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Utah Campus Compact Conference on Civic Engagement
60 S. 400 W.
SLC, UT 84101

Dear Utah Campus Compact Conference on Civic Engagement:

SLCC Community Writing Center (CWC) would like to present **“Writing for Change”** at the UCC Conference on Civic Engagement.

Writing is such a powerful civic tool (especially in the digital age) that it is surprising more civic writing isn't being done on local, grassroots levels. According to scholar Louise Dunlap, public media and institutional discourse often provide a “culture of judgment,” a silencing mechanism that shapes societal thinking so as to “*not rock the boat*” (*Undoing the Silence*). Whether a resident requesting a street lamp fixed or an advocate for healthcare reform, many people do not always choose writing as the first step toward change, or perhaps feel he/she has been silenced in some way and *should* not write. And yet, a recent study has shown that 96 percent of congressional staff say personally written letters have an impact on representatives' decisions.

Both Ken Simin (Vista, SLCC Community Writing Center) and I will discuss the challenges facing civic writing practices, provide exercises for engaging students and community in civic writing and will present the CWC's partnership project titled “Writing For Change” that will take place in February, March and April of 2010.

ARTICULATION OF CLEAR OBJECTIVES FOR SESSION PARTICIPANT

- Reflect on current theories and discourse on Social Change Writing, including comments from the CWC focus group
- Engage in writing prompts and techniques to begin the civic writing process
- Learn about the CWC's “Writing for Change” project to take place in the Spring
- Reflect on how “Writing for Change” events might translate into the classroom and service-learning programs

ARTICULATION OF HOW YOU WILL PRESENT YOUR INITIATIVE/MODEL AS ONE THAT OTHER INSTITUTIONS CAN ADOPT

After engaged discussion on civic writing practices, Ken Simin and I will present the “Writing for Change” community project to take place in spring 2010. “Writing for Change” events will be done in partnership with the Salt Lake Public Library and will be hosted at two west-side libraries and one east-side library. This project includes community leaders speaking on the importance of civic writing, CWC staff presenting writing for change strategies, and participants writing their letters with help from one of the many CWC Writing Coaches at the events.

For our UCC presentation, we will discuss how these events easily translate into classroom assignments, projects for student councils and learning models for more engaged service-learning and social-justice students by means of the writing and peer-review techniques, and most importantly, how the engagement of a group dynamic all working together can make a difference.

QUALITY OF ACTIVE LEARNING SEGMENT

Participants will be given prompts and activities to engage them in the issues surrounding civic writing. Participants will also reflect on the ways their institution uses civic writing, including how it is used as a learning tool. Participants will then reflect on types of civic writing that might translate into their institutions' goals and mission.

OVERALL CONTRIBUTION TO THE SERVICE-LEARNING/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FIELD

The presentation of the project, as well as the interactive discussion on civic writing, offers a mix of topics relevant to the field of service-learning and civic engagement, including education through social action, writing and community building and adult literacy. The presentation provides more than tools, but a deeper understanding and awareness of how intertwined civic writing is to a functioning democracy. As Albert Einstein put it "No problem can be solved by the same level of consciousness that created it."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrea Malouf, Assistant Director, SLCC Community Writing Center and SLCC English Department faculty

ENCLOSURE: BIOS

Utah Campus Compact Conference on Civic Engagement

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