

Office of the Dean  
College of Arts & Sciences

# DEANotes

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## WheelerNotes

### Arts and Sciences Conversation

Dean Wheeler would like to invite interested Arts and Sciences faculty to join him on Wednesday, February 25 (3:30 pm, Solms 110) for an Arts and Sciences Conversation. For the first 30 minutes we will be visited by staff members from Computer Information Services who will discuss briefly the services provided by their staff and respond to questions from faculty members about those services. Following the interaction with the CIS staff, we will shift gears; Dean Wheeler will be available for questions and comments from faculty members *about any issue or concern* that may have arisen since our last conversation on September 15. Refreshments will be provided.

### Introducing Dr. Lorrie Hoffman

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Lorrie Hoffman will join us as Head of the Department of Mathematics in 2004-2005. Dr. Hoffman earned bachelors and masters degrees in mathematics and then matriculated to the University of Iowa where she earned the Ph.D. in statistics. She followed completion of her degree with seven years of employment in industry (United Airlines, AT&T, ...) and then joined the faculty at the University of Central Florida in 1988. While at UCF she consulted in a variety of venues on and off campus, served as interim head of the Department of Statistics, won a university-wide teaching award (in this university of 42,000), and remained active in the scholarly conversation of her discipline. We look forward to Dr. Hoffman's service on our campus.

### February 10 ... Many Thanks to

Beth Howells and Mark Finlay who prepared two delicious punches; Diane Sellers, Fern Illidge, and the departmental secretaries who handled the logistics for the event; the talented team from the music program: Professors Brown, Gordon, Hampton, Harris, Johnson, Primatic, Reese, and Schultz who recruited and prepared the talented

students who delivered an extraordinary Showcase Concert.

### On Experiments in Higher Education

A respected colleague recently commented to me, "Wheeler, you surely use the word *experiment* a lot. Are you sure you want to suggest that we do that much experimenting with our students?" I quickly concede that I overuse the word. However, I do so in opposition to what I regard to be a damaging tendency in higher education. In higher education we have a tendency to make wholesale changes in curriculum, in modes of delivery of courses, and in methods of evaluation with little attention to the consequences of the changes. Indeed, those of us who have been around a while have observed any number of "revolutions" in the delivery of higher education, some curricular, some in response to a new but yet unproven technology, some that seem to reappear every 20 years or so.

On the other hand, I strongly advocate testing whatever curricular and pedagogical waters that present themselves. But I like to use the word *experiment* in these circumstances to suggest that we are not committed to going wholeheartedly in this direction until we see the consequences of the change. In particular, I like to use the word *experiment* to suggest that we will examine closely the consequences of the decisions and make mid-course corrections if such corrections seem wise. Below you will find mid-term reports on several current experiments in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Learning Communities: Two and a half years ago we began experiments with learning communities, groups of 25 beginning freshmen who share several courses together. Our goals in the experiments were to help the freshmen make the social and academic connections that would enhance their success and, with these enhanced connections, to positively impact their ability to stay at Armstrong. Abundant anecdotal data from both faculty and students suggest that the learning communities do indeed accelerate

the process of making social and academic connections. Perhaps because of the small sample sizes, we have not yet seen hard data that shows that retention is being improved. For the time being we will continue to sponsor learning communities on the basis of achieving two of three goals. However, we will probably not receive significant additional resources for our efforts until the third goal is more clearly met.

Women's Studies Program: In Fall of 2002 we put in place an experiment involving a single section of WMST 1101 and a shoestring budget for a women's studies conference. Just months later the course was completed with full enrollment, the conference was an enthusiastic success, and we were well on our way to having a women's studies program. This Spring, we will host the annual meeting of the Southeastern Women's Studies Association and have many students working on a Women's Studies minor. To this point, the experiment appears an unqualified success.

Large Class sizes: Last spring we made efforts to coordinate several departmental experiments with large class sizes. Efforts to examine the consequences of those experiments are hampered by small data sets. However, the following initial observations can be made:

- Effects on student persistence and grade distributions seem to differ among disciplines; in some departments there is less change than others.
- In some departments we note declines in student persistence and, in some departments, shifts of grade distributions down.
- Though faculty members have found the flexibility from schedules with large classes enrollments helpful, teaching a large class does increase out of class labors.

Efforts to say too much from present data are hampered because we have not controlled for professor and time of day, and because we have not yet designed measures of whether other things are affected other than grade distributions and student persistence. On the first matter, Professors Scott and Roberts from the Department of Psychology have done a careful study in which they control on several variables and look at grade distributions and persistence. They will present their results of their study at the Teaching and Learning Symposium on April 2.

## FinlayNotes

### Phi Kappa Phi

We are still looking for active members of Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Beta Kappa, or Sigma Xi, so that we can begin to create a chartering group for Phi Kappa Phi. Let me know if you are one, and have not indicated so already.

