Rutgers School of Law-Camden and LEAP Academy Charter School: How a K12-School Law School Partnership Engages Students and Families

PHENND Justice for All
February 27, 2015
Presenters

- **Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago**, Board of Directors Distinguished Professor in Public Policy and Administration, Rutgers-Camden; Director of the Rutgers-Camden Community Leadership Center (CLC); Founder and Chair of LEAP Academy Charter School
- **Jill Friedman**, Associate Dean for Pro Bono and Public Interest, Rutgers School of Law – Camden and Newark
- **Robert Ransom**, LEAP alumnus and Rutgers School of Law – Camden student
Scholarship of Engagement

“Engagement is the partnership of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.” (Council of Independent Colleges, 2005)
Community Leadership Center (CLC) Mission Statement

“To provide new organizational environments, strategies, and building bridges, partnerships and collaborations between communities and academia to deal effectively with development, neighborhood revitalization and education.”
Overview of CLC

Core Strategic Areas

Birth–16 Pipeline
Educational Investments and Innovation

Academic Entrepreneurship and Service Learning

Applied Research and Dissemination

Leadership and Community Development
CLC Alignment with University Strategic Goals

Attracting and developing the best students and faculty
1. Development of academic and innovative hybrid programs
2. Leveraging of applied research opportunities
3. Student and Faculty Engagement
4. Dual credit program for high school students

Transforming the student experience
1. Programs, courses and support systems that lead to broad academic and engagement and service learning
2. Internships and fellowships for graduate and undergraduate students
**Collaboration and partnerships**

1. Birth through 16 Pipeline Development (LEAP/ELRA)
2. Leverage the support of external and internal organizations locally and internationally
3. Fundraising, Collaborative Program and Resource Development

**Enhancing university visibility**

1. Public exposure and recognition
2. Social Media Outlets and Media Cultivation
3. Dissemination Programs (forums, conferences, etc.)
4. Awards, Honors and citations

**Academic differentiation**

1. New courses and academic programs
2. Dual enrollment options for High School Students
3. Academic Internships, Fellowships and Directed Study
4. International Study Options and Service Learning Courses
5. Graduate Certificate Programs
Faculty Engaged with CLC

DPPA
- Dr. Marie Chevrier
- Dr. Paul Jargowsky
- Dr. Adam Okulicz
- Dr. Stephen Danley
- Dr. Brandi Blessett
- Dr. Patrice Mareschal
- Dr. Lori Minnite

STEM
- Dr. Benedetto Piccoli
- Dr. David Salas
- Dr. Rahiv Ghandi
- Dr. Eric Klein
- Dr. Joseph Martin
- Dr. Robert Evans

English
- Dr. Shanyn Fiske

School of Nursing
- Dr. Joanne Robinson (Dean)
- Dr. Nancy Pontes
- Dr. Claudia Beckman
- Dr. Marie O’Toole
- Dr. Rashida Atkins
- Dr. Nancy Powell
- Dr. Robert Scoloveno

School of Law
- Jill Friedman
- Sandra Simkins

School of Business
- Cal Maradonna

NB Faculty
- Dr. Nelson Maldonado (Comparative Literature)
- Dr. Yolanda Martinez-San Miguel (IRW and Latino Studies)
- Dr. Ben Sifuentes (American and Comparative Studies)
  • Dr. Joanna Regulska
  • Steven Barnett (NIEER)

Other Institutions
- Dr. Charles Watters, University of Sussex
- Dr. James Jennings, Tuft University
- Dr. Angeles Iturrondo, University of Puerto Rico
- Dr. Cristina Burgos, University of Habana

33 Faculty Members
BIRTH – 16 EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENTS AND INNOVATIONS

• LEAP Academy and the Rutgers/LEAP Centers of Excellence
  - a public charter school serving 1700 students in grades preK-12 and located within the Camden campus in the Cooper Street Corridor
BIRTH – 16 EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENTS AND INNOVATIONS

School based centers to channel university support for the school.

