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Our Lady of the Lake College Recognized as Carnegie Community Engaged Campus

Baton Rouge, LA – The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has named Our Lady of the Lake College to an elite list of 2 - 4 year public/private colleges designated with the Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification. This classification recognizes the College's significant commitment to Service-Learning and community engagement throughout Louisiana.

"This designation is a momentous achievement, putting us into a select group of 311 higher education institutions in the United States recognized for their students' engaged service in the community," said OLOL College President Sandra Harper, Ph.D. "It recognizes our years of hard work and dedication to serving others which is a fundamental characteristic of the OLOL College community and the core of our Mission."

Founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1905 and chartered in 1906 by an Act of Congress, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is an independent policy and research center. Its current mission is to support needed transformations in American education through tighter connections between teaching practice, evidence of student learning, the communication and use of this evidence, and structured opportunities to build knowledge.

The Foundation describes community engagement as the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. "As of June 30, 2010, the College had forged over 50 Service-Learning and community engagement partnerships with groups such as Catholic Charities, St. Joseph Hospice, Habitat for Humanity, Wildwood Elementary and Boys Hope/Girls Hope, dedicating over 18,700 hours of service in the last year alone," explains Phyllis Simpson, Ph.D., Dean of Student Services."

Service-Learning—a teaching pedagogy that integrates meaningful community service with classroom instruction and personal reflection—has been used successfully at the College in both liberal arts and clinically-based classrooms to enhance course objectives and improve learning and engagement in students. Recent student survey results show that OLOL College



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students report higher than national average levels of engagement in 1) developing a personal code of values and ethics; 2) contributing to the welfare of their community; and 3) participating in activities to enhance their spirituality.

Beyond volunteering, this type of outreach focuses on the application and provision of institutional resources for community use with benefits to both on campus and beyond. Partnerships with charitable organizations and public services focus on collaborative interactions with community and related scholarship for the mutually beneficial exchange, exploration, and application of knowledge, information, and resources (research, capacity building, economic development, etc.).

According to Rhoda Reddix, Ph.D., Service-Learning Coordinator for Our Lady of the Lake College, "Our faculty and community partners work collaboratively to meet course objectives and frame service opportunities to both challenge the students and help them develop an increased awareness of their civic responsibilities." An example of a successful collaboration was a class of Associate of Science nursing students which gave blood pressure and glucose screenings at a Baton Rouge-area "Health is Wealth Community Fair," allowing the students to practice nursing skills but at the same time offering a valuable community service.

Other recent examples of Service-Learning projects include a group of Respiratory Therapy students who talked with a fifth grade class at Wildwood Elementary about the health risks associated with smoking, a technical writing class that volunteered to write informational materials and brochures for area non-profit organizations, and students from an introductory religion class who worked at the St. Joseph Hospice, helping the staff to better serve the patients and giving the students exposure to end-of-life issues.

"Community service has helped me grow by challenging my cultural views and making me think more deeply about my career aspirations and our society," explains nursing student, Marla Bruton.

Last year a group of OLOL College students made it possible for the East Baton Rouge Council on Aging to open its Homewood Senior Center on time. "The students washed walls and windows, painted, mopped the floors and even trimmed the bushes outside," explained Charlene O'Neal, Interim Director of the Homewood Senior Center. "They even came back on their own initiative to finish things that needed to be done. We simply could not have prepared this Center in time without their help. They were a Godsend!"

"It is heartening to see this level of commitment and activity. Clearly, higher education is making real strides in finding ways to engage with and contribute to important community agendas. There is much to celebrate," says Anthony S. Bryk, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.



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In addition to the Carnegie Foundation classification, Our Lady of the Lake College has been named three times to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll in 2006, 2008 and 2009. This is the highest federal recognition a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service-learning and civic engagement.

Currently Our Lady of the Lake College enrolls nearly 2000 students in programs such as master's in Nursing, Nurse Anesthesia, Physician Assistant Studies, and Health Administration; bachelor's in Nursing, Biology, Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Health Sciences, Health Service Administration, and Liberal Studies; and associate degrees in Arts and Sciences, Physical Therapist Assisting, Radiologic Technology, Respiratory Therapy Surgical Technology, and Nursing. As an integral part of each of these programs the College seeks to advance a collegial environment that promotes individual and collective social responsibility within the concepts of community, democracy, social justice, and the culture of life.

Offering master's, baccalaureate, and associate degrees, Our Lady of the Lake College is a four-year, independent institution, providing a strong foundation in the liberal arts and continuing its highly-regarded health sciences and nursing programs. Established in 1923 as a nursing school by the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady (FMOL), Our Lady of the Lake College holds to a Franciscan tradition of service, offer a healing and spiritual presence for the community and especially those most in need.

To learn more about Our Lady of the Lake College, please visit www.ololcollege.edu.

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