

## **The Engaged Citizen Experience 2007-08**

During the 2007-2008 academic-year, Drake is implementing a revision of the *Engaged Citizen* Area of Inquiry for the Drake Curriculum general education program.

Analysis of assessment data related to student learning about responsible global citizenship made it clear that we were not realizing the learning outcomes associated with the Engaged Citizen Area of Inquiry in the Drake Curriculum. As discussed earlier, the Engaged Citizen was the focus of one of the Summer 2005 Drake Curriculum Study Groups. The work of this group led to a major revision in the Drake Curriculum, and development of a full *Engaged Citizen Experience* designed to create a community-wide discussion of key public issues that have local, national, and global ramifications. As revised, rather than previous survey courses, the *Engaged Citizen* requires more advanced level courses that model engagement either in the classroom and/or in the community. In addition new student learning outcomes have been identified. This revision and the assessment of the Engaged Citizen Outcomes have been made our first project for the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning.

In addition, co-curricular programming is developed to enhance the spring Engaged Citizen courses. The theme for the first *Experience* in Spring 2008 is “Voices of Democracy: Dissent and Dialogue.” Faculty and staff are collaborating to create a university-wide learning environment. The Iowa Caucus Project and the multi-layered Student Life approach to co-curricular programming illustrate programming for the *Engaged Citizen*.

### **The Iowa Caucus Project**

By virtue of its location in Des Moines, Drake University is positioned to provide a unique learning experience related to Iowa's first in the nation presidential caucuses. The Iowa Caucus project is a new initiative to coordinate caucus-related activities on campus and develop collaborative projects with Des Moines community partners.

The *Iowa Caucus Project* is:

- Coordinating candidate visits to campus, providing students an opportunity to meet with presidential candidates.
- Developing a public database of job, internship, and volunteer opportunities related to the caucuses - opportunities to work with media organizations, campaigns, parties, or interest groups. This resource will be particularly useful for those students seeking hands-on internship or job experience to supplement their academic experiences and can help advance experiential learning options.
- Working with IowaPolitics.com to sponsor a monthly lunch series with candidates, elected officials, and campaign operatives held on Drake's campus and open to students, faculty, and staff.

The Iowa Caucus Project is, however, broader than the 2008 presidential election. By developing collaborative relationships with campus and community partners during this caucus season, the project will provide a foundation for students to build the knowledge, experience, and skills necessary to be effective and engaged citizens. The project will mesh with a new course entitled “The Presidential Nominating Process: First in the Nation.” Each student in the course will be responsible for contributing to the FirstInTheNation.com website, where they will collaborate with students participating in similar classes in Nevada, New Hampshire, and South Carolina to provide information on the political process to universities. Students who participated in caucus opportunities with the campaigns and media in Fall 2007 will create a session reflecting on their experiences and the vitality of democratic debate in Spring 2008 to help shape the first Drake Curriculum Engaged Citizenship Experience.

### Co-curricular Activities

**Student and Residential life** will collaborate with student organizations to develop learning programs related to the *Engaged Citizen* theme. The collaboration will result in a multi-layered approach that includes:

- Residence Life
  - Bulletin Boards centered on the ECE theme in residence halls
  - Resident Assistant (RA) teams plan educational program for each hall
  - Residence Hall Cinema (24-hour movie channel) features a series of politically themed movies with optional discussion groups.
  
- Student Activities & Leadership
  - Elections Commission runs student government elections, promote a “get out the vote” campaign among students
  - Annual Spring Leadership Conference features the Engaged Citizen Experience theme, supported through keynote and breakout sessions
  - Target communication to student groups whose current programming fits the outcomes of the Engaged Citizen Experience for inclusion in publicity materials.

Students will find that the community is collaborating on achieving key learning outcomes – that the development of the skills and knowledge to achieve responsible and engaged global citizenship is not just the subject of one three credit class.