

# **EPIC**

## **Educational Participation In Communities**

**Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good**

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**2014-2015 Proposal for ASI Funding**

**and**

**2013-2014 Financial Report to ASI**

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## The EPIC Program Mission and Collaboration with ASI

ASI and EPIC share a common mission in supporting the educational enrichment and community service involvement of our students. In utilizing a student development model of leadership in all of our work, EPIC and ASI have collaborated to contribute significantly to our students' contributions to the community and the enhancement of our students' educational experience. ASI has a history of volunteering at many EPIC events while EPIC students have served as past ASI Board and committee members.

### Program Abstract

Established in 1966 by the Associated Students Inc., and the Division of Student Affairs, the Educational Participation In Communities (E.P.I.C.) Program was created in the wake of the Watts Rebellion of 1965 to help address critical community needs by placing student volunteers in local non-profit organizations. Coordinated by students, EPIC is a nationally recognized **community service learning** program that for over 40 years has placed students in a wide range of agencies serving a broad spectrum of communities throughout the Los Angeles area. EPIC student coordinators annually recruit, train, and place on average two-thousand students in positions that enhance their education, career, leadership and service objectives, while also providing coordination for the university service learning program.

EPIC also coordinates several special co-curricular projects, including: our annual **Toy and Food Drive**, the **Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP)**, **Read Across America**, **"Cal State L.A., Here We Come!"**, and the **Introduction to Higher Education 101 Course Service Project**.

## **Community Service Learning (CSL) Program Component**

This is the primary vehicle that is utilized for the placement of university students in the community. When being processed through this component, students can choose to either: be solely a volunteer; receive academic credit for volunteer service; or, enroll in a service learning course. **There are multiple objectives for this component and they are:** (1) to provide our **program student assistants** with training and opportunities to: (a) work together as a team implementing various community service learning strategies of the university; (b) coordinate the responsibilities of recruitment, placement, and the follow-up of student volunteers; (c) meet with community agencies and help assess their volunteer needs; (d) work with faculty in developing and implementing service learning courses; and, (2) to provide **CSULA student volunteers** with: (a) opportunities to utilize classroom theory in real life settings while serving the community; (b) opportunities to gain valuable experience in areas that can benefit their educational and career choices. **The expected outcomes** of the component are in alignment with and meeting the University Strategic Plan for Community Engagement. Service learning and community-based learning give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. Students have the opportunity to apply what they are learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on their service experiences. Students gain a valuable experience from using their education to serve the community while the community gains from the services provided by students. **To meet our objectives, E.P.I.C. conducted the following activities during the 2013-2014 academic year:**

- **Recruitment** – We conducted 69 classroom recruitment presentations and coordinated twelve separate walkway recruitment activities reaching an estimated 2,500 students.
- **Placement** – We provided a wide variety of services to the community by placing approximately 893 student volunteers in non-profit community based agencies. The community-based agencies represented a broad geographic and socioeconomic cross section of Los Angeles and included: Educational Services, Legal Services, Medical Services, and Social Services, in local community agencies.
- **Academic Credit/Service Learning** – Approximately 1123 students elected to enroll in a Community Service 395 or Service Learning course. These students required special assistance in the areas of orientation, training, placement, documentation of service, evaluation and reflection. We also continued to work with faculty to promote and support the creation of new Service Learning courses and Service Learning projects that are offered every academic year and that allow us to place additional students in the community every quarter. E.P.I.C. plays a vital role in the community placement process, record keeping and follow- up of these student volunteers.
- **Community Agencies** – Quarterly we provide student placement opportunities to approximately 150 community agencies. This requires regular contact with these agencies for purposes of referral, updates, evaluation, and risk management as new agencies are constantly being added to our database. Finally, our student coordinators conduct regular visits to selected agencies throughout the quarter to become more familiar with the services

that the agencies provide to the community and how the volunteers can help the agencies. The Community Service Learning program component conducted 30 site visits over the course of the academic year.

