

Siena College

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2019-2020
Annual Report



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Director	1
ACE Initiatives	2
Bonner Service Leaders	3
NExT Services	5
AmeriCorps VISTA	7
Faculty Engagement	9
Thank You To Our Supporters	10
ACE Awards, ACE Admin, and Social Media	11



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I hope this note finds you and your family healthy and managing the new reality that COVID-19 has thrust on us all. Like many of you, I have been thinking a lot about how to be a better ally to our black students and VISTA Fellows, campus colleagues, and the wider BIPOC community. The murder of George Floyd in May re-ignited the fight for racial justice in our country and all over the world. These past months have shown me how innovative, resilient, and dedicated our members, colleagues, and community partners are and how important it is to fight for what we believe and stand in solidarity with our community.

This annual report is a testament to and a celebration of the amazing work that our students, VISTA fellows, faculty, staff, and community partners have engaged in this year—despite the numerous challenges faced. I want to emphasize how proud I am of the hard work and strength in the face of adversity that the ACE community exhibited during such a difficult time.

In Summer 2019 we launched the school year with our Summer Gear Up theme *MissionPossible*—with hindsight, I see how appropriate a choice this was. Our new reality often feels like we have been cast in a surreal version of the show. Everyday we discover new ways to complete our work remotely and pull on inner resources we didn't know we had—all the while supporting our friends, family, colleagues, and strangers with love, empathy, and hope.

Last August, I suggested that if we believe nothing is impossible, we can work together as a community and get much more done than we ever expected. As we face a global pandemic, its economic repercussions, and the call to stand for racial justice—we must continue to work with our community to address the impact of these challenging days.

If we can work together—I believe still that nothing is impossible. As you read through this annual report, I think you will too. Thank you.

Allison J. Schultz

Director, Center for Academic Community Engagement

LET'S GET TO WORK

The ACE Community is outraged by the murders of innocent black men and women that have been occurring in our country—most recently Rayshard Brooks, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. We stand in solidarity with our black students and postgraduates, campus colleagues, partners, and community members—but more than standing in support we are making a pledge to act.

Over the next academic year and beyond, we will dive deeper in our staff and member training—focusing on fighting the pervasive and systemic racism that exists in our community and beyond. We will dedicate resources and time to this mission. We will listen to the needs of the communities most impacted by these injustices. Periodically, we will share updates on our progress, ask how we can do better, and implore our ACE network to join us in this fight. We want our community to know that we are dedicated to action—beyond this moment in time—against racism, white supremacy, and hatred.

CERTIFICATE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ACE's Certificate in Community Development offers any interested Siena student an academic pathway to explore community building. It is flexible so that students can build their credentials in a way that best aligns with their academic and professional aspirations.

During the 2019-20 Academic Year, 53 students were enrolled in the certificate and 16 graduated with the credential—which included the completion of a community engaged capstone project. Student research this year included work exploring healthcare disparities, methods to engage a younger demographic as a new donor base, creating social change through theatre, building a voice for universal suffrage, and wealth building and community ownership in Albany's South End.



2020 MLK DAY OF SERVICE

Annually, ACE hosts the **Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Reflection and Service**. On January 25th, over 85 students, VISTAs, and staff gathered on campus to learn how to be an ally in the effort to achieve equality for marginalized people by volunteering with local nonprofits. When students returned to campus, they reflected on their service. Jack McKenna '23 noted, “We went to a food bank and worked on housekeeping. We talked about food equity and allowing others to maintain dignity and freedom of choice when getting their food, while meeting the needs of everyone.”



BONNER SERVICE LEADERS

WHAT DO BONNERS DO?

- **Build capacity** through transformative service to create sustainable change in the local community, serving 8 hours/week throughout their four years in the program.
- Develop proficiency in **community development best practices and civic engagement pedagogy** through pre-semester training, weekly seminars, and the Certificate in Community Development which culminates with a community engaged capstone.
- Cultivate a lifelong passion for **purposeful community engagement** through summer service, travel courses, and international experiences.

