

## The Talloires Network: Four Years On

The Talloires Network has made tremendous progress since our launch at the 2005 Talloires Conference. We have grown from 29 original members to 137 members in 48 countries. We are particularly proud of the diversity of institutions represented in the Network. As stated by Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, founding president of Aga Khan University and a member of the Talloires Network Steering Committee, “The remarkable diversity of institutions in the Talloires Network has enabled its members to learn from each other about the value, importance and methodology of engaging with the communities in which they function.”

In addition to the growth in membership, we have continually sought to provide more benefits to our members and to build the field of higher education civic engagement globally. We have worked to keep our members informed about the latest resources and opportunities, developed partnerships with several regional higher education networks and hosted regional conferences, and launched a variety of exciting initiatives to engage students and faculty.

### **Keeping the Network informed**

Beginning in April 2008, the Network has issued a monthly Newsletter to keep all of our members up-to-date on the Network’s progress, the latest news in higher education civic engagement, upcoming events and conferences, recent publications in the field, and opportunities for engaged universities. We also issue special announcements of grant opportunities, calls for papers, and other news that is relevant to our membership. In addition, we have provided a variety of resources on our website for administrators, faculty, and students interested in expanding civic engagement on their campuses.

### **A Network of Networks**

An integral part of the Network’s approach to building the global movement for socially engaged universities is our ‘Network of networks’ strategy. Partnering with (and in some cases catalyzing the creation of) regional higher education networks committed to civic engagement allows the Talloires Network to make our work more relevant and context-driven. Regional networks understand the local context and have contacts and credibility in their regions that the global Talloires Network can leverage to advance civic engagement in higher education in these regions. The Talloires Network works with such networks all over the world, and thus far we have concluded formal partnership agreements with three of them:



The Latin American Center for Service-Learning (CLAYSS) is an organization based in Argentina, with an objective to contribute to the growth of a cooperative culture in Latin America through the development of service-learning projects. CLAYSS connects schools, universities, and higher education institutions that promote service-learning, and it provides resources for teacher training and for optimizing projects. With funding and other support from the Talloires Network since 2008, CLAYSS has expanded the Network’s

membership in Latin America and recently hosted a meeting of regional Talloires Network members and prospective members in Buenos Aires. Given the focus on university outreach and extension activities in Latin America, we believe that there is great potential in for growth in the region.

The Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) is an alliance of 34 Australian universities committed to university-community engagement in order to promote the social, environmental, economic, and cultural development of communities. AUCEA promotes direct and mutually beneficial interaction between universities and communities that is essential for the development and application of knowledge and the shaping of future citizens. With the recent emphasis on community engagement at Australian universities, the Talloires Network is very excited about this partnership, which began in Spring 2009 and will be beneficial to both networks. As stated by Janice Reid, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Sydney and a member of the Talloires Network Steering Committee, "The initiative to create a 'network of networks' has introduced an international perspective to our national organization, the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance, which now welcomes members from the South Pacific and Asia and plans to hold an international meeting in Sydney in 2011."

The Ma'an Arab University Alliance for Civic Engagement is a particularly exciting initiative because it is the first regional network whose creation was catalyzed by the Talloires Network. In October 2008, the American University in Cairo and the Talloires Network hosted a conference in Cairo entitled Tadamunn: Toward Civic Engagement in Arab Education. One of the chief recommendations arising from the conference was to establish a network of Arab universities committed to advancing higher education civic engagement in the region. Working in collaboration with the Talloires Network, the Ma'an Arab University Alliance for Civic Engagement aims to bring together Arab universities with the collective goal of encouraging and enhancing civic engagement implementation in higher education. The Ma'an Alliance has already tapped into the growing demand for civic engagement in Arab higher education by hosting a successful training workshop for faculty in Beirut this past June. The Talloires Network looks forward to the continued success of the Ma'an Alliance.



### **Engaging Students**

Over the past year and a half, the Talloires Network has made significant strides in engaging students at our member institutions. Ultimately, the greatest resource that universities have to serve their communities is the large number of talented, energetic young people in their student bodies. Therefore, the Talloires Network has worked to identify student leaders on member campuses and to shape the direction of the Talloires Network by utilizing their voices and ideas.

