

July-August 2000

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

From the Office of the Associate Dean

Vol. 4 No. 6

Why Teach Leadership?

Leadership is a word spinning through today's conversations. You may hear employers requesting "leadership" be a part of the perfect applicant's resume. Or members of the diverse agricultural community call for the emergence of someone to be their "leader." In the public forum, political candidates continuously reference their "leadership experience." In light of these broad suggestions, what is the role of collegiate educators as they tackle the serious task of preparing their students to face the changing world of agriculture and the life sciences?

Dr. Christine Townsend will provide ideas and suggestions in answering these questions during the Fall ACES Teaching Symposium to be held Friday, August 20 at Levis Center. Mark your calendar; registration information will be distributed in early August. Professor Townsend coordinates the Agricultural Leadership Education program in the College of Agriculture at Texas A&M University. An awarding-winning instructor, Dr. Townsend is one of five University Professors for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence at TAMU. She has conducted various research activities that focus on leadership development and leadership education. Her presentation style makes learning an easy task. Be sure to make attending the symposium a priority as we begin another academic year.

Tom Angelo Presentation

Dr. Tom Angelo of DePaul University will be speaking at UIUC in August. Many ACES faculty attended the 1999 Campus Faculty Retreat and heard Angelo's excellent presentation on active learning. The College of Commerce and Business Administration has invited ACES and other colleges to participate in a two-hour session on teaching and learning. Angelo is a professor and founding director

of the School of New Learning Assessment Center at DePaul University in Chicago.
Mark your calendar for Tuesday, August 29, 2000, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. in the Gallery of Temple Hoyne Buell Hall to join in the discussion. Additional information will be available in early August.

Accepted For Leadership Program

Professor Marvin Paulsen, AG ENG, has been accepted to participated in the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Academic Leadership Program for 2000- 2001. The program was created by the Provosts of the CIC institutions (Big Ten plus Chicago) to develop the leadership potential of participating faculty. Marvin will participate in seminars on the topics of Leadership and Human Resources, Long-Range Planning and Budgeting, and The University of the Future: Motivating Change, held on three different campuses of CIC member institutions. He will also be invited to participate in the UIUC Senior Administrator Orientation program at Allerton.

Ed Tech Grant

Three faculty in ACES were selected by the Educational Technologies Board to participate in the Faculty Training Workshop held in June and offered by the Center for Educational Technologies. Each \$2,000 grant is awarded to assist selected faculty in utilizing instructional technology to enhance teaching and learning. Recipients from ACES included Darrel Kesler, ANSCI, Richard Brazee, NRES, and Mike Hutjens, ANSCI.

Three Students Serve as Interns

Three College of ACES students have been selected for Congressional internships in Washington DC for the fall 2000 semester. Laura Appleby, an Agricultural Communications senior from Tuscola, will be interning in the office of Senator Peter Fitzgerald; Kristine Polo, a senior in Crop Sciences from Gillespie, and Sara Watters, a junior in ACE from Wataga, will both be interning in the office of Senator Richard Durbin. The first ACES Congressional intern, Cindy Parr, an August 2000 graduating senior in Agricultural Communications, spent a very successful spring 2000 semester in the office of Senator Fitzgerald.

Mentoring Graduate Students

Gamma Sigma Delta and ACES Academic programs sponsored a workshop on mentoring graduate students last spring. Graduate College Associate Dean Michael Loui moderated a panel of a student and faculty from ANSCI, GSLIS and the Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese on *Getting the Most Out of Mentoring*.

Small group discussion followed, addressing the topics of mentoring in a teaching environment and mentoring in a research environment. Participants gained tips and some philosophy in working with graduate students in a meaningful and collegial way to help them learn as they fulfill their assignments in teaching and research.

ACES New Student Welcome

Thursday, August 31, 2000

7:00 p.m.

Playhouse Theatre, Krannert Center

Come meet our new students!!

What Makes a Good Mentor?

Adapted from a paper by Lamar Riley Murphy and Gaye Wong, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Graduate College, April 30, 1997

The Graduate College Award for Outstanding Mentoring of Graduate Students recognizes exemplary efforts by the graduate faculty in advising and serving graduate students. This award was presented for the first time in 1996-1997.

What is it about the nominees and winners that make them regarded as excellent mentors? What special qualities do they have? In the nomination materials, several characteristics appear repeatedly.

Respectful: Good mentors treat their students with respect and trust, viewing them as invaluable but inexperienced junior colleagues. They see graduate students as apprentices; it is their responsibility, privilege, and reward to guide students successfully through that apprenticeship. As one nominee phrased it, "Working closely with one's advisor is more than a supplement to formal instruction; it is the core of the matter." Good mentors act in accordance with their vision that their students are, in the words of a nominee, "important partners in learning, teaching, and research."

Committed: Good mentors make "an investment of faith in the growth potential of students," starting at the beginning of graduate school -- or earlier -- and continuing well beyond graduation, eventually evolving into a collegial relationship. This commitment manifests itself every day and in every facet of graduate training and professional socialization. As one nominee put it, "That commitment must be very broad, including not only counsel on acquiring intellectual skills likely to be of later value, but direct guidance on everything from public speaking style to the management of career details such as nuances of interaction with journal editors and academic/corporate politics, to name only two."

Demanding: Good mentors have high standards for themselves and their students, and they constantly strive for excellence. Wrote a former student, "He always guided me in a direction that was within my reach to complete the work, but clearly had me challenged to the maximum extent of my abilities." Good mentors are sensitive to the toll such high expectations can take on students' self-confidence, and they consciously endeavor to build rather than erode self-esteem.

