

Happy fall, Bronchos! We at the STLR office hope you are having a wonderful semester and making the most of your time at Central.

In this semester's newsletter, we wanted to share the stories of four students working to make an impact on their communities.

These students are a few of the 680 students who have

partaken in Transformative Learning projects intended to expand their perspectives. We hope learning about the experiences of other STLR students will inspire you in your journey of Transformative Learning.

If you have a story you would like to share, let us know at STLR@uco.edu or on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram at @UCOSTLR. We can't wait to hear from you!

Project Spotlights: *Cultivation, Summer 2017-Fall 2017*

Rodney Cox, a senior majoring in physical education, is one of 680 students who have contributed to Transformative Learning projects at UCO.

He has spent the semester working on his project titled, "Cultivation." He traveled to Durant and Hugo, Oklahoma, and Paris, Texas, to lead middle and high school students in projects serving their communities.

"We almost feel like you have to travel thousands of miles to make a difference right in your community," Cox said.

In Durant, 65 students came to help clean up a mobile home park of 67 homes. The Southeastern Oklahoma State football team came to work and help supervise students as they picked up trash, mowed and raked lawns.

A child who lives in the neighborhood thanked the group and talked about how the people living there felt



Rodney Cox led a group of 60 teenagers in Hugo. (Photo provided)

like they were not cared about.

"I was like kids, you see we're making a difference, an impact now," Cox said. "Even if you don't see it now, 20 years from now one of those kids that's living in this community might be like, 'I remember when a group of 65 kids came here and cleaned up our community. I want to do something like that to help somebody else.'"

Between 30 and 45 students in Paris

mowed and raked lawns at 45 homes. In Hugo, 60 teenagers repainted the city's streetlight poles.

Cox said he wanted to show students that they can make a difference in ways that seem small. He did this in part by using tools and supplies that were donated or borrowed. He made sure the students knew he did not purchase all of the materials.

Cultivation has drawn attention from the Choctaw Nation, 2017 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year Jon Hazell, State Representative Anastasia Pittman, and others.

"I can't do anything but benefit from it. Everybody is willing to help because they see me help," Cox said.

"I can feel myself growing," he said. "It's been an experience, definitely. Definitely one that I will remember forever."

STLR tenets: Global & Cultural Competencies, Health & Wellness

Black Students' Lived Experiences with Campus Law Enforcement, Summer 2017-Spring 2018

Last year, Jaylon Thomas, a senior majoring in criminal justice with a minor in sociology, worked with the Black Male Initiative to teach a success central class through the lens of a black male's experience.

Students in the class would ask Thomas how he felt about unarmed men being shot by police officers and would express their feelings.

"They felt like their lives didn't matter or they were seen

as a threat," Thomas said.

This encouraged him to submit "Black Students' Lived Experiences with Campus Law Enforcement" as a Transformative Learning project.

He teamed up with Kalen Russell, a senior majoring in Strategic Communications with a minor in Spanish, to create a survey to ask students about their experiences and perceptions.

There are three components to the project:

- Surveying 2,300 UCO students who identify as black
- Developing a focus group
- Writing scholarly articles
- Meeting with student organizations and UCO Police to discuss the intent of the project

Russell said the goal of the project is "to make sure that these minorities feel that their feelings are valid and they have a voice – that they have the right to be treated equally."

The focus group will function as a way for participants to share their stories and to be researchers themselves.

"They are getting the chance to basically mobilize their own experiences as a way to give themselves a voice," Thomas said.

Russell and Thomas have met with UCO police to discuss the project.

"We wanted to make sure that the message was consistent, that we're not trying to form anything against the police. It's more like a partnership" Russell said.



Jaylon Thomas and Kalen Russell execute the project. (Photo provided)

She said they were receptive to the research.

Russell and Thomas are using mixed-method research.

"A lot of research really, it stays quantitative, so it's really about numbers. Our research is mixed method, so it's qualitative and quantitative," Thomas said.

Russell and Thomas plan to submit their findings to academic journals and hope to present at national conferences.

