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Executive Summary

The Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania program is a statewide program that enrolls college students as part-time AmeriCorps members to provide service to nonprofit organizations and schools. Scholars corps members build the capacity of nonprofits through direct service, as well as through the connection to campus resources. Scholars corps members are leaders for service; they play critical roles in coordinating service programs and facilitating service projects for their peers.

Rationale and Approach

Compelling Community Need: One of the largest states in the nation, Pennsylvania presents, in many ways, a microcosm of the problems that affect the United States as a whole. A "rust-belt" state, so to speak, Pennsylvania suffers from a decline of industrialization, and a failure to replace coal, steel, and other industries with viable alternative means of employment. Accordingly, the needs of its citizens span both urban and rural communities. Fortunately, Pennsylvania has a disproportionately large share of a treasured national resource -- institutions of higher education and their students. There are over two hundred (200) institutions of higher learning in Pennsylvania. Accordingly, Pennsylvania is in a unique position to focus an education-awards only program on college students, some of whom have faced their own academic and/or financial challenges, and for some of them, to encourage them to focus their service upon pre-K through 12th grade students similarly situated. In this way, we can foster the academic success and the corresponding employment success of two "generations" of students, those currently in college and those younger students who can only aspire thereto without additional support.

Furthermore, Pennsylvania is home to thousands of nonprofit and community-based organizations, meeting critical needs in urban and rural communities alike. Pennsylvania's Bureau of Charitable Organizations lists over 8,500 charities operating in the commonwealth, inclusive of larger well-known organizations such as the United Way and YMCA as well as countless smaller and less formal community-based organizations and civic groups. When added to the 501 school districts across the

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state, there is an overwhelming abundance of places and communities in which students' time and talents can be put use, helping to bridge the gaps of unmet needs.

The primary emphasis of the SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PENNSYLVANIA program is capacity-building at the nonprofit agencies and community-based organizations that serve as sites for the SCHOLARS Corps Members. Nonprofits of all sizes, but especially the smaller ones, are under-resourced in almost every sense of the word -- people, money, and physical resources. Many nonprofits and community based organizations operate on shoestring budgets, with only a few (if any) full-time individuals, yet increasingly they are expected to run with the efficiency of businesses. Since September 11th, public expectations of nonprofits, and with them the corresponding oversight, have dramatically increased. It is no longer enough for many nonprofits to simply meet the needs of their clients (as if that were simple to begin with) but also they must meet the needs of a more diverse and demanding donating public. Nonprofits and community-based agencies alike are struggling to keep abreast of the latest techniques with regard to technology, human resource development, volunteer management, financial diversification, and assessment and evaluation, just to name a few.

The Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND) identified nonprofit capacity building as a major statewide need through its work over the years with campus-community partnership. While each community in Pennsylvania has specific issues and concerns, they all have nonprofit and community-based organizations trying to meet those needs. Furthermore, when structured appropriately, college and university students are well positioned to help those local organizations meet those needs. When the SCHOLARS program began six years ago, this was little more than an operating assumption; evidence from the actual work accomplished by the SCHOLARS program since that time demonstrates that indeed nonprofits need capacity-building assistance from their college partners. Furthermore, in the past year, this need has only deepened with financial crisis,

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and the resulting financial strain placed on the nonprofit sector.

Description of Activity and Member Roles: In order to meet the needs of diverse communities and the organizations that serve those communities, SCHOLARS will fill a variety of roles. For the past six years, SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA AmeriCorps Members have: provided academic enrichment to at-risk children at the Camp Curtin School (Harrisburg), assisted individuals with food insecurity (Indiana County Community Action Agency and Williamsport Meals on Wheels), taught computer skills to low-income parents (Philadelphia), and planned and participated in numerous domestic alternative break trips (particularly to the Gulf region) to name just a few. Results of our End of Year Member Survey for 2008-2009 show that 43% of members work primarily in education-related service, 27% classify their service as "community development," 9% serve in health-related programs, and the rest are split between public safety, the environment, the elderly, and "other." For the 2010-2011 year, SCHOLARS will continue to play unique roles which not only help their community partners meet their missions but also build and promote a culture of service on their college campuses.

While the immediate goal of the SCHOLARS program is to provide volunteers to nonprofit and community-based organizations, so they may better serve their existing clients, the long-term goal is to build a relationship between the agency and the college or university as a whole. To put in another way, the goal is to institutionalize the relationship. By connecting with an entire institution of higher education, a savvy nonprofit is able to tap into vast networks of human, intellectual, and technological resources. Intermediate steps in this process might simply be the identification of new volunteers (primarily recruited by the corps member), identification of new clients, and the formation of relationships with other nonprofits and inclusion in related networks (such as other nonprofits already partnering with the university). Over time, this can mean the development of new streams of funding (such as being included in grants written by the university); access to technology (such as cutting edge

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equipment and software); and the development of new projects that expand the mission of the nonprofit leading to organizational sustainability (often due to the availability of new non-student volunteers with diverse interests). Our aligned performance measure is based directly on this model.

As such, the SCHOLARS program is already having a significant impact on the nonprofit agencies, community-based organizations, and schools that accept SCHOLARS members to fulfill their service requirements. The hope has always been that the mere presence of even a single SCHOLAR would lead to a deeper partnership between the community site and the campus, for at least some percentage of sites. The data are overwhelmingly supportive of this hypothesis. In fact, of the 35 campus administrators that completed our Final Survey in October 2009, all reported that their campus built capacity of a nonprofit in the community as a result of the SCHOLARS program (100% reached one of the intermediate indicators described above and 74% reached one of the long-term indicators).