✓ Health and Human Services, offering primary health and social work services to families and children

✓ Early Childhood Program offering pre-school services

✓ Professional Development Institute providing training and coaching to teachers and staff

✓ Health and Wellness Center, in partnership with the Graduate School of Nursing Rutgers-Camden
BIRTH – 16 EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENTS AND INNOVATIONS

- **Parents Academy** providing programs to strengthen the skills of families;
- **College Access Office** working with students, teachers and families in ensuring college preparedness
- **Legal Enrichment Center** offering free legal services and educational programming to families; applied research, academic training, and experiential learning for law school and LEAP students
A Focus on Pipeline Development
The Rutgers/LEAP Pipeline to College
LEAP Academy Charter Schools

- Performance Based Compensation & Professional Development
- Strong Family Engagement
- Partnerships with Higher Education Institutions & Community Stakeholders
- Comprehensive Health and Human Services
- Ongoing Assessment & Evaluation
- LEAP's Mission aligned with Local Community Needs & Vision
- Rigorous Academic Program from PreK-College "Educational Pipeline"
- Legal Enrichment Center
- Entrepreneurial Governance/Leadership
- Extended Learning STEM Focus
- Legal Enrichment Center
- "Educational Pipeline"
Early Learning Research Academy

- builds on ongoing work in K-12 education by adding a comprehensive program that targets 75 children from infancy through pre-school.
- full day comprehensive pre-school program for 135 children ages 3 and 4.

Cultivation of School Leadership

- MPA-Educational Policy and Leadership Concentration
- School Leaders Academy
- Practice Dialogues and Lectures

Service Learning

- Service Courses
- JumpStart
- Internships, Practicum, Field Practice
- Student Volunteers
APPLIED RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION

1. Research Projects
2. Publications
3. Research Consortiums
4. Replication of Best Practices
LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

• Community Development
  – Capital Improvements
    • $85 million for capital development along Cooper Street
    • Cramer Hill LEAP LLC Community Partnership
Challenges Being Addressed

- Change of Community Perception of Unresponsiveness (*Out of touch/Out of date*) to one that is responsive and caring about Community
- Lack of alignment between disciplines and society’s problems
  - Institutional Disconnect with the present and future
  - Going beyond Outreach and Service as means for engagement
New Community Practices of Engagement

• Responsiveness and Respect
• Transforming Climate and Culture of our Institutions
• Academic Neutrality and Objectivity
• Institutional Integration and Incentives
• Resource /Multiple Partners
• Multi-disciplinary Approaches
Lessons Learned from our Applied Work

• A collaborative, comprehensive approach, with intentional alignment across institutions and contexts (e.g. family, school, the broader community), instead of piecemeal, uncoordinated efforts;
• Participation by diverse partners instead of single-sector initiatives;
• A governance structure that includes a lead organization to drive the effort instead of a leaderless coalition;
Lessons Learned from our Applied Work

• An asset-based approach that builds on existing resources and strengths rather than considering communities as deficits to be remediated;
• Active engagement by residents instead of purely top-down decisions;
• A focus on geographically defined areas instead of being too broad in scope; and
• Flexible, non-categorical funding from diverse sources instead of restricted funds that constrain nimble actions.
Types of Legal Engagement

• Innovative Programs:
  – Immigration
  – Child welfare
  – Divorce
  – Credit issues
  – Constitutional Studies
  – Financial Literacy

• Applied Research, Academic Training, and Experiential Learning for Law School and LEAP Students:
  – Student partnerships that enhance connections between university and community
  – Recruitment and exposure for legal profession
Law School Programs and Benefits

- Law school expanded its impact in the community through pro bono services
- Branching off campus and engaging with community members where they are located – in community institutions (schools and churches) and in the neighborhoods
- Bring students into law school building for events and career learning opportunities
Specific Programs Offered

- Civil legal services for LEAP families through law school clinical and pro bono programs
  - Civil Practice Clinic
  - Immigrant Justice Clinic
  - Juvenile Justice Clinic
  - Domestic Violence Clinic
  - Bankruptcy Pro Bono Project
  - Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Pro Bono Project
• Special emphasis on immigration issues, yet special challenges
  – Medical-legal immigration partnership

• Community law-related educational offerings: civics, constitutional law, financial literacy for students and parents/guardians
  – Street Law Pro Bono Project
  – Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project
  – Financial Literacy Pro Bono Project
• College, professional school, career pipeline:
  – Summer law programs for high school and college students
  – After-school pre-law moot court club
  – Integration with affinity law student groups - programming and scholarships

• Law faculty membership on LEAP Board
The Student Experience

• The 2-Block LEAP to Rutgers-Camden
• Building Relationships and Bridging the Gap in Camden
Black Law Students Association

- Partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and LEAP Academy
- Annual Scholarship Gala Awards Dinner