DUKEENGAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA-DURBAN
Helping to improve environmental, educational, and overall opportunities in a post-apartheid community

Program Dates: June 13-August 7
(Dates subject to change up until the point of departure.)

Service Themes
- Education & Literacy
- Economic & Workforce Development & Social Enterprise
- Children & Youth Services
- Environment & Conservation
- Community Development & Outreach

Program Focus
Living in and learning about a community established as a result of apartheid; partnering with local organizations to improve economic, environmental, educational, and overall opportunities.

Program Leader(s)
- Jenni W. Owen, Director of Policy Engagement and Senior Lecturer, Sanford School of Public Policy (on leave as of January 2017 to serve first as Policy Director, now as Director of Strategic Partnerships for NC Governor Roy Cooper). Both at Duke and for the state, work focused/focuses on enhancing interaction among research, policy, and practice through working with government, nonprofit, and university stakeholders to enhance the use of research to inform and positively affect policy and practice, particularly on issues concerning disadvantaged and vulnerable North Carolina residents.

Program Overview
During their eight weeks in Durban, students will volunteer with organizations working to improve the economic, environmental, educational and overall living conditions and opportunities for residents of Wentworth, a community that was established as the result of apartheid. The program includes opportunities to learn about the experience and impact of apartheid from community partners, homestay hosts, and other members of the community.

The program was started by Professor Owen after her first visit to Wentworth in 2007 while on an Eisenhower Fellowship to South Africa. The combination of strong NGOs, homestay hosts who are also highly engaged community members, now-developed relationships with university and government officials, and community needs that Duke students have the capacity to help address make Wentworth an ideal location and context for a DukeEngage program.

Students immerse themselves in efforts and activities that meaningfully contribute to the community, while also informing and expanding students’ world view, educational development and personal growth. Throughout the program, students observe the impact of government policy on direct service delivery. They interact with individuals and organizations who were (some would say still are) directly involved with the apartheid “struggle.”

The program seeks students who are interested in direct service work as well as in the government, policy, and power systems that require, fund, and otherwise influence those services and the people and institutions that are
the intended beneficiaries.

Goals for Students
While supporting the community in a range of ways, students benefit from the program by:

- Learning about South African culture, specifically a historic urban “coloured” community and a rural Zulu community;
- Participating in ongoing opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural learning and collaboration;
- Contributing to strategies for building the capacity, impact, and outcomes of a diverse group of organizations and playing a role in generating and implementing those strategies;
- Developing greater understanding of the similarities between the U.S. and South Africa—seemingly different countries and cultures that have more in common than is initially apparent;
- Expanding knowledge of and action on program conception, design, and implementation;
- Working on real world problem-solving both in terms of community challenges, as well as potential challenges of the DukeEngage program itself;
- Developing resourcefulness skills including individual and group decision-making in an unfamiliar and temporary (for DE students) environment; and
- Greater awareness of and clarity about potential future educational and career opportunities.

Partnership Opportunities
Following are possible placement options. One or more sites may have more than one student, and one or more sites may not have any students.

- Assegai Primary School
- Durban South Skills Development
- Isiaiah 54 Children’s Home
- Keep a Child Alive – Blue Roof Clinic
- South Durban Community Environmental Alliance
- St. Monica Children’s Home
- Victim Friendly Centre and Community Resource Centre
- Welbedacht East

Students work on challenges likely to include but not be limited to community economic development; primary (elementary) education; environmental advocacy, education, law and policy; public health/health education; child welfare; and youth development, including academic and life skills.

There are typically two main areas of work:

1. Capacity building for the partner organizations, including but not limited to assistance with preparation of informational and outreach materials, research, website enhancements, the use of social media, resource development, and other types of assistance.
2. Direct service including but not limited to teaching/tutoring school-aged children; interviewing community members related to a community partner’s efforts; doing “anything that needs to be done” at a children’s home (orphanage); athletic and other in-school or afterschool activities; and participation at community events related to the work of one or more community partners.

Several of the organizations started with minimal funding or formal support. In many cases, they are well known and relied upon in the community but still lack sufficient resources to fully carry out their work and accomplish their goals. Most student placements include an initial shadowing component, where the students accompany worksite partners on their daily schedule and assist as appropriate. As noted, placements typically include a combination of direct service with individuals and groups of people that the organization serves and work relating to organizational capacity building and sustainability, such as developing written materials to be used for outreach, web sites, and resource development. There are extensive opportunities for student-initiated efforts.
Following are brief descriptions of expected placement sites and the type of work students are likely to do. As noted above, it is possible that one or more placements may have more than one student and that one or more sites will have no student. In addition, the students will come up with and carry out at least one group project, which could range from a one-day project to a program-long effort. All of the sites (with the exception of Welbedacht Esat, see note) have been DukeEngage Durban partners for multiple years, some for every year of the program, which started in 2010.