In order to accomplish this, the SCHOLARS program partners directly with Pennsylvania colleges and universities to manage the program. Staff from those institutions (often the Community Service Director) will work to identify specific opportunities and places for members to serve. To accomplish this, they in turn partner with local nonprofit organizations and schools. Since its inception, the SCHOLARS program has partnered with 68 different colleges and universities who in turn have partnered with hundreds of organizations. For the 2009-2010 program year, we have 41 campuses participating, enrolling a total of 285 Corps Members working with as many organizations. The campus-based staff (what we call Campus Administrators) recruit, select, and train students. Campus administrators help match members with appropriate service opportunities with partnering nonprofits and also provide ongoing training and reflection to members.

This year, we filled 100% of our slots before the program year started, and are currently maintaining a

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waiting list of students to fill any slots made available due to attrition. For this reason, in addition to new campuses already expressing interest in next year's program, we plan to enroll 450 members during the 2010-2011 program year, 400 of whom will be Minimum-Time members and 50 of whom will be Quarter-Time members. Our experience tells us that the majority of students (and community service programs) are set up to do about 8-10 hours of service per week, which over the course of a school year translates to about 300 hours. A smaller number of students go above and beyond this by doing 10-15 hours per week and/or doing additional service in the summer months.

Corps Members are supervised by both their Campus Administrators and by community-based site supervisors. In order to ensure high quality across the program, Campus Administrators are provided a guidebook and manual, complete with expectations, roles and responsibilities, and a list of the prohibited activities. Campuses often already have their own guidelines for community partners and those materials are shared across programs as well. In addition, Campus Administrators are expected to attend a Summer Institute sponsored by PHENND, to build their own capacity as volunteer managers.

PHENND has already successfully conducted this Institute for the four of the past six years. (We did not do our own Summer Institute in 2007 when the National Volunteering and Service Conference was held in Philadelphia; instead, we encouraged our partners to attend that conference and built two SCHOLARS-specific trainings into the schedule). This past July, the Summer Institute featured workshops on Environmental Programs, Post-Secondary Readiness Preparation, Supporting K-12 Service-Learning, Using Scholars to support Faculty for Service-Learning, Leveraging Work-Study to Support Community Service, and Performance Measures and Community Capacity-Building. These sessions are typically designed to be "train-the-trainer" so that Campus Administrators have to tools to go back to their own campuses and offer similar training directly to the Corps Members. These sessions are intermingled with more "nuts and bolts" sessions on AmeriCorps provisions and requirements,

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including emphasis on the prohibited activities and the non-duplication/non-displacement policies. When possible, we have also piggy-backed onto other statewide training opportunities. This year we encouraged all of our campuses to attend Pennsylvania Campus Compact's Assessment Institute held in March at Alvernia College.

Strict compliance with AmeriCorps regulations will continue to be emphasized by PHENND. Each SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA AmeriCorps member receives an AmeriCorps orientation, including an explanation of prohibited activities, and signs the requisite member agreement which clearly lists the prohibited activities. PHENND also periodically checks over time sheets to ensure that hours are not being submitted for prohibited activities.

In addition to the Summer Institute, PHENND has also worked diligently to conduct in-person site visits with every participating campus in the state twice per program year. Given that PHENND is based in the southeast corner of the Pennsylvania and there are two campuses 420 miles away in the northwest corner, this is no small task. Emphasis has been placed on face-to-face monitoring in order to ensure quality control and program compliance. In-person monitoring is also valued because it provides an opportunity for PHENND to provide technical assistance to the overall service program at participating campuses. For example, each campus has its own unique situation especially with regard to leveraging Federal Work Study for community service. PHENND has discovered that the most productive conversations about implementing and/or expanding high quality Federal Work Study service programs (which in turn can bolster the AmeriCorps program) take place when the discussion can address the unique concerns of a given institution.

Finally, in the past three years, PHENND has taken steps to offer direct training to members. While day-to-day training and member development is unique to each campus and with each corps, there are

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clearly some cross-cutting skills and competencies valuable to all SCHOLARS Corps Members, regardless of their location. During the 2007-2008 program year, the Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania piloted a regional approach to direct member training by offering a "Student Service Leaders Conference" in the southeast region of the state. It was quite successful, and for the first time ever, allowed for direct training of members on a large scale.

Due to the success of the Philadelphia conference, the Scholars program offered the same event again in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, and has been supporting the development of similar initiatives around the state. Last year, a leadership conference was held in the southwest region of the state which attracted SCHOLARS from three campuses. In mid-November of that year, Lock Haven University hosted a global citizenship conference that attracted SCHOLARS from four central Pennsylvania campuses. This year, we held the third annual Southeast PA conference in mid-November, and there are plans for a central PA conference on February 6, 2010. Although these events will not mean that all 285+ SCHOLARS will receive direct training from PHENND, they have provided a model so that one day direct training of all members will be possible. PHENND believes that this strategy of regional collaboration is the most cost-effective and sustainable method for member training and development over the long-term.

Measurable Outputs and Outcomes: The 2010-2011 SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA AmeriCorps program will focus on a series of aligned outcomes related to the nonprofit capacity-building emphasis of the program. This will be supported by three distinct, yet aligned, performance measures. Building capacity of community-based organizations and nonprofit agencies is a key goal of the SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA AmeriCorps program because it is these institutions which will have the greatest impact on Pennsylvania's communities.

