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COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

APRIL 27, 2007

## SUNY Old Westbury Community Engagement and Partnership Program

SUNY College at Old Westbury recently played host to executives from an array of local not-for-profit organizations during a reception to launch its First Year Experience Student Engagement program, an initiative of the College's new Community Engagement and Partnership Center.

Operating in a pilot status during the spring 2007 semester, the First Year Experience Student Engagement Program has placed 80 students in community service positions with area not-for-profits as part of a required course offered through the curriculum of the college's First-Year Experience program.

"Our college seeks students of high quality and produces graduates ready to lead at work, in the community, and in life," said College President Calvin O. Butts, III. "A key element in that leadership, however, is the relation they have with the world around them. By challenging students to learn about, and help address, the needs of our community early in their collegiate careers, we are providing them a valuable opportunity to learn about potential career paths, to face issues of social and economic inequity head on, and to experience the power change can make for ourselves and our community."

Founded in 2006 with a leadership grant from the Horace and Amy Hagedorn Fund of the Long Island Community Foundation, the Community Engagement and Partnership Center is a cooperative initiative whereby the college works in partnership with regional nonprofit organizations to enhance the services those, and other, non-profits provide in the college's surrounding communities. The

core method through which these enhancements occur is the CEPC First Year Experience Student Engagement Program.

While a great many local colleges and universities organize programs where students who are so disposed can volunteer their time to charitable causes, the CEPC First Year Student Engagement Program is unique in that it is directly tied to the academic structure of the institution. Through this program, every freshman student enrolling in the college, beginning with the projected class of more than 400 students entering in fall 2007, will be required to study the importance of civic engagement in their own lives and in the life of a community. Then, they will each be required to take part in between 30 and 50 hours of service with pre-selected regional not-for-profit partners or on campus. Through class discussion, reflective journals, and other assignments, they will share their experiences with classmates and faculty.

During the reception, Dr. Butts signed letters of intent with executives from the college's inaugural group of not-for-profit partners, symbolizing a shared commitment between the organizations to community development and enhancement. Among the organizations represented during the session were Winthrop-University Hospital's Reach Out and Read program, the Girl Scouts of Nassau County, ACORN, The Neighborhood Network, Workplace Project, the Long Beach Martin Luther King, Jr. Center Inc., Urban League of Long Island, Literacy Nassau and the New York Public Interest Research Group.

### ARTICLE APPEARED IN:

1. Great Neck Record
2. Port Washington News
3. Glen Cove Record-Pilot
4. Oyster Bay Enterprise-Pilot
5. Manhasset Press
6. The Roslyn News
7. The Westbury Times
8. Syosset-Jericho Tribune
9. New Hyde Park Illustrated
10. Hicksville Illustrated News
11. Plainview-Old Bethpage Herald
12. Farmingdale Observer
13. Floral Park Dispatch
14. Garden City Life
15. Mineola American
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