

## CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SERVICE-LEARNING

The SCCESL team consists of **Dr. Merydawilda Colón**, Executive Director, Associate Dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Tenured Professor of Social Work; **Dr. Heather Swenson Brilla**, Supervisor of Community Programs and Community Engagement Assessment; **Trish Collins**, Community Engagement Liaison and Site Supervisor; **Shawn Cooper**, Community Projects Coordinator and Leadership; **Taylor Coyne**, Coordinator of Service-Learning; TES employees **Kerstin Maguire**, **Enrique Calixtro**, **Alan Handler**, **and Jim Gwathney**; and 28 Engagement Leadership Team members. These individuals, with the support of many campus partners, were responsible for the achievement of the SCCESL annual goals this year.

## **Center Goals**

Goal	Action/Activity to Accomplish Goal (Objective)	Results	Notes
1. Strengthen Service- Learning implementation, we will collaborate with Service-Learning faculty to increase classroom visits from 66% to 75% and overall faculty participation in feedback sessions by 5%.	1.2 As part of our efforts to	• Goal met	In FY25, 56 Service- Learning courses were taught by 45 faculty members. 1,182 students passed the courses and earned the Service-Learning designation on their transcripts.

- 2. Increase student participation in a High-Impact Practice (Service-Learning) and remove barriers to faculty and student participation in the Complete the document Service-Learning modality, and record it using the the number of completed Service-Learning Affiliation Agreements with organizations willing to have Service-Learning students will increase from the fall and spring 10 to 20.
- 2.1 Connect with additional organizations and introduce them to the Service-Learning Affiliation Agreement document. Exxat software.
  - 2.2 Create an additional Service-Learning project in semesters so that all Stockton students, faculty, and staff can engage with the community more.

- 2.1
  - Goal Met Spoke with over 50 participants at two community partner resource fairs on campus in FY25 to engage them in the Affiliation Agreement process.
  - 23 Affiliation Agreements were created in FY25. The total number of Affiliation Agreements doubled this year.
- 2.2
- Goal Met Fall and Spring Days of
- and will continue. Three homegrown community programs were added as service opportunities.

Service were created

- 2.1
- The SCCESL obtained access to the Exxat system without direct cost to students to track affiliation agreements with community partners. These agreements formalize relationships that allow us to place students more easily at service sites and expand service options.
- 2.2
- The Days of Service, held in the Multicultural Center on the Galloway campus, have lowered the barrier to students' participation in a highimpact practice. The events are held over several hours so that students can participate in their time between classes, the projects do not require transportation, there is a wellness component of community service projects, and because the events are held in the Multicultural Center, students are drawn to an area of campus they might not otherwise visit.
- The increase of homegrown programs increased the geographic footprint of the SCCESL in the Chelsea District of Atlantic City and in Little Egg Harbor. Residential students in

					Atlantic City have access to a high-impact practice they can walk to, and commuters from Ocean County have a more convenient option.
3. Promote the scholarship of engagement, implement during the academic year a once-per-semester open session via Zoom and in person for faculty and staff interested in developing their scholarship of engagement.	the Scholarship of Engagement through our current practices (15- Minute Splash of	3.1	Ongoing Three presentations were offered to faculty. The SCCESL Week of Engagement included Zoom and in-person information sessions for faculty on the Scholarship of Engagement Among faculty carrying out community- engaged scholarship, Dr. Nordia Scott, a junior faculty member, conducted a study in the Homework Completion Program at Stanley Holmes Village. Dr. Jess Bonnan-White and Dr. Nusret Sahin each did research in community policing.	3.1	The work to fully embrace the Scholarship of Engagement is ongoing.
persist in their education,	4.1 Organize two community resource fairs and manage four Atlantic County Community Resource Roundtable meetings per academic year.	4.1		4.1	There are several benefits when the SCCESL connects the campus community with agencies and organizations in surrounding counties. Stockton staff and faculty gain knowledge about direct services for students, community issues that could become a Service-Learning project, or opportunities for collaborative research.

the students' support	their off-campus • Community partners
network overall.	partners to create learn about what the
	connections that university has to offer
	support student and look for synergy
	resiliency during with students, faculty,
	school and after and staff. In addition to
	graduation. inspiration for project
	Four Atlantic County and program
	Community Resource collaborations,
	Roundtable meetings partners are exposed
	were held in FY25. In to the university's
	addition to meeting the continuing education
	SCCESL mission of opportunities in the
	connecting community form of workshops or
	partners for the benefit graduate degree
	of South Jersey while programs.
	offering another way
	for Stockton centers
	and offices to learn
	about resources for
	students, faculty, and
	staff.
	Staff from CARES,
	OMVS, Student
	Transitions, and
	Residence Life
	attended at least one
	meeting this year.

