Our Mission: We work to create meaningful, sustainable, pedagogically rich opportunities for students to contribute to the community through the skills gained in their academic disciplines.
A Short History of CUPS

John Dewey was an American philosopher and educator widely regarded as the “father of progressive education.” Born and raised in Burlington, Vermont, Dewey attended the University of Vermont. Dewey’s work lead to new ways of thinking about education as actively connecting knowledge to experience through engagement in and reflection on the world outside the classroom. UVM continues to honor John Dewey with its civic engagement program, the Dewey House for Civic Engagement.

In line with Dewey’s philosophy, UVM was an early advocate of service-learning and founded the Center for Service-Learning in 1972. After a decline in interest, the service-learning program was reinvigorated when UVM received a federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Outreach Partnership grant in 1998. This grant led to the creation of the Community-University Partnerships and Service-Learning (CUPS) program, which is specifically charged with supporting academic service-learning at UVM.

Today CUPS has trained over 100 faculty in the pedagogy of service-learning, provides high-impact learning opportunities for students in every School and College, and serves as a voice for academic community engagement across the campus.

Dendrochronology students measure white oak along the LaPlatte River, Shelburne. Photo credit: David Siger, student.

Cross-Campus Collaborations

This year, CUPS continued to work with departments and units at UVM committed to public service and engagement of all kinds. CUPS worked with the College of Arts & Sciences as it continued with initiatives developed in its Strategic Action Plan; CUPS participated in the Student Engagement & Success Subcommittee of the Strategic Planning Process in 2013-2014. In particular, CUPS assisted in the development of community partnerships with three internship courses being piloted in CAS, and spoke with CAS directors and program chairs about service-learning faculty development opportunities. CUPS Director Susan Munkres serves on the Advisory Board of the Humanities Center, where she is helping to develop opportunities for engaged arts & humanities activities at UVM. She also spent the year as a Sustainability Faculty Fellow, sponsored by the Office of the Provost, the Office of Sustainability and the Center for Teaching & Learning. Her project as a fellow—to explore the intersections of service-learning and sustainability learning outcomes—led to a successful application to the Davis Foundation for additional faculty development funding (see below).

In addition to work with academic units, CUPS collaborates with other units involved in engagement and service. All CUPS staff participate in the UVM Service Network which also includes the Offices of Local Government & Community Relations, Leadership & Civic Engagement, and Student & Community Relations, as well as the Dewey House for Community Engagement. In 2014-2015, CUPS continued its participation in the Career + Experience Hub, bringing awareness of service-learning.

Awards & Recognitions

UVM received national and international recognition this year for its commitment to service-learning. During the fall semester, Dr. Alan Tinkler, assistant professor of Education, was named a finalist for the Ernest A. Lynton Award for Scholarship of Engaged Career Faculty by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education and the Center for Engaged Democracy. This award is presented to pre-tenure faculty who connect their teaching, research and service to community engagement.

The Greater Burlington Region received official designation as a Regional Center of Excellence on Education for Sustainable Development by the United Nations University Institute for Advanced Studies of Sustainability. The region was recognized for its collaborative and innovative sustainability education programs, such as UVM’s service-learning partnerships with local schools and NGOs. Learn more in the UVM press release: http://bit.ly/1Nwmo2d.

CUPS by the Numbers 2014-2015

- Service-Learning courses: 91
- New Service-Learning Faculty Fellows: 13
- Student seats in Service-Learning courses: 2,233
- Percent of the undergrad student body enrolled in an SL course: 22%
- Community partners of SL courses: 200
- Community partners who reported that SL projects met or exceeded expectations: 89%

UVM’s Mission: To create, evaluate, share, and apply knowledge and to prepare students to be accountable leaders who will bring to their work dedication to the global community, a grasp of complexity, effective problem-solving and communication skills, and an enduring commitment to learning and ethical conduct.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching renewed UVM’s Community Engagement Classification, which certifies that UVM has a significant and institutionalized local, national and global commitment to community engagement through reciprocal partnerships that benefit both community partners and the faculty, students and staff. UVM first won the Carnegie classification in 2006, the year it was launched, for both academic engagement and community participation, one of only 76 schools in the US to receive both designations.
and community engagement opportunities to the Hub collaborators – through cross-training – and students through workshops and events. Finally, CUPS and the UVM Service Network continue to support Vermont Campus Compact (VCC), the state-wide consortium for community-engaged campuses. This year, VCC explored merging with the Vermont Higher Education Consortium (VHEC), and CUPS staff participated in focus groups and ongoing discussion of the proposal to merge.

