

**Salt Lake Community College**

**Thayne Center for Service and Learning**

**2012 – 2013**

**Program Review**

**Program Review Team Members**

Dr. Sean A. Brumfield, Executive Director, Quality Enhancement Plan, Georgia  
Perimeter College

Ms. Alexis Bucknam, Executive Director, Utah Campus Compact

Ms. Andrea Malouf, Director, Community Writing Center and Assistant Professor  
of English, Salt Lake Community College

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Salt Lake City, Utah

## **Introduction**

On November 13 and 14, 2012, Dr. Sean Brumfield, Ms. Alexis Bucknam, and Ms. Andrea Malouf began the program review process for the Thayne Center for Service and Learning at Salt Lake Community College in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The purpose of the program review process is to examine the programming, processes, and procedures of the Thayne Center in an effort to offer commendations and recommendations for overall improvement. This report presents the findings of the program review process.

The report is broken into the following three sections: (1) general review of standards, (2) Thayne Center programming review, and (3) general commendations and recommendations. Program recommendations are provided in the programming review section.

The program review process consisted of the following: (1) a review of the Thayne Center's self-study document, (2) an on-site visit, (3) presentation of initial findings, and (4) the submission of this report. During the on-site visit, the review team interviewed key stakeholders and reviewed the major programs offered by the Thayne Center.

All recommendations are given with the best of intentions and represent the professional opinions of the review team. The review team would also like the reader to understand that these recommendations are meant to improve an already superb program.

### ***Thayne Center Programs Reviewed***

While all aspects of the Thayne Center were reviewed for the purposes of this site visit, the following core programs were examined in detail:

- Academic Service Learning
- Alternative Spring Break
- Civically Engaged Scholars
- Community Partner Outreach
- Community Work Study America Reads

- Student Leaders in Civic Engagement (SLICE)

### ***Stakeholders Interviewed***

The following Thayne Center constituents were interviewed as part of the program review process:

- *Students*
  - CES Student Group (Brumfield)
  - SLICE Student Group (Malouf)
  - ASB Student Group (Bucknam)
  - Aaron Starks, Student Body President (Malouf)
  - Caitlin Prentice, Clubs & Organizations Vice President (Malouf)
- *Faculty*
  - SL Designated Faculty
- *Administrators / Staff*
  - Dr. Cynthia Bioteau, President (Brumfield, Bucknam)
  - Dr. Ryan Carstens, Associate Provost, Education & Community Partnerships (Brumfield, Malouf)
  - Peggy Hoffman, Director Student Activities (Malouf)
  - Dr. David Hubert, ePortfolio Director (Brumfield)
  - Dr. Deneece Huftalin, VP Student Services (Brumfield, Bucknam, Malouf)
  - Amanda Jacobsen, Manager Financial Aid Office (Malouf)
  - Curt Larsen, Director, Student Life and Leadership (Bucknam)
  - Steven Lewis, Associate Director, Disability Resource Center (Bucknam)
  - Cristi Millard, Director Financial Aid Office (Malouf)
  - Kymm Owens, Advisory Financial Aid Office (Malouf)
  - Dr. Chris Picard, Provost (Brumfield, Malouf)
  - Jason Pickavance, Educational Initiatives Director (Brumfield)
  - Jennifer Seltzer Stitt, Director of Community Relations (Brumfield, Malouf)

- *Community*
  - Salt Lake County Aging Services (Bucknam)
  - SLC Mayor's Office (Bucknam)
  - Maliheh Free Clinic (Bucknam)
  - Wasatch Community Gardens (Bucknam)
  - Whittier Elementary School (Malouf)

## **Review of Standards**

The following section contains program standards as they appear in SLCC's document, "Program Review Site Visit Handbook." Handbook standards appear verbatim in the first paragraph of each of the following sub-sections. After the standard, the team provided related observations.