# Executive Summary: SCCESL FY25 Goal Achievements Expanding Stockton's Community Presence

This year, the SCCESL deepened Stockton's presence in South Jersey by expanding homegrown programs and collaborations into three of Atlantic City's Community Development Zones—Inlet, Midtown, and Chelsea—and into Ocean County. New Homework Completion Programs in Buzby Homes Village and Oceanside II broadened our impact in Chelsea, while the *Bridging Generations through Community Engagement* initiative re-establishes SCCESL's presence at Shore Park High Rise in the Inlet. In Little Egg Harbor, a Social Hour for older adults created accessible, meaningful engagement for students and residents alike.

These placements offer not only community support but also high-impact learning environments tailored to Stockton students across majors.

## Strengthening the University's Reputation

SCCESL maintains a visible, consistent presence in off-campus communities—
often where no other university programs operate. Through programs like Homework
Completion and Social Hour, youth and older adults interact directly with Stockton
students and staff, fostering trust and sparking conversations about Stockton while
connecting students to individuals they may not otherwise be in proximity with. In FY25
alone, SCCESL engaged four community spaces over 80+ days, representing thousands of
points of contact between Stockton and the region's families.

These daily touchpoints help demystify college for first-generation youth and create direct channels for families to ask questions about applications, financial aid, and academic planning—interactions that are not typically captured by enrollment metrics but are vital to long-term access.

## **Documented Stakeholder Satisfaction and Learning Outcomes**

Through rigorous annual assessment, SCCESL measures both community impact and student growth. Our data encompass parental perspectives on youth programming, curriculum quality in ESL, naturalization, and digital literacy classes, as well as the civic learning experiences of students. This year, 1,182 undergraduates—15.8% of Stockton's undergraduate population—completed Service-Learning courses, reinforcing SCCESL's role in academic and civic development.

As we prepare to align our student assessments with the updated General Studies Learning Outcomes in FY26, SCCESL remains well-positioned to continue serving as a testing ground for engaged pedagogies such as the authentic teacher-scholar model.

### **Securing External and Collaborative Funding**

FY25 marked SCCESL's sixth consecutive year of support from the TD Bank Foundation. This year, in collaboration with the Small Business Development Center, SCCESL received \$5,000 to support student transportation and stipends, enabling more equitable student access to volunteer and internship opportunities. This funding directly supported the student-led Engagement Leadership Team and created new options for students without reliable transportation.

## **Operating with Strategic Efficiency**

SCCESL achieves its goals through lean, high-leverage resourcing:

- No direct costs to students for software used to track Service-Learning activity.
- In-kind space: 10,000+ sq ft of donated community rooms, valued at ~\$170,000/year.
- **Labor**: Federal Work Study (FWS) covered ~\$23,000 in student wages—the highest of any Stockton unit—while city police and professionals contributed significant volunteer hours.
- Shared campus space in F-wing fostered collaboration with offices supporting student transition, military veterans, and underrepresented groups—amplifying collective impact without increasing institutional overhead.

Combined, in-kind contributions and grant support exceed \$200,000 annually, reinforcing the SCCESL model as a **cost-effective**, **high-impact asset**.

#### Conclusion:

The SCCESL is not simply a community-facing office; it is an engine of Stockton's public mission, providing strategic value, educational depth, and external credibility. Its embeddedness in the region, broad student reach, and reliance on external support make it an exceptionally efficient means of achieving Stockton's institutional goals and preserving the trust, access, and visibility that SCCESL has conscientiously built in the communities it serves.

### Changes to SCCESL Goals for the 2025 – 2026 Academic Year

FY26 SCCESL Goals

- 1. Strengthen Service-Learning implementation:
  - Continue to collaborate with Service-Learning faculty to increase classroom visits and overall faculty participation in feedback sessions.
- 2. Document student participation in a High-Impact Practice (Service-Learning) and remove barriers to faculty and student participation in the Service-Learning

modality. To capture and better understand the breadth of community-engaged learning being conducted on campus and to deepen the reflective process for students, the SCCESL will pilot a faculty-guided recognition process that supports student integration of community work and academic learning, with minimal barriers to faculty participation.