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As previously described, nonprofit agencies and community-based organizations face myriad challenges as they try to meet their basic missions. SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA is designed to place Corps Members from college campuses at these agencies and organizations first and foremost so that the member may provide a useful service to, or on behalf of, the agency. However, the program is also designed so that the individual relationship between the SCHOLAR and the site supervisor might be transformed to an institutional relationship between the agency and campus as a whole. While this won't happen with all sites or even most of them, PHENND hopes to see each participating SCHOLARS campus deepen partnerships with 1-2 organizations at which SCHOLARS serve. This deepened relationship will mean that the campus is providing some other type of service to that organization beyond the direct service of the SCHOLAR. For example, the campus may help the organization establish new connections/networks with other community groups or gain access to new technology. Some of these indicators of nonprofit capacity-building have been identified as long-term indicators (end outcomes) while others are more short-term (intermediate outcomes). All of these indicators are tracked in the Campus Administrator Survey and the End of the Year Member Survey.

At least 60 nonprofit and community-based organizations will be identified by participating SCHOLARS campuses as groups with which they intend to develop a deepened partnership as a result of the AmeriCorps program (approximately 1-2 per campus). By the end of the 2010-2011 program year, 90% of participating colleges will report that as a result of the SCHOLARS program they have deepened their relationship with a community partner as evidenced by meeting one of four indicators of intermediate impact. These intermediate indicators of a deepened partnership are: provision of additional volunteers, increased ability to meet mission, increase in number and type of clients served, and the establishment of new connections and networks. The intermediate indicators logically lead to the development of more long-term partnerships as evidenced by a different set of indicators, to wit: increased access to technology, the planning of additional projects (a sign of long-term sustainability),

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and the development of new service-learning courses (also an indicator of both sustainability and reciprocity between the organization and the university). Seventy percent of colleges will also report that they achieved at least one of the long-term indicators with at least one of their partners. In the 2008-2009 program year, the most recent for which there is evidence, the SCHOLARS program met and/or exceeded these goals.

All of the above outputs, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes will be measured primarily through the Semi-Annual and End of the Year Campus Administrator Surveys. These will be supplemented by an End of the Year Corps Member Survey which is given to each and every corps member upon completion of the program. These surveys will be further supplemented by content analyses of notes from site visits as well as the activities listings in the Volunteer Impact system, the primary system used by Corps Members to log hours and generate time sheets. Finally, this past year, we have been able to set aside funds to hire an external evaluator who is looking more closely at the data to assess internal consistency among all methods of reporting so that we have a deeper understanding of how exactly the SCHOLARS members and their campuses are meeting the needs of their communities.

At this time, as a scattered-site, statewide program involved with many different issues, we do not feel comfortable aligning ourselves with one of the five new focus areas, particularly since aligned performance measures for each of these areas have not yet been announced. However, given that we have many SCHOLARS working in the Education field, we can foresee an alignment with this area in the future.

Plans for Self-Assessment and Improvement: During our first three-year cycle, the newness of the program was a challenge. We experienced problems with timely submission of time sheets and other paperwork, sometimes from the corps member and sometimes from the Campus Administrator. We

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have worked diligently over to rectify these problems and now feel confident in our ability to manage a large, statewide, AmeriCorps program.

During the current three-year cycle, we have made great strides in addressing our challenges. First, we implemented a common start date and moved our recruitment calendar up by several months. When we first started the program, campuses recruited their members in the fall and submitted paperwork for actual enrollment on a rolling basis. Not only was this unwieldy, but it also meant we needed to request a no-cost extension to allow 99% of our members to finish the program. Second, the transition from WBRS to the portal, and the concurrent elimination of the requirement for signed paper time sheets, has removed an aspect of the program that was particularly challenging for a scattered-site program such as ours. We are still using the same electronic time keeping system as before; however, instead of the campus mailing PHENND a signed time sheet, PHENND staff can directly print the time sheet for the campus, eliminating the need to hunt down Corps Members' signatures and mail paperwork back and forth. PHENND has also created a new online database to replace WBRS, which allows PHENND to share monthly reports directly with each campus so they too can track the total hours for each member.

At the campus level, we have also seen vast improvement since the beginning of the program. With each year in the program, Campus Administrators have developed a better understanding of the full benefits and responsibilities of managing an AmeriCorps program; many campuses previously without well-developed service initiatives are now putting key infrastructures in place; and campuses that were already serving their communities well are realizing how to use the SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA AmeriCorps program to take their efforts to the next level. In at least two instances, participating campuses have created new staff positions solely responsible for managing their SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA programs.

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Finally, we have begun working with an external evaluator to more systematically assess the strengths and weakness of our program. Our evaluator began with analyzing the data from our End of the Year Member Surveys. Based on the results of the 07-08 program year, SCHOLARS reported that "after their SISPA experience, they think more critically (77%) are more comfortable discussing issues (78%), more actively participate in problem-solving (80%), and contribute more to group decision-making (83%). A smaller number of volunteers (66%) report that they have more respect for local, state, and federal laws" (Blanc, Scholars in Service 2008-2009 Summary of Findings). The report also documented that while the majority of members are receiving ongoing training from their campuses at a frequency of at least once a month, close to 40% reported that they only received "a few" trainings throughout the year. Our goal is that all members receive training at least monthly. These reports provide us with necessary feedback so we can continuously improve the program.

As previously mentioned, we have asked our external evaluator to dig deeper into the reports completed by the Campus Administrators as well. In particular, we are interested in comparing their self-reports related to our performance measures, with the activities performed by the Scholars themselves as evidences by their time sheets and their End of the Year surveys.

Community Involvement: The SCHOLARS program partners directly with Pennsylvania colleges and universities to manage the program. Staff from those institutions (often the Community Service Director) work to identify specific opportunities and places for members to serve. To accomplish this, they in turn partner with local nonprofit organizations and schools. The campus works with the community partner to determine the specific need the corps member will fill and with the student, determines how best to fill that need. Occasionally, students themselves are aware of an organization they wish to serve and bring that organization to he attention of their campus administrator.

