

New Orleans Philosophy Debate Tournament

Steering Committee (C.V.'s attached)

Ryan McBride, Tulane University, Director of Aristotle in New Orleans

Vincent Ilustre, Tulane University, Director of the Tulane University Center For Public Service

Sponsors:

Tulane University Center for Public Service
Newcomb-Tulane College
Middle School Public Debate Program
Tulane University Department of English
Sophie B. Wright Middle School
Benjamin Banneker Elementary
Lafayette Charter Academy
Best Buy (grant request pending)

Summary:

Aristotle in New Orleans is an innovative, ambitious service-learning project that is beginning to thrive. We launched the project last fall (2009) at Tulane University as part of Ryan McBride's Ethics and Rhetoric course. This applied virtue ethics course uses service to help students reflect on the virtues discussed in Plato's dialogues and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Each of the students devotes forty hours to creating and coaching debate programs in local, underprivileged middle schools. In its first semester, forty-five Tulane students helped to start three debate teams of about twenty students each and hosted a middle school debate tournament on Tulane's campus.

Last spring (2010), the project continued with another forty Tulane students devoting themselves to the project, as well as a number of students returning as volunteers. With the established teams acting as anchors, we launched a middle school debate league which was recently given a national charter by the Middle School Public Debate Program based at Claremont McKenna College. We hosted two more tournaments and invited every middle school in New Orleans to join us. The first league of its kind in New Orleans, the project has been met with tremendous enthusiasm by school administrators, parents, students and the public. Our tournaments have been featured in *The New Orleans Times-Picayune* and on the local NPR affiliate (see links below). The founders of the project were honored by the mayor of New Orleans at an April 2010 tournament.

Each of the debate tournaments centers on a specific issue or theme, from the worth of zoos (we took students to the Audubon Zoo for research) to the importance of the levees and wetlands (we took trips to a research station in the wetlands and to the sites of levee

breeches in preparation for those debates). This November, we would like to host a citywide debate tournament that centers on philosophical issues. Students will debate some of the following age-appropriate philosophical propositions:

We have freewill.

Ethical relativism is correct.

Consciousness is physical.

John Cage's 4'33 is art.

We can be certain that the law of gravity is really a law.

We are the same people we were a year ago.

Over 95% of the middle school students we work with qualify for the free or assisted lunch program; they cannot afford to pay tournament entrance fees which would cover the cost of trophies. We look to various contributors to cover that and other costs. **We would like to request \$800.00 from the APA to fund a citywide philosophical middle school debate tournament hosted by Tulane University students.** Eight hundred dollars would pay for 120 trophies, allowing us to give one to every participant. (The winning teams and individual debaters earn larger trophies, but all participants are excited to have one to take home to their families.) All of the trophies will have "The American Philosophical Association" engraved on them, along with the date and the details of the award.

Benefits and Media Attention:

The benefits of sponsoring this tournament are manifold. The APA will empower the middle school students of New Orleans to think seriously about profound philosophical issues. Their coaches, Tulane University students, will be working with them to think through these issues in preparation for the tournament. In a very real way, both Tulane students and New Orleans middle school students will be *doing* philosophy as they discuss the propositions.

In addition to promoting these novel venues for philosophical thought and discussion, the APA will also demonstrate that these students' logical arguments and critical analyses are worthy of an audience. We regularly get coverage from the most respected local media and look forward to gaining national attention for this citywide philosophical debate. Such exposure will help us to bring positive attention to youth who are living in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the currently unfolding tragedy in the Gulf—the kind of attention they rarely get.

The APA sponsorship of a philosophy debate tournament will help to establish a middle school debate league in New Orleans. We have found clear demand for such a league

from both teachers and students and we believe that the league is a highly effective way of promoting critical thinking and civic engagement to hundreds of teens.

With this grant, the APA would lend its considerable prestige to the project, thereby helping it to attract other donors and remain viable. In this way, the APA grant would be a seed grant. The grant will also be a seed grant in the sense that our project is one that other universities and colleges could adapt for their purposes. Even a much more modest course—an introduction to philosophy class, for instance—could add a service learning component that would have college students work with local middle or high school debate programs to prepare them for a philosophical debate.

Access for hearing impaired:

Tulane University will provide a sign language interpreter if needed.

Fiscal Agent and Timeline:

Vincent Ilustre will be the fiscal agent and will receive the grant through the Tulane University Center for Public Service. The trophies will be purchased in early November 2010 and presented at the tournament on November 20, 2010. Ryan McBride will send a report including photographs and an explanation for how other philosophy professors could coordinate similar projects.

