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Each of us is not only an alumnus of NC State but—in a real sense—an alumnus of the Service-Learning Program, which has, in the interim years since our graduations, transformed into the Center for Excellence in Curricular Engagement, broadening its mission, the scope of its work, and its impact. As students we each had the opportunity to take part in service-learning classes and experiences, to participate in civic engagement initiatives across campus, and also to provide leadership to the Program variously as reflection leaders, community liaisons, faculty workshop facilitators, trainers for other reflection leaders, and members of the Program's research and leadership teams. Now alumni, we have continued to stay involved, providing both advisory and substantive contributions to the continued growth of Patti's work on campus and beyond as the Program, which so profoundly impacted each of our lives, has matured into the Center.

Patti consistently works with students to create, expand, and redefine leadership roles in order to increase the capacity for student civic leadership at NC State and beyond. She takes a unique and empowering view of what a mentor should be and has a long history of dedicated student leaders to speak to her transformative power as an educator and a mentor; she has been a role model for many more people than she realizes. We are better thinkers, better servant leaders, and better advocates for community engagement and for service-learning because of Patti's tremendous influence.

Along with a small group of students, faculty, and staff, Patti started the Service-Learning Program on the NC State campus. Since its creation the Program has had a core commitment to what we call 'student co-creation.' In practice this means students, both in the classroom and in the office, have always been considered equal partners in the generation of knowledge, in establishing the direction of the Program, and in creating a more engaged campus. For example, Jason and Patti worked closely to develop the role of the reflection leader and our critical reflection model, to increase opportunities for student leadership and to enhance the quality of and formalize service-learning; Julie and Patti worked together to re-visit the process of training students to serve in leadership and research roles in service-learning; Brandon and Patti co-created guiding materials and mentoring opportunities for self-designed service-learning capstones; Alissa, Julie, and Brandon co-authored an invited book chapter with Patti and in the process formalized the concept of "service-learning as developmental journey" that has become key in the Center's work. Service-learning positively impacted our education at NC State in a host of ways, but in each of our individual encounters with the Program, our involvement provided what we recall as some of the most enriching, engaging, and transformative experiences of our undergraduate years; service-learning was not just a unique experience on campus, but a defining one.

Furthermore, service-learning and its perspective on civic engagement continues to impact us in our graduate studies and careers. Mary Catherine has been a reflection leader for medical mission trips in Guatemala while in medical school and as a doctor has begun incorporating reflective processes to aid in evaluation and program enhancement; Little changed his academic focus from engineering to government and lawmaking because of his experiences as a civic leader on campus, a change that has resulted in a rewarding legal career; and Brandon studied environmental anthropology and the politics of community engagement in graduate school and is now launching his own non-profit focusing on civic engagement with local environments. Not only did we each come to better understand our future goals and paths for our involvement in service-learning, but we carry forward with us important lessons about the value and importance of connecting our learning, research and/or professional practice with service to and engagement with our communities. We are better graduate students and professionals and better citizens because of our involvement with Patti and the Program/Center.

Service-learning produces graduates who understand the concept of trusteeship. It is a testament to the power of the Program and now the Center that we—and others like us—continue to stay involved. We connect most profoundly and meaningfully to our alma mater not through continued involvement as supportive alumni in a general sense, but as engaged alumni dedicated to fostering the Center and its impacts, including the spirit of co-creation and student leadership and innovation it embodies.