



# ROOTS Summit 2.0 REPORT

02.20.2020

## Collaboration

*The Animating Spirit of WU's Collaborative for the Common Good (CCG)*



On April 18, 2019, ninety-two individuals participated in our first ROOTS Summit. The enthusiasm and work done at this first gathering set the stage for ROOTS Summit 2.0. On a blustery February day (02/20/2020), one hundred and twenty-three people gathered on our campus to contribute to ROOTS Summit 2.0, and yet, the work to prepare for this day came by way of a [pre-Summit Survey](#) crafted by the CCG and taken by 98 participants. This data gave us a way of continuing the longitudinal study of what we think are our collective strengths, what challenges our community, and the ways people are committed to supporting one another. In preparation for ROOTS 2.0, we included a series of questions that helped us understand the level of awareness of service learning and the level of desire to undertake this form of collaborative partnerships.

The people who came to ROOTS 2.0 represented Wingate University, businesses, non-profits, governments, churches, environmental groups, arts community, education, healthcare, and agriculture across Union County and neighboring counties. ROOTS 2.0 had two primary commitments: deepen all attendees' appreciation of what good collaboration entails and meaningful connect our campus and community to help celebrate our strengths and dream up ways to meet our collective needs.

Our morning started with participants exploring the theme of the day -- collaboration -- namely, what it looks like, feels like, and sounds like. Our marketing team included the greater Wingate University community in this endeavor by creating Instagram polls asking them about their vision of Collaboration. ROOTS 2.0 participants placed



their answers on cards prominently displayed in the room so that their ideas would guide us throughout the day. Here is a glimpse of some of our collective wisdom:

### **What does Collaboration look like?**

- ✓ “People of different backgrounds working together for a common goal”
- ✓ “Teamwork; Diversity of Thought; Mutual Respect; Action”
- ✓ “Including the voices and ideas which the efforts will be impacting”
- ✓ “Bringing your strengths to the table collectively to find solutions together”



### **What does Collaboration Feel Like?**

- ✓ “Deeply enriching; a wonderful collaboration should be a give-and-take of ideas and resources”
- ✓ “When there are challenges and stressed communication: A rollercoaster; When there are shared goals, good communication and no focus on who gets credit: warm bowl of chili on a snowy night”
- ✓ “Feels like a crescendo of an emotionally satisfying symphony”

### **What does Collaboration Sound Like?**

- ✓ “Opening & unlocking resources”
- ✓ “Open dialogue”
- ✓ “Mutual support and advocacy”
- ✓ “Unique perspectives given value”

Another key moment of shared learning was with Psychology professor, Dr. Candace Lapan. Dr. Lapan walked ROOTS 2.0 participants through an interactive game that taught us all how to be good partners and collaborators. The impact of her engaging presentation was immediate and tangible. In a recent focus group, a partner used the three different categories of potential collaborations (Community Service, Community Based Learning; Service Learning), and this helped our focus group understand the types of interactions we were expecting from each other!



## **DREAMING BIG & BOLD**

Our other commitment when planning ROOTS 2.0 was to foster more meaningful connections between students, faculty/staff/administration, and our community. Thus, for ROOTS 2.0, we focused on increasing more student and faculty/staff participation. This year, sixteen percent of the attendees were students associated with the CCG (compared with approximately 10% last year). We also offered three faculty led presentations on collaborative projects and courses, one student lead presentation for their ECON 413 (Economic Impact) Service learning class, one

community group presentation (Rivendell Farms of the Carolinas Food Resource Map Collaboration with the CCG), and a series of informative posters showcasing the many projects and initiatives supported by the CCG. At ROOTS 2.0, students were involved in scribing comments from the table, facilitating research (encouraging pre-Summit survey participation), acting as hosts, and being presenters of data. Feedback from one participant shows how much their presence and interaction meant: “This was my first WU Roots Summit, and I am looking forward to the next one; the student scribes, volunteers, and presenters were very professional.” Another wrote that they were “Interested in more student presentations.”



Faculty also presented their community collaborations and research to fire up the imaginations of all ROOTS 2.0 participants in order to recruit more collaborations and ideas for projects or initiatives.



**ALIEN PROJECT:** Dr. Nick DeLangie spoke about our innovative ALIEN project (Adventure Leadership Immersion Experience in Nature) that used nature as the context for forming future and current leaders and offered our WU recreation programming classes a chance to put what they are learning into practice for the good of our community. Many community partners have followed up to see how they can be a part of this project.

