



**United Nations Human Rights Project
Miami Dade College**

Prof. Carola S. Pedreschi, faculty facilitator for the Institute for Civic Engagement and Democracy at Miami Dade College, initiated this project in Fall 2015 to educate students about the history of human rights and the Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations. The goal was to get students to learn about the 30 human rights articles, engage in reflection and civic action to support human rights.

The project consisted of reading and understanding the United Nations Human Rights Articles, which appear at the end of the syllabus. This learning process will be supported by showing a documentary on the story of human rights located at www.humanrights.com. A librarian gave a presentation on petitions and shared the human rights Libguides library resource.

Students selected two human rights articles that they may be concerned about or that may be related to their personal experiences, their communities, the United States or their countries of origin. The students were assigned to write two separate reflection essays (at least two pages long) on each article. Inspired by the story, awareness and understanding of human rights, and their own discoveries, students then are asked to create one piece of art work, which could include original student music/lyrics, poems, paintings, drawings, collage or sculpture. The North Campus Route to Human Rights Committee in collaboration with Learning Resources agreed to exhibit the students' reflection essays, petitions, and art work in the library at the end of the semester.

Tags: Human Rights, United Nations, Miami Dade College, civic education.

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**Climate Change – Home Energy Reduction Project
Miami Dade College**

The Global Sustainability and Earth Literacy Studies

Prof. Carola S. Pedreschi of Miami Dade College challenges students to develop a Home Energy Reduction Plan as a way to explore global citizenship, ecological sustainability, and civic engagement, through understanding planetary challenges and by developing values, skills, and behaviors that promote communities of well-being.

Students use a form provided by the utility serving South Florida, Florida Power & Light Co., to analyze their home energy consumption. They then are asked to write a bulleted action plan with ten behavioral changes that can reduce energy consumption at home, and to implement an energy reduction plan for one billing cycle (30 to 35 days). They are asked to submit a copy of their home's utility bills before and after the project's tenure to document results.

They are also asked to locate and take an ecological footprint online survey, to write a one-page essay on ways they could reduce their carbon footprint, and to explain climate change and global warming and to relate those phenomenon to their project.

As a final assignment, they are asked to write at least a two-page reflection essay based on their ecological carbon footprint test results, their family's pre-post home energy bill, initial thoughts and expectations about the project, the process of implementation of behavioral changes, challenges, results, and final personal reaction.

Upon completion of the GSELS project, the students will have acquired the knowledge and skills needed to cope and constructively engage with the 21st century, including these eight guiding principles of global citizenship (from a consensus of experts in nine countries, East, West, as cited in *Sustainable Education* by Stephen Sterling):

- ❖ Looking at problems in a global context
- ❖ Working cooperatively and responsibly
- ❖ Accepting cultural differences
- ❖ Thinking in a critical and systematic way
- ❖ Solving conflicts non-violently
- ❖ Changing lifestyles to protect the environment
- ❖ Defending human rights
- ❖ Participating in politics

Tags: Climate change, global warming, carbon footprint, global sustainability, energy conservation.

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Best Practices in Developing Service-Learning

Miami Dade College (MDC) began our formal academic service-learning program in 1994 upon receiving a Learn and Serve grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service. Over the last 20 years we have continued to develop and expand service-learning and civic engagement at MDC. Below is a partial list of some of what we've learned and feel would be helpful to other institutions interested in building civic engagement programs at their college.

- Join [Florida Campus Compact](#) and participate in its conferences and meetings.
- Create a service-learning/civic engagement **advisory committee** with key faculty, administrators, student representatives, and community partner representatives.
- Have the Advisory Committee organize their work around **Dr. Andy Furco's ["Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education"](#)** as a tool to both assess where they currently are, and to develop their vision and plan of action for furthering service-learning. This rubric was designed to assist members of the higher education community in gauging the progress of their campus's service-learning institutionalization efforts.
- Send a team of faculty, student leaders, and administrators (especially academic administrators) to do a **site visit to a model community college** service-learning/civic engagement program.
- Send faculty and administrators and student leaders to [service-learning conferences](#).
- Bring in **national speakers** to address faculty about service-learning and civic engagement.
- [Create infrastructure](#) to support service-learning and civic engagement including a physical space and staff (e.g. an "Office of Civic Engagement"). Without some basic infrastructure, these programs will remain small and on the margins of the institution. Infrastructure includes an office space, at least a PT coordinator, one or more student assistants, ideally some faculty coordinator positions (see description below), a website, etc.
- Secure one or more [Federal Work Study positions](#) to help staff the department, including "community service" FWS slots.

- Create a “**Service-Learning Faculty Coordinator**” position(s). These are faculty who are passionate about service-learning and put in a few hours a week working with their peers advocating for service-learning by helping recruit, orient, and ensure academic rigor. MDC has a job description we can share.
- Host a **workshop for community partners** who will be hosting service-learning students. The purpose of this workshop is for the partners to understand the educational nature of the partnership and see themselves as co-educators as they interact with students. MDC has an annotated agenda and workshop materials we can share.
- Ensure that the service-learning program either is **part of Academic Affairs** (preferably) or if not, has strong ties to Academic Affairs. Many of the best programs report via Academic Affairs, but partner with Student Affairs.
- [Engage students](#) to advocate for program expansion.
- Offer regular **faculty professional development** for service-learning.
- Join [The Democracy Commitment](#).
- **Build support among college administrators**, academic dean, and department chairpersons.
- Recognize and **celebrate faculty** who are involved in service-learning and civic engagement.
- Offer students the [President’s Volunteer Service Award](#). This award recognizes students who contribute at least 100 hours of service in a 12-month period (and student clubs and organizations too). MDC holds an annual ceremony and recognizes more than 400 students who have earned the award.

For more information, visit www.mdc.edu/iced and contact Josh Young, director of MDC’s Institute for Civic Engagement and Democracy at jyoung@mdc.edu / 305-237-7477.