Website:

We are currently working on a website. It will be up and running this fall and we will be able to link it to the APA's website.

Links of Interest:

An article about our program in *The Times-Picayune*:

http://www.nola.com/education/index.ssf/2010/03/debate_program_proves_valuable.html

Coverage on NPR affiliate WWNO:

<http://stream.publicbroadcasting.net/production/mp3/wwno/local-wwno-889133.mp3>

Tulane Center for Public Service:

<http://tulane.edu/cps/>

Our league was recently granted a charter from this national organization:

<http://middleschooldebate.com/index.htm>

Annual Budget:

Tournaments (five per year):

- Trophies (\$800 per tournament)

- Light breakfast, snacks and lunch for debaters and volunteers (\$1,500 per tournament)

Total for five debates: \$11,500.00

Research Field Trips (two per year):

(Past field trips have included visits to the Audubon Zoo, the Turtle Cove Wetlands Research Station in Manchac, LA., and New Orleans levees.)

- Transportation and Lunch: (\$1,200 total for three schools, per trip)

Total for two field trips: \$2,400

Pizza Parties (one in fall and spring, for three schools):

- \$120 each

Total for three schools: \$720

T-Shirts:

(For debaters and volunteers at the final debates held on Tulane's campus in fall and spring)

- \$1,200

Total for two tournaments: \$2,400

Grand total: \$17,020.00

Sponsors:

APA Grant: \$800.00*

Best Buy Grant: \$8,000.00*

Dean of Newcomb-Tulane College: \$4,000.00

Tulane University Provost: \$450.00

Center for Public Service \$570.00

Department of English: \$3,200.00

* = requests pending

C.V.'s attached below:

Ryan K. McBride

Tulane University
Department of English
6823 St. Charles Ave
New Orleans, LA 70118
(504) 330-9134/rmcbride@tulane.edu

Education

- 1998-2005 Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, **Ph.D.** in Philosophy
- 1994-1996 St. John's College, Santa Fe, New Mexico, **M.A.** in Liberal Arts
- 1989-1994 Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, **B.A.** in Philosophy, Minors in Greek, English, and Classical Studies

Dissertation: *Eikos Logos and Eikos Muthos: On the Scientific and Mythological Status of the Likely Story in Plato's Timaeus*. Directed by Owen Golden.

Teaching and Administrative Experience

Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2007-Present

Postdoctoral Fellow: Founder and director of a service-learning project that places Tulane students in mentoring relationships with local middle school students. The project launched debate programs in three schools as well as a citywide debate league, which was honored by Mayor C. Ray Nagin. Also, designed and taught courses and seminars for the Tulane English Department.

Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2008

Philosophy Lecturer: Responsible for teaching introductory philosophy at the only historically black, Catholic university in the Western hemisphere.

St. Norbert College, De Pere, Wisconsin, 2005-2007

Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy: Responsible for designing and teaching twelve classes in Greek Philosophy, Philosophy of Tragedy, Aesthetics, Ethics, and Human Nature.

Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1998-2001 & 2002-2005

Philosophy Instructor: Responsible for designing and teaching a total of sixteen classes in Philosophy of Human Nature, Theory of Ethics, and Logic.

Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2004-2005

Philosophy, Humanities, and English Instructor: Responsible for designing and teaching classes for the Liberal Arts Program in both English and philosophy including an upper division Philosophy of Beauty course.

University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 2001-2002

English Instructor: Responsible for organizing and teaching a total of six classes in which open discussions of assigned readings led to the production of thesis-driven papers. Topics included the nature of education, truth in documentary film, autobiography, and death and dying.

St. John's College Summer Greek Institute, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1995

Assistant to the Greek Tutor: As an advanced Greek student, I was responsible for explaining elementary grammar and translations to beginning Greek students.

Published Papers

- Review essay on Linda Rabieh's *Plato and the Virtue of Courage* in the *Journal of Value Inquiry*, March 2009.
- "A Theogony of the Intellect: On the status of the likely story in Plato's *Timaeus*," Published in the *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Ancient Philosophy Society*, April 2006.
- Book review of Barry Sandywell's *Presocratic Reflexivity: The Construction of Philosophical Discourse C. 600-450 BC* in *Ordia Prima*, February 2006.

Presentations

- "The Physiology of Imagination in Plato's *Timaeus*." Presented to the Ancient Philosophy Society, The New School for Social Research, New York City, April 2008.
- Tulane University Classics Department Guest Lecturer on Plato's *Apology* for third-semester Greek students, New Orleans, Louisiana, October 2007.
- "Science and Myth in Plato's *Timaeus*." Presented to the Philosophy Department at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, February 2007.
- "A Theogony for the Intellect: On the Status of the Likely Story in Plato's *Timaeus*." Presented to the Ancient Philosophy Society, De Paul University, Chicago, Illinois, April 2006.
- "An Introduction to Petrarch." Presented to the International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May, 2000.

