

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020 • ISSUE 2

Welcome to the spring edition of the ExL Newsletter.

In the pages that follow, you will learn more about our programs through the reflections of Dornsife students, faculty, staff, a wonderful non-profit partner, and one of our supportive donors. In addition, we will remember Dick Cone, former director of the Joint Educational Project (1980 – 2002) who passed in late April and share his reflections on JEP some eight years after his retirement.

Enjoy and thank you for your time.

Tammy Anderson
Associate Dean, Office of Experiential and Applied Learning



A student walks through Bogota's historic Candelaria district during the Peacebuilding in Colombia Maymester (2017).



In the Arctic, DJ Kast holds a banner made by students from Foshay Learning Center (2014). Kast now serves as JEP STEM Program Manager and Director of the Young Scientist Program.

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To learn more, visit our website:
<https://dornsife.usc.edu/exl/>

EXPERIENTIAL AND APPLIED LEARNING: WHY IT MATTERS

My decades of experience as an experiential learning advocate are culminating now in my passionate belief that a dynamic, expansive, inclusive vision for experiential learning is not only essential for a positive transformation of learning, it lies at the heart of how we learn and evolve as empathetic and compassionate people within our communities.

Learning does not live in a vacuum. Like all valuable qualities in life, learning thrives in personal relationships and societal context. I believe that Experiential Learning takes place in the student, the classroom, the laboratory, the marketplace, and in regional and global communities.

I believe that applying knowledge and expanding aspirational horizons through the exploration of new destinations and relationships is an essential part of the holistic learning experience we offer at USC Dornsife. Beyond offering opportunities to expand students' knowledge in a particular discipline, applied learning deepens students' social and emotional intelligence and their value of civic involvement and community service. Applied learning significantly impacts our human qualities of empathy, compassion and tolerance, qualities that are at the heart of living a rewarding and fulfilling life.

The spectrum of experiential and applied learning experiences offered by USC Dornsife has grown exponentially over the last decade. In addition to the programs highlighted in this newsletter, ExL staff is building partnerships with companies like Hyundai, who for the second year, has invited students to their Annual Hyundai Career Experience Day and State Farm Insurance who is funding a research project entitled "Safe Mobility: The Change Begins With Us" with Dr. Jill McNitt-Gray and her team of undergraduates. They will conduct research on improving safety on campus for both people with wheelchair and other mobility aids, students using scooters, skateboards, bikes, and pedestrians of all ages. Our Trojan Health Volunteers, supported by Gilead, will be conducting online health and COVID-19 related research projects, which they will later share with stakeholders and community partners, with the hope to support them in these critical times. In all of these dynamic and unique applied learning offerings, USC students have the opportunity to build essential skills companies are looking for in new hires including creativity, communication, collaboration, and adaptability.

The realities presented by Covid-19 require us to adapt to our "new normal." This disruption presents us with the provocative challenge to reimagine our programs and think about ways we can enhance educational opportunities for our students, our faculty, and our broader community of partners via educational technology. Here are our priorities for the upcoming year.

Innovation Initiatives

- Development and implementation of E-Portfolios: multimedia-based collections of and reflections on students' work that represent the spectrum of their identity and demonstrate their cognition of the fundamental principles of lifelong learning.
- Create an Experiential Learning Visual Transcript that will succinctly capture students' academic and co-curricular experiences and involvements.
- Development and creation of a virtual EXL Learning Lab (with an on-campus site once space and funding has been identified) exploring forward-thinking experiential methods, practices and curricula, Experience Design, Learning Space Design, Immersive, Site Based and Distance Learning Technologies and Methods, Experiential Learning Based evaluation and Assessment instruments, middle and high school classroom labs and more.

I will be sharing more about these exciting initiatives with you in the coming months. I look forward to you joining us on this exciting evolution of experiential and applied learning and to the innovative, pioneering experiences we will all create together.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and am grateful for your support and our common passion and vision during these transitional times.

Best,

Tammy Anderson

MY VOICE MATTERS (MVM)

Partner Voices

BY TARA GUBER, FOUNDER OF BREAKTHROUGH LA

More than any time in recent history and in these days of physical distance, our voices matter. Specifically, it is critically important that the voices of our children be heard and valued so that they may know that they will make a valuable contribution to shaping the future of their lives, their communities and this nation. It is our ethical and social responsibility to imbue our youth with a clear, confident sense of their identity, agency, unique abilities and the skills necessary to share who they are and what they believe with others, even those that may have different or opposing views.



