



# Volunteer Tennessee



October 12, 2011

Belle Whelan, Ph.D.  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Colleges  
1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, Georgia 30033

Dear Dr. Whelan:

Since its formation in 2008, Tennessee Campus Compact has been the leading force to embed civic engagement in institutions of higher education in Tennessee. The Compact sees civic engagement as one of the core obligations of higher education – an obligation to prepare students to participate fully in our society. The Compact also understands the importance of connecting with the K-12 education system and partnering with P-16 Councils to ensure that the pipeline that leads from elementary to post-secondary education becomes more robust and uninterrupted. This broad-based approach to its mission makes Tennessee Campus Compact a valuable collaborator.

Tennessee Campus Compact steadfastly partners with Volunteer Tennessee as we search for ways to expand and institutionalize service-learning throughout Tennessee in K-16 academic and community-based settings. Both organizations see service-learning as a key tool to achieving common goals such as increased civic engagement, increased retention and graduation rates and decreased risky behaviors among young people. One of the most pressing challenges to the service-learning field is institutionalizing service-learning at all levels of education. Tennessee Campus Compact already collaborates with Volunteer Tennessee on service-learning trainings, conferences and other methods to increase the reach of service-learning; however, something more is needed.

Because service-learning is such a useful tool, Tennessee Campus Compact and Volunteer Tennessee believe that we need to incentivize the practice of service-learning by faculty. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is uniquely positioned to provide leadership in institutionalizing service-learning by linking service-learning outcomes to faculty incentives. I encourage you to take on this leadership potential and be a driver of positive change for the higher education community and the community at-large.

Yours in service,

Jim Snell  
Executive Director

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