STLR tenets: All tenets

Uganda Educational and Literacy Project, Spring 2017

Stockton Duvall, a junior majoring in Business Management, has had several STLR experiences. Most recent was taking part in the Uganda Educational and Literacy Project in May.

After freshman year, Duvall went on a leadership study tour to Uganda to work with Saint Monica

Girls' Tailoring Centre and the Sewing Hope Foundation through Pros for Africa.

Pros for Africa is a non-profit allowing college students to volunteer with these organizations led by Sister Rosemary Nyirumbwe. Sister Rosemary started Saint Monica's to help women and girls after Joseph

Kony's regime lost power.

"We got to go over there and see what they're doing, what resources they're funding over there and the educational opportunities, and see all the work that Sister Rosemary is doing with a lot of the girls that have been abducted through the Kony era," Duvall said.

Girls who were abducted into Kony's army often were not allowed to return to their homes or villages. They were rejected because of the possibility that they had killed others.

At the school, girls receive an education and are taught a skill like sewing or making purses with tabs from aluminum cans.

Last year, UCO students raised \$12,000 to build a library.

"They're really empowering women over there. Through that, we started working on literacy efforts," Duvall said.

Money left from that project will go toward the \$50,000 needed to build an education center two hours north in Atiak, Uganda.

Duvall also lead leadership development at local schools as a Communi-



Students travelled to Uganda to volunteer with Sister Rosemary. (Photo provided)

ty Leadership Ambassador. Once a month, he and other students would cover topics like communication, self-improvement and your identifying strengths and weaknesses.

"We'd just kind of take that time to help the kids develop as leaders at a

young age, because there really aren't very many leadership opportunities for students at that age."

The 7th and 8th grade students are also encouraged to keep track of their leadership experiences so they can remember them when it's time to ap-

ply for college.

"We really just want to use it to promote leadership and higher education," Duvall said.

STLR tenets: Leadership; Service Learning & Civic Engagement

Exciting STLR Updates: Snapshot Tool Now Available

We are proud to announce the launch of the STLR Snapshot tool!

The Snapshot allows you to showcase your achievements of Transformation, Integration and Exposure in the tenets you choose to highlight.

The record can be shown to graduate schools or potential employers. You can also add your customized Snapshot to your ePortfolio or include the link to your ePortfolio on the Snapshot.

Visit STLRSnapshot.uco.edu to build yours.

Leadership								
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Opportunities to present your research

There are several opportunities for you to present your research and creative activities at statewide and national conferences:

WHAT: Transformative Learning Conference
WHEN: March 8-9, 2018
WHERE: Oklahoma City
APPLY: Submit your proposal on uco.edu/tl by November 26, 2017.

WHAT: Oklahoma Research Day
WHEN: March 9, 2018
WHERE: Northwestern

Oklahoma State University, Enid
APPLY: Abstracts and registration are due on OklahomaResearchDay.com by January 31, 2018

WHAT: National Conference on Undergraduate Research
WHEN: April 4-7, 2018
WHERE: UCO
APPLY: Submit your abstract on cur.org by December 5, 2017

Watch for more opportunities in the spring.

Donate to the Endowment

STLR started its pilot year in 2014 with a 5-year, \$7.7 million Strengthening Institution Program Grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The grant has funded TL projects, including those featured in this newsletter, the training of nearly 500 faculty and staff, and the technology necessary to track student experiences.

It has also allowed for the hiring of three assistant directors, student employees and student ambassadors to keep the program running and growing on campus.

The grant runs through 2019. For STLR to continue operating at its current capacity, UCO needs your partnership. A monetary gift to the Student Transformative Learning Endowment is tax deductible and matched up to \$200,000 annually. Your gift is an investment in our students, university and community.

To give or learn more about the endowment, visit centralconnection.org/stlr.

Special thanks to our student workers

We would like to thank our Students Ambassadors for Fall 2017 for promoting STLR on campus:

Oswah Cheema, Rikki Curto, Catherine Patrick, Kalen Russell and Trinni Stevens.

STLR's student employees also play an important role. We would like to thank Student Communications Assistants Jessica Phillips and Macie Snowden, and Graphic Designer Spencer Lee for their work.

Connect with us!



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