- **Assegai Primary School:** Assegai is a co-ed government (public) elementary school. DukeEngage students work with teachers and students on areas of the curriculum such as math and science and may develop new projects/programs for the elementary school students. One example is Science in a Box (started in 2014). Ongoing opportunities to contribute include tutoring in large and small groups, after school programming (such as athletics or academic opportunities) and school beautification.

- **Children’s Homes:** At each of the two children’s homes, a significant portion of the student’s time will likely involve caring for the children. This includes assisting with daily child-caring activities, accompanying the children and staff on outings (if applicable), and the opportunity to develop program components and/or materials to enhance the home’s offerings for the children, staff, and adoptive parents.
  - **Isiaiah 54 Children’s Home:** A co-ed home for approximately 20 abandoned and orphaned children ranging from infancy to approximately 10 years old.
  - **Saint Monica’s Children’s Home:** An over 100-year-old institution that strives to “… provide children and young people on admission with the understanding of their present situation (residential care) and the skills to cope and manage the situation,” and “… to conduct an independent living programme for young people to be equipped with skills to make the transition from the institution to community life,” and to “… to provide children from disadvantaged backgrounds with life-skills.” St. Monica’s residents are mostly elementary to middle-school aged girls.

- **Durban South Skills Development:** DSSD is a nonprofit skills development program for individuals with a range of physical and developmental disabilities that make it challenging for them to find employment in the traditional labor market. DSSD provides training for specific types of work, along with other critical on-the-job skills. The organization operates multiple income generating enterprises, all of which employ people with disabilities.

- **Keep a Child Alive – Blue Roof Clinic:** Keep a Child Alive is an international NGO that operates the Blue Roof, an HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention clinic in Wentworth. Patients receive medical assistance as well as a range of supportive services to address nutrition, mental health and other needs. This placement is likely to involve assistance with community education as well as with outreach and communications efforts such as development of materials for dissemination in the community.

- **South Durban Community Environmental Alliance:** SDCEA focuses on environmental justice and related issues of concern to the residents of Wentworth and neighboring communities. Its activities and initiatives have included: monitoring air pollution and incidents, lobbying elected officials for clean air legislation, writing and distributing information to stakeholders, convening workshops to inform and empower community members, and working for sustainable urban development. DukeEngage students usually work both “out” in the community and at the SDCEA office. Community work involves meetings and events such as community clean-ups. Office work is likely to include preparing documents such as press releases, brochures, and presentations for education and advocacy purposes.

- ** Victim Friendly Centre and Community Resource Centre:** The Victim Friendly Centre (VFC) is a domestic violence relief and support program housed within (but separate from) the local police station. The Centre provides a safe haven for victims of domestic violence, assists victims with becoming financially and emotionally self-sufficient, provides basic necessities to families in immediate need due to domestic violence, and makes referrals to other service providers. The Centre and police have a strong working relationship. DukeEngage students assist with daily work as well as help with the Centre’s efforts to enhance its infrastructure through requests for funds and in-kind donations. In addition, they may assist
staff with their networking and educational efforts involving schools, hospitals, and religious congregations. The Community Resource Centre is a partner organization of the VFC to which community members go for assistance with basic needs as well as for opportunities for children during the three-week school holiday that takes place during the DukeEngage timeframe.

*Weldebacht East is a struggling and predominantly Indian area of Durban where mosques and churches have been regularly scheming to identify ways to support the growing homeless population. The champion for this effort is in part Collin Pillay, a municipal official Collin is familiar with DukeEngage and has been helpful every year of DukeEngage Durban.*

**Program Requirements**

**Language:** English is spoken in Wentworth and throughout Durban. Some residents also speak Zulu, Chosa, and Afrikaans. In the province of KwaZulu-Natal, Zulu is the most common language. Based on feedback from DukeEngage-Durban alumni, students who use online resources to learn basic Zulu terms before departing will be glad they did.

**Coursework:** Specific prior coursework is not required, however, it is an asset if students have some knowledge and understanding of South African history and culture, particularly the history of apartheid and its continued impact twenty years after its official end, and/or knowledge and understanding of the nonprofit sector (in the U.S. or abroad).

**Other Skills:** Strong writing skills and being resourceful, creative, and entrepreneurial serve students in this program well. It is a bonus (for students and community partners) if students have experience with grant writing, website development, use of social media, etc.

