Overview of Teagle Foundation Project

Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) in Branchburg is one of five community colleges nationally that has been awarded a Service Learning grant from the New York-based Teagle Foundation. The three-year, $8,500 annual grant is enabling five community colleges to work together on a national project, “Student Learning for Civic Capacity: Stimulating Moral, Ethical, and Civic Engagement for Learning that Lasts.”

The project is overseen by the Community College National Center for Community Engagement and Kapiolani Community College of Hawaii, who have received a total of $370,000 to administer the grant among the five colleges.

RVCC faculty from several disciplines are playing national leadership roles through their work with the College’s Service Learning program. They are joined by faculty from Delgado Community College, Louisiana; Kapiolani Community College, University of Hawai‘i, Hawaii; Kingsborough Community College and Queensborough Community College, both of New York; and Mesa Community College in Arizona.

The Teagle grant project has several components, including:

- Developing courses in different disciplines that build students’ current and future commitment to civic and moral responsibility and encourage their participation in co-curricular programs such as student government and clubs.
- Evaluating student learning experiences and sharing the results through publications and national presentations.
- Using additional resources from campus, state, federal, and foundation sources to create new opportunities.

Along with the other community colleges, RVCC is integrating the following BIG Question across courses in its two-year degree and baccalaureate transfer program: “How do we build our commitment to civic and moral responsibility for diverse, equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities?” Foundations of Education taught by Kathy Suk and Foundations of Early Childhood Education taught by Kimberly Schirner are the education disciples and faculty developing exemplary course models. Four other courses involved in the project include: Environmental Science and Sustainability; Environmental Studies; Principles of Marketing; Trends in Nursing. Numerous co-curricular activities with the Student Nurses Association also provide ongoing engagement with the Big Question.

Faculty involved in the Teagle Foundation project assess student learning using required end-of-semester reflection prompts and a scoring rubric. Pre- and post-surveys are being used in fall semesters to assess learning gains.