**SERVING OUR SENIORS:** Sociology professor, Dr. Lacey Ritter, helped ROOTS 2.0 participants see how Wingate listened to the data from the first ROOTS Summit (namely, that our seniors were under-resourced and under-served in our community) and creatively met that need. In her Sociology of Aging service learning course, students interviewed 74 of our local seniors and found that that they would love to take classes with our students, go to lyceums, travel, enjoy exercise classes and water aerobics, participate in music programs, health and wellness fairs, and learn about financial planning.



They would also love to participate in bingo, pet therapy, potlucks, and book groups. This data helped create a new program at Wingate, the Golden Bulldog Club, which allows Wingate Seniors to have access to the McGee Wellness Center.



Participants also learned how the 33 students taking Wingate’s Adult and Aging Psychology service learning course have been listening, learning, and collaboratively dreaming up amazing projects with their community partners. The student team working with the Council on Aging wants to implement a hands-on, student led Technology 101 series for seniors on topics such as how to use FaceTime, putting medical information in their phone, and using technology as a memory aid. The team working with Brookdale wants to host a Recreate a Memory event in which residents will paint, draw, or make an artistic representation of a meaningful personal memory. At the end of the event, they will have residents share the story of their artistic creation and record them to create a Seniors Stories book. The team working with the Ellen Fitzgerald Senior Center wants to create and host a decade trivia night to encourage residents to engage with one another – and earn swag -- recalling trivia from various decades. One team working with Monroe Rehabilitation are planning a Senior Prom event. A second team is planning a reading buddy event in which they will arrange to bring some younger children to visit Monroe Rehabilitation to have them read with residents.



These presentations illustrate great partnerships and models of collaboration, and they inspired our afternoon ‘Deep Dives’ into two distinct areas identified as important by our campus-community: **Sustainable Agriculture and Health & Wellness**. Facilitator teams for each ‘Deep Dive’ were intentionally made up of community partners and faculty, and over 85 participants took part in these brainstorming sessions to help identify needs and ways to address these needs.

## DEEP DIVE DATA

The structure of both Deep Dive Sessions was the same and began with an exploration of the terminology (Sustainable Ag and Health & Wellness) followed by a reflection on:



- R:** What resources or assets do you/your group bring to the community?
- O:** What optimism or great programs/ideas do you/your group bring to the community?
- O:** What outstanding areas or gaps are present in our community that need to be addressed?
- T:** What do you/your group target in your service to the community?
- S:** What Support could you/your group give to your community?

Data collected from each area will be shared via a more comprehensive newsletter (April-May 2020) to be shared with our contributors once the COVID-19 crisis has passed. However, below are some snapshots demonstrating the effectiveness of these sessions.

