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## Press release : 2009 : 08 : 19 : Lead-Learn-Serve Expands with Federal Grant

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## Lead-Learn-Serve Expands with Federal Grant



Filed under [eNews Newsletter](#), [Homepage Articles](#) on Wednesday, August 19, 2009 by Author: Melanie Marquez.

**(St. Petersburg, Fla.) August 19, 2009** – A federal grant awarded to USF St. Petersburg will support student leadership initiatives and create a student philanthropy program offering grants to assist non-profit organizations in the local community meet critical needs.

The Learn and Serve America Higher Education grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service will support the Lead-Learn-Serve (LLS) program which started at USFSP in 2008. The \$395,000 grant is one of 36 Learn and Serve America grants awarded to organizations throughout the country to engage students in service-learning projects that promote community service while enhancing student academic and civic skills.

The program goals at USFSP are multifold: to develop student commitment to civic engagement; to foster leadership through curricular and co-curricular activities that assist local non-profit agencies meet the challenges of the current economic downturn; to assist community agencies address needs for leadership development and sustainability; and to support and facilitate community/university dialogue on issues that affect constituents.

Program elements:

- Citizen Scholar Service Project

Student-run boards evaluate and award grants of up to \$5,000 to assist non-profit organizations meet critical community needs.

- Lead-Learn-Serve Learning Community

Fifty freshmen in the LLS community receive scholarships, work with the non-profit sector and take linked leadership and English courses focused on civic writing and engagement

- Course Development

Up to 30 faculty members receive funding to incorporate civic engagement and service-learning into their courses.

- Community Dialogue Projects

USFSP will hold Community Leadership Symposiums for students and non-profit agencies and other public programming to strengthen university/community collaboration.

By engaging students with regional non-profits through the Citizen Scholar Service Project, curricular activities and public events, program organizers expect to see an increase in student volunteerism.

This grant adds to ongoing civic engagement at USF St. Petersburg. By pairing courses with corporate community partners for immersive learning, professors involve students in the world outside the classroom. During the last five academic years, nearly 750 courses have engaged USFSP students with community businesses, agencies and schools in focused academic service. That translates to more than 12,000 students dedicating service to the community. Applying a national valuation for volunteer service, the economic impact of USFSP student civic engagement is nearly \$10 million.

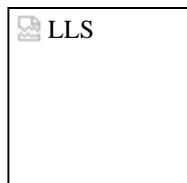
The LLS program is directed by Charlie Justice who serves as the assistant director of leadership programs at USFSP. Justice collaborates with the Bishop Center for Ethical Leadership and the Center for Civic Engagement to assist in the research, implementation and evaluation of leadership and engagement initiatives and their assessment. Justice served as an Academic Advisor at USFSP since 2002 and as a project coordinator prior to that. He earned his Bachelor

of Arts degree from USFSP in 1993.

"I think having first-hand experience in philanthropy work and responsibility for funding decisions, students will gain an understanding of the many un-met needs that go unaddressed in their community," Justice said. "In the long-run this emphasis on leadership and regional stewardship will demonstrate the importance of staying civically involved once they've graduated."

Learn and Serve America is the federal program that supports service-learning in schools, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations across the country. Learn and Serve America is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that also oversees Senior Corps and AmeriCorps.

-USF St. Petersburg-



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