### **1. Department Mission, Goals, and Outcomes**

**Program Review Standard:** The department has a mission and overarching goals/outcomes statements which are consistent with and which support the College's and Student Services' mission statements and goals.

**Team Observations:** The Thayne Center has a mission, goals, and outcome statements that are consistent with other organizations of similar function. The Thayne Center supports the college's and division's mission statements and goals. However, the Thayne Center's current mission and vision could be too restrictive to allow it to grow naturally. Inserting a statement that stresses the Center's academic nature in addition to its more obvious student affairs functions would allow engagement in related activities (i.e., high impact practices, The Democracy Commitment, gender and LGBT issues, environmental sustainability, teen / unplanned pregnancy, etc.).

### **2. Programs and Services**

**Program Review Standard:** The department provides a set of core programs/services which are central to and consistent with the department's

mission and goals. These programs/services are responsive to the needs of the department's constituents, are cost-effective and, when appropriate, are supported by other departments or agencies both within and outside the College.

**Team Observations:** The Thayne Center offers a variety of services and programs consistent with the department's, division's, and college's stated mission and goals. The programs and services are cost effective and supported by other departments or agencies within and outside the college.

Programs and services that were identified as particularly strong include alternative spring break, community partner outreach, community work study (America Reads), and Student Leaders in Civic Engagement (SLICE). Programs and services that need some improvement include academic service learning and civically engaged scholars (see recommendations / commendations). The Thayne Center should also devote more resources to communicating its mission and goals to the broader college community in an effort to expand its programming from "boutique" to "large scale."

### **3. Leadership and Staffing**

**Program Review Standard:** The department has a sufficient number of well-qualified employees (professional, support, student) to effectively provide the core programs/services offered by the department. Employees have clear and current job responsibilities. Employees are oriented to their roles, receive appropriate leadership and supervision, are provided with ongoing professional development opportunities, and are regularly evaluated.

**Team Observations:** The director of the Thayne Center is highly competent and has a clear vision for helping the Thayne Center achieve its mission and stated goals. However, "empowering" others to "realize" their potential to "affect positive change" requires the resources to educate students and faculty on a larger scale. The director does not have the time or the resources to fulfill the empowerment aspect of the center's mission and would benefit from an Assistant Director.

The college should be commended for its decision to dedicate the resources necessary to hire a full-time community partner coordinator. However, given that both academic service learning and the civically engaged scholars programs need to be strengthened some reshuffling of duties / responsibilities among the various coordinators should be considered. The department might also consider allowing the service learning coordinator to solely focus on the coordination of academic service learning.

Currently, the Thayne Center is housed within the student services division of the college. While this placement is logical, academic service learning might be better served with shared oversight from both the VPSS and Provost.

#### **4. Financial Resources and Budget**

**Program Review Standard:** The department has a well-defined and participatory budget planning process. This process results in sufficient resources to meet the department's core programs/services, staffing, facility, equipment, and technology needs.

**Team Observations:** While, the Thayne Center's budget planning process is well-defined and participatory in nature, the Thayne Center's financial allocation does not allow the Thayne Center to achieve all of its goals. In fact, its budget allows it to merely sustain current offerings without sufficient room for growth. Additional financial resources are required to expand existing programming and to meet the stated vision of the Center. Immediate needs include additional human resources in the form of an Assistant Director and a dedicated service learning coordinator. Funding for a dedicated service learning coordinator could come, in part, from the Office of the Provost. Finally, the Center carries forward approximately \$10,000 - \$15,000 per year in student fees, a number which should be closer to \$60,000.

## 5. Facilities, Equipment and Technology

**Program Review Standard:** The department has safe, accessible, and current physical facilities, equipment, and technological resources to support its core programs/services and personnel.

**Team Observations:** The Thayne Center has adequate equipment and technological resources to support its core programming and personnel; however, the Thayne Center could be better located physically within the college in an effort to improve overall visibility and accessibility. A new, more visible location within the college could allow the Thayne Center to grow its cadre of “boutique” programs. Additionally, the Thayne Center does not have adequate office space to house its staff. Finally, as the Thayne Center continues in its community outreach mission, the college should consider identifying and acquiring space within the community for a remote office.