<b>Sustainable Agriculture Deep Dive</b>	<b>Impact of ROOTS 2.0</b>
<p>What is not being done? Who is not being served?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Coordination &amp; Collaboration; Mechanisms not fully in place; parents of students in school-based programs</li> <li>• Food Resources; folks living in lower socioeconomic status in Wingate and Marshville and high schoolers</li> <li>• Community Gardens; aquaponics at East Union; community engagement; Parents? We need to talk to parents</li> <li>• Food wasted in the fields; organize volunteers; pantries, kits, etc...</li> <li>• Food recovery; minimizing food waste</li> <li>• Connection of farmers with food insecure people</li> </ul>
<p>Projects to Address Gaps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use WU as the coordinator and facilitator; Communication &amp; collaboration &amp; education</li> <li>• Education of healthy eating; creation of community/school gardens</li> <li>• Home garden kits, Community Gardens &amp; farmers markets</li> <li>• Rivendell Aquaponics system</li> <li>• Organize Farm Food Council; Union County commerce; online locations for Farmers market</li> <li>• Do we want a Farm Food Council in Union County? Farmer's markets on campus?</li> <li>• Local Food Council; Campus farmers market</li> </ul>
<p>Contributions to close the gap: Contacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving from 'community' garden to 'home' garden (kits); Bridge between production &amp; table</li> <li>• Rivendell Farms – aquaponics; garden kit (peppers, tomatoes); make garden kit as school assignments; Farm field trips; Mobile Farmer's Market; nutrition education</li> <li>• March 12<sup>th</sup> – Attend Union County Chamber Policy Luncheon</li> <li>• CFSA Policy team</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Wellness Deep Dive</b>	<b>Impact of ROOTS 2.0</b>
<p>What is not being done? Who is not being served?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Assistance</li> <li>• Childcare in emergency shelter; lack of financial resources &amp; personnel</li> <li>• Understanding perspectives of minority communities; language barriers – you cannot get to your target audience if you do not understand their side of the story</li> <li>• Lack of services for non-English speakers and those living in poverty; Spanish speaking population and below the poverty line population</li> <li>• Kindergarteners are unprepared (academically, socially, linguistically) for school – children not in preschool/childcare; low income households not providing appropriate language base</li> <li>• Housing repair for those in need in eastern UC</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Getting the word out (newsletter with meal ideas; encouraging words; resources; monthly events); under resourced are not being served; we do not know what resources are available</li> <li>• A satellite public health office in Eastern part of the county; people in the Eastern part of the county – youth – seniors; women – single dads</li> <li>• Classes for Wingate students to discuss relationships (dating, pre-marital); students who have not experienced or maintained a meaningful dating relationship</li> </ul>
<p>Projects to Address Gaps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly get togethers (Social)</li> <li>• Make a specific sheet/book/journal/list that we can send out ... an index of partners and what they can do. Yearly?</li> <li>• Senior Assistance: Updating resource registry for Council on Aging</li> <li>• Quality Afterschool programs – subsidy for aftercare &amp; summer programs up to 12 yrs old</li> <li>• Projects with minority communities (e.g. Hispanic Community) concerning language barriers and inability to apply for resources due to lack of information &amp; immigration status (fear + non-understanding); Have someone explain the process of health care programs, benefits &amp; risks to reduce the fear and increase understanding; Provide opportunities for healthcare, low-cost and/or free services</li> <li>• At least one Spanish speaking provider at each office; full time interpreters at each office</li> <li>• Identify an interested group (church, club, service organization) for conversations &amp; guidance for starting up a group to address housing repair for those in need in Eastern UC</li> <li>• Take newsletter (?) to different organizations, schools, shopping centers, etc...</li> <li>• Partnerships with churches that have gyms and low participation of youth; partner with them and use the facilities for ages 5-18 after hours 3pm-12pm</li> <li>• Partnership; facilitate connection – Dept of Health &amp; MPH with Wingate University; service learning</li> <li>• Understanding &amp; active communication involved in dating relationships; Understanding different types of dating; levels-seasons-reasons</li> <li>• Foster Care Children; those without internet / Wi-Fi to learn of services</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey: Hear Voices of Community</li> <li>• Act as ambassadors for reaching out to organizations that can be of assistance to seniors on the brink (between Medicaid and</li> </ul>

<p>Contributions to close the gap: Contacts</p>	<p>fully funded) – low-cost dental; hearing; vision; drugs; housing; transportation...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact with faith community to provide week-long summer programs; girl scouts babysitting training</li> <li>• Having Partnerships with insight on the process of applying for healthcare; find Spanish speaking staff</li> <li>• Hiring more Spanish speaking staff; further engage with the Spanish speaking community; begin process of 501c3 status – help get grants for free services; partnerships</li> <li>• Hands on leadership; accept volunteers &amp; leaders that are interested in starting a mission in Eastern Union County</li> <li>• Identifying and bringing in resources</li> <li>• Partnership with churches with gyms for after-hours programs</li> <li>• Service learning</li> <li>• Education; discussion; modeling; experience; understanding healthy relationships</li> <li>• Newsletter Development</li> </ul>
---	---

## SUCCESS

Both ROOTS Summits have exceeded our expectations. In April 2019, we were just getting to know our neighbors, and ROOTS 2.0 cultivated stronger relationships that have blossomed into partnerships aimed at promoting the well-being of our neighbors in Eastern Union County. We have involved more students and faculty, generated meaningful projects and initiatives, fostered new service-learning curriculum, hosted more focus groups and luncheons, and received more communications about follow-up meetings and the next ROOTS Summit. We are so grateful for the support of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, because the grant we received started such a meaningful endeavor that has helped us co-construct the CCG with the help and insights of our community. The ROOTS Summit has become a crucial annual event that brings our community together for the common good. Below are the local businesses who contributed to ROOTS 2.0 and made it such a success!