### Interesting Conferences

Honors: AASU will host the Georgia Collegiate Honors Conference on February 20-21. Nearly 80 honors students from around the state will offer papers and panel presentations that highlight good practices in honors teaching and learning. All sessions will take place in Solms Hall, and all faculty are invited. For more information, contact Mark Finlay, 921-5642.

Americas: Also on February 20-21, AASU will host the Seventh Annual Conference on the Americas. The conference is sponsored by the Americas Council and the University System of Georgia. Over 40 speakers from Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Argentina, Chile, and Peru will provide lectures and panel presentations during the conference. All sessions will take place in the AASU Science Center. It is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Jim Anderson, 921-5671.

Women's Studies: Over two hundred scholars from around the nation and beyond will be in Savannah for the 27th Annual Southeastern Women's Studies Association Conference, March 25 - 27, 2004. Guests will include Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization for Women, three other prominent keynote and plenary speakers, plus over a dozen members of the AASU community: faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, and alumni who have moved on to doctoral programs.

See <http://class.gasou.edu/wgender/SEWSA2004.html> for the program; contact Dr. Teresa Winterhalter (921-5632) for more information.

Ethics: Kennesaw State University presents an International Conference, "Global Ethics: Crossing Borders-Joining Hands" on October 24-26, 2004. Organizers invite proposals for panels, papers, roundtables, and poster sessions on topics such as: education as a vehicle for realizing global ethical leadership, ethical ramifications of educational policies, and the scholarship of teaching ethics and/or leadership; corporate citizenship in a shrinking world, professional codes of ethics; ethics of child labor and other forms of involuntary servitude; the aging of the world's population as it impacts the use of global

resources; the ethics of global wealth and poverty; and environmental justice. For more information, contact Dr. Liza Davis, KSU, (770) 423-6116.

### Interesting Guest Speakers

Some of the Arts and Sciences classes are chock-full of interesting guest speakers this semester. The current Gignailiat Professor, Dr. Nancy Remler, has the following speakers on the agenda for her class entitled Contexts, Audiences, and Styles in Professional Communication:

February 20: Mary Ann Bowman Biel, Vice President of Corporate Ethics and Compliance, Memorial Health University Medical Center.

Topic: Writing and Corporate Ethics

February 25: Phoenicia Puckett, Director of Development, Savannah Music Festival.

Topic: Grant Writing

February 27: Annette Haywood-Carter, Professor, Department of Film and Television, Savannah College of Art and Design

Topic: Screen Writing.

March 26: Skippy Davis, *Macon Telegraph*

Topic: Journalism

April 9: Amy Hughes, Vice President of Governmental Affairs at Memorial Hospital

Topic: Writing for Advocacy

April 12: Jason Beach, Clerk to US District Court Judge Hugh Lawson.

Topic: Legal Writing

Interested students and faculty are invited. The class meets in Gamble 112 from 11:00-11:50, MWF. If you would like to attend one of these classes, let Dr. Remler know (921-5692) and she will share copies of the materials the visitors have provided.

The HONS 2000 course, focusing this semester on "Savannah the G8 summit," already has heard from representatives of the Savannah Police Department, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency, and the Savannah City Manager's Office. Next up, on February 24, is Tony Schopp from the Savannah Convention and Visitor's Bureau. For more information, contact Dr. José da Cruz (927-5670). In April, this course and the Honors Program will feature Dr. John Kirton, Director of the G8 Research Group at the University of Toronto for a public lecture.

## FacultyNotes

José A. da Cruz and Becky K. da Cruz, both CJSPS, have recently published *Politics in Action: A Reader in American Government* (2004) Pearson Custom Publishing. José da Cruz also published "The Politics of AIDS: The Brazilian Case in Perspective," in *National Social Science Journal* 21/2 (2003).

Daniel Skidmore-Hess, CJSPS, has published "The Danish Party System and the Rise of the Right in the 2001 Parliamentary Election," *International Social Science Review*, 79 (2003), #3/4, 89-110.

Bill Daugherty, CJSPS, has published "Approval and Review of Covert Action Programs Since Reagan," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 17 (Spring 2004).

Mike Price, History, participated in panel entitled "Creating Alternatives to Assessment Regimes: A Standards and Outcomes Approach to Postsecondary History Education," at the national meeting of the American Historical Association in Washington.

Teresa Winterhalter, LLP, has published "What Else Can I do But Write?": Discursive Disruption and the Ethics of Style in Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*," in *Hypatia* 18 (Fall 2003): 236-257.

The Christmas Day national broadcast of "Performance Today" on National Public Radio included a performance by the Spivey Hall Children's Choir of Randall Reese's arrangement of the French carol "Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella." The choir will perform two other of Reese's works at the Southern Region conference of the American Choral Directors Association in Nashville in February.

## Student Notes

AASU's Economics Club recently presented the SAFE Shelter in Savannah with a computer and a cash donation of more than \$800. Emily Adams, president of the Economics Club, said the computer was donated so that residents of SAFE Shelter would be able to develop their resumes.

