City native is a criminal justice major with an immigration studies minor and an anticipated graduation date of spring 2024.



Nick Cerniglia, Bonner Leader, was named the 2022-23 Newman Civic Fellow by Campus Compact. The Newman Civic Fellowship recognizes and supports community-committed students who are changemakers and public problem-solvers at Campus Compact member institutions. Each university or college can select one student each year. Cerniglia the founder and president of a campus club named *Aspire to Inspire*, which "promotes positivity, inclusion and perseverance in the face of challenges or adversity." He also is doing research on using journaling and meditation to address the mental health crisis in K-12 schools.



Nichole Data, Bonner Leader and health science major, presented the work of her Distinguished Research Fellowship at the Day of Scholarship on April 7, 2022. Data is working with the Future Leaders Program of the Salvation Army to address the cyclical nature of discrimination and poverty via education in Atlantic City.

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