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National Service Fellows Presentations 06/10/1998

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June 11, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR BOB SHIREMAN

FROM: NICOLE DAVISON

RE: National Service Fellows Presentations on "Connecting Students with Service" and "Implementing the America Reads Challenge: Rhode Island READS"

Below I have outlined the important information provided in the two National Service Fellows meetings I attended yesterday. Attached are the handouts from both meetings as well as the research studies produced by the two Fellows. Please let me know if you need any further information.

Connecting Students with Service

National Service Fellow Howard Wolf presented an overview of the most effective ways to link and integrate college service opportunities and national and community service. Wolf distributed a research guide entitled "Connecting College Students With Service," that gives a more detailed examination of topics addressed in the presentation. The guide is designed to allow readers to examine and think about ways in which current service opportunities can be strengthened and diversified. The information for the guide was gathered from the member institutions of Ohio Campus Compact

Wolf discussed the following topics:

- **Models of national service and college students.** In the first portion of the presentation, Wolf discussed the programs AmeriCorps*USA, Education Awards, AmeriCorps*VISTA summer associates, non-college AmeriCorps members working college campuses, and Learn and Serve Grants. He provided general information on these programs, all of which can be found in the handout.
- **General findings and recommendations for colleges.** Wolf stated that college and university presidents and other administrators need to take an active role in supporting service activities. He stressed the importance of having one streamlined service office with a broad focus and a central location. Service offices can bring different constituencies together and can simplify the process of becoming involved in a service program.
- **Policy recommendations for national service.** The crux of Wolf's presentation focused on ways to improve and enlarge national service programs and their connections to college students. Placing AmeriCorps*VISTA or AmeriCorps members on college campuses to develop service activities has been successful. Wolf also stressed the importance of flexibility. He said that part-time positions were often more attractive to college students than full-time or inflexible positions. Wolf examined the integration of work-study programs with AmeriCorps programs. He said that while they were highly effective when implemented, combining the two was not easy. They are often in direct conflict over

minimum hourly wages vs. living allowances and have different match requirements. Wolf suggested that CNS work toward clarification and policy for the relationship between work-study and national service. In addition, he suggested that allowing students to participate in and receive Education Awards for two full-time equivalent terms would help incorporate national service into work-study.

- **Other issues impacting college students & national service.** Wolf ended his presentation with an examination of the difficulties associated with the amount of time students devote to service and the manner in which they view their service. He identified problems with multiple year projects such as interfering with studying abroad and internships. Students are also hesitant to make long-term commitments. Another set of difficulties addressed by Wolf is the role service plays in students lives. Many students view their own schooling as a priority and view AmeriCorps as a job, not just an activity.

Implementing the America Reads Challenge: Rhode Island READS

National Service Fellow David Morton described the implementation of the America Reads program in the state of Rhode Island, and shared general information on the project as well as implementation strategies and products developed in the process. Morton also distributed a guide on the Rhode Island READS program. It includes a tremendous amount of information on the process of starting and establishing an America Read program. Morton outlines everything from the mission statement and project goals to strategic planning, volunteer incentives, and training programs.

Morton stated that the conceptual basis of the Rhode Island READS project is the creation of a project which services and integrates the efforts of literacy programs and reading programs with schools and programs during the day, after school, and on weekends. It seeks to provide safe sites for program activities, parent involvement projects, and family literacy initiatives.

The presentation began with Morton's analysis of the importance of reading and literacy in the 21st century. He went on to stress the importance of a comprehensive project. Morton noted the effectiveness of utilizing all available resources in the Rhode Island READS program. The actual program was then described in detail. Rhode Island READS had a Steering Committee that focused on strategic planning, thirteen pilot programs and a communication network.

The majority of Morton's presentation was devoted to the steps taken in establishing Rhode Island READS. Morton discussed:

- the importance of having credible people associated with the project;
- the strategic placement of AmeriCorps*VISTA members;
- the involvement of the Rhode Island Commission for National and Community Service;
- the procurement of financial resources; and
- the establishment of a training consortium and volunteer manual for practitioners.

Morton stressed, in particular, the importance of having a cadre of excellent training programs that incorporate basic tutoring, mentoring, and cross age tutoring.

Morton made numerous suggestions on all aspects of an America Reads program:

- He stressed the importance of using unobtrusive measures in evaluating the effectiveness of the program;
- He discussed the effectiveness of using a variety of volunteer groups and organizations, such as Senior Corps, State Corporation Offices, and State Commissions;
- He listed issues to contemplate in the future, such as English as a second language, assumptions about diversity and language, and juvenile justice reform; and
- He stressed the importance of being open to alternative ways of tutoring and learning.

Attached

The Inaugural Group of National Service Fellows Present Innovations in Service
Connecting College Students with Service
A Rhode Island READS Experience
Rhode Island Reads Presentation Handouts