WASIELESKI SEES THE SERVICE-LEARNING RELATIONSHIPS AS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL FOR BOTH THE COMMUNITY AND STUDENTS.

Dr. Dave Wasieleski, assistant professor of business ethics, has been incorporating service-learning into his core business ethics curriculum for the past three years. Each semester, he sees an average of 125 students through service-learning courses.

Dr. Wasieleski has established four community partnerships. The first is with Boys and Girls Club which is an ongoing partnership where students tutor youth in the community, coach basketball games, or help with marketing the retail store, which members of the Boys and Girls club operate. Another partner is Just Harvest, an organization where students help individuals in the community complete their taxes and job applications. The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation seeks help from Duquesne students to participate in planning an annual fundraiser gala. Finally, Junior Achievement of Pittsburgh is where the students get involved in the community by teaching six one-hour courses to high school students on the topic of Global Business Ethics.

EXPOSING THE JOY OF SERVING

The business ethics course Dr. Wasieleski teaches is a required course, and because of this, the service-learning part is initially resisted by some students. However, by the end of the semester Dr. Wasieleski estimates that over ninety percent of the students say it was a great experience. To Dr. Wasieleski, it is a mutually beneficial situation for the community partners and the students.

“There’s no better way to learn. They’re actually learning more. You don’t have to learn concepts when you actually live it.”

Over half of the students finish the semester with a greater understanding of the concept of corporate social responsibility, are able to recognize ethical issues more clearly, and also identify the benefits of local community partnerships. Dr. Wasieleski knows that “the service partners love us!”

THE GREATER MISSION

Dr. Wasieleski decided to incorporate service-learning into his classroom because “it fits the mission of the Business School and the Spiritan mission of Duquesne.” He knows all too well the tremendous amount of extra work it is to incorporate service-learning into a curriculum saying, “it’s a challenge.” However, he feels “it’s completely worth the work, especially for those half [of the students] getting the experience of a lifetime. There’s no better way to learn. They’re actually learning more. You don’t have to learn concepts when you actually live it.”