With the support of the USC Office of Experiential & Applied Learning, my organization, Breakthrough LA's program, My Voice Matters (MVM), is currently at several South LA middle and high schools and is successful in engaging students through a student interest and inquiry-based learning approach in an experiential learning context.

Within the context of the class, our students have visited the USC bio-mechanics lab, the BOC stadium and LAFC offices downtown and interviewed nationally recognized artists, writers and musicians and attended a Peak Performance Soccer STEM Summer Camp supported by USC and LAFC.



Tara Guber and students on-campus at USC during a My Voice Matters camp.

When integrated into class work emphasizing reading, writing, co-creating and oral presentation, these experiences significantly extend students "horizon of opportunity" and give them the intellectual and emotional life-long learning tools to choose, shape and create their lives.

Giving the tools of collaboration, cooperation, communication and publication to these students through activation of the dynamic techniques of journalism is my personal mission and goal of MVM. I am deeply grateful for our partnership with Tammy Anderson and the department of Experiential Learning to bring this valuable work and life skills to students.

Tara Guber is the founder of Breakthrough LA, as well as co-owner of the Los Angeles Football Club.

MORE THAN A BUSINESS: EMPOWER WOMEN, SECURE COMMUNITIES

Partner Voices

**BY SYLVIA CASTILLO,
DIRECTOR, FOUNDATION AND COMMUNITY
OFFICER, CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

I firmly believe that when you empower communities at the grassroots level and provide them with the resources and the opportunities, they will flourish. I am fortunate to work for an organization that shares my belief, and I'm even luckier to serve in a capacity where I have the ability to effect change. Union Bank's support of USC's Joint Educational Project (JEP) gives us the opportunity to create that lasting change for some of our most disenfranchised communities in Los Angeles.

USC has a long and storied legacy of serving some of the most underserved neighborhoods in South Los Angeles. Like USC, Union Bank has also always been committed to serving communities where there is the greatest need. That's why –through our foundation- we are proud to partner with USC in our shared support of JEP's Young Scientists Program, (YSP). The Program works in partnership with local elementary schools in South Los Angeles to provide a wide range of science-related activities. It offers hands-on science labs to fourth and fifth graders during the day to complement their classroom science instruction. The goal is to cultivate a learning environment in which students are encouraged to broaden their view of the world through the lens of scientific pursuits.

While the elementary students that participate in this program are learning new ways to appreciate science, the USC student mentors also gain tremendous value out of the experience. They learn how their individual contributions can have a positive influence, perhaps even a life-long impact on others. I believe wholeheartedly that a mentor has the power to leave a permanent imprint in the life of their mentee. Transformative opportunities like this are a big reason why we choose to remain committed to this program.

In addition to Union Bank's existing support of the Young Scientists Program, we are proud to soon be launching a new effort in partnership with the Dornsife Office of Experiential and Applied Learning, it's called "More Than a Business: Empower Women, Secure Communities." The initiative will involve cross-collaboration with other departments at USC including USC Econ, the Spanish Language Department, and Union Bank's Magnolia Community

Center. Working together, we will pool resources to help provide financial education and entrepreneurship training to underserved residents in South Los Angeles. Our focus will be to help Latina women who have a dream to launch their own business, and perhaps in many cases are already running a microenterprise, but do not have the skills, resources, or access to grow their business. For many, there may even be a language barrier as well as other socio-economic and cultural challenges preventing them from truly fulfilling their career aspirations. Much like a business incubator, More Than a Business will provide the training that will help remove many of those barriers and help women find a path to success.

Both these programs are a manifestation of why USC and Union Bank are such good community partners, we are helping bring to life our shared belief that when individuals thrive, entire communities can flourish.

There's an expression that says, "to whom much is given, much is expected." I feel blessed to serve in my role at the foundation. I've enjoyed a successful career in banking and have so much to be thankful for and now I consider it not just my personal responsibility, but my privilege to give back to the hardest working communities in Los Angeles.



