

Office of the Dean
College of Arts & Sciences

DEANotes

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WheelerNotes

A Brief Report on Learning Communities

We presently have 189 students enrolled in nine learning communities for Fall 2004. This year's learning communities fall into one of three categories. Three of the learning communities are focused on a specific group of students: students with weak mathematics backgrounds, students contemplating a major in Education, and students contemplating a major in science or engineering. In three of the learning communities, faculty members have organized 2–3 core courses across a theme. For example, Professors Rinalducci and da Cruz teach a sociology course and a criminal justice course linked on the theme, *Preparing for Revolution*. Finally, in three of the learning communities, a faculty member teaches both a core course and a section of AASU 1100 and links the two courses with a theme. For example, Professor Deborah Reese teaches a course centered around ENGL 1101 and AASU 1100 and the theme *Preparing for Leadership: Academic Discourse and University Life* [For a full description of the nine communities presently in session, you might like to visit the Advisement Center web site <http://www.advise.armstrong.edu> and follow the trail to learning communities.]

On October 12, a group of current learning community faculty met to discuss progress in their communities. In general the conversations provided enthusiastic confirmation that that learning communities enabled beginning freshmen to more quickly build social networks and academic networks in their new university environment. However, we also learned that our learning communities were not immune to some problems that have been observed on other campuses (See *Learning Communities Can Be Cohesive and Divisive*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education: The Chronicle Review*, July 9, 2004) and that special strategies are sometimes required to harness the enthusiasm of 18 year olds deeply immersed in the transition from high school to college.

In the next issue of DEANotes we hope to call for proposals for next year and would be pleased to entertain suggestions along any of these three models described above. Please give thought to whether you or you and colleagues would be interested in participating in next year's learning community efforts.

MALPS is Coming

Shortly after Dr. Jones joined Armstrong as President, he requested that a team design a new master's degree designed for working professionals and recent college graduates who desire both personal enrichment and professional development through an innovative, interdisciplinary graduate program. Four years and many rewrites later, we are pleased to announce that Armstrong has been given permission by the Board of Regents to offer the Masters of Arts in Liberal and Professional Studies (affectionately known as MALPS by those who have worked on it through its journeys through the offices of the Board of Regents). This degree involves courses from the curricula of multiple colleges and several different departments but is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences. At the core of the degree are four courses that focus on the values, research strategies, communication skills, and critical thinking skills required for personal growth and career advancement. In addition, students elect to follow one of three tracks based on their interests and goals:

- **Gender and Women's Studies**--for those who wish to view cultural, social, and political issues through the lens of gender, in order to uncover new and more comprehensive ways of understanding human experience.
- **International Studies**—for those who seek a deeper understanding of various regions in our increasingly interconnected world and of international issues that affect the development of public policies and the global economy.

- **Leadership Studies**—for those with the desire to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to think strategically, manage change, communicate a vision, empower others, and advance in their professions.

Finally, all students will have extensive opportunities to gain professional experience through off-campus internships and guided projects.

Many Thanks

Even as we celebrate the initiation of the Masters of Arts in Liberal and Professional Studies, we need to say thank you to several persons who are deeply involved in its success. We need to thank Drs. Jones, Connor, and Thompson who were and are staunch supporters of the degree, Drs. Townsend and Nordquist who had the thankless job of writing and rewriting and rewriting the proposal, Dr. Price who guided it through the curriculum process and laid the foundation for its implementation on campus, Drs. Wilson, Nordquist, Winterhalter, Skidmore-Hess, Donahue, Kenton, A. Thompson, and Townsend who are designing the first wave of new courses for the degree, and Drs. Winterhalter, Daugherty, and Nordquist who will coordinate the three tracks.

Quiz: What is the most popular major in the College of Arts and Sciences?

Did you get the Bachelor of General Studies? If so, read the next article about the name change for the office that administers this degree:

New Name for Venerable Office

For many years Dr. Dick Nordquist and Ms Peggy Williams have quietly but effectively steered 60 - 80 students to graduation each year through the Bachelor of General Studies working out of the Office of General Studies. We are most pleased to announce that Armstrong's new master's degree, the Masters of Arts in Liberal and Professional Studies, not only finds its campus home in the College of Arts and Sciences but will be administered out of Dr. Nordquist's office. In celebration of the initiation of MALPS and in recognition of the new responsibilities of Dr. Nordquist's office, we are renaming the Office of General Studies the *Office of Liberal Studies*.

FinlayNotes

Med School Advisement Tips

In past issues of DEANotes, I have provided some tips about advising students interested in law school

and pharmacy school. This time, I have some tips regarding the med school process.