CUPS continues to seek ways for community engagement and public service – a key element of UVM’s mission – to deepen through data-sharing, collaboration and strategic planning.

Benchmarking Academic SL
In response to the introduction of Incentive-Based Budgeting (IBB), CUPS undertook study of academic service-learning at our peer and aspirant peer institutions. Such work had not been done in the office since 2006, and we learned much about the strengths and weaknesses of our unit. Throughout this annual report, we are now able to contextualize the data provided in light of benchmarks against our peer/aspirants.

While most campuses had some form of service center or volunteering activities among the student body, we found widely diverging levels of academic service-learning at our peer and aspirant peer institutions. Such work had not been done in the office since 2006, and we learned much about the strengths and weaknesses of our unit. Throughout this annual report, we are now able to contextualize the data provided in light of benchmarks against our peer/aspirants.

Among these peers in particular, we are notable for high numbers of service-learning courses and for reaching a high percentage of the student body. We host a unique Service-Learning Teaching Assistant program that is notable for its training of students in service-learning pedagogy. However, we lag these peers in operating budget, staffing and strategic planning capacity. Half of all peer/aspirants have a high-level administrative leader for community engagement, an endowed center or a strategic plan for engagement. UVM has none of these. Due to these gaps, we lag our peers in several areas: providing stipends for faculty development, supporting transportation for service-learning, and engaging in substantial community outreach and partnership development. We have also cut our support for faculty engaged scholarship as other institutions are moving to increase their staffing and support.

To view the entire report, see the CUPS website. (About CUPS/reports).

CUPS Support
After consulting with the CUPS Advisory Committee and other faculty development professionals at UVM, CUPS brought back its former training model for Faculty Fellows for Service-Learning. This training, begun in 1999, had featured faculty meeting over an entire semester in a cohort to learn with and from each other. From December to May this past year, thirteen faculty members – the largest cohort yet – met monthly to develop service-learning courses. They heard from experienced faculty, community partners and service-learning teaching assistants, trained by CUPS.

This experience was 100% positive. Joyce Hendley was extremely helpful in how she set up the partnership with the students [in her CDAE 120 class] and the organizations in making sure that there wasn’t an increased workload for the community partner. It was so easy to work with her and her students due to the way she set it up.

Kindle Loomis, Common Roots

CUPS staff additionally consulted individually on service-learning pedagogy and partnerships with 45 faculty members, and served over 100 faculty through workshops and events throughout the year. Presentations on service-learning reached another 70 faculty and staff. Of particular interest was a 2-day visit from Dr. Barbara Jacoby, author of Service-Learning Essentials, the main text for our Faculty Fellows program. Dr. Jacoby conducted workshops for students and for faculty, and keynoted the CUPS Awards Ceremony. Her workshop for faculty addressed a need expressed at UVM: Critical Reflection in Project-Model Service-Learning.

Continued Growth

In 2014-2015, CUPS designated a record number of courses, reaching a higher proportion of the student body than in previous years. 31 courses, taught by 57 UVM faculty members, received the SL designation, reaching 2233 students (see graph of courses over time). The breadth and reach of our courses is truly impressive, particularly given the size of our institution.

Several of these courses represented new or unique initiatives, such as the LANDS semester – a 4-course SL travel immersion program in land resources in the fall semester; and a paired-course SL project in Museum Anthropology and Museum Studies. Existing courses continued to garner attention across campus, such as Kathleen Liang’s Entrepreneurship courses and Barri Tinkler’s Education for Citizenship course, featured in Vermont Quarterly and in the UVM newsfeed, respectively. (See course profiles, page 10).

CUPS Awards

On April 16, CUPS honored faculty, students and community partners for their exceptional service-learning efforts. We were delighted to have service-learning expert Dr. Barbara Jacoby as the keynote speaker at the ceremony, held in Waterman Manor.

Associate Professors Kimberly Wallin and Ernesto Mendez were both given the Lynne Bond Outstanding Service-Learning Award for Faculty.

Professor Mendez of Plant and Soil Science teaches service-learning courses in Advanced Agroecology and Community Participatory Action Research. He has led faculty collaborations to promote engaged scholarship and developed local research projects that involve community partners in long-standing efforts to promote agricultural resilience in the face of climate change in Vermont. His colleagues cite his “gift for leveraging reflection in his partnerships to surface those ‘elegant solutions’ that deepen collective impact and cultivate both sustained and joyous engagement for all partners.”

