

Cleveland State

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

October 6, 2011

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

Dr. Wheelan,

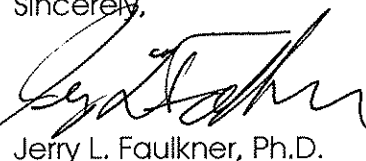
I'm sorry that I could not be there today to add my voice to that of Dr. Hull in promoting service-learning. Here at Cleveland State Community College we are firmly convinced of the value of this endeavor.

Our 2004 QEP was on increasing student engagement. At the time of the initial submission we were unaware of the advantages of service-learning. When we did become aware of the concept we moved quickly to establish it on our campus. We valued it so highly that after our 5 year interim report, we elected to continue the emphasis on student engagement with service-learning as a major focus. We recently were notified that we had received a \$2 million, Title III grant and again the development of our service learning program is a major goal.

Service-learning allows engages students in a way that no class-room experience, on-line web site, nor lab simulation can match. We have service-learning embedded within course offerings and also now offer stand-alone service learning courses. Our students almost unanimously return from the experience extolling the learning value. As our program matures, we are looking for ways to assess the learning value. Because our efforts are still relatively new, we don't yet have the statistics, but we are convinced service-learning will improve our retention rates and ultimately our completion rates.

I know that several SACS members have elected service-learning as the goal of their QEP. I suspect you will see more in the future.

Sincerely,



Jerry L. Faulkner, Ph.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs