Policy Boot Camp Sparks Awareness and Action

Earlier this month, 120 students from Raleigh’s Enloe High School participated in a day-long public policy boot camp at the Hunt Library on NCSU’s Centennial Campus. Throughout the sessions, students grappled with issues of race, poverty, and education. To make this program possible, IEI partnered with EdNC, the Jamie Kirk Hahn Foundation, and the Kenan Institute for Engineering, Technology, & Science.

Why did so many partners come together to focus on improving youth engagement? Because extensive research demonstrates that youth who are connected to their schools and communities enjoy greater success in school and in the workforce.

Anita Brown-Graham, IEI Director, opened the program by noting the low level of civic engagement among young people. In response, one student responded by pointing out, “We’re busy with our school schedules but if someone asks, I think we step up!”

Featured Educator

This month’s featured educator, Nate Barilich, has a passion for education and his students.

Featured IEI Event

Don’t miss IEI’s #YouthEngageNC Summit on Nov. 6!

Featured IEI Event Series

Check out IEI’s statewide Discovery Forum series that’s engaging young social entrepreneurs!
Students connect with civic engagement in the Emerging Issues Commons

This theme of engagement continued throughout the day. Nancy Rose from the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research walked students through the legislative process. Later, a panel of experts addressed issues around education policy, the environment, healthcare, and the economic underpinnings of North Carolina.

The civic dialogue was driven forward over lunch by the Jamie Kirk Hahn Foundation’s Gathering for Good. Speakers engaged the students around the values of North Carolina with the ultimate question centering around what it would take to both keep the students in North Carolina and then what it would take to engage them in civic life.

After spending the day with these amazing students, you would be hard pressed to find anyone who was present who did not believe that our best days as a state are ahead of us. Attendees challenged the speakers and each other, questioning assumptions based on race, class, and gender. One student, for example, raised the issue of the demographic makeup of advanced placement versus standard classes, sparking a lively debate about classifications. Other topics included preventing young women from dropping out of high school.
The students - our future leaders - were clearly committed to both asking the hard questions and to improving North Carolina. They departed with key takeaways:

- Be brave. Failure is not fatal.
- Challenge assumptions.
- Connect the dots on public policy decisions and weigh in.
- It is important to engage in civic life in North Carolina.

Are you interested in learning more about how to engage students in your community? IEI invites you to participate in the #YouthEngageNC Summit, a first-of-its-kind convening for all North Carolinians passionate about intentionally fostering successful engagement among young adults (ages 16-24). Join us Nov. 6, 2015, at any of our three live-linked locations in Raleigh, Asheville, and Greenville.

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Do you know a teacher who is working hard to help students succeed? Let us know, and s/he could be featured in the next education issue!