Professor Wallin teaches in the Forestry department of the Rubenstein School. She was nominated by no less than three people, including a former student who took her first service-learning course with Kimberly as a first-year student and is now a Ph.D. candidate in RSENR. Kimberly has an ability to meet students at their starting point and carefully and rigorously scaffold experiences that develop their abilities and prepare them for community-based research and other opportunities.

“[Mendez’s] colleagues cite his ‘gift for leveraging reflection in his partnerships to surface those ‘elegant solutions’ that deepen collective impact and cultivate both sustained and joyous engagement for all partners.’”

Assistant Professor Sarah Heiss of CDAE was awarded the title of Outstanding New Service-Learning Faculty. With the depth of service-learning experience across the university, junior faculty do not always receive recognition for their important work. Professor Heiss has shown steady commitment, an ability to deeply engage students and a thorough understanding of the service-learning experience.
2014-2015 Course Profiles:
Full stories from University Communications: www.uvm.edu/partnerships/

LANDS Semester
“UVM’s new LANDS Program Field Semester is the only program of its kind in the United States. Similar to a study abroad program - but staying on campus - 15 undergraduate students signed on as the first team in the spring of 2014. Then they worked - full time, all fall - on field-based alternatives to traditional classes - serving as consultants to numerous towns and conservation organizations across Vermont....” [The purpose of LANDS is to promote better land stewardship], explains Florence Costume ’16. “A lot of the things we were doing involved going outside - and putting what we learned conceptually into practice.” Full story by Joshua E. Brown.

Museum Anthropology & Art
“Two classes taught in tandem this semester gave art and anthropology students the space to work together as curators on a fall 2015 exhibition at the Fleming. Group-based coursework and workshops taught students everything from the art of writing wall text to the fundamentals of museum installation. The interdisciplinary effort, led by Professors Jennifer Dickinson, anthropology, and Kelley Helmstutler Di Dio, art history, in partnership with Fleming staff, was this fall’s recipient of the College of Arts and Sciences’ competitive grant program, Enhancing Excellence through Interdisciplinary Experiential Engagement...” Full story by Amanda Kenyon Wale.

Community Entrepreneurship
“Kathleen Liang] walked into the first class of the semester with forty-five dollars in hand and staked each student with a single bill. They would then form teams, develop a product to make and sell with their startup capital and write a business plan. “Dollar Enterprise” students peddle their wares in front of Bailey/Howe Library, a familiar scene on campus thanks to the enduring popular ity of...[the] class...The class won the 2014 Best Practices Award at the National Small Business Institute Conference and was named one of Inc. magazine’s best entrepreneur courses in America last fall, among offerings from Stanford, MIT and Cornell.” Full story by Lee Ann Cox.

Citizenship & Education in the US
“Sophomore Eric Venezia works with Saran Chhetri to prepare the Bhutanese immigrant for his UVM citizenship test. The unlikely relationship was forged during a service learning course taught by Barri Tinkler, assistant professor of education. Every Thursday evening, students in her “Citizenship and Education in the U.S.” class meet at the O’Brien Community Center in Winooski to help adult refugees prepare for the U.S. citizenship test. The course content is designed to help students understand how the system works, says Tinkler. “Once they understood it better, I wanted them to talk to people who are actually in the system.” Full story by Jon Reidel.

Far-Reaching Impact
Courses such as those profiled at left have profound effects on student learning. Service-learning is included as one of ten “high-impact practices” (Kuh 2008) designed to support student learning. National data confirms over and over that participation in service-learning is associated with greater learning, engagement, retention and success. Data at UVM affirms these national findings with data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2015 showing that participation in service-learning was significantly associated with a number of positive perceived gains for students. Seniors reported perceived gains in the following areas: speaking clearly and effectively, working effectively with others, acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills, being an informed and active citizen and clarifying a personal code of values and ethics.

Data from UVM’s Survey of Recent Graduates also shows that service-learning participation is associated with greater satisfaction with UVM as an institution, greater sense of academic challenge, higher levels of faculty-student interaction and greater likelihood to choose UVM again.

These beneficial effects are particularly strong for under-represented students (McNair and Finley 2013). At many institutions, under-represented groups do not participate at the same rates in the high-impact practices. At UVM, ALANA students participate in service-learning at the same rates as white peers, and men and women participate at very similar rates as well.