***Sylvia Castillo** serves as director and foundation and community officer for MUFG Union Bank's Corporate Social Responsibility group. She is responsible for building relationships with civic and business leaders, community-based advocacy organizations, and multicultural leaders throughout the communities that the bank serves. Additionally, Ms. Castillo directs initiatives that involve the bank's Foundation, public policy, and community development efforts. She is based in Los Angeles.*

CENTER FOR ACTIVE LEARNING IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CALIS)

Student Voices

MARKUS SHERMAN - USC CLASS OF 2020
MAJOR: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (GLOBAL BUSINESS)
CALIS PROGRAM COORDINATOR & TIRPER, 2016-2020

My Dornsife Experience:
A campus job and outreach program
made the difference

The Teaching International Relations Program is the service-learning initiative of the Center for Active Learning in International Studies (CALIS). Through the program, USC students team up to guest teach international relations topics in classrooms of our TIRP partner teachers at high schools across Los Angeles.

My experience with CALIS both as a staff member and a TIRPer has truly meant everything to me. As an International Relations Global Business major, I had a vested interest in education when I arrived at USC. I joined TIRP my first semester on campus to engage with the community outside of the USC bubble, and learn more about some of the challenges that students face in Los Angeles schools. At CALIS we believe that understanding your own community is a vital first step for students to build a truly global perspective.

As a TIRPer I employed CALIS' analytical tools to help students break down complex concepts that I even had trouble understanding when I came across them in my IR classes. I felt like I was learning as much as the students by teaching. I was able to make connections with students in just four short sessions and saw their confidence build from the first session to the last. I've even had students message me months after our sessions have ended asking for college advice.



Markus jumped into TIRP right out of the gate in the Fall of his freshman year.

As a staff member, I've been able to grow my passion for education further by hosting workshops for teachers and students on campus, developing curriculum for TIRPers to use in classrooms, and run the day-to-day TIRP operations. With CALIS I was able to grow into my own professionally, and even found my first internship through a CALIS connection. As I embark on the next step of my career as a history teacher in August, I know I'll rely heavily on everything I've learned as a TIRPer and a CALIS staff member. I am ever grateful to CALIS Director Teresa Hudock, my fellow staff members, and all of the great TIRPers I've had the pleasure of working with for making this my most valuable USC experience.

To learn more about CALIS and TIRP outreach, follow this [link](#).

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OFFICE OF OVERSEAS STUDIES

Alumni Voices

EMILY JETTER - CLASS OF 2016 - USC MADRID SPRING '14
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY
MINOR: SPANISH, NATURAL SCIENCE

My study abroad experience at USC truly shaped the trajectory for my life. My time in Madrid, Spain opened my eyes to the beauty of traveling, culture, and exploration. I knew that my time in Madrid was not complete after my four months abroad with USC. After graduating in 2016, I applied to become an English Teaching Assistant for one year at an elementary school in Madrid. I was responsible for collaborating with the teachers and creating my own lesson plans for my kindergarten class. Additionally, I assisted the sixth grade teachers in preparing their students to take the Cambridge PET exam. Outside of the classroom, I administered private English classes and volunteered with recent immigrants and refugees.

After my second time in Madrid, I decided that I wanted return to Brazil (I completed a Maymester program there in summer 2016). I was lucky enough to find a program called 4YOU2 in Sao Paulo, a company that provided cheap English classes to Brazilians who otherwise could not afford to take an English course. While this was all happening, I was applying to medical school and I could not believe it when I was accepted to my first-choice medical school. Suddenly, I had a big decision to make, postpone medical school or cancel my new job experience in Sao Paulo. This decision may seem easy to some, but it was something that I struggled with for days. However, I knew that I would never have the opportunity to travel to Brazil, experience the lifestyle of the favelas, and meet amazing students and faculty from around the world. I was extremely fortunate that the Admissions Committee at Quinnipiac University were so understanding of my situation and allowed me to defer my admission for one year!