Med school required courses: Most medical schools require or recommend these courses or their equivalents: CHEM 1211/1212 with labs; BIOL 1107/1108 with labs; CHEM 2101/2102 with labs; PHYS 1111/1112 or PHYS 2211/2212 with labs; ENGL 1101 and 1102.

Recommended Courses: In addition, many medical schools applicants will have completed these: One year of calculus; coursework in human anatomy and physiology; coursework and/or familiarity with current issues in health care delivery, policy, and ethics

Other Requirements and Recommendations: Students should gain significant experience in scientific research; significant experience in "shadowing" a medical professional through either volunteer work or employment in a health care or patient care facility; strong letters of recommendation; active involvement and/or leadership in extra-curricular activities; experience working with people from diverse backgrounds.

Choosing a Major: Although the science courses listed above are required, it is not required that applicants major in one of the sciences. At the University of Missouri Medical School, for instance, non-science majors formed 24% of the 2003 class, and their acceptance rate, 15.6%, was a bit better than that of biology and chemistry majors.

Admission Process: Students should take the MCAT test early, preferably in April of the junior year. This is important because even though medical schools announce that their deadline for admission is December of January, they actually fill seats in their entering class with qualified students who apply in October and November.

Here is a useful site about what med schools expect of prospective physicians:

<http://www.aamc.org/meded/msop/msop1.pdf>

Pre-Pharmacy Follow-up

The last issue of DEANotes included some tips about advising pre-pharmacy students. Additional information, including the required courses lists for UGA, South University, and Mercer University are now available at the Dept of Chemistry and Physics website, <http://www.chemistry.armstrong.edu/prepharm/Prepharmadv1>.

New Faculty Notes

Quick: Name Four African American Male Writers
If asked this question, many folks in academia would be able to come up with Richard Wright, James

Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and Ernest Gaines (the featured speaker for the Campus Read in Spring 2005). Beyond that, however, the names become a little more obscure.

Dr. Uzzie Cannon, Assistant Professor of English, is trying to do something about that. Dr. Cannon's dissertation addresses the theme of "black masculine narrative insurgency" among contemporary African American male writers, such as Percival Everett, Trey Ellis, and Randall Kenan. Influenced by Cornell West, these authors aim to bring fresh perspectives and a social action agenda that goes beyond the messages of the earlier generation of Ellison, Wright, and their peers. Advisors should be aware that Dr. Cannon will be teaching these authors in a spring semester course entitled "Reading Black, Reading Masculine."

Dr. Cannon is a native of Greenville, South Carolina and earned her Ph. D. at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Along the way, she also was a collegiate basketball player, first at Appalachian State and then at Southern Wesleyan University in Central, South Carolina. It's pronounced "UZ," like the two letters in the alphabet.

You Thought You Were Busy

Professor Rebecca Warbington-Wells, Temporary Instructor in Biology, is one of the busier people on campus. In addition to teaching an overload of three lecture classes and four laboratory classes, she also is active in the PRISM initiative, takes two classes from Georgia Southern as part of her doctoral program (in science education), and even plays the banjo.

Professor Warbington-Wells comes to Armstrong from Armstrong, have received her B.S. from here just a few years ago. She earned a master's in biology at GSU, where her research was on acorn germination and seedling development among live oaks. Her research project was based on Sapelo Island, where the Department of Natural Resources hopes to restore live oaks and thus induce native flora and fauna to repopulate the environment. For PRISM, her work will focus on bringing lessons in marine science to disadvantaged elementary school students.

Faculty Notes

On September 13, 2004, Selwyn Hollis, Professor in the Department of Mathematics, gave this year's Annual Sherwood Ebey Mathematics Lecture at The University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. The Ebey lecture is an annual endowed lectureship that sponsors the presentation of mathematically sound ideas in a manner accessible to a general audience. Dr. Hollis's lecture was entitled

"Reaction-Diffusion Models of Biological Pattern Formation." He also gave a second talk on "Modeling Bark Beetle Infestations in Pine Forest Ecosystems."

Richard J. Cebula and Sherri Todd have published "Determinants of Geographic Living-Cost Differentials for Counties in the State of Florida, 2003," in *Review Of Regional Studies* 34 (Summer 2004): 98-105. Ms. Todd is an undergraduate Economics major.

In addition, Dr. Cebula's article, "Expressiveness and Voting: Alternative Evidence," has just appeared in *Atlantic Economic Journal* (September 2004): 216-222.

At the recent 48th National Convention of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the NATS Board of Directors appointed Lucinda D. Schultz, AMT, to a two-year term on the NATS Art Song Competition Award Committee. Dr. Schultz joins five other NATS members from across the United States in serving on this committee

Grants Workshop

The last issue of DEANotes included some of the tips that Dr. Lynch and Mr. Williams offered at a recent Faculty Forum on grant writing. Here are some tips from Delana Nivens (Chemistry & Physics), Mark Burge (Computer Science), and Dabney Townsend (External Affairs).