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Since its inception, the SCHOLARS program has partnered with 68 different colleges and universities who in turn have partnered with hundreds of organizations. For the 2009-2010 program year, we have 41 campuses participating, enrolling a total of 285 Corps Members working with as many organizations. The campus-based staff (what we call Campus Administrators) recruit, select, and train students. Campus Administrators help match members with appropriate service opportunities with partnering nonprofits and also provide ongoing training and reflection to members. Staff at community-based organizations help identify specific service needs and activities, provide supervision to the members in the field, and in some cases, help evaluate the members' effectiveness. Community partners have also been tapped to provide training to campus administrators on issues of concern; for example, the Indiana County Community Action Agency provided a workshop on Rural Homelessness at our most recent Summer Institute.

Relationship to Other National and Community Service Programs: PHENND has been a direct and indirect beneficiary of funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service, most recently as a grantee of Learn and Serve America (2009 Higher Ed Consortium with Drexel University as the lead institution). For the past three years, PHENND has also been a site for a VISTA member (through Pennsylvania Campus Compact).

As a long-time member of the national service community, PHENND always works to highlight national service initiative and collaborate with other Corporation-funded programs. In 2008, we co-hosted an event as part of the Learn and Serve Challenge week, we always highlight the LSA and AmeriCorps Challenge Weeks in our weekly newsletter, and the PHENND Director regularly attends the National Service-Learning and the National Volunteering and Service Conferences. PHENND Director Hillary Kane is now a Co-Chair of Pennsylvania's Statewide Learn and Serve Advisory Board.

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The SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA AmeriCorps program will also continue to emphasize the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service as an excellent way to engage SCHOLARS in their communities as well as to provide opportunities for the SCHOLARS to recruit additional volunteers to serve in the community. MLK Day is also an excellent opportunity for SCHOLARS to utilize newly acquired leadership skills as they may take an active role in the planning of their campus' or community's Day of Service activities.

Potential for Replication: As a broad-based, multi-site statewide initiative, the SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA AmeriCorps program is highly replicable. In fact, each and every state and territory could easily create its own version of the SCHOLARS program. In fact, SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA is itself modeled after two other, highly successful Education Award Programs: The Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation's Bonner Leaders Program and the Western Campus Compact Consortium's Students in Service program. Over the years, we have received several phone calls from colleges in other states hoping to replicate the SCHOLARS program; we have also presented on the model at conferences such as the Atlantic Region Cross-Stream "Super Conference" in April 2005.

Organizational Capability

Ability to Provide Sound Programmatic and Fiscal Oversight: The Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND) began in 1987 with representatives from five colleges and universities. Today, PHENND is a consortium of 36 colleges and universities in the greater Philadelphia area. PHENND works to build the capacity of its member institutions to develop mutually beneficial, sustained, and democratic community-based service-learning partnerships. The consortium actively seeks to revitalize local communities and schools and foster civic responsibility among the region's colleges and universities.

Despite the fact that PHENND is based in Philadelphia, it has successfully managed a statewide AmeriCorps program for six years. In part, this is due to the face-to-face monitoring previously

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described. Twice annually, the Program Director visits each and every campus outside the Philadelphia area. (Philadelphia-area schools are visited annually.) These visits, combined with frequent phone and email communication, as well as the Summer Institute, provide PHENND the ability to manage this program effectively.

PHENND and its fiscal sponsor Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania have both successfully administered AmeriCorps grants for several years. PHENND has received an AmeriCorps Education Award only grant to manage the SCHOLARS program for six years. Prior to that the University of Pennsylvania served as a sub-site for the SEEDCO AmeriCorps Education Awards Program and has also hosted an AmeriCorps*VISTA. In addition, PHENND has also received and managed two Learn and Serve Higher Education Consortium grants, first through the University of Pennsylvania in 1997 and again through Drexel University in 2009.

The Netter Center for Community Partnerships, the home department for PHENND at the University of Pennsylvania, has also successfully administered numerous federal grants including Community Higher Ed School Partnership (CNCS), Community Outreach Partnerships Centers (HUD), Character Education (Dept. of Ed) and Access Science K-16 Partnerships (National Science Foundation).

Sites are also chosen for their administrative capacities. Although as a fixed-award EAP program, our funding is fairly simple, we do strive to ensure that all participating campuses have adequate programmatic capabilities. Campuses must apply to PHENND to host a SCHOLARS corps; however, through trial and error, we have learned that some campuses do not have the capacity to manage this program effectively and over time they have either withdrawn voluntarily or we have asked them to leave the program. Typically, this means asking a campus to take a year off to re-group.

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With all of the non-Philadelphia area campuses, we had no programmatic relationship prior to the SCHOLARS program. We do not fund any of our campuses through the program. In the Philadelphia area, we do have (and have had) funding relationships with some participating campuses, usually through the awarding of sub-grants from previous and current Learn and Serve grants. We have just awarded Learn and Serve subgrants to four local campuses at which there are also SCHOLARS programs operating: Drexel University, University of Pennsylvania, Rosemont College, and Chestnut Hill College. Additional subgrants were awarded to campuses not participating in SCHOLARS; programmatically these two projects are not connected in any way.

Monitoring and site compliance occur through two channels. First, we provide a detailed handbook to all campuses clearly outlining their roles and responsibilities. Second, we reinforce these rules through site visits, the Summer Institute, and subsequent phone and email communication. Again, we have no real fiscal compliance issues as we do not share any AmeriCorps funding with subsites.