Service-Learning Teaching Assistant Program
CUPS staff work with faculty to provide service-learning courses for students, but also work directly with students. Since 2007, CUPS has provided opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of service-learning pedagogy through working as a teaching assistant for the service-learning component of designated courses. Either for a stipend or for academic credit, students work up to 5 hours per week for faculty, while receiving training in critical reflection, best practices in community partnerships, grading student work, and project management. CUPS Program Coordinator Tom Wilson manages all aspects of the SL-TA Program, from recruiting, matching, training and supporting SL-TAs, to assisting faculty in working effectively with this support.

“Being able to help my students interact with professionals in our field was fantastic. Each student developed lots of valuable skills throughout the year, and are responsible for a very exciting exhibition that the community will benefit from greatly.”

Kat Ford, Service-Learning Teaching Assistant

CUPS SL-TAs 2014-2015
Nell Auchincloss ’15, ENVS
Allie Brilow ’15, CDAE
Chris Damiani ’15, ENVS
Jack Fitch, Nursing
Kat Ford ’16, Art History
Marissa Lehman ’17, HDF5
Lauren Lumbra ’16, Community Entrepreneurship
Jackson Massey ’15, ENVS
Caroline McCall ’15, ENVS
Andrea Meyer ’15, ENVS
Vivian Nicastro ’15, CDAE
Karla Noboa ’15, Natural Resource Ecology
Sarah Richardson ’15, Psychology/Social Work
Aleyna Rodriguez ’16, ENVS
Isaac Sacca ’16, Forestry
Sarah Shaw ’16, Global Studies
Oliveia Taylor ’15, ENVS
Corinne Sadowksi, Computer Science
Charlotte Wonnell ’15, Anthropology/Psychology

Annual Report 2014-2015: Our Students
Student Outreach & Engagement

In addition to significant outreach to recruit for the SL-TA program, CUPS staff offer workshops for service-learning students on identifying the work-related skills that they are gaining in SL courses; these Transferable Skills workshops were piloted in 5 courses this year and will be offered to all faculty for inclusion in their courses in FY16. We also work with students to identify opportunities that are natural outgrowths of service-learning projects, such as internships and independent studies with the community partner, and supported research on behalf of the community partner, such as the Simon Public Research Scholarship, offered in the summer to students and community partners. CUPS provides materials for faculty, identifying these opportunities for students in one centralized format.

CUPS Outstanding Student Award

Carley Jensen, ’15, is this year’s recipient of the CUPS Outstanding Student in Service-Learning. Jensen is a Sociology major, Community and International Development minor, and a member of the Dewey House for Civic Engagement. Kailee Brinkner-McDonald, director of the Dewey House, nominated Jensen, praising her passion, facilitation skills, empathy, and ability to cohesively pull together ideas to gain a complex understanding of society’s systemic injustices. In a reflection on her service-learning, Carley wrote: “I am especially grateful for the hands-on professional experience they have provided me. In no other class would I have had the opportunity to plan and implement my own international community development project, work one on one with members of the Burlington community struggling with housing issues, critically analyze issues facing Burlington’s Old North End, or write a grant for a local community organization. I am passionate about community engagement and service learning so this project was a natural and easy [fit].”

‘The students who come from Alan [Tinkler]’s [EDSC 215] class are experienced, confident, and supremely helpful. This semester, his tutors were my most reliable and some of the most effective.”

Nick Mc Kelvie, O’Brien Community Center
In the past two years, CUPS staff have increased our engagement with our community partners. We now work directly to each community partner at the beginning of the semester, introducing CUPS and our resources for service-learning; we also offer to assist community partners to find additional UVM connections. We also now write directly to each community partner requesting their feedback – via a revised survey instrument – at the end of each semester. The results of these new surveys are discussed in the next section.

Through these contacts, and others, we met directly with 21 community partners in 2014-2015, and referred an additional 13 to other UVM staff, such as Matt Myers, Food Systems Internship Coordinator; Margaret Burke, Community-Based Learning Coordinator in RSENR, and the Career Center. We were able to assist in the creation of one successful Simon Public Research Scholarship, through connecting a community partner with an appropriate undergraduate for a desired research project.

Community partners Dan Cahill (Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront), Jason Van Driese (Local Motion) and Laurie Dana (The United Way) spoke as panelists to the Faculty Fellows for Service-Learning. They offered their perspective on service-learning, both appreciating what service-learning and internship opportunities, lead- ing to a doubling of ANR partnerships. Finally, her vision has manifested in the creation of an experiential learning workshop spanning the entire ANR.

