



## **PSU-UNS COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM: YEAR 1 REPORT**

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### **Activities and Achievement**

1. PSU student study exchange (December, 2006)
2. Organize launch workshop in March, 2007: 54 participants including representatives of PSU, Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), IIE/HCMC, Vietnam National University of HCMC, UNS Board of Rector, Prof. Erik Thulstrup (Roskilde University of Denmark), People's committee of HCMC, HEPA, DONRE, CEECO, Center for Technology & Environment, Center for Environmental Protection (Institute of Tropical Technology), Institute of Tropical Biology, Deputy Director of HCMC Urban Upgrading Project, Journalists, Faculty of Biology, Faculty of Mathematics, Faculty of Environment, Faculty of Informatics Technology, Faculty of Geology, and students
3. Establish a community-university engagement facilitation unit at UNS: Center for Educational Excellence (July, 2007). Develop website [www.cee.hcmuns.edu.vn](http://www.cee.hcmuns.edu.vn)
4. Training in August, 2007: Integrating Community based learning into your courses: 30 faculty members from Faculty of Biology, IT, Geology, Chemistry, Environment, Mathematics, one faculty member from An Giang University, and 52 students participated in the first day. In the following days, there are only faculty members from Biology and An Giang University and students.
5. Integrate community-based service learning into three courses at the Faculty of Biology: Environmental Science, Wastewater Treatment (Dr. Phung Thuy

Phuong), and Biodiversity (Dr. Hoang Duc Huy). But it was not successful with the course of Biodiversity, because it was not easy to find out appropriate community partner (attachment 1)

6. PSU student study exchange (December, 2007)
7. Feb 18, 2008: Working with Dr. Tran Triet and Mr. Tuan on how to integrate CBSL into their courses: Wetland Ecology and Plant Morphology (Room : Botany; Participants: Prof. Messer, Dr Triet, Mr. Tuan, Dr. Phuong, Ms. Lan Huong, Mr. Hai)
8. Workshop in February, 19, 2008: “Learning Through Community Engagement: A Program to Incorporate Community-Based Learning into undergraduate Courses at UNS”

\* Objectives:

- To introduce community-based learning (CBL) and how to integrate community-based service learning (CBSL) into two courses at Faculty of Biology
- To discuss and assess the possibility to integrate CBSL into different courses at UNS

\* Participants: 46 participants

- Prof. Barry Messer (PSU),
- Prof. Dong Thi Bich Thuy (Director of CEE),
- Prof. Duong Anh Duc (Vice Rector for Academic Affairs),
- Dr. Nguyen Kim Quang (Head of Academic Affairs Office),
- Dr. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Lan (former Head of Academic Affairs Office),
- Dr. Tran Triet (Head of Faculty of Biology),
- Dr. Nguyen Du Sanh (Deputy Head of Faculty of Biology),
- Prof. Le Cong Kiet (former Head of Faculty of Biology)
- Ms. Nguyen Tuyet Phuong (Secretary of the Youth Union of UNS, faculty member of Chemistry)
- Faculty members of Biology, Environment, Geology

- Four representatives from Dam Sen Park (Community partner),
- 15 (among 40) students who participated in two CBSL courses,
- two journalists
- Dr. Phung Thuy Phuong (CEE)
- Ms. Vu Thi Lan Huong (CEE)
- Mr. Nguyen Thanh Hai (CEE)

\* Workshop schedule

Venue: Room F102

Time: 8 am - 12 pm

- Welcome and Registration
- Opening remark (Prof. Dong Thi Bich Thuy)
- Presentation by Prof. Barry Messer (PSU) (attachment 2)
- Presentation by Dr. Phung Thuy Phuong (UNS) (attachment 3)
- Representatives of Dam Sen Park: appreciate the value of students' projects at Dam Sen Park; express their willingness to continue the collaboration
- Representatives of students who participated in CBSL courses:

According to one junior, CBSL is the combination of the 'green summer program', which focuses on service and the practicum, which focuses on enhancing academic learning; he recognizes the benefits CBSL course brought to students; he gains experience when working at Dam Sen Park; this course offers opportunity for him to apply theory into practice; he can develop communication skill through this course. He would like the university support this program, because this is a useful program, so that students can feel more interested in learning and community can get benefit from student's projects. At the beginning, this student was so 'shy', he refused making a presentation at the public. However, after participated in this course, he was one among

students presented the results of CBSL projects at Dam Sen Park. He also spoke at the workshop as a student representative.

Another junior, who participated in August training (2007), wished CBSL could be integrated into courses at UNS soon. To her surprise, she was selected as one among 40 students to participate in Environmental Science CBSL course taught by Dr. Phuong. According to her, this is very new method of teaching and learning. On faculty side, Dr. Phuong devoted her time to supervise students at the park, correct any single mistake of each report, and provide adequate guidelines. On student side, they had to read more, to work harder in order to carry out CBSL project. Through this course, she not only gained experience relates to the content of the course, but also gained experience in communication, team work, and oral & written report. She would like the university support this program. She wished CBSL could be integrated into other courses; more assistant lecturers to assist faculty members in CBSL courses; all students can participate in CBSL courses.

According to a senior, CBSL course is so interesting and useful. Students can learn how to work in team, to develop communication skill, how to make oral and written report. This way of teaching and learning helps students to develop their autonomous thinking, to apply theory to solve real problems. Compare to the traditional teaching and learning method, this method is more interesting. She and her classmates would like the university apply this method to other courses, too. However, according to her, there are some limitations that should be overcome: only some students can participate in CBSL project; it is overload for Dr Phuong to supervise 40 students at the park, there is a lack of assistant; the curriculum of Biology is too heavy, it is very difficult to arrange time for CBSL project; each student has his or her schedule and finding time when every student is available is too difficult. She and her classmates would like the university apply this program to other courses, too.

- Coffee break
- Discussion (attachment 4)

9. Feb 19, 2008 (afternoon): Room I24, Prof. Messer, Dr. Phuong, Mr. Tuan, Ms. Huong, Mr. Hai

- Experience gained from the two CBSL courses: Environmental Science and Wastewater Treatment
- Plan for two other CBSL courses

10. Feb 20, 2008 (morning): Room I24, Prof. Messer, Prof. Thuy, Ms. Ruby, Dr. Phuong, Ms. Huong, Mr. Hai

- Evaluation of year 1
- Plan for year 2: two more CBSL courses on Wetland Ecology ( Dr. Tran Triet), and Plant Morphology (Mr. Dang Le Anh Tuan); five senior capstone projects at Dam Sen.