Although teaching in Spain and Brazil may not seem to be directly related to medicine, I definitely think that this experience improved my application. Firstly, my Spanish and Portuguese greatly improved after living there for nine months and these are the two largest non-English speaking populations in Connecticut. Secondly, I gained more



Emily Jetter, MD '23 pictured with her white coat at Quinnipiac University.

experience on working with a team (teachers, principals, parents) which is important because interdisciplinary teamwork is now a fundamental component of medicine. Lastly, even though I primarily worked with younger students, I never used their native language in my classroom. Therefore, I learned the value of explaining complicated material in the simplest way possible so that my students were able to understand me. Ultimately, doctors are teachers and I think it is critical to be able to explain things to patients in a way that they can easily comprehend. As I said in 2016, "There is nothing comparable to leaving your comfort zone and assimilating yourself into a new culture, you will develop in so many ways and make memories that will last a lifetime." Studying abroad can and will change your life; more importantly, you can still accomplish all of your dreams while being able to have fun along the journey. [READ MORE](#)

*For more information, contact:
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FACULTY LED OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION BY WENDY PEDERSEN, DIRECTOR

All of our faculty directors know that taking on a student travel program is no easy task! That is why we are grateful for all the dedicated faculty directors that lead our student programs, especially during these unprecedented times and our rapid transition to virtual programming. One of our passionate faculty directors, Ivette Gomez, has been leading students on her popular Cuba program for the past 4 years! We treasure her flexibility, creativity, and above all her commitment to ensuring students have a wonderful Cuba Maymester!

*For more information, contact Wendy Pedersen
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Professor Gomez, in middle, with students during the Cuba Maymester.



Students pose for a group photo during the Cuba Maymester.

Faculty Voices

Professor Ivette Gomez
**Associate Professor (Teaching) of Spanish,
Director of the Cuba Maymester**

It had long been a dream of mine to take students to Cuba, my native country. Inspired by the visit of President Obama to the island in March 2016 and the warming of Cuban-U.S. relations under his presidency, I felt how important it was to seize the opportunity that more American students could go to Cuba and have a firsthand experience of the culture.

The USC Dornsife Office of Experiential and Applied Learning made this dream come true on May 29, 2017, when I arrived in Havana with my first group of 21 students. Since then, more than 90 undergraduate students have had the possibility to participate in my course, **Visualizing Cuba: Arts, Politics and Society in Today's Cuba**, also known as the Cuba Maymester.

In this program, students explore the many connections between Cuba and the United States in terms of arts, music, literature, history and culture. They live the experience through trips to places such as the Bay of Pigs, Hemingway's house in the outskirts of Havana, and the hotels built by the American mafia of the 40s and 50s. They stay in the houses of Cubans, where they get to see how they live, what they eat, what music they dance to, and how they go about their everyday reality.

They receive lectures by specialists and get to interact with young people and ask them questions about what they think of the political situation in the island, the current state of Cuban-U.S. relations, how they handle discrimination in race relations, and what they think about the Cuban health care system.

I believe this kind of experience builds a bridge where students find others and themselves. Many expressed the long-lasting impact that going to Cuba has had in their lives. They end up understanding and appreciating, in a better way, theirs and others' realities.

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PRISON EDUCATION PROJECT

Staff Voices

BY KATE LEVIN & NIK DE DOMINIC, CO-DIRECTORS

Though the Spring 2020 session of the USC Dornsife Prison Education Project was curtailed due to the COVID-19 public health crisis (which, nationwide, has hit prison populations particularly hard), the PEP program is flourishing. The planned Spring 2020 program included a larger and more diverse set of courses than we have ever organized before, with a selection of five classes—Film Studies, Creative Writing, Science Fiction/Fantasy Writing, English for Spanish-speaking In-Custody Students, and Science, Faith, and the Search for the Cosmic Truth—to be offered at two California state prison facilities. Notably, four of the courses were to be taught by Dornsife faculty members new to the PEP program, and we look forward to more faculty serving as guest lecturers and instructors in future semesters. Dr. Lisa Sedano of the Spatial Sciences Institute, a PEP guest lecturer during the Fall 2019 semester, reflected:

“Lecturing for the PEP project, alongside another Dornsife faculty member and a Dornsife undergraduate, was incredibly rewarding. The students were focused listeners and asked insightful questions. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to teach, and learn, in this non-traditional setting.”