### AASU Honors Students and Faculty PREP Local Middle Schools for Success

In late fall semester AASU honors students and faculty hosted some "at risk" 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Shuman and Bartlett Middle Schools to encourage them to pursue continued education by giving them a taste of what college was like. Dr. Jill Miller, who has participated in many PREP events, was there to

show the young students how fun art can be. Dr. Beth Howells and some of her honors students entertained the crowd with Theodore Roethke's "The Bat" and Robert Frost's classic "Nothing Gold Can Stay." After analyzing poetry and art with some of AASU's top minds, the kids were full of questions for our honors students about the college experience. The questions ranged from "How's the food in the cafeteria?" to "What's the longest paper you've written?" I think I speak for everyone involved when I say how great it was to see the bright, enthusiastic faces of tomorrow. By the end of the seminar, there was not an idle hand in the crowd when they were asked, "Who wants to go to college?"

Participating Honors students included: Josh "Lights" Kroeger, Kyle Libbey, Christopher McCormick, Stephanie Roberts, Natalie Scofield, Allison Walden, and Ashley Walden.

-Christopher Allan McCormick

### Law School Update

In past two issues of DEANotes, I have reported on issues concerning pre-law advisement. Dr. Relyea recently received a note from AASU grad Lori Choquette, who has been accepted into the Vermont Law School. This follows her master's in Marine Resources Management from Texas A & M and a B.S. in Biology from AASU. Her career path is further evidence that all advisors need to know something of law school admission procedures, and that law schools are interested in students with all majors.

### Campus Read

As announced earlier, AASU will launch a major initiative in Spring Semester 2004: a campus-wide read of *A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories* by native Savannah author Flannery O'Connor. The following events are on the calendar for the week of April 5:

All Week: Special Collections Exhibit, Lane Library. AASU's Lane Library is pleased to showcase our very own collection of rare books and artifacts.

Monday, April 5: Across-the-Curriculum Discussion, Noon, University Hall 156 Faculty from various disciplines will lead a discussion about approaching the stories from alternative viewpoints.

Tuesday, April 6: Displaced Person, Film Showing and Discussion, 7pm, University Hall 156. Enjoy light refreshments and engaging conversation as we view this short film version of O'Connor's story.

Wednesday, April 7: Student-Led Community Book Club Discussion, Noon, University Hall 156 Join in the Book Club craze by sharing in this conversation with the other students and community members reading the book.

Thursday, April 8: Flannery O'Connor, One Woman Show and Reception, 7pm, University Hall 156 Beverly Fatherree will entertain us with her acclaimed one woman show as O'Connor herself.

Friday, April 9: Field Trips to Flannery O'Connor's Childhood Home, 11, 12:30, and 2. Tour the house in historic downtown Savannah where Mary Flannery O'Connor lived from 1925 until 1938.

We are especially encouraging faculty in disciplines other than English to consider using an O'Connor story as part of their teaching this semester, and to contribute to the discussion on April 5. For a detailed itinerary and the texts of several O'Connor stories, please check

<http://www.faculty.armstrong.edu/read.htm>. For additional information, please contact Dr. Beth Howells, Composition Coordinator, 927-5218, [howellbe@mail.armstrong.edu](mailto:howellbe@mail.armstrong.edu).

### NEH Fellowships

Information on and application instructions for the 2005-2006 NEH Fellowships Program are now available on the NEH website: [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov). The submission deadline is May 1, 2004. NEH Fellowships applications are now online, and support individuals pursuing advanced research in the humanities that contributes to scholarly knowledge or to the general public's understanding of the humanities. Applicants may be faculty or staff members of colleges or universities, or of primary or secondary schools, or independent scholars or writers. Fellowships provide support for projects that can be completed during the tenure of the award, as well as for work that is part of a long-term endeavor. Recipients usually produce scholarly articles, monographs on specialized subjects, books on broad topics, archaeological site reports, translations, editions, or other scholarly tools. Lists of recent fellowships winners are available at

<http://www.neh.gov/news/recentawards.html>  
For more information, contact [fellowships@neh.gov](mailto:fellowships@neh.gov).

### Deadlines and Dates

- 16 February** Post-Tenure Recommendations due from Departments
- 20 February** Proposals for President's Symposium on Teaching & Learning due to Dr. Nordquist
- 24 February** Academic Council Meeting
- 27 February** Faculty AFE/APARs due to Dean Wheeler
- 27 February** Nominations for 2004 Faculty Awards due to Dr. Nordquist
- 27 February** Items for A & S Curriculum Committee due to Dr. Finlay
- 27 February** Faculty Lecture: Dr. Schubert, on Water issues
- 5 March** Meeting of College Curriculum Committee
- 5 March** Faculty Forum: Diversity Issues

*DEANotes* is a quasi-weekly publication of the College of Arts & Sciences. Dr. Mark Finlay is the editor. Some of the content of the publication will be informational content directed primarily at department heads. However, other parts of the reading may be of interest to members of the faculty of the College of Arts & Sciences. In addition to a limited paper distribution, *DEANotes* will be posted upon publication at the Faculty Resources page of the web site for the College of Arts & Sciences.