

Belle, S. Wheelan Ph.D.
President
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on College
1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033



October 10, 2011

Dear Dr. Wheelan:

On behalf of the Martin Methodist College Community, I would like to offer a word alongside Mani Hull in regards to the institutionalizing of civic engagement and Service-Learning.

In 2006, the College was amidst the synergy of growth and intentionally chose to grow in the areas of community service and service-learning led by Martin Serves. Shortly thereafter, MMC was seeking reaccreditation through SACS and developed the Quality Enhancement Plan to initialize projects that would further enhance academics and campus life. Our President then introduced us to Campus Compact and the coming Tennessee Campus Compact to assist with the development of Service-Learning. Thanks to CNCS and TNCC, Martin Methodist College received an AmeriCorps VISTA to support the growth Service-Learning initiatives. Since the official launch of Service-Learning at MMC in the Fall of 2009, some of the following has occurred:

- MMC has incorporated a civic engagement component in each First Year Experience course to introduce the importance of service, encourage a sense of community for new students, and assist with retention rates,
- MMC has hosted a faculty development session each semester to encourage the incorporation of Service-Learning initiatives in discipline-based courses,
- MMC students have experienced meeting with state legislators for TNCC Day on the Hill to support Service-Learning in education,
- MMC has engaged over half of the student body in either Service-Learning or civic engagement opportunities
- Roughly 25 out of 65 full time faculty members have incorporated Service-Learning pedagogy in one or more courses
- MMC has grown from offering less than 5,000 hours of service per year to more than 20,000 hours of service per year at the local, state, and national levels.
- Through civic engagement and Service-Learning initiatives, Martin Methodist has been able to quadruple what we are giving to others each year, as well as educate our personnel and students to make serving others a life-long commitment.

Service-Learning at Martin Methodist College continues to be a work in progress, and even though we do not have statistical results to share as of yet, we believe that Service-Learning has been a very positive learning experience for our students. It has not only enhanced students' ability to understand and retain course content, Service-Learning has encouraged student engagement in service opportunities through the Martin Serves program. Faculty members have had opportunities to network with colleagues as well as community leaders, and partner organizations have received additional human resources needed to achieve their organizational goals. We look forward to the growth of this program and hope that you will further consider the development of Service-Learning in all levels of education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Trimmer".

Rev. Dr. Ed Trimmer
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