

SERVICE-LEARNING AND FACULTY TRAINING

Robert Franco, Kapi'olani Community College

What role have you played in supporting, advocating, or developing service-learning or civic engagement programs?

My work is to institutionalize service-learning at Kapi'olani Community College, University of Hawaii, to formatively evaluate this institutionalization, and develop a set of ongoing improvements. Major developments in recent years include six service-learning pathways wherein students can serve across multiple semesters to degree completion, transfer, and careers. Each of these pathways is directed by a paid student leader. Overall coordination is led by a full-time, college-funded outreach coordinator. Our most recent innovation is aligning service-learning with STEM undergraduate research in the life sciences. This campus-based work serves as the basis of my national training in 36 states over 15 years.

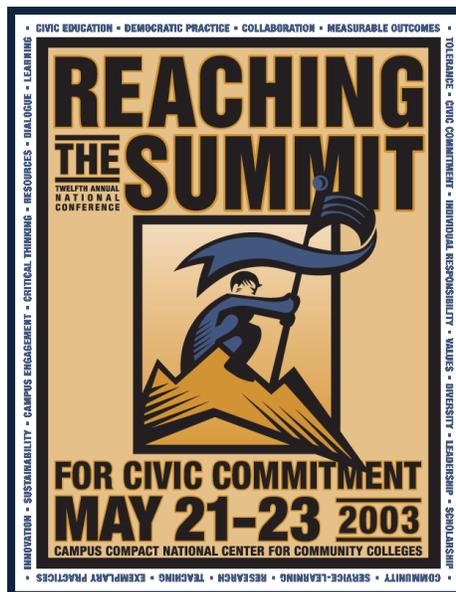
What is it about service-learning or civic engagement that encourages you the most?

I am most inspired by the commitment, intellect, and work that hundreds of our students, younger and older, direct at making Honolulu a better place to live. At Kapi'olani Community College we'll

celebrate our 10,000th service-learner in 2011!

What have you found to be the major challenges that advocates for service-learning or civic engagement have faced?

The major challenge is the non-alignment of service-learning with institutional reward structures for both faculty and staff.



Moving forward, what do you see in the future for service-learning or civic engagement?

I think service-learning's future is bright as campuses sharpen their focus on motivating students to complete degrees. For students to value a degree, they need to understand why learning matters. Communities are a rich, infinite resource for both meaning and learning, and

service-learning is the best way to tap this resource and, reciprocally, to sustainably develop the communities in which we serve.

Dr. Franco has written numerous articles and has been a prolific trainer, pushing community colleges across the nation towards embracing the pedagogy of service-learning. This passion is captured in an article he wrote for the *Journal of Public Affairs* entitled *The Civic Role of Community Colleges: Preparing Students For The Work Of Democracy*(2002). In it he writes...

Today, America's 1,166 community colleges now serve increasingly diverse populations. Community college leaders need to recommit to three essential missions: developing strong transfer programs that provide students with equal educational opportunities; preparing students for twenty-first century careers; and preparing students for the work of democracy in the world's dominant democracy. Service-learning is the leading pedagogy that community colleges can employ to achieve these missions and truly become civically engaged campuses in the communities they serve.



ABOUT ROBERT FRANCO

Dr. Robert Franco is a recognized expert on contemporary Samoan, Polynesian, and Pacific Islander demographic, ecological, health, and cultural issues. He has published scholarly research on contemporary Samoan political and cultural change, traditional Hawaiian water management systems, and socio-cultural factors affecting pelagic fisheries in Polynesia and Micronesia. His current national research and training focuses on service-learning, reducing the minority academic achievement gap, and strengthening the liberal arts, workforce development and civic missions of community colleges.

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In 2008, Franco was selected as NSF-SENCEER Leadership Fellow, and advisor to SENCEER Center for Innovation (SCI) Western Region. He also is Kapi'olani Community College's EPSCoR Coordinator and LSAMP Co-Principal Investigator, and a Senior Faculty Fellow for Community Colleges at Campus Compact.

Franco currently serves as the college's accreditation liaison to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACJC/WASC), American Council on Education, Community College Survey of Student Engagement, Carnegie Foundation, and Campus Compact. He conducts training, technical assistance, and research dissemination at community colleges, universities, and other conference audiences in five states per year (35 states total) with research-based training designed to improve retention, degree completion, and transfer rates through service-learning, community-based research, and authentic partnerships.

An advocate of international education, Franco serves as a board member of the American Council on Education, International Collaborative, and was selected by the East-West Center to present at the International Forum on Education for the Year 2020.