Out in the City, Down on the Farm
Service Learning & Sustainability at Roosevelt University

Michael A. Bryson, PhD
Sustainability Studies Program
College of Arts and Sciences
Roosevelt University
Chicago IL 60605
mbryson@roosevelt.edu
Roosevelt University: a Snapshot

Founded 1945

- Campuses: downtown Chicago, suburban Schaumburg, online
- 6 colleges
  - Arts & Sciences
  - Business
  - Education
  - Performing Arts
  - Pharmacy
  - Professional Studies
- ~6,000 students (60% undergrad)
- Racially and geographically diverse
- Social justice-centered mission
Sustainability at Roosevelt
2010-16

Sustainable Buildings & Operations
Wabash Building (LEED Gold)
Goodman Center (LEED Silver)
AUD retrofits
Schaumburg Campus Redevelopment
STARS Certification 2015 (Bronze)

Academic Innovation
Sustainability Studies undergrad program launched Fall 2010 (1st in Chicago)
Environmental Science Minor revamped
SENCER pedagogy in Biology & Chem
Service Learning & Internships
Strategic Sustainability Plan 2014-15

Student Organizations & Activism
RU Green (environmental activism)
Net Impact (business and sustainability)
RU Reforesting (conservation biology)
RISE (student activism & social justice)

“Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort.”
Franklin D. Roosevelt
Sustainability at Roosevelt
Focus on Service Learning

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- Strategic Sustainability Plan 2014-15

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Service Learning at Roosevelt
Transformational Learning with Community Partners

- Service to community within context of existing & new academic courses
- Meaningful volunteer work to advance community partner's mission
- Reflection and analysis by students on their experiences
- Interaction with underprivileged people and community leaders
- Connection with social sustainability: community resilience & environmental justice

Resource: Mansfield Institute of Social Justice & Transformation
Weekly Seminar-style Sessions
Brief group discussion of readings or short student presentations

Farm Work
Starting week 2; constitutes the bulk of class time

Individual Writing Assignments
Connect readings to class theme & service experiences

Engagement with the Community
Discussions with site staff & volunteers; interaction with the general public

Landscaping at Eden Place Nature Center, Oct 2014 (photo: C. Dennis)
Scope of Issues Addressed in SUST 350

- **Environmental**: food and water; waste and recycling; organic food production; biodiversity; public access to green space

- **Economic**: sustainable agriculture and job training/creation; community development; persistent poverty; housing scarcity

- **Ethical**: environmental justice and social equity; just spaces: poverty and education; food deserts; gentrification

- **Technological**: green architecture and design; low-tech farming techniques; transportation infrastructure

Teamwork exemplified at the Chicago Lights Urban Farm, April 2013

*(photo: M. Bryson)*
Service to the Community Partner

Scenes from Chicago Lights Urban Farm Fall Festival, 2009 (photos: M. Bryson)
Building a hoop house, Chicago Lights Urban Farm, May 2012 (photos: M. Bryson)
Farm Chores: Working Together

Planting trees at Eden Place Nature Center, Nov 2014 (photos: C. Dennis, M. Bryson)
Environmental education for youth at Eden Place Nature Center (photos: EPNC)
Restoring Urban Green Space

Eden Place Nature Center, Fall 2014 (photos: M. Bryson)
Learning from Community Leaders

Fireside chat with Michael Howard at Eden Place Nature Center, Fall 2014 (photo: M. Bryson)
Creating Action Research Projects

Community Empowerment and Youth Enrichment (CEYE) Program

Community Gardeners’ Guide

Farm Education Lessons and Activities

Knowing Your Neighborhood: Community Assets Brochure and Map

Rainwater Harvesting Plan

Self-Guided Tour and Farm Map (left)
Transformation through Service

SUST 350 Service & Sustainability:
last workday at Eden Place Nature Center, 2 Dec 2014 (photo: M. Bryson)