Outstanding Community Partner Award
Carey Hengstenberg was named this year’s Outstanding Community Partner in Service-Learning. Hengstenberg is the Planning Manager in the Administration & Innovation Division at the Agency of Natural Resources. In addition to working directly with service-learning courses and interns, Hengstenberg has stewarded interns through the UVM “perennial internship” program at ARH. She has supported the recruitment of new ANR partners for service-learning and internship opportunities, leading to a doubling of ANR partnerships. Finally, her vision has manifested in the creation of an experiential learning workshop spanning the entire ANR.

Community Partner Experiences
Our community partners generally are very pleased with their work with UVM students. In FY15, all partners responding to the feedback survey found UVM service-learning students to be professional, knowledgeable and responsible. The vast majority (88% of respondents) said that the project or service was useful and met their expectation, while only 4% saying that the work did not meet expectations.) Partners also testified that they helped to determine the project (80% had helped to determine what students would do).

Our Community Partners 2014-2015:

- ANR (Agency of Natural Resources)
- Department of Environmental Conservation
- ANR Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
- ANR Dept. of Parks & Recreation
- Audubon State Forests
- Back Country Pizza
- Boys & Girls Club of Burlington
- Bread and Butter Bakery
- Burlington Children’s Space
- Burlington Co-Housing
- Burlington Farmers Market
- Burlington High School
- Burlington School District
- Burlington School Food Project
- Cabot
- Camp Ta-Kum-Ta
- Cathedral Square
- Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)
- Chittenden County
- Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf
- Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility
- City of Burlington Department of Parks & Recreation
- City of Burlington Department of Planning & Zoning
- City of Burlington Electric Department
- City of Burlington Public Works
- City of South Burlington
- City of Winooski
- Clinton County Health Department
- Committee on Temporary Shelter
- Community College of Vermont
- Community Justice Panels
- Coop Food Stores
- Circa's Pub
- Dan and Whitney's Store
- Danta Convocado Lodge, Costa Rica
- Dine Alive in Burlington: summer '14; produced by students in FS330 Food Systems Immersion Seminar, taught by Cheie Morse, Geography.
- Photos by Sally McCay
- EarthWalk Vermont
- ECHO Lake Aquarium & Science Center
- Escuela Casandra, Costa Rica
- Fleming Museum
- Friends of the Mad River
- Friends of the Northern Lake
- Friends of the Winooski River
- Girl Develop It
- Greater Bridgeport Regional Council
- Green Mountain Animal Defenders (GMAD)
- Green Mountain National Forest
- Greene Houseback
- Guaymi Indian Reserve
- Health Care Rehabilitation Services (HCRS)
- HOPE Works
- Howard Center
- Huataes VT
- Intervale Conservation Nursery
- Jake's Convenience Store
- Jericho Research Forest
- Johnson Conservation Commission
- Keller Williams
- Kentucky Sanitation District
- Kids-A-Part
- King Arthur Flour
- King Street Youth Center
- Lake Champlain Basin Program
- Lake Champlain International
- Lake Champlain Sea Grant Program
- Lonesome Educational Organization Zoological Conservation Center
- LUNO
- Meals on Wheels Association of America
- Metta Earth Institute
- Middlebury Town Manager’s Office
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food Production, Fisheries, Cooperatives, & Rural Development; St. Lucia, West Indies
- Ministry of Commerce; St. Lucia, West Indies
- Morro de Osco; Costa Rica
- National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- National Wildlife Federation
- New Haven Conservation Commission
- Northfield Conservation Commission*
- Oakland University
- O'Brien Country Center*
- Old North End Arts and Business Network
- ONE Arts Center/Collective
- One Good Food Deal
- Our Community Cares Camp, Inc. Outreach for Earth Stewardship
- Parents & Adults Celebrating Children & Teens
- Partnership for Change
- Permaculture Design Synthesis
- Planning Commission Chair
- Power. Nordic Snowboards
- Pride Center of Vermont
- Rock Point
- Rockpoint Garden Collective
- Serve Burlington
- Shellburne Farms*
- Simsbury
- South Burlington Energy Committee
- South Burlington School District
- Vermont Humanities
- Vermont Feeding Network
- Vermont Office of Sustainable Benches
- Vermont Outdoor Recreation Program
- Vermont River Conservancy*
- Vermont State Attorney's Office
- Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program
- Vermont Village Greens
- Voices for Vermont's Children
- Watered Allison: Potash Brook
- Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District
- YouthBuild

*Indicates community partner who worked with multiple courses

Right: Carey Hengstenberg receiving her service-learning community partner award. Below: Working Landscapes Exhibit in Bailey Howe Library: summer ’14; produced by students in FS330 Food Systems Immersion Seminar, taught by Cheie Morse, Geography. Photos by Sally McCay.