
Non-Profit and Civic Engagement Center

What is NPACE?

The Department of Communication believes in creating civic-minded, engaged citizens as we shape the next generation of communication professionals. We do so by infusing service-learning work into our students' curriculum. Annually, the Department of Communication leads Columbus State University in service-learning hours. There is no student who graduates with a degree in communication that does not take a course that incorporates service-learning projects during their sophomore, junior, or senior year of study.

The Non-Profit and Civic Engagement (NPACE) Center is the Department of Communication's bridge to non-profit organizations in Columbus and the Chattahoochee Valley. Through the center, we bring non-profit organizations together with our experienced faculty to discuss the needs of each organization and what support and resources the Department of Communication can provide through its service-learning courses. Once the need or problem is identified, the faculty members match each non-profit organization together with a student intern or group working in one of their courses in order to meet the needs of the non-profit organization. For the non-profit, they are able to satisfy their immediate needs. For the students, we are able to provide them with career-relevant work opportunities to fill out their portfolio for the job search after graduation.

Take a look at the local organizations that NPACE and the Department of Communication have been able to assist since its inception:

Since 2001, serving while learning has been the heart of the Communication Department of Columbus State University. Originally, only two communication classes – Political and Group – contained service learning components that allowed students to expand theoretical concepts beyond the physical classroom and to use those concepts to make a positive impact in the community. Through the hard work of our students, we have forged relationships with Non-Profits in our community and expanded our Civic Engagement to include this type of learning in many other classes. The NPACE Vision is to build bridges of compassion, education, helping hands, and hope in the places where they are most needed, locally.

Each semester we will provide information about which organizations are "on the drawing board," highlights when available, and an end of the semester wrap up with links to finished work. Spring Semester 2012 has our students working with Artbeat of Columbus, Strong4Life, Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce, Boys and Girls Clubs of the Chattahoochee Valley, Columbus Lions, Columbus Georgia Department of Public Health, Columbus Housing Authority, and 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion (Triple Nickel). View our current projects below!

Our [Advisory Board](#) is comprised of 10 community leaders and 10 Communication Department alumni who are the backbone to our organization; using their talents and strengths to direct us in areas of marketing, funding, branding, and networking opportunities for our students as they work through NPACE. These individuals will assist us in communicating goals and standards of our mission to the community. Each member of the Advisory Board brings years of experience and special skill sets that are an asset to our unique blending of theory and service learning curriculum.

About NPACE

History

Carpenter Building Communication Department - Columbus State University

In 2001, the Communication Department at Columbus State University applied service learning by experience techniques to the curriculum for the first time in two courses – Political Communication and Group Communication. The question professors were asking was: What better way to teach the power of group formation than to allow students to experience team building while serving the community? What began as a part of course requirements for our majors has grown into a program that reaches over 100 local non-profits representing over 10,000 student service-learning volunteer hours.

Today, NPACE Academic Center is located on the first floor of our Communication Department in the Carpenters Building on 9th street. This center is accessible to local non-profit agency representatives who seek our assistance. NPACE makes students (enrolled in courses, independent studies, internships, or scholarships with embedded service learning components), faculty, and retired or on-loan professionals with a passion for service, available to bridge the gap between resources and needs. Through research, education, and outreach activities NPACE Academic Center provides knowledge and tools that enhance the effectiveness of those who govern, manage, provide programs and services, volunteer for and support nonprofit organizations.

NPACE, allows Communication Majors opportunities to integrate mind, body, and spirit into their learning experience while local nonprofits benefit by expanding human and fiscal capacity. Allow us to assist with your research, training and development, audio and video technology, business or financial needs to help you make a difference in our community.

Mission

The Non Profit and Civic Engagement Center, through the CSU Communication Department, aims to foster civic engagement (where students design and implement strategies to assist partner nonprofit agencies and faculty and on-loan professionals see the difference their service makes) while serving as a bridge connecting our human and capacity building resources to meet the operational needs of community nonprofits and the training needs of communication students.

Approach

Under the guidance of Communication Department professors, our majors are first exposed to service learning in sophomore-level courses (e.g. Public Relations, Community-Building, Interactive Web Design, Communication Research, and Training and Development).

How NPACE Functions:

Of better than 6,000 businesses, there are over 4,800 non-profit organizations that make up the economic structure and fabric of greater Columbus and the Chattahoochee Valley region. As stated previously, NPACE serves as a bridge between the Department of Communication and the Chattahoochee Valley's large, passionate non-profit culture.

In order to meet the needs of the non-profit organizations that partner with the NPACE Center, the Department of Communication employs a structure similar to most independent public relations or strategic communication firms. At the top of the structure is our NPACE Director and NPACE staff, who serve as primary contacts for organizations interested in working with the NPACE Center. The administrative staff at NPACE will bring our non-profit partners together with our faculty and staff, who serve as account managers. The account managers serve as liaisons for the clients for the duration of their specific projects with the NPACE Center and pair them with specific students and student groups that can best meet their needs. Finally, our students function as staff members assigned to specific accounts, where they complete the daily task load for each non-profit organization.