- a. Frame the pilot with the support of highly engaged faculty who have been implementing Service-Learning, creating a streamlined documentation process for courses that include community engagement but lack a formal Service-Learning designation. The streamlined process is a way to support, not undermine, the Service-Learning faculty commitment.
- b. Use the existing post-test survey for students in an SRLN course to build a Google form for students in the streamlined pilot to document their community engagement experiences.
- c. Draft a guide for faculty explaining how to use the streamlined process and the potential benefits for students and faculty if they choose to do so.
- d. Track who uses the process and decide if the pilot should be implemented as a best-practice at Stockton.
- 3. Promote the Scholarship of Engagement.
  - a. In collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning Design, continue to identify and support faculty who conduct community-engaged scholarship.

## Appendix: List of SCCESL Projects, Programs, and Assessment in the 2024 – 2025 Academic Year

The SCCESL held many events for students, faculty, staff, and community partners this year. The table below reflects a selection of the events and the notable outcomes.

Table 1.

FY 24 Selection of Events, Projects, and Programs						
Event or Activity	Date	Notable Outcomes				
Westminster Food Distribution in	Ongoing	8 Stockton students volunteered over the 6				
Atlantic City		events this year				
Social Hour Events in Atlantic City	Ongoing	57 Community members participated over the				
		11 sessions this year.				
Engagement Leadership Team	August 2024	A two-day orientation session where the staff				
Member Orientation in Galloway		debuted the new ELT program and competency				
		program				
Coast Day at Scarpa Academic	October 2024	6 ELT members and 3 staff members supported				
Center in Atlantic City		NAMS in the operation of the event, and the				
		SCCESL hosted youth from the Homework				
		Completion Program at Stanley Holmes Village.				
Voter Registration in Galloway	October 2024	7 ELT members supported Dr. Claire				
		Abernathy's voter registration event for Stockton				
		students				
Fall Celebration of Service in	November	13 micro-grants were awarded, and 17 Service-				
Galloway	2024	Learning projects were presented				
Reed's Farm Documentary Screening	November	As a part of the Week of Engagement, Jimmy				
	2024	Chairman's Service-Learning students				
		presented their documentaries on Reed's Farm.				
Fall Day of Service in Galloway	November	24 students participated in making positive				
	2024	bracelets, buttons and birthday cards that were				
		then donated to the Acenda Oceanside II Family				
		Success Center.				
Discussion with the Deans on	November	Deans from HLTH and SOBL met to discuss how				
Community Engagement at Stockton	2024	those schools support and promote				
		community-engaged learning.				
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of	January 2025	There were 992 participants, and there were 11				
Service in all Campuses		service projects				
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Panel	February 2025	115 high school students attended from 7 high				
Discussion at Scarpa in Atlantic City		schools				
Youth from Stanley Holmes Village	April 2025	5 youth from Stanley Holmes Village visited with				
Campus Visit the Noyes Arts Garage		Ralph Hunter and the African American				
		Heritage Museum of South Jersey				
Spring Celebration of Service	April 2025	13 micro-grants were awarded, and 25 Service-				
		Learning projects were presented				
Spring Day of Service in Galloway	April 2025	27 students and 5 faculty and staff participated,				
		80 greeting cards were made				
Engagement Leadership Team	April 2025	20 members of the Engagement Leadership				
Member Reflection Banquet in		Team and their families came together to reflect				
Galloway Campus		on their work and growth over the year.				

Service-Learning Faculty/Community	May 2025	3 partners joined the SCCESL staff to give
Partner Reflection Breakfast in		feedback on their Service-Learning teaching
Galloway Campus		experiences

The SCCESL continued its ambitious assessment plan in FY25. In addition to engaging with the assessment huddles offered by the Coalition for Urban and Metropolitan Universities and learning about assessment best practices, the center continued to take feedback from faculty, students, and community partners on ways to improve the measures we use. The data from the FY25 data analysis will be published in September 2025 in our full annual report.

Table 2.

FY25 SCCESL Assessment Matrix					
Student Leader Assessment	Timeframe				
Engagement Leadership Team Competency Self-	Mid-April				
Assessment					
Engagement Leadership Team Exit Interview	Mid-April				
Stockton Student Assessment	Timeframe				
Impact of Engagement on Students	Mid-March				
Homework Completion Program Volunteer Surveys	Mid-April				
Fall Day of Service Impact Survey	Early September				
MLK Day of Service Impact Survey	MLK Day				
EOF Student Summer Impact Survey	Late July				
Service-Learning students' pre- and post-test	Mid-December and Mid-June				
attitudes towards engagement and agency					
Longitudinal impact of community engagement	Ongoing				
activities and participation in a Service-Learning					
course on Stockton students					
Participation frequencies and demographics of	Ongoing				
Stockton students who volunteer in all homegrown					
community engagement programs					
Stockton Faculty and Staff Assessment	Timeframe				
Impact of Engagement on Staff	Mid-April				
Impact of Engagement on Faculty	Mid-February				
Mid-Semester Service-Learning Check	Mid-March				
Service-Learning Faculty Breakfast	Mid-May				
MLK Day of Service Impact Survey	MLK Day				
Community Member/Partner Assessment	Timeframe				
Impact of Engagement on Community Partners	Late-May				
Naturalization Class Participant Feedback	Early May				
English Learner Class Participant Feedback	Early May				
Computer Class Participant Feedback	Early May				
MLK Day of Service Impact Survey	MLK Day				