Adaptable: Good mentors recognize that different students have different needs and strengths. In fact, the best mentors capitalize on such differences by tailoring training opportunities to the needs and aspirations of each student. Good mentors do not force students to adapt to their own styles; rather, good mentors adapt their approaches to the needs of individual students. Since students are continually developing throughout their graduate careers, effective mentoring also requires a process of continual reassessment and readjustment. What is common to all effective mentoring, however, is, in one mentor's words, "very personal attention" and "quick and detailed feedback."

Available: Despite their own busy schedules, good mentors are accessible, and approachable, not only to their own current and previous advisees but to other students as well. Their doors are literally always open to their students, and they are available at nights, on weekends, and while on sabbatical. Marveled on student, "[My mentor] always gave me his undivided attention, although he had countless other commitments." Another wrote, "one of the [his] students once told me that he worked so hard to turn around a draft of his dissertation proposal in a timely manner because it embarrassed him that [his advisor] was working harder on it than he was."

Encouraging: Good mentors encourage students to develop their own ideas by giving the kind of feedback that promotes a sense of independence, responsibility, and self-confidence. They encourage students to experiment and teach them not to fear mistakes. Said one former student about his mentor, "He hands his students the rope and shows them how not to hang themselves." Another mentor was said to have the "knack of giving comments in a way that elicited rather than imposed ideas." Indeed, the intellectual passion and enthusiasm that good mentors communicate to their students is contagious. Students find inspiration in their examples, and are further inspired when they realize that they are being encouraged to pursue topics far beyond the particular expertise of the mentor.

Proactive: Good mentors do not wait for their students to seek them out with questions or problems. Good mentors have frequent formal and informal meetings with their students, and they aggressively make available and encourage participation in meaningful professional development activities.

The nominating materials abound with anecdotes about students whose lack of self-confidence, experience, or foresight would -- without the intervention of a mentor -- have kept them from pursuing an opportunity that later proved to be extremely beneficial. Good mentors also provide opportunities for other students in their programs. One nominee, for instance, has improved professional development opportunities for all of the students in his department by instituting such programs as a graduate "buddy" system, faculty-graduate student round tables on graduate and professional issues, and various colloquia on job search and interview techniques.

Nurturing: "Good mentors," wrote a former student, "nurture the careers of their students. They introduce them to the right people, they are generous with credit and praise, they put in good words in the right ears which result in the earliest professional opportunities, they encourage after setbacks. In short, they spend the credit of their hard earned reputations to advance their students." Good mentors spend significant amounts of their time promoting the careers of their students, beginning with the earliest days of graduate school and continuing well beyond the first job.

Holistic: Good mentors view the educational process as encompassing much more than mastery of a particular academic subject. As a former student explained about his mentor, "after spending my graduate career with [him], I know now that an educated individual knows more than the contents of numerous text books and journal articles. An educated individual is knowledgeable about the world around him, tolerates any and all views, goes out of his way to make others a better person, and accepts nothing less than the best possible effort."

Influential: "An advisor," wrote one finalist, "has the responsibility to be a positive role model..." Good mentors, as she and other finalists suggest, practice what they preach. Noted another professor, "students learn at least as much by first-hand observation of you... as they do by what you tell them." Good mentors have influence that extends far beyond the students with whom they have personally been involved, so that their influence ripples through succeeding generations of students. Wrote one student about the three years he spent studying with one nominee, "Three years is not a long time in my life. However, three years studying with [her] has changed my whole life." Another of this professor's students made a similar testimonial, concluding that her "impact over the generations is immeasurable."

New Course Development

Congratulations to Sara Douglas in ACE for receiving an Undergraduate Course Development Award for a new course, ACE 3XX: *Institutions and Processes of Global Agribusiness*. The \$4,350 award, matched by department and college funds, will be used to develop this new course which will add to the cafeteria of courses in ACES that address international issues. The course should be ready for approval during 2000-2001 and offered in the next academic year. Congratulations to Sara, and thanks for helping to expand the international dimension of the undergraduate curriculum in ACE and ACES.

Distinguished Teacher/Scholar

Congratulations to Phil Buriak in AG ENG for being selected as one of two Distinguished Teacher/Scholars at UIUC! In the second year of awards, the program is designed to recognize outstanding teacher/scholars and call upon them to share their expertise with other faculty on campus. Phil receives funding from the Office of the Provost to support his planned activities, and the Department of Agricultural Engineering also receives funding in recognition of Phil's new duties. The Teaching Advancement Board selects the recipients, based on the winners' talent for teaching and stellar scholarship. Congratulations to Professor Buriak!

As You Prepare for Fall

Instructors may find it helpful to review the campus *Code* as they prepare course syllabi for fall semester. The *Code* contains a well-developed section on academic integrity which should be referenced in all course syllabi. Copies of the *Code* are available in departmental offices as well on the UIUC web site.

Teaching Enhancement Grants

Three Teaching Enhancement Grants were awarded in Spring for instructional development activities. Congratulations to the following recipients:

Steve Eckhoff and Ping Yang - TSM course development in biomass processing.

Greg McIsaac, Karyn McDermaid, Patrick Brown and Jennifer Tank - NRES 300 course on ecosystem management.

Jim Painter - FSHN 399 course on the wine industry.

The next round of competition will be announced in late August. Funds are available for activities to enhance instructional activities and student learning, to a maximum of \$2,000.