Jefferson Public Citizens: Learning in Action

The Jefferson Public Citizens (JPC) program aims to inspire students to act as engaged citizens through active community partnerships, research service projects and scholarly reflection.

Project Goals
- Incorporate thoughtful public service into the curriculum
- Research experience that extends academic coursework to real world problems
- Leadership experience that promotes a sense of global citizenship

Project Examples
- Water distribution systems in developing countries.
- Community education garden and business leadership training for women - Tanzania.
- Reducing local energy consumption.
- Identifying strategies for combating youth aggression.

Impact for Students
- Reciprocal learning with their community partner
- Reflection on their goals, change perspectives
- Skills and confidence
- Sense of accomplishment
- Making a difference with their education
- Shape career goals
- Real results for community partners

Lessons Learned
- Define specific learning outcomes and set assessment priorities.
- Establish expectations regarding the level of challenge for undergraduate students.
- Strongly discourage faculty from advising teams outside their area of expertise.
- Partner with existing community-based programs.

Learning in Action
A web site serving as the front door to public service at the University of Virginia, dedicated to connecting students, faculty and community partners to social entrepreneurship, community engagement and co-curricular service opportunities.

Integrating Civic Engagement and Academic Learning
- 3-5 member student group
- Faculty advisor(s)
- Research/Service project
  - Addresses a documented community need or social problem
  - Hypothesis-based, study best practices, collect data, propose solutions, and, when appropriate, implement
- Work with community partner(s)
- Local, national, or international