## 6. Ethical and Legal Responsibilities

**Program Review Standard:** The department is aware of and compliant with statutory and professional ethical and legal standards which apply to the department’s core programs/services, personnel, facilities, equipment and technology.

**Team Observations:** The Thayne Center is aware of and compliant with statutory and professional ethical and legal standards that apply to the department’s core programs/services, personnel, facilities, equipment, and technology.

The Thayne Center should be commended on its understanding and development of reciprocal relationships and community organizing. Thayne Center staff and associated faculty demonstrate clear knowledge of the ethics and legal responsibilities of community work. Because the Thayne Center works closely with community organizations, According to the self study document, the Thayne Center operates on an ethical framework based on Asset-based Community Development, which “recognizes the strengths inherent in residents and in the community capitals (human, cultural, political, built, natural, financial,

and social). ABCD works to facilitate solutions from a foundation of assets, rather than deficits and all that a community is perceived to not have on hand.”

## **7. Assessment and Evaluation**

**Program Review Standard:** The department has clearly defined and measurable core program/service and student learning outcomes which are consistent with the department’s mission and goal statements. These program/service and student learning outcomes are regularly assessed through both direct and indirect measures, and the results of assessment are shared among constituents and are used for decision-making and planning.

**Team Observations:** The Thayne Center has clearly defined and measurable core program / service and student learning outcomes, consistent with the department’s mission and goal statements. Regular assessments through direct and indirect measures are conducted and results are shared among all constituents and used for decision making and planning.

### **Review of Thayne Center Programming**

#### **Academic Service Learning**

The Thayne Center’s academic service learning program is frequently cited as a model program and is recognized as one of the best in the nation. However, within the context of Salt Lake Community College, the program is relatively small and is viewed by many as a “boutique” program. Additionally, many misperceive service learning as a “student affairs issue” not directly linked to academics.

The program’s coordinator currently supports 40 designated faculty members, five of whom are adjunct faculty members, which results in approximately 220 service learning sections per semester. Faculty members interviewed for this project repeatedly stated that the one-on-one mentoring provided by the Thayne Center is one of the best aspects of the program. That said, faculty also noted a perceived overall decrease in the quality of mentoring and faculty development opportunities over the past couple of years.



One major concern is that the program's coordinator does not provide support for non-designated faculty members beyond offering a SL 1000 course, which is open to everyone. It should be noted that the service learning program does provide multiple points of support available to all faculty members at SLCC; however, the service learning coordinator does not feel that she has adequate time to support all interested faculty members.

Faculty members appreciate the support given by the service learning coordinator; however, they also agree that the designation process itself could be a barrier to increasing the number of faculty members using service learning in their courses. A related barrier to faculty use of service learning is that faculty do not understand the benefits of service learning to students, the community, and the college, and faculty members do not have the tools necessary to implement service learning in their courses.

Faculty members also stated that although the Thayne Center provides opportunities for faculty members to meet (i.e., teaching circles, teaching squares), more opportunities are desired and suggested that Thayne Center staff piggy-back teaching circles on existing faculty and departmental meetings. Faculty also mentioned that at one time the Thayne Center has a Faculty Consulting Corps in place that was quite helpful for new faculty members.

Finally, faculty members and students are frustrated with the level of bureaucracy involved with accessing the funding provided by the president's office for student service learning projects. Both faculty members and students report significant delays in approvals and reimbursements.

SLCC's president strongly supports service learning and seems to understand the importance of the pedagogy as a high-impact practice, conversations with others administrators revealed a lukewarm attitude toward the pedagogy at best. Both the provost and assistant provost suggested that the program was beneficial but not far-reaching within the faculty ranks. The provost and assistant provost suggested creating better lines of communication between the Thayne Center and the academic departments.