Dr. Nivens on assessment:

- * Start with a flow chart, indicating short, medium, and long-term outcomes.
- * Don't underestimate the importance of a strong assessment piece in your proposal (check out the Evaluation Toolkit developed by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, www.wkkf.org): show what specific outcomes follow from specific actions.
- * Respond to the favored evaluation catchphrase: "to what extent" (TWE).
- * Be prepared to develop surveys to measure the effects of your project.

Dr. Burge on the review process:

- * Follow *all* proposal guidelines to the letter (and that includes font and type size).
- * Proofread, and recruit others to proofread with you.
- * Don't misspell anything—especially key words.
- * Keep your reader in mind: "peer review" does not necessarily mean an expert in your particular area. Your first page should be understandable by *anyone*.
- * Always include an abstract.
- * Identify yourself *and* Armstrong Atlantic: provide your own qualifications (include the URL of your

web site) and those of the university.

- * Drop names of associates and collaborators.
- * Identify (and involve) collaborators: e.g., a faculty member to assist with assessment, another to help with statistical analysis.
- * Involve an *external* review board to help with the assessment of your project—and identify the names and titles of members.
- * Include letters of commitment: not personal references but specific commitments to assist and/or support the project.
- * Don't plagiarize: reviewers will Google your proposal.
- * Don't hesitate to involve undergraduate students in your proposal.
- * Explain specifically how you intend to disseminate the results of your project.

Dr. Townsend on the process:

- * Grant-writing is a game: know and play by all the rules.
- * Know your readers, recognize their needs and interests, and be prepared to scratch the right itch.
- * Consider locating corporate partners for your project.
- * Follow the RFP to the letter: it's the law.
- * Seek help from experienced grants writers (such as Dr. Townsend or Mr. Ken Kenton, both of External Affairs): let them help you tailor your proposal to suit the needs of a particular organization.
- * Dr. Townsend has already written text that describes AASU, its mission, and its context—something that most grants will expect. You may borrow text from him and do not need to write your own.

Curriculum Procedure Tidbit

The graduate council approved a small change in procedures for submitting 5000 level courses. In the future, departments and/or graduate coordinators should indicate both undergraduate and graduate prerequisites for 5000 level courses. In many cases, prereqs are not the same.

Phi Kappa Phi Update

President Jones has given us the green light for AASU to apply for a chapter of Phi Kappa Phi. PKP is the nation's oldest and largest all-discipline honors society, and its presence should give AASU the chance to highlight the scholarship of our very best students in a new and campus-wide way. According to President Bill Bloodworth of Augusta State University: "The benefits are unqualified, and I think, extraordinary."

In order to qualify, we need to form a chartering committee with fifteen members, at least

ten of whom must be PKP members. We also may use up to five Phi Beta Kappa or Sigma Xi members, and also PKP members from the community. I have the names of a few faculty members who have earned these honors, but I am eager to find a few more. If you are member of PKP, PBK, or Sigma Xi, please let me know. X5642.

The Viva Rio Story:

Lecture on Public Health in Brazil

Dr. Maria Helena Moreira, Director of International Programs at Viva Rio in Rio de Janeiro, will give a lecture on public health issues in Brazil. Viva Rio is a leading human rights organization that has for over a decade been fighting to end public violence in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Dr. Moreira will describe Viva Rio's remarkable growth and explain its successful, grass roots interventions efforts to combat urban violence. This is open to the public, and will take place Thursday, October 28 from 12:00 - 1:30pm in University Hall 156.

Arts Ashore Legacy Grant Opportunity

The Arts Ashore Legacy Fund through The Savannah Foundation, Inc. is soliciting grant requests from non-profit organizations in Chatham County, Georgia whose focus is in culture, art, or art education. A minimum of two organizations must collaborate on a program or project. The grant amount will be \$4,000.00. The grant deadline is 5:00 p.m., Monday, November 1, 2004. If you have any questions, please call Paulette at The Savannah Foundation (912) 921-7700 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday or email her at paulette@savfoundation.org.

Deadlines and Dates

- Oct 15 Spring Semester Book orders due
- Oct 18 Dept heads to submit Faculty Workload Reports
- Oct 22 Faculty Lecture by Jim Brawner
- Oct 27 Deadline for Items for A & S Curriculum Committee
- Oct 30 Fall Open House
- Nov 1 Arts Ashore Legacy Grant deadline
- Nov 3 Meeting of A & S Curriculum Committee
- Nov 3 Web Registration for spring 2005 Begin