In the past two years we have taken steps to develop common program elements to ensure overall program quality and to foster a sense of group identity and esprit de corps among members. First, the Summer Institute is used to forge a common identity among participating campuses as it brings all of the Campus Administrators together. This event not only strengthens the group identity, but also provides a platform for PHENND to communicate and reinforce common expectations. Second, we are replicating this effect in small ways through our regional student conferences. When students from five different campuses get together and realize that they are all a part of the same program, it can be very powerful.

Finally, last year we commissioned a professionally designed logo for the SCHOLARS program. This logo now appears on our website, on the program handbooks, the web-based time tracking systems, our

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Facebook page and newly purchased t-shirts for Corps Members. We hope this symbol will also help solidify identification with both the SCHOLARS program and AmeriCorps more broadly.

Board of Directors, Administrators, and Staff -- SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA is managed directly by PHENND. Currently, PHENND Director Hillary Kane spends 30% of her time on the program; her time is supplemented by a part-time assistant who handles data entry and filing of member time sheets. Ms. Kane has ten years experience in the national service field. She has successfully managed the program for the past five and a half years. She has supervised five VISTA members in as many years and has expertise in relevant areas such as volunteer management, campus-community partnership and service-learning. Ms. Kane has presented at numerous conferences and events. She was recently nominated to be a Co-Chair of the Pennsylvania Statewide Learn and Serve Advisory Board.

For the 2010-2011 year, PHENND hopes to hire a new full-time Program Director in lieu of the part-time assistant and part of the PHENND Director's time. All of this is supplemented by an even more extensive network of 35+ Campus Administrators, each contributing 10-100% of their time to manage the SCHOLARS program on their campus.

PHENND's Board of Directors, known as the PHENND Co-Chairs, is comprised of faculty and administrators of seven Philadelphia-area colleges and universities: Dr. Ira Harkavy, Director of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Marcine Pickron-Davis, Assistant to the President for Civic Engagement and Diversity Initiatives at Widener University; Dr. David Bartelt, Professor of Geography and Urban Studies at Temple University; Dr. Virginia Johnson, Director of the Faith-Justice Institute at Saint Joseph's University; Dr. Karen Tidmarsh, Dean of the College at Bryn Mawr College; Dr. Suzanne Rocheleau, and Dr. Joy Charlton, Director of the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility at Swarthmore College.

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Plan for Self-Assessment or Improvement: PHENND is a learning organization that continually assess its effectiveness. In the past three years, we have hired an external evaluator to help us understand the "value-added" for participating member campuses. According to the report, "for many university participants, PHENND has been especially helpful in introducing service learning to their campuses, as well as providing resources and information about service and service learning." Additionally, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the interviewees described ongoing involvement with PHENND as an important part of moving service learning forward at their institutions."

PHENND is also in the midst of a year-long strategic planning process designed to build on strengths, identify challenges, and build stakeholder support to meet those challenges.

Plan for Effective Technical Assistance: The SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA AmeriCorps program regularly provides programmatic technical assistance to all participating campuses as well as many community partners. In addition to the semi-annual site visits and the Summer Institute described above, PHENND also provides a resource-rich PHENND Weekly Update, a comprehensive weekly newsletter provided to all PHENND members and SCHOLARS campuses. The Weekly Update contains information about potential grants, national conferences, and information resources, all of which have potential utility for improving and expanding SCHOLARS programs across the state. This newsletter, as well as other technical assistance provided by PHENND, was studied as part of the PHENND Evaluation described above. "From the perspective of many of the university-based participants, the newsletter, technical assistance from the Executive Director, and the network itself are all important resources" (Blanc, "An Evaluation Study of PHENND: Participant Perceptions of a Regional Service Learning Network" 2008).

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Volunteer Generation and Support: PHENND does not make great use of volunteers in the traditional sense. As a very small organization with staff that are frequently traveling and/or away from the office, a part-time volunteer in our office would not be very effective. However, we rely heavily on partner organizations and others who often "volunteer" their time to assist PHENND. We rarely pay for presenters or speakers at any workshop or conference we organize. We have also used volunteers to help us review proposals and provide technical assistance to our partners.

Organizational and Community Leadership: PHENND has experienced remarkable success mobilizing campus and community partners in the greater Philadelphia region, and for the past six years, across the state. In the Philadelphia area, PHENND's ten annual conferences have offered training and technical assistance, as well as a venue for face-to-face interaction among practitioners, demonstrating its expertise in providing for the professional needs of those in the field. Numerous workshops and meetings are held regularly for the professional development of participants focusing on such themes as the environment, poverty, and technology. For statewide audiences, the PHENND website features a collection of service-learning syllabi as well as listings of resources and events disseminated on a weekly basis via an electronic newsletter. PHENND was featured as a "best practice" in *Building Partnerships for Service-Learning* (2003), by Barbara Jacoby and Associates.

Organizationally, PHENND prides itself on being a resource and leader to university-based and community-based partners alike. According to the recent PHENND Evaluation, "In addition to the impact that PHENND has on participants' individual networks, the survey also shows that involvement with PHENND increases the capacity of many of their programs. 58% of survey respondents report that involvement with PHENND increases the resources of their programs, 56% report that it increases the connections of their programs, and 53% report that it increases the overall effectiveness of their programs" (Blanc, "An Evaluation Study of PHENND: Participant Perceptions of a Regional Service

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Learning Network" 2008).

PHENND's Director Hillary Kane has demonstrated leadership in both the national service field and as well as the Philadelphia community. Ms. Kane serves on the boards of the Penn State Cooperative Extension in Philadelphia County, LIFT's Local Advisory Board, and is now the Co-Chair of the Pennsylvania Statewide Learn and Serve Advisory Board. In 2004, Ms. Kane received Idealist on Campus's Idealism in Action award.