Perhaps our most meaningful development during the 2019-2020 academic year was the restructuring of PEP to increase student leadership of the program. Student Co-Directors Colin Petersdorf and Hadiya Culbreath organized multiple outreach meetings to recruit new students and faculty, facilitated travel to the mandatory PEP orientation session at Cal Poly Pomona in February, and expanded the USC PEP network via email and social media. We would like to extend particular gratitude to Colin, who is graduating this spring. Colin served as a teaching assistant for multiple PEP courses and, in the Fall of 2019, designed and instructed his own screenwriting course at the California Rehabilitation Center. We look forward to welcoming Gurasees Bajaj, a Health and Human Sciences major and PEP teaching assistant, as Co-Director for the 2020-2021 academic year.

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Director Nik de Dominic with PEP students, including student Co-Director Hadiya Culbreath.



An in-custody student raises his hand during a course session.

TRIAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM (MOCK TRIAL)

Student Voices

ELISA HERRERA
MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE

I joined the USC Trial Advocacy Program in 2018. That summer, I had come home one evening to find my entire family sitting on the couch, watching the news in perfect silence. I immediately knew that something was wrong. We're Mexican-American—we don't do silence. When I walked in, my mother looked at me with wide eyes. I realized what they were watching, what they were hearing, that had left them so perfectly still. Photos of migrant children, sitting in cages like dogs. The sound of children sobbing, screaming for parents that had been ripped away from them. I looked over at my younger sister, her wide brown eyes and young face, and back at the television. I was eighteen, fresh out of my first year at USC. And sitting there, night after night, watching children scream and cry, I felt powerless.

Meanwhile, the students on the USC Trial Advocacy team were boarding a plane for Harlingen, Texas. Located on the border, this South Texas town is home to the Port Isabel Detention Center—and to ProBar, a group of pro-bono attorneys defending migrants in detention. It was there that the USC Trial Advocacy Team flew in to help train pro-bono attorneys to fight for evidence necessary to defend detained migrants. They also worked to pair detained children with attorneys, helping children find a voice when they would have otherwise been silenced. They ended up matching over 100 children with attorneys to defend them.

This was one of many things that I learned about the USC Trial Advocacy program when I came in for an info session in the fall of 2018. I was already interested in the program, interested in civil rights law. But knowing what the team had been able to do, "when push came to shove," made me determined that I wanted to join them.

Trial Advocacy is difficult, there's no question. That's because being a trial attorney is difficult. Being a good advocate is difficult. By putting USC students in a trial simulation, requiring us to learn the rules of evidence, to conduct legal analysis and construct our arguments as a team, Trial Advocacy gives us a chance to practice being present in a courtroom. It gives us a chance to practice giving speeches, to respond to arguments we didn't see coming.

But most importantly, it gives us the chance to fail. To fail at using the rules of evidence correctly. To fail to make a coherent argument. To fail to use our words in a way that moves people. And so, when push comes to shove, when someone's freedom is on the line, when justice is at stake, we have learned. We have learned to argue the rules of evidence. We know how to make a clear argument. We know how to use our words to move people.

In the summer of 2019, an attorney for the Department of Justice stood before a federal judge, and said that detained children don't need or deserve toothpaste, or soap. I didn't stay sitting on my couch. Instead, my teammates and I boarded a plane to Harlingen, Texas.



*Top: Student Elisa Herrera poses at VKC.
Bottom: Students on the mock trial team.*



The USC Trial Advocacy team poses with their trophy after winning a tournament.

*For more information, contact Olu Orange
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PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Staff Voices

BY AMBER HARRIS, ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR



One of the benefits of working in the USC Physical Education Program is that my colleagues are in the business of educating people on how to achieve healthy living. I can emphatically state that my journey here in physical education has been, well an education. I was of the mindset that single digit clothing was evidence of being physically fit, never mind my inability to climb stairs without becoming winded. I was only concerned with my physical appearance, not realizing there were so many other factors that went into my overall wellbeing. While experiencing firsthand the myriad of Mind/Body/Fitness/Sports and Activity classes and their real life, hands on approach to learning, I quickly changed my entire way of thinking and realized that living a healthy lifestyle really is a choice.

Students in our classes are discovering the same lifelong benefits and are learning more about physical and mental health as our PE classes continue to grow in popularity and enrollment. The variety of yoga classes help strengthen the body and soothe the soul while self-defense classes involve a physical, no nonsense approach to teaching valuable life skills. The fitness related classes challenge the muscles and build confidence, allowing students an opportunity to work at their own pace while gradually being nudged out of their comfort zones. If students are looking to build camaraderie while improving fundamental skills, the sports related classes are an option.

