

# ACADEMIC PROGRAMS



College of Agricultural,  
Consumer and  
Environmental Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

From the Office of the Associate Dean

Vol. 6 No. 8

## Goals and Outcomes of Study Abroad

From an article by K.S. Gray, G. K. Murdock and C.D. Stebbins in *Change*, May/June 2002.

Five specific learning objectives for study abroad at Missouri Southern State College:

- 1) Graduates will have an understanding of how cultures and societies around the world are formed, are sustained, and evolve.
- 2) Graduates will have empathy for the values and perspectives of cultures other than their own, and an awareness of international and multicultural influences in their own lives.
- 3) Graduates will be able to identify and discuss international issues and other cultures.
- 4) Graduates will have communicative competence in a second or third language.
- 5) Graduates will have experienced or have a desire to experience a culture other than their own.

The list may be expanded in the future to include the following objectives, which, while more difficult to assess, demand a deeper understanding and ability to function within a global context:

- Students will be able to analyze the accuracy and relevancy of their own world view and anticipate how people from other nations view Americans and America's impact on the world.
- Students will be able to function effectively and ethically in societies other than their own.
- Students will seek out and interact with the richness of diversity within all of humanity – learning and applying strategies used in other cultures to improve their own lives and communities.
- Students will be able to identify with a variety of individuals and situations despite superficial differences of culture and conventions.

Techniques and strategies to help students meet the study abroad objectives:

- Short-term travel
- Short-term study
- On-site classes
- Student teaching
- Internships
- Long-term study abroad

While perhaps the greatest long-term benefits to students who study abroad are the confidence, maturity, and empathy they gain from the experience, the actual outcomes of study abroad can be summarized as follows:

- When students gain the ability to see themselves as foreigners, they indeed become aware that they hold a view of the world that is not universally shared.
- When students acknowledge that the lack of material wealth they see in so-called third-world countries is indicative of poverty by U.S. standards but not necessarily by the standards of the rest of the world, they learn to explore perceptions of the world as others see it.
- When students recognize both the similarities and differences among members of the human race, they demonstrate an awareness of cultures other than their own.
- When students speak of the kindness they receive from people whose language, customs, and beliefs they do not understand, they realize the need for a tolerance of human diversity.

## ACES Career Fair

Thursday October 3, 2002

Illini Union

## Projects Awarded Funding from USDA

Jesse Thompson and Charles Olson have received notification that their proposal to the USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant program has been approved for funding. The project, *Community College Science Internship Program*, has as its aim to create learning opportunities that will increase the experience base of transfer students in science and technology and create on-going partnerships with urban community colleges. The target audience includes potential transfer students enrolled in one of four Chicago metro area community colleges. As a result of participating in the eight-week program, students will be more aware of career opportunities in fields related to ACES degree programs and will be more likely to enroll at UIUC and in the College.

Geoff Dahl, Animal Sciences, and his co-investigator Thomas McFadden at the University of Vermont also have been notified of their successful proposal. The objectives of the project include developing modules and accompanying virtual labs in the area of lactation physiology to be delivered as a part of a web-based course that will be available world-wide.

## ACES Courses Re-certified for Advanced Composition Credit

Seven courses in ACES have been re-certified by the General Education Board as Advanced Composition (formerly Comp II) courses, effective until the next review in 2006-07. The courses are: AGCOM 214 and 273, ANSCI 150, HDFS 301 and 315, NRES 319 and PL PA 100.

These are excellent opportunities for students in the College to complete courses for ACES residency or their major or minor while also satisfying a Gen Ed requirement. Advanced Composition courses cannot be transferred from another institution.

## New Student Convocation

Thanks to faculty in ACES participated in the campus new student convocation on August 26. Those who represented the College included:

- Wayne Banwart**, Academic Programs  
**Kirby Barrick**, Academic Programs  
**Loren Bode**, Agricultural Engineering  
**Andrea Bohn**, Academic Programs  
**Don Briskin**, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences  
**Cleo D'Arcy**, Crop Sciences  
**Faye Dong**, Food Science and Human Nutrition  
**Phil Dziuk**, Animal Sciences  
**Robert Easter**, Dean  
**Thomas Fermanian**, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences  
**Darrel Good**, Agricultural and Consumer Economics  
**Alan Hansen**, Agricultural Engineering  
**Gary Heichel**, Crop Sciences  
**Prasanta Kalita**, Agricultural Engineering  
**Darrel Kesler**, Animal Sciences  
**Gary Kling**, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences  
**Fred Kolb**, Crop Sciences  
**Mary Ann Lila**, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences  
**Michael Mazzocco**, Agricultural and Consumer Economics  
**Greg McIsaac**, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences  
**Michael Murphy**, Animal Sciences  
**Charles Olson**, Academic Programs  
**Carl Parsons**, Animal Sciences  
**Jan Seitz**, 4-H Youth Development  
**Connie Shapiro**, Human and Community Development  
**Robert Skirvin**, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences  
**Daniel Warnock**, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

Personal leadership is the  
progressive realization of one's  
life vision through the habit of  
making the right choices.

## Does Evaluating Instruction Improve It?

We assume it does. Ratings provide feedback and feedback improves performance. If student ratings are low, that feedback can motivate faculty to implement changes or seek the counsel of instructional experts. If rating results figure in the salary, tenure, and promotion equation, faculty have concrete reasons for devoting effort to improved classroom performance. If administrators use rating results in personnel decisions, then ratings improve instruction in the aggregate, as more effective faculty are hired and retained, and ineffective ones are terminated.