Success in Securing Match Resources: PHENND has been quite successful in securing match resources. Although we do not document match as it is not required by AmeriCorps, we do know that each of the participating campuses are devoting significant resources to the program not the least of which is the staff time in the form of the Campus Administrators who handle day-to-day operations. In addition to these in-kind resources, we have also garnered additional support for our regional student conferences. In November 2009, we partnered with Campus Philly and Drexel University to host the Southeast regional conference; each organization split the cost of the conference equally and contributed equal staff time to planning the event.

Success in Securing Community Support - Collaboration: For many years, PHENND has collaborated with community organizations to expand services. For example, in 2002, we partnered with the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger (GPCAH) to help develop a Food Stamp Enrollment program with college student volunteers and service-learners playing a significant role in the program. PHENND worked to identify potential college partners and GPCAH staff trained and managed the actual participants. Since that time, we have developed additional projects and collaborations with other groups such as the Delaware County Asset Development Group (providing volunteer income tax assistance) and the School District of Philadelphia. Our goal is always to create a mutually-beneficial

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relationship among PHENND, the community organization, and colleges and universities.

Evidence shows we have done just that. According to the PHENND Evaluation, "Like university-based staff, all community partners value PHENND's newsletter. Both partners identified the important role played by PHENND in initiating and/or sustaining their organizations' initiatives. For both partners, PHENND fills an important need by connecting local college students as volunteers in federal initiatives designed to provide additional resources to low-income families and individuals."

Local Financial and In-Kind Contributions: PHENND relies primarily on grants to sustain core operations; however, local contributions are also generated. Each member campus of PHENND pays a small amount in annual membership dues to the organization. It has long been recognized that these payments are not enough to provide even the most basic financial security for the organization. Thus, one of the key charges of the current PHENND strategic planning process is to reassess the member dues structure, build greater buy-in from more senior campus stakeholders, and eventually increase the dues to a level that would provide greater stability to the organization. That said, the dues payment amount per campus has doubled since the organization's founding in 1987. The number of dues-paying campuses has remained fairly steady over the past ten years at about 30 per year.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (MSY): PHENND is requested \$800 per MSY to cover expenses necessary for the smooth operation of the SCHOLARS IN SERVICE TO PA AmeriCorps Program. We are hopeful that with this increase in the allowable cost per MSY, and the greater number of members we believe we can support, we will be able to hire a full-time Program Manager who can devote 100% of his or her time to the program, truly taking it to the next level.

Diverse Non-Federal Support: As previously discussed, the SCHOLARS program relies heavily on in-

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kind support from participating campuses. Although we do not document match as it is not required by AmeriCorps, we do know that each of the participating campuses are devoting significant resources to the program not the least of which is the staff time in the form of the Campus Administrators who handle day-to-day operations. In addition to these in-kind resources, we have also garnered additional support for our regional student conferences. This month, we partnered with Campus Philly and Drexel University to host the Southeast regional conference; each organization split the cost of the conference equally and contributed equal staff time to planning the event.

Budget Adequacy: AmeriCorps funds will be used to support 18% of the PHENND Director's time plus one full-time Program Manager. The Program Manager will be responsible for all day-to-day central operations such as outreach, recruitment of campuses and Corps Members, site monitoring and the coordination and planning the Summer Institute and regional student conferences. The PHENND Director will supervise the program manager directly and participate in general program planning. The remainder of the AmeriCorps resources will support the training events, curriculum materials, evaluation, and travel for site visits and monitoring.

Costs not covered by AmeriCorps include campus-based staff supervision of Corps Members.

Depending on the campus, this can represent 10-100% of a full-time staff person. Campuses also spend additional funds on training events for members and staff travel to the Summer Institute.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Each year, SCHOLARS corps members who successfully finish the program are asked to complete an End of Term Survey. The survey collects some basic information about the type of service they performed, when they began their service, the number of activities in which they participated, the types of leadership and training they were provided, and attitudes about civic engagement.

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For example, during the 2008-2009 program year, 123 PA Scholars in Service took the survey and 123 completed it. Three universities had 12 or more participating scholars. These are Westminster (18), Indiana University of Pennsylvania (15), and Misericordia (12). 31 more universities have between 1 and 9 students participating.

82.5% of the participants began during the fall of 2008. 6.9% started in spring 2009 and 10.6 % began in summer 2009. The largest number of participants (41%) split their time between 2 or 3 organizations. Approximately equal numbers of participants worked primarily in one organization or project (29.3%) or split their time among many projects of short duration (26.1%).

Volunteers also identified the ways that their service had changed themselves. The majority of volunteers report that after their SISPA experience, they think more critically (77%) are more comfortable discussing issues (78%), more actively participate in problem-solving (80%), and contribute more to group decision-making (83%).

The full report is on file with the Corporation.

In addition, this year the SCHOLARS program has retained the services of an external evaluator to conduct a longitudinal analysis of the results of the Semi-Annual Campus Surveys to ascertain the level of congruence between campus self-reporting about corps member activities with corps member self-reporting and corps member time sheets.

Amendment Justification

n/a

Clarification Summary

(1) Please clarify the standard topics in which members will be trained, including how members are

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educated about AmeriCorps and the Scholars in Service program. Also, please explain how members are trained in the specific technical skills they need to serve successfully.