**Personal Qualities:** Students who have had the most “success” in this program with regard to contributions to community partners’ work are students who are resourceful, creative, flexible and adaptable, willing to propose and try new skills and experiences and who regularly ask thoughtful questions. This is important, as the specifics of what students will do at each worksite are not thoroughly established in advance to the extent that some students might expect.

**Program Details**

**Description of Community:** Wentworth is a community in South Durban. Durban, with a population of over three million, is South Africa’s third largest city and home to South Africa’s largest port. It has the largest population of Asians in sub-Saharan Africa. South Africa as a whole has the largest population of people of Indian descent in the world, outside of India and the majority of these live in the Durban area. Durban is in KwaZulu-Natal, a province with a large Zulu population.

Wentworth is known for being situated in the heart of an industrial basin where major oil refineries reside along with chemical and manufacturing plants. The outputs of these corporations have been the source of blame for health problems endured by local residents. Wentworth was initially populated almost exclusively by “coloured” South Africans who, like so many non-whites, were forcibly removed from their homes during Apartheid. While still self-described as “coloured,” Wentworth is increasingly ethnically and racially diverse.

In addition to the large multi-national corporations, there is a hospital in Wentworth that borders a nature preserve. The community boasts strong environmental activism stemming from problems related to the oil refineries and other industries.

The range of economic well-being in Wentworth is striking. Large parts of the community consist of comfortable houses that were once all of the same cookie-cutter design and now show the results of decades of add-ons that have enlarged and individualized the dwellings. This is in contrast to areas of extreme poverty, where families live...
in unsafe, unsanitary conditions, roads are litter-strewn, and many families can’t afford school fees. The official unemployment rate has hovered around 25% in recent years though the generally stated rate is often around 50%, some say even higher.

Housing and Meals: During the first week of the program, students and program leaders live in group accommodations, which since 2013 has been Bluff Eco Park, an environmentally friendly organization conveniently located near many of Wentworth’s amenities. Other than a 2-3-day excursion later in the program, accommodations for the program are in Wentworth families’ homes. Each family houses one student for the duration of the program. Homestays are all within a few minutes’ walk or short drive from each other, and most (if not all) of the families have served as DukeEngage hosts before. Each student has a private bedroom. All homes have electricity and running hot and cold water. Some of the homestay sites are within walking distance from the students’ work sites and many of the hosts are familiar with many of the work sites.

While at the homestays, hosts provide breakfast and dinner. Students are encouraged to eat dinner with their host families at least a few times a week, and often do so more frequently. Students may use their homestay hosts’ kitchen and refrigerator space to store snacks and lunch supplies. The group eats together approximately once a week, often combined with a weekly discussion session.

Transportation: Some of the students can walk from their homestay to work. Others need a ride, which is arranged in advance.

Local Safety, Security, and Cultural Norms: If you have special needs related to health, cultural, or religious practices, please contact the DukeEngage office, dukeengage@duke.edu, to discuss whether or not your needs can be reasonably accommodated in this program.

For information related to how your religion, race, sexual/gender identity, ability or other aspects of your identity might impact your travels, we recommend starting with the Diversity, Identity and Global Travel section of the DukeEngage website.

We encourage students who have questions or concerns about health or safety in international programs to check Duke’s International SOS (ISOS) portal for relevant information.

Reflection and Enrichment: The group will discuss health care and/or education systems within SA; strengthening communication and building relationships with community partners; race and power dynamics within South African culture; interpersonal group dynamics; self-care; and topics that emerge from the students’ experience. We invite guest speakers with relevant expertise to speak on pertinent topics, such as the experience of growing up during the apartheid era, education, and politics. Students are likely to have approximately two evening commitments each week.

There are partial and full-day excursions, often on weekends, that may include:
- Tour of the Phoenix settlement of Durban where Mahatma Ghandi lived and initiated his strategy of satyagraha and visit to the Ghandi Museum in the same area;
- Visit to the U.S. Consulate in Durban and meeting with Consulate staff
- Events in Wentworth and Chatsworth such as Youth Day activities; community meetings about housing; music; art events; and volunteering with youth soccer clubs.

In addition, the group takes an overnight trip (2-3 nights) to Mnweni, a rural community in the Drakensberg area of the KwaZulu-Natal province. Mnweni includes a cultural and economic development center where the DE group stays, and the students spend one night staying at the home of a local Zulu family.

Curricular Connections
Students interested in this program should review course offerings listed on the website of Duke’s Africa Initiative. There are a wide range of other relevant courses in multiple disciplines such as anthropology, history, global health, public policy, psychology, and sociology. Courses that address poverty, child and family programs and policy, the history of South Africa, and race and inequality are likely to be particularly useful for this program.

More Information
Suggested Readings: See PDF under Resources below.