

New England Center for Civic Life

By Joni Doherty, Director

The Civic Scholar Program offers students the opportunity to acquire an array of skills and to work closely with faculty and staff affiliated with the New England Center for Civic Life. In addition to creating innovative programs that generate engagement in community life, the Civic Scholars learn how to lead deliberative forums which are designed to foster thoughtful and civil discourse.

Courtney Breese '07, a Social Work and Counseling major, is now program director at the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration at UMass Boston. "At 18, my exposure to political discourse was limited to watching presidential debates on television," she said. "Once I experienced deliberative dialogue, I discovered that discourse did not have to be adversarial, and that the role of citizens can be more nuanced and active. I gained confidence and improved my public speaking. I learned how to frame good questions, synthesize information quickly, and think on my feet. I also began to process information deliberatively, looking for the benefits and drawbacks in each perspective, and seeking additional viewpoints and information. It also helped me to improve my organizational skills and time management."

Courtney's experiences as a Civic Scholar had long-term impacts: "As a student, I became more involved in campus activities and issues. Overall, I became more active in my community. And ultimately, my experiences landed me a job, where I have had the privilege and pleasure of being able to continue working with deliberative dialogue. For the past five years, I have used my skills and knowledge on a daily basis to help communities across Massachusetts tackle the tough issues they face. I couldn't have hoped for a better result!"

Knowledge, job skills, impact . . . the Civic Scholars Program is just one of the ways in which the New England Center for Civic Life contributes to the lives of Franklin Pierce students and ultimately, the communities in which they live and work.

The Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication

By Dr. Kristen Nevios, Director

On the third weekend in January, senior Samantha Deabay boarded a train in Connecticut to Washington, D.C. Senior Ahmos Diaz boarded a bus in Boston and did the same. The difference between them and the hundreds of thousands of other Americans who converged on the nation's capital for the inauguration of President Barack Obama is that these two Franklin Pierce University students were about to make history.

Eighteen months earlier, both were part of the Center's credentialed news team covering the June 2011 GOP debates as the race for the 2012 New Hampshire primary heated up. After that, the Center was credentialed to cover two more national debates, both national political conventions, and the infamous Dixville Notch vote in the wee hours of November 6, 2012. Now they, and seven other students, were going to the inauguration as credentialed media.

This marks the first time that the Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication has completed coverage of a full election cycle – it is an achievement made possible by many talented students, but Samantha and Ahmos are the ones who were there at the beginning and at the end. It is a remarkable achievement, and it is especially appropriate to celebrate it during the Center's 10th Anniversary year.

Ahmos, a journalism and production major, said that it was interesting to see what candidates go through to become president. "I feel that I am now more involved politically," he said, "and I have more of an opinion. I have a voice."

Samantha, a production major who is this year's FPTV-25 station manager, said, "I am very honored and thankful for being a part of the Fitzwater Center for Communication's election cycle. I was able to cover the first in the nation GOP debate and the Kids' Inaugural concert during the presidential inauguration. I was able to work side by side with professionals in the field who are in positions that I would like to apply for after I graduate. It was very interesting to see how it all unfolded starting in June 2011. Having these opportunities will be a great addition to my resume and will set me apart from other applicants. All this was made possible because of the Fitzwater Center."



Jennifer Bell '13 maps the Gates Farm Trail.

Monadnock Institute of Nature, Place & Culture

Jennifer Bell '13 writes about her work with the Institute:

During my junior year (2011-2012) at Franklin Pierce, I worked on a project with the Monadnock Institute of Nature, Place & Culture designed to encourage students to get outside and to promote environmental education and sustainability. The campus trails on Franklin Pierce's 1,200-acre, ecologically diverse property provide ideal opportunities for students to learn about succession, New England history, phenology, wetlands, and wildlife, as well as opportunities for fun and relaxation.

Because many old cross-country ski trails, carriage roads, and logging trails crisscross

campus woods, I recognized that a detailed map would be important for safety and so that more students could enjoy these trails without the fear of getting lost. Using a handheld GPS unit, I walked the marked routes of the Serenity Trail, Gates Farm Trail, Place Trail, and newly developed Pond Trail. After transferring the GPS points into GIS map layers for ease of accessibility and adaptability, I transposed my data onto an aerial photograph of the campus property.

As a final step in the process, the University invested in a kiosk, which features the map

as well as grab-and-go trail brochures that include the map, trail descriptions, and safety information.

As president of the Ecology Club, I have been inviting the campus on weekly trail walks, where students share knowledge about our environment, look for animal signs, identify plants, exercise, and have fun! I plan to graduate from Franklin Pierce this spring with degrees in Environmental Science and Chemistry, and hope to build a career studying ecology. After graduation, I am scheduled to attend graduate school to study wetland ecology. 