Focus Group Breakfast with Community Partners	Mid-August
Survey of the impact of the Homework Completion	Late-April
Program on the parents of the youth	
Survey of the youth who participate in the Homework	Late-April
Completion Programs	
Participation frequencies and demographics for all	Ongoing
homegrown community engagement programs	

## **Appendix**

The following section includes the analysis of the most salient impact and programmatic data collected in FY25.

## **Service-Learning Assessment**

The following table outlines the change in mean scores for the pre- and post-test assessment of selected Essential Learning Outcome administered to students in a Service-Learning course.

FY25 mean scores for Service-Learning pre- and post-test assignments

		М	Mean dif.	n	SD	One-
						Tailed
						Sig.
Pair		4.24		1004	0.66	
1	Pre-test - I can generate ideas					
	Post-test - I can generate ideas	4.57	0.33	1004	0.61	<.001
Pair		4.27		1006	0.63	
2	Pre-test - I can recognize opportunities					
	Post-test - I can recognize opportunities	4.54	0.27	1006	0.59	<.001
Pair		4.14		1001	0.69	
3	Pre-test - I can adapt to change					
	Post-test - I can adapt to change	4.15	0.37	1001	0.62	<.001
Pair		4.10		1002	0.75	
4	Pre-test - I can share ideas					
	Post-test - I can share ideas	4.43	0.33	1002	0.69	<.001
Pair		4.02		1001	0.76	
5	Pre-test - I can use various formats					
	Post-test - I can use various formats	4.38	0.36	1001	0.71	<.001

## Assessment of the Impact of Engagement of Students

The following distribution table outlines the perception of the impact of engagement activities on Stockton students.

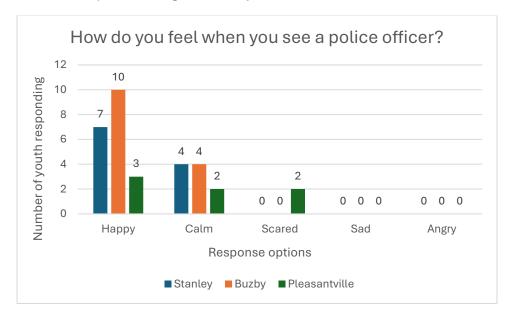
## Frequency distribution of students' self-assessment of the impact of community engagement

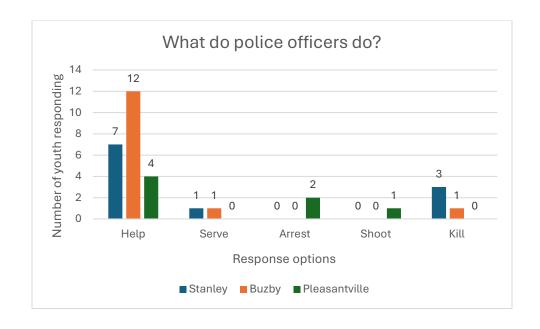
"Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about your Community Engagement Work."