## **Recommendations**

1. Revise the operating definition of service learning to be more inclusive of the various forms of community-based learning in which faculty and students want to participate.
2. Allow the service learning coordinator to solely focus on academic service learning.
3. Seek a larger, more visible campus location for the Thayne Center to improve overall accessibility of resources and to provide adequate work space for the center's employees and students.
4. Identify space in the community for a remote Thayne Center office.
5. To improve communication / relations with academic affairs, consider a model in which both the VPSS and the provost share oversight of academic service learning.
6. Seek funding for the academic service learning coordinator from the provost.
7. Both the center's director and the service learning coordinator should participate in national conversations / conferences about civic engagement / service learning to stay abreast of current thought and best practices. Conferences of particular interest should include the annual meeting of the Community College National Center for Community Engagement, the annual meeting of the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement, the Democracy Commitment, etc.
8. Develop a faculty co-coordinator program, in which one of more faculty members would be responsible for helping the Thayne Center bridge the gap between student services and academic affairs.
9. Increase the number of faculty members using service learning in their courses.
  - a. Develop a multi-tiered faculty development system through which faculty members can ultimately achieve designation while at the same time benefiting from support provided by the service learning coordinator and the Thayne Center.

- b. Increase the number of engaged departments.
- 10. Create a better partnership with Academic Affairs through active participation in faculty meetings and regular interactions with faculty members, department chairs, and deans.
- 11. Create better awareness of community-based learning as a high-impact practice. This includes more collaboration with faculty leadership, not just faculty. This should be done by the Director, as she is the person to direct the mission of the Thayne Center, particularly in terms of future collaborations.
- 12. Develop a strategic plan with Dr. Ryan Carstens for incorporation of community-based learning as a high impact practice throughout the college. This could include engaged departments or creating a steering committee, as Dr. Carstens suggested.
- 13. Provide incentives for faculty use of service learning in their courses:
  - a. Offer release time for course development purposes.
  - b. Strengthen ties with the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center.
  - c. Make high impact practices and community based learning a priority that has total administrative support.
  - d. Invite faculty to participate in advisory committees.
  - e. Teach faculty members how to incorporate service learning in to online courses.
  - f. Invite faculty members to participate in community partner forums.
  - g. Introduce service learning to faculty as part of new faculty orientation and assign a faculty mentor early.
  - h. Talk to faculty members about the benefits of using service learning at convocation, faculty meetings, summer workshops, etc.
  - i. Recognize faculty members who use service learning in their courses as graduation and in the course catalog.
  - j. Spotlight service learning faculty members on the college's website.
  - k. Increase the number of engaged departments.

## **Alternative Spring Break**

Alternative Spring Break is a highly regarded program among the students that participate and professional colleagues at SLCC. It is also clear that it is an important gateway into the Thayne Center for many students and as one student put it “ASB has a multiplying effect with committed students”. More than one student commented on how ASB introduced them to the Thayne Center and because they had a positive experience they continued their engagement in other ways like SLICE. As far as can be observed, the partnership that the Thayne Center has with Disability Resource Center to provide an accessible alternative break experience to student with disabilities is unique and the collaboration is very strong.

There are clearly articulated learning outcomes for the ASB program as evidence by the rubric that has been developed. This learning focus though embedded in the language of the existing Vision and Mission statements could be more explicitly stated to ensure consistency across the programs in the Thayne Center. The assessment by Trip Advisors using the rubric is an effective practice and could be supplemented by a “360 degree” type assessment within the small teams that each plan a day of the break experience. Empowering students to think about the learning that is happening in their peers and themselves will not only strengthen the assessment process but increase student consciousness around the desired learning outcomes for the program.