Works in Progress

- *Aristotle in New Orleans: Classical Thought and Service Learning*. A rethinking of Aristotle's virtue theory and the relationship between

philosophy and rhetoric in light of the service-learning project I founded and direct at Tulane University.

- “Plato’s Sacred Disease,” article on what Plato’s medical account of epilepsy and its connections to Hippocratic writings demonstrate about Plato’s methodology in the *Timaeus*. Submitted to *Ancient Philosophy*.
- “Plato’s Cosmic Craftsman,” article on the striking and unrecognized debts Plato’s the craftsman of the universe in the *Timaeus* owes to earlier mythological works from Greece and Babylonia. Submitted to *Phronesis*.
- *Theogony, Cosmology, and Philosophy: The Philosophical Revival of an Ancient Poetic Genre in Plato’s Timaeus and Aristotle’s On the Heavens*. Monograph proposal complete, substantial portions of four chapters written.

Offices and Committees

- Honored by Mayor C. Ray Nagin for founding a New Orleans Debate League, 2010
- Philosophy Honors Thesis Committee Member, Tulane University, 2008-9
- Service-learning Committee Member, Tulane University, 2009-10
- Facilitator for the Tulane University Reading Project, 2007-2010

Languages

Classical Greek: Ability to teach introductory courses
French: Reading knowledge
Beginning Assyrian/Babylonian Cuneiform

Professional Societies

American Society for Aesthetics
Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy
American Philosophical Association

VINCENT N. ILUSTRE

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EDUCATION

A.B. Freeman School of Business, Tulane University

New Orleans, LA

Master of Business Administration, May 2004

Concentrations in Management and Marketing

Paul Tulane College, Tulane University

New Orleans, LA

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Sociology, May 1998

Experience

Center for Public Service, Tulane University

New Orleans, LA

Executive Director, July 2006 – Present

Director, January 2006 – June 2006

- Manage all of the daily operations of the Center for Public Service
- Select, supervise, train and coordinate 68 staff members (25 full-time and 7 part-time staff members, a research consultant, 25 full-time VISTA Volunteers and 10 Work Study Students)
- Collaborate with the Faculty Executive Committee of the Center to create a strategic plan and to resolve academic issues related to the graduation requirement; oversee and maintain Advisory Committees
- Oversee all programs and grants run out of the Center for Public Service, including affiliate programs such as Upward Bound; develop and implement new programs to support the public service graduation requirement, including community-based research initiatives, public service fellows, and the Semester in NOLA program for non –Tulane students
- Function as a liaison between the Center and the Schools/Units of Tulane by coordinating and communicating initiatives and programs sponsored by the Center, including planning grants, faculty seminars and workshops
- Manage budget and allocation of funds that are in excess of \$1.6 million, including university funds and external funds, including grants and income from endowments
- Maintain and pursue donor and foundation relations, including the cultivation and stewardship of relationships; pursue funding opportunities with Office of Development
- Coordinate program evaluation with consultant to ensure program quality
- Represent the Center for Public Service locally and nationally

Office of Service Learning, Tulane University

New Orleans, LA

Associate Director, April 2005 – December 2005

Assistant Director, July 1999 – March 2005

Program Coordinator, July 1998 - June 1999

- Designed and implemented experiential education program in conjunction with faculty director, including defining goals, publishing materials and planning for expansion

- Hired and supervised eight full-time staff members, two graduate students and five work-study students
- Directed day-to-day operations of the office, including staff meetings and problem resolution
- Acquired funding for projects through grants and collaborative projects
- Managed service learning activities and project budgets (\$400,000 up from initial budget of \$50,000)
- Informed and recruited faculty members and community partners on service learning through workshops and development seminars
- Acted as liaison to university administration and various committees about service learning
- Represented Tulane University through presentations at national conferences
- Developed and oversaw growth of the Gulf-South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education, a regional conference serving over 350 practitioners

Tulane University

New Orleans, LA

Adjunct Instructor, September 2009 – Present

Adjunct Instructor, September 2006 – December 2006

- Teach an Introduction to Management course for the Freeman Business School
- Co-taught an inter-disciplinary experience seminar on Tourism and Culture

