

Making a difference

Business class encourages teamwork and social responsibility.

For business students at Missouri Southern, Dr. Nanette Philibert's Organizational Behavior class is a unique way to learn how to work as a team and give back to the community.

Each semester, students in the class work to create some type of community service project.

Since the students are from various majors, they work in small groups and designate different responsibilities within the group.

Some work on publicity, others serve as project managers, and some work on labor logistics collection.

"You learn how to deal with different personalities within an organization," said Rhonda Lawrence, '11, who took the class in the spring of 2011. "You learn about the cultures of other countries, things you need to change, and ways to motivate individuals."

Last spring, due to a large class size, there were two class projects. The first was an initiative for Botswana, in which the group collected items to send to missionaries hoping to start an orphanage there.

The second project was the MO-KAN Alliance, a project to collect donations for no-kill animal shelters in Missouri and Kansas.

Philibert said a huge part of the class is learning from experience instead of from a textbook. Sometimes, Philibert has a hard time letting students take on the project without a lot of guidance from her.

"I have to sit on my hands and not get involved because it's their project," said Philibert.

Regardless, the students have never let her down. In the past, classes have worked on projects with the Carthage Crisis Center, Threads of Hope, and Haven of the Ozarks.



Above left, Dr. Beverly Block, interim dean of the Robert W. Plaster School of Business Administration, looks at items sold at the Mission Market. Top right, Dr. Nancy Philibert and a student work the table at the market. Above right, students organize items at the Mission Market held at Missouri Southern. — Photos by Julie Lybarger, '11

Other projects have involved raising money to renovate the memorial gardens on campus and creating a venue for both international and local charities with Mission Market.

"This project has taught me the importance of demonstrating civic responsibility and how my efforts impact the community and world," said Marchella Claar, '11, who also took the class in spring 2010.

"Dr. Philibert does an excellent job of teaching students the value of social responsibility."

For some students, a project doesn't end with the class.

"I've had students get jobs because they listed these projects on their resumes," said Philibert.

Erik Wright, '10, helped his class renovate the memorial garden at Missouri Southern and is now helping to develop a community garden in Joplin.

"The memorial garden project was a catalyst for promoting and developing the community garden program in Joplin," said Wright.

"I am a huge supporter of this concept and actually came back last year and participated in the fall project. Corporate social responsibility projects are becoming essential to the survival of business in the 21st century."

Philibert uses her organizational behavior class to give students opportunities and experiences they would never have if they stayed inside a classroom. **G**

— Joanna Lee, '12