The most apparent obstacle for ASB is its limited capacity. The Thayne Center staff vocalized their desire to move past the notion of ASB being “owned” by them, and Student Life and Leadership expressed an interest in taking a more active role in supporting the program. The opportunity to expand the program is ripe and could be viewed as one way to build relationships with multiple campus departments both administrative and academic. A Steering Committee of stakeholders anchored by the Thayne Center, Disability Resource Center, and Student Life & Leadership could explore a whole host of possibilities for expanding the reach of the program. These might include developing

exchanges with community colleges outside of Utah with support from Campus Compact, learning cost reduction strategies from other ASB models and programs like AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps, or creating locally based Alternative Weekends and Breaks paired with campus-wide programming (i.e. heritage months, hunger and homelessness week, etc.). ASB has the reputation and potential reach to play an important facilitating role for the Thayne Center to build relationships with other campus departments. In order for this to happen the Director, or if an Assistant Director position can be funded, would need to play a more central role in developing the suggested Steering Committee or similar body given the visible and collective nature of the activities that would be taking place.

Furthermore, student participants are so enthusiastic about ASB that there are many ways that ASB alumni could be engaged in fundraising as well as locally based weekend or week trips. It was not clear how SLCC tracks alumni as an institution, and if the campus is not effectively tracking alumni the Thayne Center could look into options for modules in OrgSync for that purpose, or consider seeking a license grant from the Salesforce Foundation to build a student and alumni tracking database with particular emphasis on programs like ASB and SLICE. A preliminary step could be creating a LinkedIn group and inviting all past and present students from the programs to join. Alumni giving at community colleges is not typically robust but in the case of these signature experiences the Thayne Center may be able to buck that trend.

If the Thayne Center chooses to pursue a shared program-design and implementation model for ASB to include campus colleagues, alumni, and current students the possibility to grow the program to meet demand seems achievable.

**Recommendations:**

1. Continue to provide an accessible alternative break experience annually.
2. Explicitly state the learning focus of the program.

3. Create a Steering Committee of stakeholders anchored by the Thayne Center, Disability Resource Center, and Student Life & Leadership that explores possibilities for expanding the reach of the program.
4. Use social media to connect current and past students.

### **Civically Engaged Scholars**

The Civically Engaged Scholars program has the potential to be a significant co-curricular experience for SLCC students that could result in improved retention and persistence rates. However, the program in its current state is largely ineffective. Currently, two groups of students make up the pool of civically engaged scholars: those who elect to participate and those who are enrolled in the college's OTA (Occupational Therapy Assistant) program. While the roughly 40 students who self-selected to participate in the program understood the goals of the program, the roughly 40 OTA students did not even realize that they were classified as civically engaged scholars.

Conversations with the program's coordinator revealed that 12 students regularly participate in CES activities. The program's coordinator also suggested that administrating the program was difficult given the coordinator's other responsibilities.

Students recognized the importance of being a part of such a program but desired more intentionality in the associated programming. Students also reported difficulty in getting service hours approved in the OrgSync system and repeatedly expressed frustration in delays associated with being reimbursed for associated project expenses.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Improve the overall intentionality of the Civically Engaged Scholars program. The Bonner Leader program could serve as a model.
2. Work with faculty in engaged departments to make students specifically aware that they are classified as civically engaged scholars.
3. Expand the number of civically engaged scholars by increasing the number of engaged departments rather than by attempting to attract

additional self-selectors. Doing so will increase the number of scholars without significantly increasing the workload of the coordinator.

4. Market the CES program during new student orientation.
5. In an effort to reduce student / faculty frustration over being reimbursed for supplies from the president's service learning supply funding source, develop a system whereby certain commonly used supplies for service learning projects / CES projects are purchased ahead of time and kept on hand.