Our student outreach began in March 2008, when the Talloires Network sponsored the attendance of 24



students from Talloires Network institutions at the Clinton Global Initiative – University (CGI U) Conference in New Orleans. CGI U is a project of the Clinton Global Initiative that challenges students and universities to tackle pressing domestic and international problems. As part of the conference, the students attended panel presentations, discussion groups, and speeches by President Bill Clinton and other leaders. In addition, the Talloires Network organized workshops and activities for the students to encourage shared learning and collaboration on common goals. The students discussed their projects, conditions in their communities,

involvement of their home institutions, and strategies for achieving change. These conversations formed the foundation of a global community of active student citizens. According to Maria Kambouris, a student at Charles Darwin University, “My participation in the CGI U assisted me greatly as I had the opportunity to network with other students from around the world who were passionate about making a difference.”

To build on the progress made at CGI U and to engage student leaders from across the Network, we also created a Student Peer Advisor Program. 25 Student Peer Advisors were selected after a competitive application process, and serve as a resource for any peers seeking support, advice, or someone to discuss ideas with. To keep these students engaged and build an online community of practice, the Talloires Network hosts monthly chats on our online discussion forums, addressing topics ranging from fundraising to strategic planning to building community partnerships.

### **Engaging Faculty**

In order to get faculty at Talloires Network institutions more involved and to build an international community of practice in higher education civic engagement, this spring we introduced a Civic Engagement Experts List. The list thus far includes 23 leading figures in university civic engagement from all over the world. Participating experts are listed on the Talloires Network website with a brief biography, areas of expertise, and contact information. This list of experts serves as a valuable resource for researchers, practitioners, media outlets, and other faculty and staff worldwide who wish to learn more about civic engagement and higher education. Fellow experts can find others with common research interests and have opportunities for peer review and collaboration. In forming this experts page, we sought to foster opportunities for mutual learning and increase awareness of the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education.

### **MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship**

In order to recognize and encourage exceptional student civic engagement and community service, financially support the ongoing work of university-based civic initiatives, and strengthen public support for the global civic engagement movement in higher education, the Talloires Network partnered with the MacJannet Foundation to create the MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship. This annual prize includes 8 monetary awards for exceptional civic engagement programs at Talloires Network institutions. The first year of the MacJannet Prize was a great success, drawing 67 nominations from 40 universities in 19 countries. After a competitive selection process, eight outstanding programs were recognized.



First place winner, receiving \$5,000:

The Urban Health Program based in Aga Khan University in Pakistan  
Established by Aga Khan University in 1983, this innovative program run by Aga Khan's Department of Community Health Sciences provides critical health and socio-economic support to the squatter settlements of Karachi.

Two second place winners, each receiving \$2,500:

Opération 7ème Jour (Operation 7th Day) at l'Université Saint-Joseph in Lebanon;  
and Theewaterskloof International Community Development Project at Cape Peninsula University of Technology in South Africa

Two representatives from each of these programs traveled to Talloires, France to participate in workshops; network with fellow prize winners, MacJannet Foundation board members, and the staff of the Talloires Network and the Tufts European Center; and receive their awards in a special ceremony on June 6, 2009.

Five third place winners, each receiving \$1,000:

- Alshaneq Ya Balady (American University in Cairo, Egypt)
- Assistance Program for Local Development (Universidad Señor de Sipán, Peru)
- The Human Rights Clinic (Al-Quds University, Palestine)
- Playing for Time Theatre Company (University of Winchester, United Kingdom)
- Women Legal Leaders & Legal Feminism Clinic (University of Haifa, Israel)

The Network will soon be announcing a Call for Nominations for the 2010 MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship.

## **Conclusion**

After four years, the Talloires Network has gained a large and diverse membership, increased the benefits offered to its members, and built momentum in the global movement for socially engaged universities. As the Network moves forward in its fifth year, we will build on the work that we have

already done, continuing to expand our membership, develop partnerships with regional higher education networks, and engage faculty and students with exciting initiatives and resources. We will also advance several ongoing special projects, including our upcoming conference at the Bellagio Center in Italy, a book of case studies on 20 of our member institutions, and the six-member Partnership Program between universities in Africa, the US, and the UK. We are confident that this year will see even more accelerated growth in the Network and the momentum for higher education civic engagement globally.