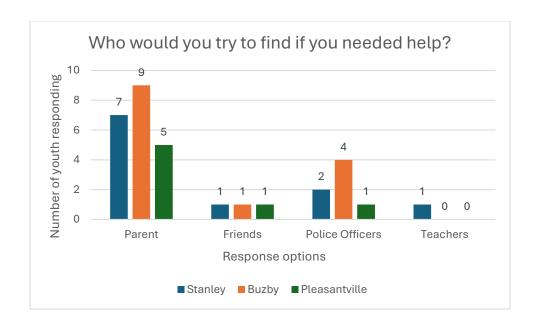
	Mean	n	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It has increased my ability to effect change.	3.19	301	131(39.58%)	109(32.93%)	52(15.71%)	6(1.81%)	3(0.91%)
I have a much better understanding of important issues in society.	3.17	301	129(42.86%)	108(35.88%)	53(17.61%)	8(2.66%)	3(1.00%)
I am better able to understand perspectives other than my own.	3.23	301	128(42.52%)	123(40.86%)	41(13.62%)	8(2.66%)	1(0.33%)
I have learned a lot about myself.	3.20	301	129(42.86%)	108(35.88%)	53(17.61%)	8(2.66%)	3(1.00%)
My work was meaningful to the community.	3.11	301	117(38.87%)	111(36.88%)	63(20.93%)	9(2.99%)	1(0.33%)
I am more likely to contribute to public projects.	3.04	301	113(37.54%)	109(36.21%)	61(20.27%)	15(4.98%)	3(1.00%)
I am more likely to get involved with many types of community projects.	3.05	301	112(37.21%)	110(36.54%)	66(21.93%)	9(2.99%)	4(1.33%)
I made changes in the communities in which I served.	3.25	301	126(41.86%)	128(42.52%)	44(14.62%)	2(0.66%)	1(0.33%)
My values in democratic principles have been strengthened.	3.20	301	120(39.87%)	129(42.86%)	46(15.28%)	3(1.00%)	3(1.00%)
I know more about off campus communities.	3.13	301	116(38.54%)	117(38.87%)	59(19.60%)	9(2.99%)	0(0.00%)
I have conversations with friends about my community work.	3.02	301	108(35.88%)	110(36.54%)	68(22.59%)	12(3.99%)	3(1.00%)
I am better able to participate in discussions about civic and political issues in the communities.	3.09	301	117(38.87%)	108(35.88%)	64(21.26%)	9(2.99%)	3(1.00%)
My participation in acts of activism has increased.	3.16	301	118(39.20%)	118(39.20%)	60(19.93%)	5(1.66%)	0(0.00%)
I have engaged in research as a result of my community engagement activity.	3.11	301	113(37.54%)	113(37.54%)	70(23.26%)	4(1.33%)	1(0.33%)
I have not been changed by my community activities.	2.46	301	79(26.25%)	87(28.90%)	57(18.94%)	48(15.95%)	30(9.97%)

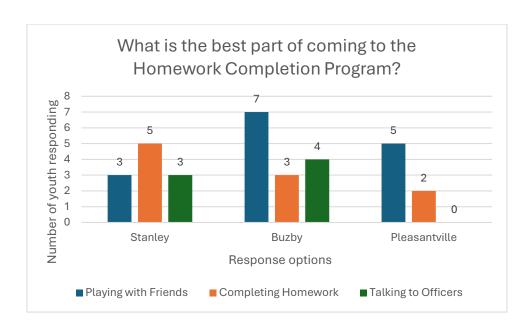
## **Programmatic Assessment**

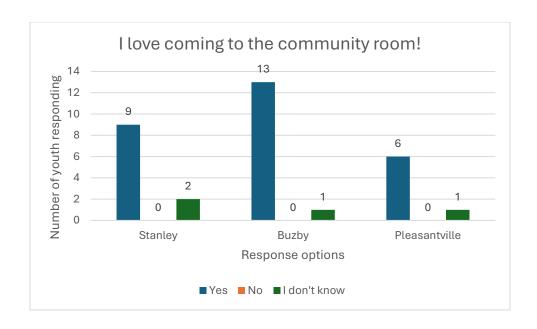
These five charts represent the responses to the survey administered to youth in the three Homework Completion Program in May 2025.











Every year the parents of the youth in the Homework Completion Programs are surveyed to understand their perceptions of the program and the impact the programs have on their families. The following two tables detail the responses from the parents at the Stanley Holmes Village program.

## Stanley Holmes Village Parents' Perceptions of the Impact of the Homework Completion Program (n=9)

	Having this program has made it possible for me to focus more on my job	opportunities my	Having this program has removed the financial barrier for my child to receive extra help with schoolwork	Having this program has offered my child help that I cannot provide at home	Having this program has reduced my overall stress knowing that my child is getting help	None of these are true for me
Strongly Agree	3	5	9	4	9	0
Agree	6	4	0	4	0	0
Neutral	0	0	0	1	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	9

## Stanley Holmes Village Parents' Perceptions of the Impact of the Homework Completion Program (n=9)

	Having this program has made it possible for me to focus more on my job	Having this program has given opportunities my child wouldn't get in school	Having this program has removed the financial barrier for my child to receive extra help with schoolwork	Having this program has offered my child help that I cannot provide at home	Having this program has reduced my overall stress knowing that my child is getting help	None of these are true for me
Strongly Agree	3	5	9	4	9	0
Agree	6	4	0	4	0	0
Neutral	0	0	0	1	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	9