I'm thankful that students have access to classes like mindfulness and stress management especially during this challenging time. The lifelong lessons gained during my time with PE that I (and I imagine our students) put into practice every day has allowed a greater achievement in my physical and mental wellbeing and for that, I'm grateful.

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Amber Harris with PE Director Steve VanKanegan, 2009



Amber Harris fitness regime, 2020

WASHINGTON D.C. PROGRAM

Student Voices

KABIR BADIANI

MAJOR: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (GLOBAL BUSINESS)

The DC program is quite literally the reason that I have a job, but more than that, doing the program was immeasurably important in helping me figure out the direction that I want my career to head in and building on the skills to help me get there. Beforehand, I was a first semester junior with little professional experience and no real idea of how to navigate the recruiting space because I was not a business major but wanted to get into management consulting. Through the DC program I was able to secure an internship in the research space for dual use technologies and nuclear non-proliferation, and because of that internship, I interned over the summer for a small consulting firm working on a project with governments and small businesses, advising them on international trade issues. The network I created through the program was essential for me to be able to take those steps towards building relationships, and without the people I met, I would certainly not have kick started my career the way that I was able to, and I am now about to start my full time job working in Global Trade Advisory at Deloitte. But more than just the professional growth, the semester in DC was also one of the most enjoyable of my 4 years at USC. Living with the DC cohort and being able to enjoy the District for an entire semester was invaluable, and I can't wait to be back soon!



Sophia Lechner, Margaux Gjurasic, Kurt Weatherford, Kabir Badiani, Inkoo Kang at White House

Student Voices

MADDIE MASINSIN

MAJOR: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

As a senior studying International Relations, the Dornsife D.C. Program was one of my most formative undergraduate experiences. Not only did the program provided me with incredible professional advancement opportunities, but it also set me up on my current career trajectory. For example, my internship at the U.S. Department of State helped me realize my interest in human rights and allowed me to hone in on the topics of Internet Freedom and democracy promotion — two areas of work I have continued to research and hope to pursue in the future. Moreover, by interning for the federal government, I gained first-hand insight into how Washington operates as the capital of the United States, as well as a foreign policy hub. Additionally, thanks to the many networking opportunities USC facilitated — such as its annual alumni networking night — I was able to form strong professional connections. As an individual who is eager to return to D.C. after graduation, this and all the other opportunities the program provided were incredibly valuable and could not have been experienced under any other circumstances.



Claire He (left) and Maddie Masinsin (right) in Washington D.C.

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JOINT EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

INTRODUCTION BY TINA KONEAZNY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

The JEP staff is so incredibly proud of all of the students who have worked with us over the years and love to keep in touch with them post-graduation. We hold a special kind of pride in those who have remained in our USC neighborhood as teachers and administrators in the schools in which they spent time as tutors, mentors, or mini-course instructors as USC students through our many programs. Alberto Rivera is one such alum. A former USC ReadersPlus tutor at Vermont Elementary School, Alberto spent nearly 20 years at Vermont first as a teacher and later as an administrator. It's a pleasure to share Alberto's reflections on his time with ReadersPlus:



*For more information, contact Tina Koneazny
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Alumni Reflection by Alberto Rivera

I began my journey as an educator in August of 1997 when I was a freshman at USC and applied for this new program through JEP called "USC Readers". In high school, I did community service working in an elementary school and figured I could use that experience and apply it towards the USC Readers program as I settled into my first year as a university student. I was trained by Tina and placed at Vermont where I began helping students one-on-one with their reading skills. I noticed how much help these students needed, but more than that they needed a mentor or role model in their lives.



I remained with the program my full college career until I graduated from USC in 2001. The program changed my life. While working with the program, I majored in General Studies to be an elementary school teacher in the future. I truly enjoyed helping the students I served and felt that as a teacher I could do even more. I also felt I could serve as a role model and demonstrate to the students that they, too, could be successful, and even become a USC student one day just like I was, but only if they work hard.

After graduation, I was hired as a teacher at Vermont for thirteen years. I always welcomed USC Readers to my class, as well as other JEP programs, such as service-learning JEP mini-courses and the Young Scientist Program. I then served as the Title 1 Coordinator monitoring and providing resources for at-risk and low-income students.