### **Community Partner Outreach**

President Bioteau has a very clear and articulate vision for SLCC to be "the community's college" and the Thayne Center has an important role to play in achieving that vision. It is notable that the Thayne Center mission not only speaks to relationships with community organizations but states a commitment to "capacity-building" in those relationships. Creating a full-time staff position is allowing SLCC and the Thayne Center to set the standard for the State in the effort to bring the campus and community together in partnership. The representatives from Community Partner organizations that were invited to participate in the Program Review all commented on the authentic commitment they felt from SLCC to work with them to not only place service-learning and volunteer SLCC students, but to also increase the capacity of their organizations.

The Thayne Center recently implemented a three tiered partnership model which appears to be working effectively. The Community Partner program review participants (all Tier 3) and the Coordinator are pleased with the outcome of the new model and the rapport that is developing. In a few cases the partners mentioned that they weren't actually hosting that many SLCC students at their organizations yet, but that they believed the deepening connection to the Thayne Center would facilitate more student participation in their organizations in the future. They also find great value in the opportunities afforded them by their "level 3" relationship with the Thayne Center.

For example, the training that was provided by SLCC and other higher education institutions through the Utah Commission on Volunteers grant was cited as a great resource and a very important opportunity to gather with other non-profit representatives. Although the trainings were the result of a collaboration, SLCC played a significant anchor role in the planning, hosting, and execution of the entire series. SLCC's visible leadership was mentioned on multiple occasions throughout the conversation with Community Partners. It seems appropriate that the Coordinator has made continuation of the training endeavor a high priority because it is so highly valued by partners. Efforts are being made to off-set the cost of these trainings, printed materials and food, through mini-grants. However, this is not sustainable and an ongoing funding stream needs to be identified. Given the importance placed on this function by the partners a sustained funding source needs to be identified which may require support from staff and administrators outside of the Thayne Center such as the Community Partners Council.

Several of the community partners mentioned that, although they valued their relationship with the Thayne Center itself, they found working with SLCC faculty challenging. They shared a few concerns but the most consistent grievance was unresponsiveness. The Community Partners mentioned that the Bennion Center at the University of Utah provides a list of upcoming service-learning courses each semester that they find quite useful. This list allows them to proactively approach faculty that are prepared to discuss community partnership. The Community Partners recommended that the Thayne Center put a similar list together so they could engage in more targeted outreach to potentially more responsive SLCC faculty. This would allow the Community Partnerships and Service-Learning Coordinators to collaborate to support both faculty and community stakeholders.

Community Partners also expressed an interest in more long-term and sustained volunteers from SLCC. Partners wondered if there were opportunities to post internships or solicit participation in similar field work or practicum requirements. As the Thayne Center considers expanding the Service-Learning



course offerings and the Civically Engaged Department model it could behoove the Center to include Community Partners in preliminary discussions to alert Deans, Chairs, and faculty of the community interest in hosting students in sustained placements. Additionally, a community work-study program, beyond America Reads, and/or AmeriCorps Education Award placements could facilitate a more persistent and meaningful student engagement experience. Similar to America Reads and SLICE these placements could be supplemented by a substantive orientation and on-going reflection opportunities.

The Community Partners were effusive about the high quality of the relationships and services that the Thayne Center is providing to them and compared their experiences to other campuses in the Salt Lake Valley very favorably. This is a testament to the work being done in the area of Community Partnerships but raises a red flag with regard to capacity in the future. The Coordinator mentioned that he had approval to hire a part-time student assistant which should allow the transfer of many on-going social media and administrative tasks. This will free up some of the Coordinators time but realistically the Thayne Center needs to begin thinking about managing expectations around the number of partners that they can work with and at what level now so that as the word continues to spread the Coordinator can manage the program effectively.

As the community's college, SLCC, has an important role to play in supporting the economic and community development of the region. This is among the reasons the College is seeking Carnegie Classification. Although the Thayne Center has an critical role to play in the classification process the Community Partnerships Council and the Director of Community Relations and Associate Provost for Education & Community Partnerships are central to marshaling substantive and on-going support from Academic Affairs and leveraging the existing Thayne Center and other campus-community partnerships to ensure the "community's" voice is heard and meaningfully integrated into the work of the college

**Recommendations:**

1. Identify a funding stream for development activities.

2. Include academic leadership in discussions with community partners so that faculty can be made aware of opportunities for sustained placements (i.e., internships, practicums).
3. Expand the use of social media to connect community partners to the college.

