SLATES: A COLLABORATIVE SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM FOR TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE EL PASO, TEXAS REGION

Diane Doser (doser@utep.edu), Dept. of Geol. Sci., Univ.Texas at El Paso (UTEP) 
Robert Rohrbaugh and Joshua Villalobos, Geol. Sci., El Paso Community College (EPCC)

One project on EPCC focuses on field visits and water sampling at Rice Lake (near Van Horn), El Paso County, and another on the Chisos Mountains near Big Bend National Park. A third small team is taking data on a series of early Pleistocene lava flows near El Paso. Students have also worked to develop a Living Coral Reef project and are close to developing a project that would involve a trip to the South Pacific to study coral reefs. The team is also developing a new project that would involve a trip to the South Pacific to study coral reefs.

The overall objectives of SLATES are to use short-term service learning activities to demonstrate how geoscience impacts the local community; increase the number of students who decide to major in the geosciences at UTEP and EPCC, and expand the network of students and educators interested in the field; and provide hands-on experience to students with geoscience-related careers.

El Paso Community College Based Activities

Our diversity is reflective of our local community. Place-based learning and service learning projects allow students to participate in a variety of activities that reflect the culture and environment of the El Paso region. The project is funded by the National Science Foundation and the University of Texas at El Paso. The project is led by Diane Doser, Robert Rohrbaugh, and Joshua Villalobos.

Tracker/Evaluation:

EPCC offers two summer programs, one for high school students and another for current community college students. The high school program is designed to introduce students to geosciences and provide them with exposure to college life. The program includes classes, field trips, and social activities. The community college program is designed to provide students with a head start on their college education by offering courses that are transferable to Texas universities.

Feedback from the external feedback team involved in the visit to the Tech20 Center was very positive, with all expressing the desire to bring another group of students during the academic year. In fall 2018, the Tech20 Center hosted a group of students from EPCC for a visit to the facility. The group included EPCC students and faculty members who were interested in learning about the work being done at the Tech20 Center.

One of the key objectives of SLATES is to increase minority participation in the geosciences. The project has been shown to increase and retain minority students in the geosciences. Service learning projects have been successful in increasing the number of geoscience majors, as well as long-term (>10 hrs/semester) activities. The project has also been successful in increasing the number of geoscience majors taking courses in the geosciences.

GeoVentures: The Geoventures program is a series of field trips offered for students in introductory and advanced courses in geosciences. The program is funded by the National Science Foundation and the University of Texas at El Paso. The program is led by Diane Doser, Robert Rohrbaugh, and Joshua Villalobos.

Motivation:

The overall objectives of SLATES are to use short-term service learning activities to demonstrate how geosciences impacts the local community; increase the number of students who decide to major in the geosciences at UTEP, and expand the network of students and educators interested in the field; and provide hands-on experience to students with geoscience-related careers. The project is funded by the National Science Foundation and the University of Texas at El Paso. The project is led by Diane Doser, Robert Rohrbaugh, and Joshua Villalobos.

Río Bosque Park/Bustamante Water Treatment Plant

Fifty EPCC students toured the Bustamante water treatment plant and adjacent Biscuit Basin in El Paso County. The plant was built in 2012 and currently serves over 100,000 customers. The students examined water quality data, collected water samples, toured the plant, and interacted with plant operators.

Tracking/Evaluation:

EPCC offers the Texas Passport program, a program for short-term (1-10 hours) service learning projects. This program allows students to participate in a variety of activities that reflect the culture and environment of the El Paso region. The program has been successful in increasing the number of geoscience majors, as well as long-term (>10 hrs/semester) activities. Feedback from the external feedback team involved in the visit to the Tech20 Center was very positive, with all expressing the desire to bring another group of students during the academic year. In fall 2018, the Tech20 Center hosted a group of students from EPCC for a visit to the facility. The group included EPCC students and faculty members who were interested in learning about the work being done at the Tech20 Center.

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