Delgado Community College

New Orleans, LA

Adjunct Instructor, January 2005 – May 2005

- Created syllabus and taught a 16-week course on Fundamentals of Management

New Orleans Public School Scholarship Foundation

New Orleans, LA

Consultant, August 2000 – July 2002

- Ran locally-funded college preparatory program for high school students
- Designed curriculum and schedule and created policies and guidelines
- Recruited, selected and enrolled participants and staff

Tulane/Xavier Campus Affiliates Program, Tulane University

New Orleans, LA

Program Coordinator, January 1998 - July 1998

Assistant Program Coordinator, September 1997 – December 1997

- Oversaw a federally-funded college preparatory program for high school students
- Wrote procedures, planned lessons and schedules, recruited participants and tutors
- Marketed College Preparation Program to community

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Moely, B. E., Cochrane, A., Ilustre, V., Schmidt, A., Banks, E., & Crandall, I. *Defining Service-Learning Conceptually and in Action: A Step toward Service-Learning Program Institutionalization*. Gulf-South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education. Nashville, TN, March, 2008.

Henry, R., Ilustre, V., Shoemaker, J. & Young, J. *Face to Face, Hat to Hat: A Dialogue with Service-Learning*

Directors. 5th Annual Gulf-South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement in Higher Education.

New Orleans, LA, March 2007.

Lopez, A., Ilustre, V. & Moely, B. E. *After Katrina: Recovery and Renewal at Tulane University in New Orleans.*

Association of American Colleges and Universities, New Orleans, LA, January 2007.

Ilustre, V. & Slates, S. *Research to Develop and Improve Your Service-Learning Program.* National Society

for Experiential Education Conference, Philadelphia, PA, October 2005.

Bertin, A., Levy, S., Ilustre, V. & Bouzon, T. *Developing Youth in Philanthropy.* Association of Fundraising

Professionals: Greater New Orleans Chapter's 12th Annual Workshop for Fundraising Professionals, New Orleans, LA, June 2004.

A complete listing of professional presentations is available upon request.

Publications

Moely, B. E., Mercer, S. H., & Ilustre, V., Miron, D., & McFarland, M. (2002) Psychometric Properties and Correlates of the Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire (CASQ): A Measure of Students' Attitudes Related to Service Learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 8, 15-26.

Moely, B. E., McFarland, M., Miron, D., Mercer, S. H., & Ilustre, V. (2002). Changes in college students' attitudes and intentions for civic involvement as a function of service learning experiences. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 9, 18-26.

Acquired Funding

Capital One Foundation, 2007-Present

AmeriCorps VISTA, Corporation for National Community Service, December 2006 – Present

US Department of Education's TRIO Programs: Upward Bound: 2006-Present

Learn and Serve America, Corporation for National Community Service, October 2004 – August 2008

American Association of Colleges and Universities: Bringing Theory to Practice, September 2007 – August 2008

A complete listing of acquired funding is available upon request.

Individual Honors

- Gulf-South Summit Award for Outstanding Contributions to Service-Learning in Higher Education, 2008
- 1st Annual Tulane University Excellence Award, 2001
- Commendation from New Orleans Public School Scholarship Foundation, 2001

Program Honors

- Innovator of the Year Honoree, New Orleans City Business, 2008
- President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll
 - Honor Roll with Distinction, 2007 and 2008
 - Presidential Award for Hurricane Relief Services, 2006
 - Honor Roll Finalist for General Community Service, 2006
- National Society for Experiential Education Program of the Year, 2005

Professional Activities

- International Association of Researchers on Service-Learning and Community Engagement
 - Secretary/Treasurer, 2009 - Present
- Gulf-South Summit, Executive Committee
 - Founding Member, 2003 – Present
 - Chair, 2004-2007
- Tulane University Committees:
 - President's Administrative Council, 2010 – Present
 - Sacks Chair in Civic Engagement and Social Entrepreneurship Search, 2009 – Present
 - 6+1 Medical School Admissions, 2009 - Present
 - Quality Enhancement Plan SACS, September, 2008 – Present
 - Community Service Scholarship Selection, 2006 – Present
 - Study Abroad, 2006 – 2008
 - Vice-President for Student Affairs Review, 2007-2008

Community Activities

- Louisiana Serve Commission
 - Appointed Commissioner, 2009 – Present
 - Social Innovation Committee, Chair, 2010 – Present
 - Learn and Serve Committee, 2009 – Present
 - Treasurer, 2009 – 2010
- VIALink/211, Board of Directors, 2008 - Present

Skills

- Languages: Fluent Tagalog (Philippine language); Beginning Spanish
- Computer: MS Office, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and Publisher

References Available Upon Request