BONNER NAMED NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOW

We are excited to celebrate Dana Wakeman '21 who has been named a member of the 20-21 cohort of Newman Civic Fellows by Campus Compact. Not only is Dana a Bonner Service Leader, but also she is a passionate Political Science major and member of the college's Honors Program. She has worked with Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany to help community members find employment and housing, and created a diversity training and transgender policy to ensure clients are treated with dignity regardless of their identities. More recently, Dana has served as a leader in the Bonner Program, recruiting the Class of 2024 as well as developing trainings and new initiatives for the program.



“ I feel incredibly grateful to have been nominated for the Newman Fellowship and for the support of ACE over these last three years. I look forward to learning more about creating social change as well as interacting with students from colleges across the country during this coming year. ”

Dana Wakeman '21, *Bonner Service Leader*

BY THE NUMBERS

- ◆ 16 Partners
- ◆ 50 Students
- ◆ 61 Trainings
- ◆ 19,670 Hours Served
- ◆ 68% Work Study Eligible

SOPHOMORES PUBLISHED

After visiting West Virginia for the Bonner First Year Trip and completing Dr. Ruth Kassel's course *Higher Education Partnerships for Community Development*, three Bonners' essays based on their experience in the field and classroom have been published in the following journals:

International Journal for Service-Learning, Leadership, and Social Change

The Story of Paul, Michael Averill '22

My Story of West Virginia, Erin Spence '22

Undergraduate Journal of Service Learning & Community-Based Research

You Never Really Go Home: Returning from an International Service Trip, Samantha Gisleson '22



“ Having my article published was an incredible feeling of validation. I have always taken pride in my ability to write and I see myself publishing more research papers in the future...Bonner has given me more opportunities in my first two years than I could have ever imagined. 'The Story of Paul' is a tribute to mi hermano Paul and all those who have immigrated as a form of resistance towards the policies in place that have tried to restrain them. ”

Michael Averill '22, *Bonner Service Leader*

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020!

This year has been full of unexpected changes and has challenged us all to adapt and adjust to unprecedented situations. The Siena College Bonner Service Leaders have met these challenges with courage and commitment to continue to give their best to everything they do—including moving learning, service, and Bonner trainings online amidst a global pandemic. We especially missed the opportunity to gather together to celebrate the successes and achievements of the Class of 2020—a group of passionate Changemakers, dedicated to their Capital Region, Bonner, and Siena communities. We extend a heartfelt congratulations to the Siena College Bonner Class of 2020 and wish them all the best!

JAMIE DEL ROSARIO

KYLIE GILBRIDE

GRACE HARRIS

IVORY MOORE

ANDRAYA PEREZ

HAYLEY PIJANOWSKI

AEDAN RALEIGH

LILIANA SANCHEZ ADAMES

KAYLA SWEET





NExT SERVICES

Relationship. Leadership. Action.

NExT services cultivates interdisciplinary student-led teams to engage in extensive capacity building research and consulting with local community organizations. We accomplish this mission through a threefold approach of faculty-led classes, student-led internships, and collaborative summer research.

- NExT supports multiple **project-based community classes** throughout the academic year. We connect courses with community partners, provide training and support for course design, and offer project support and assessment.
- **The NExT Internship** offers the opportunity for student consulting teams to work on projects with community partners throughout the semester and for students to grow in their leadership skills.
- **The Siena Project Incubator (SPIn)** brings together faculty, partners, and students for 6-8 weeks of interdisciplinary research over the summer.



“ As a new faculty member at Siena (and someone who is completely new to the Albany area), I could not have planned my community-engaged course without the immense help of ACE. With the support of ACE, the students in my Spring 2020 course, 'Representing HIV/AIDS in Literature and Pop Culture,' visited the Albany Damien Center's archives. ACE helped connect me to the Damien Center, arranged our transportation for the interview visits, and mentored me as I developed the project. I look forward to a long-term partnership! ”

Shannon Draucker, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English



NExT BY THE NUMBERS

- ➔ 15 Collaborative Team Projects
- ➔ 1 National Presentation
- ➔ 14 Capstones & Community Engaged Courses
- ➔ \$95,500 Estimated Value of Services
- ➔ \$30,000 in Grants Awarded to Support Specific NExT Initiatives