I made Vermont my second home for nineteen years until leaving in 2017 to work as an Administrator in the Charter Schools Division overseeing Independent and LAUSD Affiliated Charter Schools. Currently I work on the Administrator Team at Gil Garcetti Learning Academy. Never did I expect this to happen when I became a USC Reader. I am glad the program still exists because it is a life changing program, not only for the children served, but for the USC students as well.



Alberto with one of his students when he first joined the USC ReadersPlus program

In Memorium: Richard 'Dick' Cone

INTRODUCTION BY TAMMY ANDERSON

Our JEP staff is heartbroken by the passing of Dick Cone, who was so much more than a supervisor. He was our fearless leader, friend, teacher and mentor who created a unique work environment where every staff member was treated like a family, their voice heard and respected no matter their position.

On a personal note, when I walked into the JEP House 39 years ago, to start my first full-time job, I absolutely had no idea of the gift I had been given - the privilege to work with Dick Cone. He was a fountain of knowledge and taught me the principles of experiential education, program development and administration, strategic planning, the value of building reciprocal partnerships, and patience. He was one of my biggest supporters. When he retired in 2002, he left a picture on my desk that said, "When life gives you limes, make Margaritas" and reminded me that I was ready to direct JEP. He promised to stay in touch, and he did.

The reflection below was an email that he sent to the staff in 2010. He later gave me permission to use it in a future JEP newsletter. Now, I share his heartfelt words with you.

[Read more about Dick Cone: USC Dornsife's tribute](#)



JEP Executive Directors: Dick Cone (1980-2002), Tammy Anderson (2002-2018) and Susan Harris (2018-) (Photo credit: Hinde Kast).

A Reflection by Richard 'Dick' Cone

JEP Colleagues -

I want each of you to know what a great newsletter you just put out. Unlike anything that has been done before, the fall newsletter demonstrated how so much we took as articles of faith are bearing fruit. Despite the naysayers and the cynics, it is clear that JEP is having a long and lasting impact on the community and, perhaps more importantly, those on campus who engage in that community. I think the focus of the newsletter on the impact of students, former as well as current moves the conversation off of "JEP as charity" and toward service-learning as a valid form of learning.

It's been a long hard struggle and there are undoubtedly many who keep engaged learning at arms-length, possibly due to their own sense of being intimidated by the world. The struggle is far from over and new challenges are ever-present but some things are becoming ever more clear:

1 - In the late '70's, Barbara said that JEP's greatest challenge was "to outlive the bastards". Working together we stabilized JEP, made it solvent, slowly won converts and did everything in our power to make the reality of the program match its rhetoric. The quality of the work, furthered by hundreds of dedicated staff members, made it increasingly difficult to describe JEP as a "mick". Now, most of the bastards are gone and those many years and hard-fought battles all seem worthwhile.

2 - Our ability to focus has paid off in ways that are unimaginable for less focused programs. While the norm for most service-learning programs developed in the late twentieth century (and still true today I believe) had no working definition of "community" other than "not campus", our focus on neighborhood schools became the model for USC's Family of Five and now we are witnessing the transitions from student being tutored to student tutoring, from student tutoring to alumni teaching. At conferences I used to preach "Commitment, Community, Communication, Continuity" but few have applied those concepts half as well as JEP.

3 - And, on the topic of continuity, JEP's ability to keep small committed staff together, to recruit from within and work together to constantly identify and sooth out rough spots is a major source of strength. I watched with great interest as a friend who ran the service-learning program at *[another school]* left and was replaced after a national search by a hot shot from the Ivy League. She was so anxious to put her stamp on the program that she destroyed most of what *[the former director]* had carefully created and alienated many of the faculty members. JEP has not lost any ground over the years, growing seamlessly.

4 - We knew all along that university students got more out of this deal than people in the community. While it has always been easier to sell JEP as outreach, those of us in the belly of the beast knew that USC students were the biggest beneficiaries. I must confess that I often sold JEP as outreach because it was the only message that many on campus could understand way back when. But now, times have changed and it is indeed refreshing to see the Dean of LAS and the new President speak in ways that indicate that they clearly see the benefits of JEP to the campus.

Thanks to all of you for sticking with it and making this collective dream more of reality than Barbara or I could ever have imagined.

Love,

Dick