By employing the same organization and delegation of contemporary communication firms, we are effectively managing the needs of our non-profit partners while preparing our students for a contemporary work environment.

Services Provided by NPACE:

- Internal and External Research
- Internal Relations Campaigns
- Communication Audits
- Internal Communication Consults
- Multimedia Productions
- Web Design
- Strategic Communications Planning
- Public Relations/Marketing Consultation
- Media Coaching
- Professional Training and Development

- Broadcast Support
- Graphic Design

Featured Projects

Muscogee County School District “Active Shooter” Video:

In the spring of April of 2013, the Muscogee County School District completed an exhaustive risk assessment study on the likelihood of their schools having to prepare for an active shooter scenario akin to the tragedies in Newtown, CT and Blacksburg, VA. What they discovered was that with proper training, the severity of such an event could be minimized through sound emergency preparedness and training of faculty and students.

Upon completion of the study, the Muscogee County School District approached NPACE about developing a training video which could be used to train its faculty, staff, and students for the unfortunately possibility of such an occurrence. In conjunction with the faculty, staff and students of the Department of Communication developed a script, filmed, and produced a training video that carried the support of the school board and was premiered in December of 2013 on Columbus State University’s RiverPark Campus.

The Muscogee County School District is now providing the training video to other school districts in Georgia and Alabama that do not have the resources to develop such a video on their own. In this case, we see how the work of the NPACE Center is serving a much larger community than its local region. Feel free to take a look at the video below:

Boys and Girls Club of America “75 Blue Doors” Event:

In the fall of 2013, the Boys and Girls Club of Chattahoochee approached the Department of Communication about developing a comprehensive plan and providing support to put on a year-long event that promoted the club in its celebration of 75 years of work in the region. NPACE paired the Boys and Girls Club staff with Dr. Chris McCollough’s COMM 4142: Public Relations Campaigns course. Over the course of the fall semester, a student intern and the COMM 4142 class worked with the Boys and Girls Club in creating an event and working to garner media attention for the event.

The event helps provide greater exposure for the club and for the event itself. The project provided a means for Dr. McCollough to build an on-going partnership between the Boys and Girls Club and the College of the Arts, which will be leading to a “75 Doors” exhibit in the Lake Bottom region of Columbus during Artbeat 2014.

Steeplechase at Callaway Gardens:

During the summer of 2013, the staff at Callaway Gardens approached the Department of Communication and the NPACE Center about providing a student perspective in the development of marketing for annual Steeplechase, held every fall at Callaway Gardens. In addition, they wanted to get the active military and their families out to the event. Proceeds from the Steeplechase event go towards promoting the arts in the Chattahoochee Valley Region. Given the Department of Communication’s close relationship with the Arts in the region, getting involved was an easy decision.

The opportunities that this event created for communication students were exceptional. Brandon Lashley, a junior in the Department of Communication, took on a semester long internship and served as a liaison among Steeplechase, CSU students, and active military members and their families throughout the semester. His experience as an active member of the student body and a retired member of the Marine Corps made Brandon an excellent student to fill this role.

In addition, a team of four engaging public relations campaigns students worked in event planning and execution to get Steeplechase’s new “Collegiate Corner” off the ground, growing attendance numbers by 40% in the first year of the program from past iterations.

The students are continuing their project work during Spring 2014 as part of their Public Relations Management course in an effort to aid Callaway Gardens and Steeplechase in building partnerships with institutions outside of Columbus State University that will build stronger attendance for fall 2014.

Artbeat 2013:

An annual component of the work of the NPACE Center is to support the annual Artbeat festival that the Columbus and the College of the Arts puts on every March, Artbeat. Since its inception in 2011 with “Arts in the Street,” the College of the Arts in conjunction with local arts-based civic organization, Broadway in uptown Columbus has been a hub for arts exhibits. The event itself has branched out to local arts venues and community centers around Columbus.

Whether it be through media production, archiving, or broadcast promotion, the NPACE Center continues to provide support in promoting the Artbeat festival on behalf of several of our community partners who promote the arts and arts education in the Chattahoochee Valley.

Friday Night Sports Focus:

In the fall of 2012, PMB Broadcasting opened its doors and provided on-site technology to enable the NPACE Center to go live with radio broadcasting on any theme our students and faculty could creatively produce. Josh Pate, one of our entrepreneurial communication majors, came forward with the idea to produce a weekly sports show that filled a niche market in the region that provided score reporting and commentary akin to Paul Finebaum’s daily programming on SEC Football called Friday Night Football Focus.

With the support of PMB Broadcasting (currently airing on 99.7 FM, locally and streaming on the web [embed streaming link here]) and the logistical access and support of the Muscogee County School District, Friday Night Football Focus was up and running by October of 2012, and has since grown into a year-round model of programming that covers all high school and college sports in the region. It is now becoming a vehicle for all-platform sports coverage in the region, branching out to social media and we will soon be providing content for our Columbus State University student media partner, CSUTV.