STUDENTS PRESENT AT POSTERS ON THE HILL

"Wealth Building and Community Ownership in the South End," the project developed by Matthew McAuliffe '20, Ivory Moore '20, and Aedan Raleigh '20 was one of only 60 projects in the country selected for Posters on the Hill (POH) 2020. POH is an undergraduate conference hosted each spring on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. The conference, sponsored by the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR), welcomes members of Congress and their staff to learn about the importance of undergraduate research by talking directly with students. This year's event was held virtually via Twitter with the hashtag #POH2020.

The students worked in collaboration with the local nonprofit AVillage to create a structure for the South End Night Market, a business incubator where local vendors offer "culturally relevant goods and services in the areas of food/produce, wellness, beauty, and apparel." The incubator gives vendors entrepreneurial experience with a long-term goal of a stronger business community that will anchor wealth in the South End. The model was chosen after the students gathered data from pop-up focus groups and ethnographic observations at South End community meetings, and is built on cooperative principles that can be used for economic development beyond food justice.



“ Working with the South End community has been an incredibly fulfilling experience. The research my peers and I conducted has formed the foundation of a sustainable business incubator. I will keep the skills I learned from this experience and stay engaged in the South End after I graduate. ”

Matthew McAuliffe '20, NExT Fellow



AMERICORPS VISTA

Volunteers in Service to America

WHAT VISTAS DO

- Generate funds that **build the capacity** of local nonprofits
- **Connect** volunteers with opportunities to support the work of our partners
- Promote **awareness** of programs and events that benefit community residents
- **Create, develop, and evaluate** programs and projects that alleviate poverty

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

“ Lydia is a force for positive change. She has done an amazing job with us and for us. Her work as assessment and outreach coordinator had positively impacted hundreds if not thousands of people in the Capital District. She is deeply focused on our mission and committed to our cause. Lydia has worked diligently to fill the gaps in our region, to ensure that those less fortunate who do not have the resources they need to not only survive but thrive. Her dedication has been unwavering. She has served with us at a very challenging time and I can honestly say that she has been steadfast both as a member of our team and as a leader. She has demonstrated tremendous strength and positivity. She truly is a superstar. ”

Angie Pender-Fox
Program Director, The Food Pantries for the Capital District



“ My year working as a VISTA at the Food Pantries for the Capital District has given me the opportunity to learn professional skills and learn about a new community. I'm grateful for everything that my site and the Siena Center for Academic Community Engagement has taught me. ”

Lydia Calabro, *AmeriCorps VISTA*
The Food Pantries for the Capital District



AmeriCorps VISTA is a federal program funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows make a year-long, full-time commitment to serve in a Capital Region nonprofit organization or public agency. They focus their efforts to build the capacity of organizations that fight poverty in our community.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

“ Every day as a VISTA was a learning opportunity for me. Serving at Schenectady County Probation Department Center for Juvenile Justice allowed me to connect my passion to my career choice. I continue to serve underrepresented youth and families in poverty after VISTA as a Family Support Caseworker at Northern Rivers Family Services where I provide support and resources/referrals to those in need. A piece of advice for current/future VISTAs is DO network around in your organization and outside of your organization. Value those professional connections you’ve established with people. Volunteer for events outside of your organization and get to understand how each position is performed day-to-day. Find your passion, challenge yourself, and create opportunities. ”

Suthasinee Saengchuto (Gift)
2018–2019 Siena AmeriCorps VISTA



IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ 23 VISTAs
- ✓ 19 Community Partners
- ✓ More than 35,000 Hours Served
- ✓ \$283,710 Raised for Local Nonprofits
- ✓ 6,915 Youth Supported
- ✓ 727 Volunteers Recruited
- ✓ 92 Siena Students Engaged

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

This year marked the launch of ACE's Community Engaged Faculty Academy (CEFA). We created a model for faculty community engagement that starts with concrete teaching, research, and mentoring support; develops into leadership and professional identity development; and finally moves toward advocacy and strategic change work. CEFA is based on a faculty learning community model bringing together faculty and administrators from diverse areas of the college to engage in long term learning and action in a specific area. This initiative is generously funded by the Bonner Foundation and AAC&U's Bringing Theory to Practice.

