

# College Building on Community

By ERIKA CAPEK The Brunswick News

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Having an opportunity to build a program from the ground up at College of Coastal Georgia brought one of the institution's newest faculty members to Brunswick.

Clayton Hurd, director of service learning and assistant professor of anthropology, joined the college in October.

With his background in service learning - he took the Colorado State University program in five years from 30 service learning courses to 150 courses - the position was a natural fit.

"I think the chance to begin a service learning program at this college was very appealing," Hurd said.

Service learning is a way for students to volunteer at an organization, usually a nonprofit, and address the community's needs for a minimum of 15 hours throughout a semester.

Some of those needs may include poverty, hunger or crime. The service is part of a student's academic course work.

"It's a win-win situation," Hurd said.

Students are able to test and apply their skills and ideas through hands-on experiences, while the community benefits by receiving extra resources from them, such as promotional work, advocacy or ideas for improvement.

Beginning in the spring, the college will have four pilot service learning courses in four academic areas - English, biological sciences, business and sociology. Depending on the subject, the course will count as an elective or a core course requirement.

Over the next several years, Hurd said he hopes all students will take at least one service learning course. He also expects to see the college's program grow exponentially.

A \$150,000 grant from the St. Mary's United Methodist Church Foundation is providing start-up funding for creating the Center for Service Learning at the college.

The idea behind the center is that it will host programs for faculty, staff and students. It will also provide faculty training, student leadership, alternative spring break trips, campus-wide service events and workshops for community partners, Hurd said.

Currently, four professors who volunteered to teach service learning courses are being trained. Community partners are also being sought.

Hurd said he is casting as wide a net as possible to attract partners in Glynn and surrounding counties.