Scholars in Service does not proscribe any standard topics for member training aside from basic information about AmeriCorps. Members are educated about AmeriCorps itself by their campus administrators, who in turn, receive information from PHENND. Many of the campuses also have AmeriCorps*VISTA members on hand, or in the surrounding community, and have also relied on them for additional information about AmeriCorps. That said, PHENND provides several Train-the-Trainer workshops specifically tied to our performance measure so that Campus Administrators have a set of workshops ready to go. We do not require that they use these workshops, but we have done training on them at our summer institutes, and make them readily available via our website. Our performance measure asks that campuses identify nonprofits with which they wish to develop deeper relationships as well as identify characteristics of a "deepened partnership." One of the choices is to help the organization acquire new volunteers. Thus, we have a workshop on Recruiting Volunteers that Campus Administrators can use with their members. We have 6 workshops developed that correspond to one of our performance measure indicators in this way. Additionally, we have a separate handbook for Campus Administrators filled with reflection tips and techniques.

(2) Please explain how much time, on average, site supervisors dedicate to supervising members. What expectations for the level and quality of supervision are communicated to site supervisors?

Each campus handles communication with site supervisors differently, usually based on how they handle these relationships for other community service programs. Some campuses use signed Site Agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and some have long-established partnerships

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with community organizations where they know and trust the staff to supervise students effectively. Additionally, each Scholar is ultimately supervised by their Campus Administrator as they may have more than one placement in the community and/or be responsible for on-campus leadership roles such as recruiting additional volunteers.

(3) The application narrative states that "during their time in the program, scholars are challenged to become leaders for service by cultivating and then, publicly demonstrating, civic responsibility." Please explain what types of tools or training you use to deliberately develop these skills, and explain how you provide structured opportunities for members to reflect on and learn from their service.

This training and reflection takes place at the campus level at the direction of the Campus Administrator. As previously mentioned, PHENND provides a supplementary handbook dedicated to reflection tips and techniques. Many of the activities in the handbook are designed to help students critically reflect on concepts such as leadership, civic engagement, and civic responsibility. In addition, PHENND is consistently pushing campuses to see their members as leaders and to structure their programs accordingly, so that the types of positions members fill require them to publicly demonstrate civic responsibility, thereby learning by doing. For example, at the beginning of our program, we had many campuses who recruited students and allowed them to simply volunteer for a local nonprofit. While this is still the basis of our program, we are pushing the campuses to see these students (and in turn push the students to see themselves) as leaders. We want a program where a member is not just tutoring at a local middle school, but is tutoring and also coordinating several of their peers to tutor as well. We encourage Scholars to be "site coordinators" or "project leaders" (depending on the parlance of the campus). Many Scholars are now also working with faculty to help coordinate service-learning

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experiences for other students. We believe that the type of work our Scholars are doing, combined with the reflection described above, challenges Scholars to become leaders.

(4) Please explain how you recognize or reward members.

Again, most of this is done at the campus level. Some campuses have recognized Scholars during graduation week (which also happens to coincide with AmeriCorps Week for many campuses). Other campuses recognize their students in other ways such as through newsletter articles and other on campus publications. At one campus, a Scholar was selected to be the public face of the university for a local ad campaign. Additionally, we have a Facebook page for the Scholars program and when we learn of exciting member achievements, we publicize them to the other Scholars on Facebook.

(5) Please explain the amount of time campus administrators dedicate to managing the program.

This is a difficult question to answer as each campus structure their community service (and thus their Scholars program) very differently. In addition, the size of each campus's program varies widely, anywhere from one member to twenty. In most cases, the Campus Administrator spends 10-20% of their time supervising the Scholars program. However, there are at least two campuses at which there is a full-time staff person dedicated to managing the Scholars program. The expectations for our Campus Administrators are that they will recruit, train, manage, and support members throughout the year; assist members with all necessary paperwork; approve member hours on a monthly basis; and complete reports and surveys for the program semi-annually. In addition, we also stress that we expect that the Campus Administrator will meet with members on a bi-weekly basis ideally, and monthly at minimum. These expectations are communicated in both the Host Campus Agreement, which each campus is

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required to sign and submit prior to recruiting members, as well as in the Campus Administrator Handbook. All of this is reinforced during semi-annual site visits as well as the Summer Institute for Campus Administrators.

(6) Please describe the proposed member recruitment plan and how it will be likely to result in a diverse member corps, including members from the target community.

We recruit our members through our network of campuses. This year, we have already conducted a campus application process in preparation for 2010-2011 enrollment and have request for 502 slots from 44 campuses. Although we do not expect members' enrollment paperwork to be submitted until June 30, we already have at least 25 enrollment packets submitted and awaiting review. Our target community is college students and by working directly through college campuses we are easily able to do this.

Criminal History Check Requirement: Criminal history checks are required for all grant funded staff and AmeriCorps members. A detailed description of the requirements can be found at: <http://www.nationalservicerresources.org/criminal-history>. Please verify that you will conduct criminal history checks on members and staff.

Yes, we require each campus to conduct Criminal History and Child Abuse clearance checks on all member. PHENND Director Hillary Kane also has a complete and up-to-date Criminal History check.

Continuation Changes

New Site Locations:

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This year, the Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania program welcomed new and returning campuses. They are: Alvernia University, Bucks County Community College, Cabrini College, East Stroudsburg University, Lock Haven University, and Moravian College. The expansion has been successful in terms of program management. However, the addition of new sites has put a strain on our ability to meet member requests from existing campuses. This year, we were over-enrolled before the program year started; we were able to whittle down our numbers to our awarded allotment only by asking campuses to reconsider all of their members and remove anyone who showed signs of a flagging commitment (such as not responding to emails during the summer and/or having incomplete paperwork). We also had to turn down whole campuses that did not make our June 30th enrollment deadline (for August 22nd start date) which would normally not be the case. We expect some additional growth into new campuses and communities again, and believe it is important for us to provide this opportunity to students and the nonprofits they serve.