Those reasons are offered in a first rate, well-organized and accessible review of the research on the role of evaluation in the improvement of teaching. Author Harry Murray offers a succinct summary of the research that establishes the reliability and validity of student ratings.

Evidence as to the role of ratings in instructional improvement comes from three sources. First, there are surveys of faculty opinion. Murray highlights eight studies that asked one or both of these questions: “Do student ratings provide useful feedback for improvement of teaching?” And “Have student ratings led to improved teaching?” Although results varied somewhat from study to study, the overall trend was for faculty respondents to agree that student ratings have had a positive impact on quality of teaching. One of the studies in this group asked the questions of 4,468 faculty at various campuses (within a state system). Sixty-seven percent said that they had.

More compelling is the evidence offered by the second source, field experiments. In this collection of studies, randomly assigned experimental teachers receive feedback concerning mid-course student evaluation of teaching, whereas control teachers are evaluated at mid-term but given no feedback. The two groups are then compared on end-of-course student ratings. A variation of this basic design was tested in a number of different studies. A meta-analysis of 13 experiments that compared feedback with no feedback found a small increase (0.10 points on a 5-point scale) on the end-of-course ratings. But in the nine experiments where mid-course feedback was accompanied with consultation, the average increase benefit was 0.33 points, the equivalent to 24 percentile points.

Murray also identified 14 longitudinal

studies of rating impact. In eight, significant longitudinal improvement was reported; in six, it was not. One study considered the rating data from 195 faculty in 31 different departments across a 13-year period. Murray writes, “Despite the use of a large sample and powerful design, (this) study provided no evidence that mean student ratings improve over time following the introduction of student evaluation of teaching.”

Most of us who have taught at the same place for any length of time can easily plot the impact of ratings on our own teaching. Be encouraged to take a look at yours. For expediency’s sake, you can look only at the global questions (how does this instructor, this course compare with others?). Graph results across the years and across courses.

Researchers did find longitudinal evidence that rating data improved instruction. They did not look at individual faculty but looked at the rating data by department across a 15-year period. Of the seven departments studied, improvement in ratings occurred in five of them. The graphs for each department show how strikingly different the patterns of increase were – some large, some small; and some up and down on the way up, some more steady up, for examples. Murray concludes that “long-term improvement in teaching following the introduction of student evaluation occurs under some conditions but not others. Unfortunately, we are not yet able to define the conditions that either enhance or inhibit performance.”

Finally in this article Murray addresses two frequent criticisms of evaluation efforts: 1) that evaluation systems cause faculty to raise grades and lower standards; and 2) that current systems of evaluation lead to an entrenchment of traditional teaching methods. For the first, after a review and discussion of the issues, he concludes “research evidence provides no clear support for the claim that student evaluation of teaching has led to grade inflation and lowering academic standards.” For the second, he finds limited relevant data, but some compelling logical arguments that cause him to conclude that “there are no strong reasons for believing that student evaluation of teaching perpetuates traditional instructional methods and impedes innovation.”

From *The Teaching Professor*, February, 2002.  
Reference: Murray, Harry G. (1997). Does evaluation of teaching lead to improvement of teaching. *The International Journal for Academic Development*, 2 (1), 8-23.

## ACES DirectConnect

The ACES course portal is up and running!

The project, through the efforts of John Schmitz and Clark Roberts, involves the creation of one central web site to access every course in the College. Be sure to check it out at <http://dc.aces.uiuc.edu>

Why a course portal? Students will not need to navigate across seven department web sites to find courses of interest. Information beyond the portal is still controlled by faculty, so access to information can be limited or can include the entire course syllabus. The instructor decides. The site is searchable. Try it out. Key in words that you believe should lead students to your course. If it doesn't happen, let us know. Perhaps your course description needs to have more descriptive words. ACES has also developed a WebCT site for every course offered in the College. Locate your course at <http://webct.aces.uiuc.edu>.

In addition to our students, the courses portal is an important recruitment tool. We know that potential applicants are savvy at checking us out via the web. The courses portal will allow them to get a better look and make better decisions about potential enrollment.

The web site is only as good as faculty make it. Be sure to look at your courses!

## Graduate Fellows Recognition

Tuesday, November 5, 2002,  
3:30 p.m.

149 Natural Soybean  
Research Center

## Problem-Based Learning

Dr. Mark Ryan, University of Missouri, was the keynote presenter for the annual ACES Fall Teaching Symposium. Ninety faculty and graduate students participated in the workshop that focused on helping make teaching more problem-centered. Participants indicated that they learned how to use problem-based instruction in their courses. The real world is problem-based, so it is important for students to learn to use knowledge to solve problems rather than merely recall what they have learned. Having well-written objectives is key to successful problem-based teaching.

Follow-up sessions and activities are planned to assist interested faculty in developing their skills in problem-based teaching and learning. The symposium was sponsored by the Academy of Teaching Excellence and ACES Academic Programs, and was funded through the ACES Teaching Enhancement endowment.

## ESCOP/ACOP Program

ACES is sponsoring two participants in the ESCOP/ACOP Leadership Development program for 2002-2003. Karen Chapman-Novakofski, FSHN, and Richard Weinzerl, Crop Sci, participated in the first part of the program in late June. They will conduct several activities during the next academic year and conclude the formal program next March in Washington, D.C. ACES participants are funded by Academic Programs and the Office of Research. A total of 36 ACES faculty have participated in the program since its inception.

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