

## Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Institute

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On January 30 and 31, professionals from colleges and universities across Michigan gathered for the Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Institute hosted by the Michigan Campus Compact. Faculty and professional staff attended the two day conference in East Lansing.

The bi-annual conference offers individuals from over 40 institutions the opportunity to participate in and/or facilitate presentations. It also includes an awards ceremony that honors community service-learning faculty and staff for incredible contributions to the field. Madonna University was well represented at this conference with four presenters, two professors receiving award recognition, and a posthumous award presented to family of the late Kevin West (1958 – 2010).

Nicole Nagy, the First Year Experience Assistant as well as an Academic Advisor at Madonna, co-presented with Admissions Counselor, Haley Mulka. Their presentation was, titled, **"Preparing Students for Lifelong Engagement."** In their session, they spoke about college access, things students should know before attending college as well as how students get involved on campus especially in student organizations. A significant portion of the session consisted in Mulka and Nagy answering questions about the First-Year Experience program as well as student run organizations and the FYE Peer mentoring program at Madonna. In addition to presenting they went to other sessions, the majority of which they found very useful.

**"I went to a 'Service in Writing' presentation, which I thought was fantastic, even though I don't teach writing at Madonna,"** said Nagy. **"It gave me information I could pass to the other teachers who interact with first-year students."**

Mulka describes the atmosphere at the conference as exciting and the experience reassuring. It was nice to see people as passionate as I am, and encountering some of the same struggles I do, encouraging service on their respective campuses and developing their students as leaders along the way.

In addition to Mulka and Nagy, Laura Kull, professor of Dietetics and Nutrition Food Science at Madonna presented at the conference with two colleagues from Oakland University and Grand Valley State University. She highlighted the outcomes of the 2011 Midwest Consortium Learn and Serve grant that Madonna received to create the Growing Green: Community Teaching Garden. The grant resulted in a partnership between Madonna the City of Livonia, Schoolcraft College, Trinity Inc., and Focus Hope. Kull explained in her presentation how the students, specifically STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) contributed to growing the garden, conducted research projects, hosted informational community events and served as a resource for nutrition and resource sustainability. Additionally, during the grant cycle several nutrition students conducted nutrition education presentations to 1,351 elementary students.

Service is nothing new to the Dietetics and Nutrition Food Science professor; Kull has been engaged in Service-Learning for quite some time. In the Spring/Summer session she offers a community nutrition course and also works hand-in-hand with Nutrition Network and the Livonia Public Schools. Service-Learning is required for a degree in Dietetics or Nutrition Food Science and the students partner with Madonna programs as well as outside organizations such as Gleaners and teach Cooking Matters classes.

**"I have never had a student return from a service-learning experience with anything but positive comments about it,"** said Kull.

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The final presenter for Madonna was Michelle Proctor, Chair of the Sociology Department. "It is like planting a seed. Many things grow from it and can be applied to the bigger picture," Proctor describes the process of service-learning.

**Proctor's interactive presentation was about service-learning and Humane Education.** She spoke about the service she did with her students at the Detroit Zoo. While this topic is typically thought of something focused on animals, "You can take the same ideas about social justice with animals, said Proctor, "and apply it to people and neighborhoods."