



## Quarterly Reflection Kansas Campus Compact AmeriCorps\*VISTA Project

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Quarterly reflections provide an opportunity to:

- **Assess VISTA project:**
  - what you planned to do
  - what you actually did
  - who you have affected, including yourself
  - how the community and participants have been affected
  - appropriate next steps
  - challenges
- **Develop professionally:** assess your progress and grow from your experiences
- **Build capacity for AmeriCorps\*VISTA:** information provided in the reports is used to obtain more funding from Congress and to tell the world how VISTAs are making a difference!
- **Sustain your VISTA project:** develop a history file based off the reflection and Quarterly Report that others can use after you

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Service Site: University of Saint Mary  
Date: April 11, 2008

Answer the following questions related to your VISTA service:

1. Summarize in 3-5 sentences what you did this reporting period to get things done in your community.

To get things done in the community I offered my services and/or expertise depending on the need. Moreover, I coordinated and attended meetings between staff/faculty, students, and community members. In addition, I delivered what I promised, upheld any commitments I had made, and volunteered whenever possible.

2. What were the highlights of the last three months? Describe something particularly successful related to your VISTA service.

Highlights for the past three months include actively participating in the search process for the new Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs. As part of the process, program directors directly supervised by the Dean of Academic Affairs meet with the potential candidates to ask questions. Afterwards, they provide the search committee with their input and views concerning the suitability of each candidate. Since I am the only staff member in the Service-Learning Office, I was involved in these meetings. Throughout this process I gained vast insight into the unique culture of the University and acquired a much better understanding of the faculty and how the University's limited resources have directly impacted their teaching, their department, and their salaries.

Additionally, participating in the alternative break to Appalachia and networking with fellow Kentucky VISTA's was extremely rewarding. Not only did I learn how to install siding, I gained a much better understanding of Appalachia's vast social and

economic problems. This trip greatly increased my knowledge and understanding of the myriad of challenges facing the region.

3. Describe challenges you faced and how you addressed those challenges. If you encounter similar situations in the future, what will you do differently?

The most current challenge I faced was the theft of \$180.00 from the Service-Learning Office. Once discovered, I reported the theft and began the journey in learning who/how/when etc involved in the reporting and documenting process used by the University. In the future, I will insist on having a locked cabinet/drawer etc to secure agency monies and valuables.

An additional frustrating challenge I faced was working with a community agency director that does not understand reciprocity and mutually beneficial working relationships. Instead, she clearly desires a working relationship that significantly benefits her agency. In the future should I encounter this situation, I will confront the issue sooner, rather than latter.

4. What are your short term goals for your project?

Plan and coordinate this fall's *Into the Streets* freshman introductory service-learning experience. Update faculty and student handbook.

5. What are your long term goals for your project?

Incorporating a service-learning requirement for graduation into the academic curriculum and creating a service-learning transcript.

6. What are your next steps?

1. Maintaining as high profile as possible in the community and at USM
2. Continuing to attend monthly meetings
3. Provide quality customer service
4. Collaborate with the registrars office
5. Update, print, and distribute the faculty and student service-learning handbooks
6. Continue to support USM and partner events
7. Collaborate with the Registrar's office develop official service-learning transcript
8. Revise current proposal for Academic Affairs Committee
9. Collaborate with faculty to develop new service-learning courses for the Spring 09 semester
10. Recruit community partners for the fall semester's freshman *Into the Streets* service-learning project
11. Establish alternative break sites for the 2008-2009 academic year

7. Other thoughts:

8. Collect at least 1 success story from any of the following groups:
  - students, staff, or community members who benefited from VISTA project-
  - community and/or volunteers- your supervisor - yourself

After a successful alternative break trip to Kentucky where students spent a week working along side homeowners who where the recipient of their labor, one student has committed to volunteering her services for two weeks this summer. In addition, she is actively recruiting two additional USM students to accompany her as well. Unmistakably, the need to strengthen communities through helping individuals less fortunate than themselves is beginning to take hold. I am optimistic that this student is well on her way to a lifelong commitment to civic engagement and community service.

See attached article and picture from the Leavenworth Times about USM's Kentucky Alternative Spring Break.