

## 2010-2011 Grant Proposals

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Carol Calo, Visual and Performing Arts  
Creative Engagement: College, Art, and Community  
SOTL Research Grant

This project will investigate community-based outreach initiatives engaged in by college and university art departments. Increasingly over the past ten years, academic art departments have spearheaded curriculum that integrates service learning and art instruction. These initiatives may range from mentoring children to documenting oral histories to involving a community in a collaborative art project.

As prevalent as these efforts may be, no substantive study has been conducted by a public art scholar. While specific projects may be studied, no comprehensive overview of this kind of service-learning experience has been attempted. Assessment is generally based solely on anecdotal information; there is a scarcity of published material addressing the impact of programs and desired outcomes for students and for targeted constituencies.

My research will involve studying a number of college/university initiatives which combine community outreach, service learning, and art. These institutions include Massachusetts College of Art, Temple University, Rhode Island School of Design, Syracuse University, Carnegie Mellon, Cal State, and New York University. Research will be conducted in a number of ways. Relevant books and articles will provide background concerning developments in community-based arts. Websites such as Americans for the Arts, Public Art Network, and Community Arts Network will offer up-to-date information about current projects. I will interview professors and community members who have been involved in particular collaborations. Finally, a student research assistant will design a survey to obtain information from college students who have participated in these art courses or programs.

My goal is to evaluate specific programs to determine strengths and weaknesses, level of community engagement, degree of student interaction with community members, overall effectiveness of the initiative, and the possibility of long-term impact. This study will be presented to "The Public Art Review" whose editor, Jack Becker, has already expressed an interest in publishing it. Ultimately I hope to offer educators and professionals in this field evidence of factors which contribute to success in community-engaged learning, while discussing challenges which face professors and community leaders who organize these collaborations.

This is a much-needed and timely study because "town and gown" relationships have been the subject of many discussions at Stonehill and on college campuses throughout the country. Service learning has become an integral part of Stonehill College's mission in an effort to instill in students a commitment to social responsibility. The arts are a powerful vehicle for creating understanding and meaningful connections between diverse groups. I also plan to apply the results of this research in my own community-engaged Learning Community, "Art and Civic Culture in Urban Environments" as American Studies Professor, Beth Belanger and I, move into the second phase of our partnership with the Cape Verdean Association in Brockton.

My community outreach plan includes giving a presentation on my research to faculty at Stonehill College and participating in faculty development events as well as programs offered by the Office for Community-based Learning. I would welcome the opportunity to be a faculty mentor to anyone who is considering planning a course or learning community involving service learning. Beth Belanger and I have been invited to organize a panel on community-based learning at the American Studies National Conference in the Fall. We will be on a panel at Brown University in May with Aminah Pilgrim, President of the Cape Verdean Association, Brockton. We have also submitted a chapter proposal for a book on bringing art into urban neighborhoods.

### *Budget*

\$2500 TOTAL

\$1,000 faculty stipend

500 student research assistant

180 rt train to New York City (visit NYU)

675 airfare and hotel - Philadelphia (visit Temple)  
and Pittsburgh (visit Carnegie Mellon)  
110 books on community arts  
35 gas to travel to Boston and Providence