### **Community Work Study / America Reads**

This is a vital program of the Thayne Center and one of the most well managed and pedagogically-enhanced of the programs. The coordinator of this program, is dedicated to the students and ensuring they receive not only a worthwhile experience through volunteering, but that their experience is connected to learning. In addition to a strong training program for the work-study students, the coordinator has created and maintains a blog in which students participate in critical reflection and knowledge-building discussion. She provides prompts and off-campus experiences, including suggested films and events, that help round the students education. She deserves much praise and recognition for her efforts. The students and community partners suggested many times that the coordinator is the heart and soul of the program and the reason for its success. For many students, the experience has been, as “life-changing.” “I have decided to switch my major to teaching, because this experience has taught me I have a gift,” says one student. The coordinator also incentivizes students to stay in the program longer, giving them a more consistent work-study education and the community partner consistency with volunteers.

While a successful program, this is not a well-known program. This is true of many Thayne Center programs. However, this might be intentional as there are limited spots, due to financial aid issues. The number of available work-study slots has declined over the years. The perception from the Thayne center is that financial aid is lacking resources to dedicate to this program and so maintain just the minimum requirement of seven percent of total work-study for community service. The perception from Financial Aid office is that the Thayne Center has not asked for more positions nor communicated the need adequately. There is

little communication between the departments regarding this issue. Student concerns also focused on issues with Financial Aid and Human Resources. Students feel when they call these departments to inquire on their Work-study positions, that they are treated disrespectfully or as if they are a burden.

It should be noted that the Thayne Center recruits and hires as many qualified tutors as come through the Center's doors, and that financial aid does not promote to students or orient students to the concept of work study. According to the self study report, financial aid said they do not dedicate resources to what they view as low yield.

**Recommendations:**

1. Increase better Communication between Financial Aid and Thayne Center and together create a strategic plan for coordinating efforts and working with students. It is recommended that this initial strategic planning come from not just the coordinator, but also the director. The authority and ethos of the director could begin conversations that would result in a meaningful plan. It was apparent that both programs' misperceptions of the others would be resolved with structured plan and then ongoing and planned meetings together.
2. Hire a dedicated person in Financial Aid to work with Work-study students. This may also relate to the job-locator position mentioned in the self-study, but financial aid did not feel a person dedicated to just that produced a high enough yield.
3. Recognize Lynn McCue-Hamilton on a college level. She is truly extraordinary.

**Student Leaders in Civic Engagement**

This program has a high-impact on students, but there is potential for greater learning. This program suffers from misperceptions from students and other departments due to lack of communication and marketing. Because this program is intensive (in time and effort) for the students, the camaraderie and collaboration between the students is evident. Many reported an increase in self-

confidence and in skills they need not only in leadership roles, but in adulthood. They were very grateful for the program.

The program seems focused on the implementation of a project and less on the learning provided by the experience. While students produce small reflection essays, there is little beyond such. Compared to the America Reads program, this program lacks in pedagogically focused activities that lead to the outcomes. As the most intensive program for students, the pedagogy should reflect that. Students commented that while they've gained many skills, they wish they had more discussion about other leadership issues beyond the project, such as fundraising workshops or interviewing other community leaders. While an interview with the coordinator of this program was not possible, a discussion with the interim coordinator was had. He seems to intuitively understand that the program lacks in a more pedagogically driven focus and vision, and in the short time guiding students, has incorporated more activities and discussions that will enable this learning. His background is in Community Leadership, and so brings a knowledge of leadership issues to the table.

