To the PETE Committee,

I am writing to report on our recent trip to the International Leadership Association annual conference to present on Community-Based Learning (CBL) as a part of leadership studies and humanities pedagogy. The conference, attended by nearly one thousand scholars and practitioners of leadership, was held October 14-17 in Barcelona, Spain.

Our panel discussed the benefits of and strategies for integrating CBL into a liberal arts leadership curriculum. There were approximately 15-20 attendees at the panel, including experts in leadership education and community involvement, several of whom offered suggestions and asked questions about our presentation.

Each of us spoke for 10-15 minutes on the courses we teach and how we use CBL to give our students a more realistic image of the world in which they live, and then concluded with a discussion about the values and pedagogical benefits of including CBL in a humanities-based classroom more generally.

At the conclusion of the presentation, we opened the floor for discussion and questions. Among those in attendance were two individuals who are looking to add CBL to their schools’ curricula as a way to foster an increased relationship between their institutions and the communities in which they operate, including a new director of a center like UR’s CCE and a new director of a program in leadership studies. In addition, we were able to have a lengthy conversation with another director of a CBL center who had several productive and actionable suggestions for ways in which we could each improve our current classroom use of CBL.

The panel enabled us not only to talk about what we do at UR, but also opened up lines of communication with other institutions about the benefits (and challenges) of using CBL in the classroom. We intend to stay in communication with both the aforementioned individuals in order to help them with their projects, as well as gain advice on how to continue with our own.

In addition, we were able to attend several other panels focusing on education, including one with a discussion of the Aristotelian model of liberal arts education and another on evaluating the effective use of programs (such as CBL) in the classroom.

We are grateful that PETE was able to give us this opportunity, and we will use it to continue to improve our own classes’ use of CBL, as well as share the advice and recommendations we received with others who use CBL in their classrooms.

Thank you.

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