- EPIC Community Service Learning Project, Introduction to Higher Education 101 Course – The Introduction to Higher Education Course objective focuses on the application of knowledge and skills for academic and social success, and understanding the myriad aspects of student life and the structure of Cal State, Los Angeles. The learning outcomes for the class project are explicitly applied through the Service Learning Project with EPIC. Students brainstorm topics, themes and issues related to college preparation and literacy for elementary school students. The class selects the most relevant themes to structure 385 minute presentation for children. CSULA students work in groups to create a presentation by identifying research articles and activities relevant to the topic to develop their presentation points. Student groups select a grade level and present to one class at EPIC elementary school partner sites. In fall, winter and spring quarters approximately 260 first-time freshman presented to an estimated 1064 elementary school children.

### America Reads/Counts Program

This national tutorial program targets elementary school students who are achieving below grade level in the subject of reading and math. This program year, September – June, approximately 34 Cal State L.A. students were employed, primarily through Federal Work Study funds, to tutor approximately 350 students in grades K through 6 in LAUSD partner elementary school sites. The objective of the program is to promote careers in education through providing valuable opportunities for firsthand experience, relevant training, and civic engagement. **The program outcome** will have provided Cal State L.A. students the opportunity to gain experience and contacts for potential career development, while assisting in improving the academic achievement of the elementary school children served.

There are two annual special events coordinated by this program:

- “Read Across America” Winter Quarter - Coordinated by the CSULA student tutors, this nationwide literacy advocacy event celebrates Dr. Seuss’ birthday by exposing more than 500 elementary school children to positive college role models, while engaging them in educational activities that encourage the importance of higher education. This creative event provides for a quarter long Service Learning course project and student clubs and organization team building project. It also serves as a one day service opportunity for the campus community. In winter 2013 an estimated 300 CSLA students and staff volunteered for this event and two service learning courses participated.
- “Cal State L.A., Here We Come!” Spring Quarter - This very special event focuses on exposing 350 elementary school children to higher education in an authentic way. Students, staff and faculty come together to provide educational presentations appropriate for elementary school children, a spirit rally that celebrates school prides, and a lunch event that hosts children in the Food Court. In total, an estimated 200 students, staff and faculty volunteer to support this very special event for community children. This event

bridges the university community with the children from the surrounding communities we serve. Through coordinating special events, student program tutors engage members of the campus community in the importance of community service for children in elementary school.

### **Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP)**

For over 35 years EPIC has utilized university students as coordinators and mentors for this employment program for low income youth that serves to provide actual work experience on our campus for the participants while exposing them to the possibilities of attending college. We served 66 youth during the 2013 summer quarter and they provided the university with more than \$70,000 in donated employment services. The **objective of the program** was to provide CSULA students with the opportunity and experience to work with youth while gaining program coordination skills. Through these efforts, **the program outcome** was the experience, leadership, and sense of team work gained by our university students, the work provided to our participating university departments and offices, and the exposure to higher education and practical work experience that the community youth.

### **Toy and Food Drive – Fall Quarter**

The Toy and Food Drive is a campus wide event that has taken place for the past 37 years. E.P.I.C. has coordinated this event centered on **three main objectives**, the first of which is to provide food and toys to low-income families during the holiday season. Second, is to give students, clubs, organizations, and all members of the campus community the opportunity to make a positive contribution in their community. The third objective is to place students in an environment that allows them to integrate classroom theory with real life experiences. These goals are achieved through a collaboration of students, staff, and faculty, who come together to collect toys and food. After the collection is completed, the donations are distributed to families who are selected from the caseloads of agencies that E.P.I.C. works with throughout the year. These agencies represent the Asian, African American, Latino, and Native American communities. The **expected outcome** of the event is to provide a much needed service to the community, as well as instill a sense of the importance of community service for our campus community. This year we served 75 underprivileged families which were comprised of approximately 480 children and adults.

### **Volunteer Recognition Event, Spring Quarter**

This annual event provides an opportunity to recognize all of the campus volunteers (students, staff and faculty) and community partners who have participated in various EPIC programs and special events throughout the academic year. For this spring quarter event, we estimate 300 to attend this event.

