Convocation

March 2, 2018

De Anza

“S” Classes as a means of promoting civic capacity

Hello. My name is Bob Stockwell, and I teach Political Science here at De Anza.

Welcome to the breakout on “S” classes as a means of promoting civic capacity among students. This brief session will introduce you to “S” classes and their impact on students and student civic capacity. It will also provide you with an opportunity to get to know each other, to share ideas on the opportunities afforded through “S” classes, and ideally, encourage you to consider integrating community service learning/civic engagement into your teaching.

As to the mechanics and timeline for the session, I have a few things to share with you by way of powerpoint slides. I have invited a former student of mine, Raphael Villagracia, to say a few words about his experience with “S” classes and his participation in civic life. And, there will be opportunities for you to share your thoughts with each other in small groups and with the large group.

Are there any questions before we begin? By the way, the bathroom facilities are …. And I’ll be mindful of the time and plan accordingly.

Let’s begin with some definitions.

Let’s start with Community Service Learning (CSL). Quoting Janet S. Eyler (winner of the 2003 Thomas Ehrlich Faculty Award for Service Learning) and Dwight E. Giles, Jr., CSL is “a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students. . . seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves. In the process, students link personal and social development with academic and cognitive development. . . experience enhances understanding; understanding leads to more effective action.”

Typically, community engagement is incorporated into a course by way of a project designed in collaboration between faculty and community partners. Students apply course content to community-based activities, which provides real-world learning opportunities, skills in community engagement, and addresses community needs. Teaching through community engagement benefits students, faculty, communities, and institutions of higher education.

In essence, what we’re talking about is the promotion of civic capacity, which we can define as the ability to make a difference, to have the knowledge, skills, and motivation to be an agent of change in the world.

De Anza College’s mission includes a commitment to civic capacity for global, cultural, social and environmental justice, and a commitment to civic engagement for social justice.

According to our values statement, “We provide students with opportunities to enhance their potential for purposeful and productive lives. As a public institution, we contribute to the development of our local, state, national and global communities. We view our students and ourselves as agents of change, responsible for building the world in which all people are able to realize their dreams in ways that are environmentally sustainable and in alignment with the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights.”

Community Service Learning (CSL)/Civic Engagement (CE), or “S” classes, is/are one sure way to contribute to the advancement of our mission and the actualization of our values. My hope is that many of you here will consider adopting a community engagement approach to your classes.

At this time I’d like to turn it over to Raphael Villagracia who is going to share his story about how an “S” class led him to purse ever-greater levels of engagement and to exhibit ever-higher levels of civic capacity. Thanks, Raphael.

Thank you, Raphael, for sharing your experience. I believe Raphael is quite exceptional, but not unusual. It has been my experience that students really grow through their civic engagement work; that they do better in the class; and that they are far more likely to become actively involved in civic life. “S” classes promote civic capacity and make its exercise more likely.

Let’s turn it over to you now. In groups, for the next 5 minutes, please discuss the following questions:

1. Would you like to integrate civic engagement into your class?

2. What concerns do you have about doing so?

3. What resources are available to you?

In five minutes, I’ll ask you to share out with the rest of us.

Ok, here we go…

Let’s address the questions together, and let’s plan the next steps. Please feel free to contact me.

My own civic life at De Anza

Executive Secretary for the Faculty Association (FA)

SS&H division representative to the FA Executive Council and FA representative to the Academic Senate

Co-Chair of the FA PAC

Co-supervisor of the FA PAC internship program

Co-director of VIDA’s Public Policy School

Director of Political Science Department Internship program

Professional Relations Committee

Enrollment Advisory Team

Co-Chair of the Community Policing Taskforce

FACCC Board of Governors

FACCC Legislative Committee

FACCC A&P Planning Committee