Retention:

Since the program's inception, we have made great progress with member retention. During the first year of the Scholars in Service to PA program (04-05), we retained only 58.5% of our members. By last year (09-10), we had a retention rate of 73.7%. While this is still below our goal of 90% retention, it does show that our program is making consistent improvements in this area.

In recent years the Scholars program has made retention a priority. We have communicated a goal of 90% to our member campuses. We have also stressed the importance of ongoing training and member development as a best practice to achieving higher levels of retention. As mentioned earlier, for the current year, we had an overabundance of accepted applicants, and therefore asked campuses to be

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more selective in who they were enrolling as members in the first place, putting particular emphasis on enrolling only those students who were truly committed to a year-long service experience with AmeriCorps.

Finally, we have made strides in directly connecting with members as a means toward retention. Currently, our program works mostly through campus-based staff to run and manage the program. It is rare for the Program Director to have a close working relationship with individual members; the Program Director works closely with the Campus Administrators who in turn work closely with the students. However, we felt the need to establish some channels by which the Program Director, and by extension the Scholars in Service to PA program, could in deed have a relationship with the members. We believe that this gives them a greater sense of belonging, and to see themselves as part of something larger than their campus, which ultimately has a positive impact on retention. To that end, we have established a Facebook group for the Scholars program, and have developed regional training events, both of which provide greater connection to the members (one on line and one in person). Last year was the first year in which we supported three events in different parts of the state and we plan to do the same again this year, eventually holding regional trainings and student conferences multiple times a year.

2011 Clarification Changes

Performance Measures:

I have revised our performance measure to provide more accountability for our results. Given the size and scope of our program we do not have the resources to go beyond a self-report from our campus administrators, the only potential reporter with whom we have a direct relationship. However we have revised our survey instrument to provide more veracity of those results. Previously, we would ask campus administrators to report which of nine indicators of a deepened partnership they had met by

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simply checking off which indicators (such as "help organization gain access to new funding") they had met by year's end. We will now ask for evidence -- indicators for the indicators -- to ensure veracity of the self-report. Thus, if a campus administrator says that they helped a community partner get access to new funding, we will ask for the source and amount of that new funding. This should alleviate any concerns about the accuracy of results.

Upon review of our indicators, we have dropped one of the nine because it is too vague to have a sub-indicator. That indicator was "help organization increase ability to meet its mission." Each of the remaining eight indicators, four of which are intermediate signs of a deepened partnership and four of which are long-term signs of a deepened partnership, are rigorous and specific enough to stand up to the additional scrutiny of our new survey instrument.

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - None
 Geographic Focus - Urban
 Geographic Focus - Rural
 Encore Program

Priority Areas

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 0

Service Categories

Other Human Needs Primary Secondary

Nonprofit Capacity Building

Service Category: Other Human Needs

Measure Category: Strengthening Communities

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

While the immediate goal of the SCHOLARS program is to provide volunteers to nonprofit and community-based organizations, so they may better serve their existing clients, the long-term goal is to build a relationship between the agency and the college or university as a whole. To put in another way, the goal is to institutionalize the relationship. By connecting with an entire institution of higher education, a savvy nonprofit is able to tap into vast networks of human, intellectual, and technological resources. Intermediate steps in this process might simply be the identification of new volunteers (primarily recruited by the corps member), identification of new clients, and the formation of relationships with other nonprofits and inclusion in related networks (such as other nonprofits already partnering with the university). Over time, this can mean the development of new streams of funding (such as being included in grants written by the university); and access to technology (such as cutting edge equipment and software). Our aligned performance measure is based directly on this

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

model.

Result: Output

Participating campuses will identify at least 60 nonprofit organizations with which they intend to develop a deeper partnership as a direct result of the Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania program.

This translated to approximately 1-2 organizations per campus.

Indicator: The number of community-based organizations and schools identified.

Target: 60 organizations (approximately 1-2 organizations per participating campus)

Target Value: 60

Instruments: Semi-Annual Campus Survey

PM Statement: Participating institutions of Higher Education will each identify 1-2 community-based organizations or schools where SCHOLARS corps members will be placed to meet community needs, that the campuses wishes to deepen the relationship with over the course of the year based on meeting one of eight indicators of partnership. This will occur through the service of the SCHOLARS corps members and will be evidenced by reports provided by the campuses through the Semi-Annual Campus Survey.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Participating campuses will first identify, and then report success, with helping at least one organization meet one of four intermediate indicators of increased capacity.

Indicator: One of four intermediate-level indicators of a deepened partnership between a

Target: 90% of campuses will report success in meeting one of the intermediate indicators of increased capacity described above.

Target Value: 90%

Instruments: Semi-Annual Campus Survey

PM Statement: By the end of the program year, 90% of participating campuses will have identified a community-based organization with which they wish to deepen their partnership as evidenced by one of four intermediate indicators and will report success in achieving progress toward this indicator as a result of the service provided by the SCHOLARS Corps member. This will be reported by the campus on the Semi-Annual Campus Survey.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: Intermediate Outcome

campus and community-based organization.

Result: End Outcome

Participating campuses will first identify, and then report success, with helping at least one organization meet one of four long-term indicators of increased capacity.

Indicator: One of five advanced-level indicators of a deepened partnership between a campus

Target: 70% of campuses will report success in meeting one of the long-term indicators of increased capacity described above.

Target Value: 70%

Instruments: Semi-Annual Campus Survey

PM Statement: By the end of the program year, 70% of participating campuses will have identified a community-based organization with which they wish to deepen their partnership as evidenced by one of five advanced indicators and will report success in achieving progress toward this indicator as a result of the service provided by the SCHOLARS Corps member. This will be reported by the campus on the Semi-Annual Campus Survey.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: End Outcome

and community-based organization.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable