

With service-learning, you give and you get back

By Jessica Decina

In the far corner of the Career Services Suite over a dozen faculty members in departments ranging from political science to foreign language came together for a seminar on the Service-Learning program offered at Rider.

Service is not limited to students of social sciences, according to Dr. Sigfredo Hernandez, a professor of marketing. Hernandez spoke about his program, "Minding Our Business" (MOB), an elective course that brings business majors off-campus to work with children living in nearby Trenton. MOB, already in its ninth year, is highly effective because it teaches business students about teamwork, mentoring and entrepreneurship, according to Hernandez.

"You develop real connections with the people you work with," he said. "That's what makes the experience so

satisfying."

Hernandez is currently working to research the effectiveness of MOB on both the students and the youth of the Trenton schools. But according to two former MOB students, the course was an unforgettable experience that would not fade away.

"Showing them parts of my world and having them [the students in Trenton] show me theirs helped me understand them more," said Kimberly Brancato, a student who became involved in MOB three years ago. "[The class] was not about an easy A."

Don Brown, the director of Multicultural Affairs and Community Service, took the floor to shed some light on service-learning.

He explained the importance of finding balance in service-learning, pointing out the differences between community service, volunteerism and

field service.

According to Brown, service-learning seeks to find the balance to "what you focus on and who benefits from it." Brown also stressed the key point in understanding service-learning.

"Service enhances learning and learning enhances service," he said.

Service-learning can also find its roots in the political science department under the term "action anthropology," a program developed by Dr. Roberta Rusciano, a professor in the field. Rusciano said she wants students to become a more integral part of the communities in which they work.

"The best part about service-learning is that it gets to your core," Rusciano said. "You can take it as far as you want, that's where the creativity and fullness comes in."

But taking a project to another level is no easy task. Senior Tara Arhakos

shared her experience of working at Planned Parenthood in Trenton through the service-learning program. Once she became involved Arhakos became so passionate about her work that she decided to tackle the difficult task of creating Voices of Planned Parenthood (VOX) on-campus.

"I noticed that this campus was very liberal," Arhakos said. "But we are not politically active in any way."

But the most important factor of service is putting it into action, according to Jessica Januzzi, Service-Learning Coordinator. Januzzi closed the seminar by providing faculty in attendance with a packet of resources that provided ideas on how to get students involved with community service at the University.

"I wanted to help college students get involved in community service," she said. "It's important to get faculty to integrate it into coursework."

Indian music sensation initiates celebration of Asian heritage

By Stephanie Mostaccio

A world-renowned instrumentalist from India shared his musical talents with spectators from the Rider community as well as from Mercer County on Wednesday, April 6, in the Bart Luedeke Center Theater.

Shafaatullah Khan displayed his mastery of the tabla, a type of Indian drum, and the sitar, an Indian classical string instrument. He was accompanied by three other musicians, who either played the tabla, the tanpura, an Indian drone instrument, or the dilruba, an Indian bowed stringed instrument. Audience members said they were impressed with Khan's musical ability as well as with the instruments.

"It's a great sound. The drum was beautiful," an audience member from Lawrenceville said. "It was wonderful and certainly enjoyable."

Audience members not only had the opportunity to listen to Indian music, but to also learn about the Indian culture.

"Khan's performance is going to give a glimpse of what the Indian culture is," said Suchi Batra, a graduate assistant in the Center for Multicultural Affairs and Community Service.

In addition to performing, Khan lectured on Indian rhythms, solo tabla and Indian music.

"I already knew some of

what he was saying, but a lot of it was new to me," sophomore Casey Jost said. "It was a good experience."

Khan represents the eighth generation of a family whose heritage can be traced back to Mughal Emperor Akbar, who ruled India in the 16th century. He is also the descendant of one of the most renowned families of Indian musicians.

Khan performed for the first time at the King's Lynn Festival in England at age 11, which was opened by the Queen Mother. Since then, he has performed at many other

festivals and concerts worldwide, including venues at the Acropolis in Greece and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.


The Shafaatullah Khan concert was sponsored by Asian Students at Rider (ASAR) as well as the Center for Multicultural Affairs and Community Service. He was invited to perform at Rider as part of Asian Heritage Month, during which the Asian culture is celebrated and appreciated.

"It is a time when we as a community take time to look at the various Asian contributions

to our culture and community," said Don Brown, director of the Center for Multicultural Affairs and Community Service.

The performance was the signature event of Asian Heritage Month. However, according to Brown, the Center for Multicultural Affairs, along with ASAR, is also planning an event known as "Holy, Holy," which is an Indian celebration of the spring season. There was also a celebration of the Chinese New Year earlier in the semester.

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