Community Engaged Faculty Academy



“ The Siena College Faculty Learning Community deepened my ties to my campus community while building a space to further facilitate my research initiatives. Through the accountability and support of Faculty Learning Community members bouncing constructive feedback and ideas back and forth, I was able to produce higher quality manuscripts for future publication. ”

Jessica Salmon, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Management

BRINGING THEORY TO PRACTICE

This year ACE, along with **eight other regional campuses**, was awarded a Bringing Theory to Practice Multi-Institutional grant to support ongoing regional collaborations. With the funding, we created a regional fellowship called CREST (Capital Region Engaged Scholar Teachers). **Thirteen Fellows** met at least once a month in person for community dinners to learn about campus-community partnerships such as those with the Refugee Welcome Center, The Central Ave. Business Improvement District, and the Sanctuary for Independent Media. Fellows also came together for workshops both online and in person and collectively taught **15 community engaged courses**.



GRANTS AND GIFTS

The Center for Academic Community Engagement is grateful for the sustained support of its donors. Through their generosity, our members continue to work with the community. Funding also supports the significant training and professional development offered to our members—including a week long Summer Gear Up orientation in August and our Winter Retreat in January.

Special thanks to the following for their continued support of our programs:

Bringing Theory to Practice (AAC&U)
Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation
Corporation for National and Community Service
Jerry and Regina DeFrancisco

Seymour Fox Memorial Foundation
SEFCU
Stewart's Shop/Dake Foundation
Carl E. Touhey Foundation

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

We would like to thank each of our partners for their support, co-education of our members, and collaboration. Given the challenges our community faced as a result of COVID-19, we are particularly grateful for their flexibility and partnership. For a complete list of our partners and to learn more about them, visit our website at siena.edu/ace.



SHINE CONNECTS

SHINE - Share. Help. Innovate. Nourish. Engage. is a virtual community for nonprofit practitioners and community stakeholders. The platform is accessible to local nonprofits and community practitioners at no cost thanks to the generosity of SEFCU. SHINE members can share information, the work they have been doing, publish timely announcements, spread organizational news and events, and support each other.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, SHINE members posted about local volunteer needs and opportunities, food drives, and information on accessing federal funding.



“ Thank you SHINE and members of SHINE for your support at the weekly South End Children's Café food drives. We appreciate your support and kindness, sharing your food and well wishes and spreading the word about the Café and our needs. We are entering into our tenth week of serving food and have served close to 19,000 meals along with sharing groceries during COVID-19. We could not do this without you. ”

Tracie Killar, *South End Children's Cafe*



OUR TEAM

Allison J. Schultz, Director
Dr. Jerry DeFrancisco '68, Executive in Residence
Dr. Vera Eccarius-Kelly, Scholar in Residence
Dr. Ruth Kassel, Associate Director
William Figueroa, Assistant Director
Sarah Toledano, Assistant Director
Katie Zyniecki '14, Assistant Director
Cheryl Voter, Coordinator
Cassidy Layman, VISTA Leader
Shauna Plath, VISTA Leader
Katherine Burt '17, VISTA Fellow
Rocky O'Connor, VISTA Fellow

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S ACE AWARD RECIPIENTS!

ACE 2020 Faculty of the Year | Dr. Megan Kelly

ACE 2020 Community Partner of the Year | The Food Pantries for the Capital District

2020 Academic Achievement Award | Jamie del Rosario '20

2020 Engaged Scholar Award | Kyle Creech '20

2020 Life of Service Award | Hayley Pijanowski '20

2020 Nicholas Ramundo Class of 2014 Award | Ivory Moore '20

CONNECT WITH US

On Our Website | www.siena.edu/ace

Via Social Media | [@sienacollegeace](https://twitter.com/sienacollegeace)

On SHINE | SHINE.connectedcommunity.org