## **ASI Funding History**

In 2014/15 we will enter our 49<sup>th</sup> year of working with ASI. ASI helped create the EPIC Program and has always financially supported the work and involvement of students in service to communities. For example, ASI funding: helps EPIC employ student assistants to support the Community Service Learning component; provides training support for the America Reads and America Counts tutorial program; supports the purchase of supplies and provision of workshops for the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program; and has supported the purchase of food for our Toy and Food Drive. Without the continuous support of ASI funding, we would not be able to provide students with the significant experiences that are gained through these programs and events.

## 20014/15 FUNDING REQUEST

	<u>Non ASI</u>	<u>ASI</u>
<b>Student Community Service Learning Component</b>		
• 10 Student Assistants @ \$9.00/hr @ 15 hrs/wk @ 50 weeks/year = \$67,500	\$47,500	\$20,000
<b>Toy and Food Drive</b>		
• Purchase food for needy families		
• Additional food and toys	\$4,000	\$2,000
<b>Youth Employment and Training Project</b>		
• Purchase of workshop supplies and materials		
• Additional project supplies and participant recognition event	\$3,000	\$1,000
<b>America Reads and Counts</b>		
• Project training supplies and materials		
• Additional project supplies and special events	\$6,000	\$2,000
<b>TOTAL ASI REQUEST</b>		<b>\$25,000</b>

### Program Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation of all EPIC programs and activities is an integral part of our work. In the **Community Service Learning Program** students are asked to provide written evaluations of their volunteer placement as well as the services provided by the EPIC program. Their supervisors evaluate the volunteers and students provide feedback during their reflection sessions. In addition, written evaluations are utilized in our academic credit and service learning components. Recruitment and placement goals are reviewed on a quarterly basis. We also meet regularly with faculty and community agency representatives to assess our work with them.

Our **Toy and Food Drive** is evaluated upon conclusion by reviewing the number of agencies and families served, donations received, and how many student volunteers participated and in what capacities. Participating agencies are asked for their feedback on our activities in this project.

The **Summer Youth Employment and Training Project** has numerous ongoing and summative evaluations. They include: evaluations by participants on workshops, worksite placements, our supervision/coordination, and overall program; evaluations by supervisors on their participants; evaluations of participants by our worksite aides; and evaluations of the overall program by our worksite aides.

Our **America Reads and America Counts Program** includes data collection on student achievements; tutor assessments of students; classroom teacher assessments of students and tutors; tutor assessments of training sessions; meetings with classroom teachers, principals, and students; weekly progress meetings with the site-coordinator and tutors; quarterly observations of tutors during their tutoring sessions; and final evaluations by tutors of our overall program and summation meetings with school based personnel.

All of these activities are used to assess our work and plan for future programs. The Director of EPIC will be responsible for providing any performance data required by ASI.

## **2013-2014 Financial Report to ASI**

A.S.I allocated a total of \$16,734.80 in University Support for the 2013-14 fiscal year. The funds were used to support EPIC Programs and events in the following way:

### **FALL QUARTER**

#### **Student Employment**

\$4,000 was applied to supplement student employment for all program areas.

#### **Toy and Food Drive**

\$1,369 went toward the purchase of food.

#### **Administrative Fees**

\$209.19 is 3.75% of the quarterly allocation required by Business Finance to manage funding

**TOTAL: \$5,578.19**

### **WINTER QUARTER**

#### **Student Employment**

\$4,000 was applied to supplement student employment for all program areas.

#### **Read Across America**

\$500 went toward the purchase of supplies to support this event.

#### **Administrative Fees**

\$209.19 is 3.75% of the quarterly allocation required by Business Finance to manage funding

**TOTAL: \$4,709.19**

### **SPRING QUARTER**

#### **Student Employment**

\$4,000 was applied to supplement student employment for all program areas.

#### **Volunteer Recognition Event**

\$1,100 will be used to support the purchase of recognition gifts for volunteers and event supplies.

#### **“Cal State L.A., Here We Come!”**

\$1,138.16 will be used to support the purchase of event supplies.

#### **Administrative Fees**

\$209.19 is 3.75% of the quarterly allocation required by Business Finance to manage funding

**TOTAL: \$6,447.35**