Even though a budget of over \$2,000 exists for student projects, students were unaware of the availability of funding for supplies, often spending their own money for such projects. The other concern is in a lack of understanding or misperceptions between the Thayne Center and Student Life and Leadership (SLL). SLL seemed to not fully understand all that the Thayne Center does or its mission. The student body president was almost hostile when he discussed his disappointment in the Thayne Center lacking immediate volunteer positions for drop-in students, something that is not part of the Thayne Center as a program. They perceive it more as a service instead of a place of learning. Students also discussed how little the program is advertised by the Thayne Center or Student Life and Leadership.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Create a strategic plan for SLICE that includes a more pedagogically-driven program and develop curriculum to support that vision.

2. Ensure coordinator of this program is trained in teaching practices that can carry out the more pedagogically-driven vision of the program.
3. Increase better Communication between Student Life and Leadership and Thayne Center and together create a strategic plan for coordinating efforts and working with students. It is recommended that this initial strategic planning come from the director as her role is to help fulfill the mission of Thayne, as well as to educate others about that mission. Both programs would benefit from regularly scheduled meetings with each other.
4. Make students better aware of available funds for SLICE-related projects.
5. Market the program better to students.

### **General Commendations and Recommendations**

The Thayne Center should be commended on its efforts to fulfill its mission and in turn to help fulfill the college's mission. Historically, the Thayne Center has been responsible for helping faculty members provide high-quality community-based learning experiences for SLCC students. The college should also be commended for its decision to hire a dedicated community partner coordinator. Finally, the center's director was lauded in almost every interview, and it is evident that Gail Jessen is without a doubt an extraordinarily capable director.

The Thayne Center is a successful arm in the college that more than achieves its mission. While its success is undeniable, there is little room to grow, let alone make people more aware of the Thayne Center, due to capacity issues. There is a perception that the Thayne Center is a Service Center (perhaps due to how one might understand the word service in the title), but it should be known as a learning center, one that is based on pedagogically-sound teaching and learning practices. This perception shift is one in which the Director could make, as her background is in adult education and community leadership, however, she lacks the time and resources due to the workload of the Thayne Center.

The Thayne Center's current mission statement also restricts the natural growth of the center. Centers like the Thayne Center around the country are engaged in using the academic resources of the college to help communities solve social and environmental problems such as teen / unplanned pregnancy, LGBT and gender issues, a lack of overall civic responsibility, and environmental sustainability among others.

### **Overall Recommendations**

- 1. Revise the mission of the Thayne Center.**
- 2. Hire an Assistant Director.** The role of the Director should be in directing the mission and vision of the Thayne Center. Instead, she is mired in the everyday work of the Thayne Center and, as a result, has not been able to collaborate amongst other departments or to empower others to incorporate community-based learning into their practice. There is a misperception or, at the very least, a limited perception about what the Thayne Center is. Instead of it being thought of as a Learning Center, very few people interviewed could adequately name what the Thayne Center did or what its role was at the college. With an assistant director there to guide everyday practices and coordinator communication, the director would be free to create collaborations and strategically position community-based learning as a high-impact practice throughout the college...and at a crucial time when the college is seeking the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement.
- 3. Create more Visibility in the Community and within the College.** The limited understanding of the Thayne Center is also one of physicality. It is not located within a student-centered space at the Student Center, one in which students can walk by and become curious. Students must already be aware of the center and find it as a destination. Likewise, a Thayne Center space in the community would not only increase visibility, but better connect Community Partners to the college, as they would have an easy access space in which to collaborate and plan.

- 4. Revitalize academic service learning and better incorporate community-based learning as a high-impact learning practice throughout the college.** This is an activity of education, involvement and collaboration to be done by the director. It is beyond just service-learning, but helping others to think of multiple ways in which community-based learning can be a useful practice. This also requires the director to be more involved in communication and collaboration with the academic side of the college, and beyond just faculty. Involvement with faculty leadership will help create a culture of community engagement, which could eventually lead to a more hybridization of ownership as the self-study mentioned.