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ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

From the Office of Associate Dean and Director

WHY TEACH?

Adapted from an article by Maryellen Gleason in Change magazine

Not so long ago, at one of those obligatory social functions, I was superficially engaged in conversation with a rather wearisome creature who inquired as to my profession. "I'm a teacher." Taking a sip of the warm, red punch he smiled and asked me, "Why?" Confused, I echoed the question, "Why?" "Yes, why do you teach?" I stammered. The first reasons that come to mind were not right. *For money*. People who teach for money are a minority--poor blinded souls who have yet to make the acquaintance of a banker, doctor, or mortician. *For glory*. The few who still teach for the glory tend to be young and idealistic--poor blinded souls who have yet to read the fine print on promotion and tenure. *For the opportunity to do research*. Maybe, but unless you have a bevy of graduate assistants, objective tests, and no office hours--even the most elementary cost-benefit analysis reveals this to be a losing proposition. My inquisitor was out of punch, and I was out of time. I had to say something. **"I teach for the students."**

We parted--he for more punch, I to collect my thoughts. What kind of an answer had I given? Do I teach for the students? I felt myself wanting to smile. I caught myself trying to imagine the sophisticated, tweedy intellectuals among my colleagues admitting to such an unabashedly human reason. But before worrying about them I needed to answer the question for myself. Names and faces--some together, some separate--all flashed through my memory. Suddenly the movie stopped, and I remembered Scott.

I met Scott early in my teaching career one unfortunate semester when the two sections of my beginning speech course had been scheduled to meet at the same time. That meant I had sixty students instead of thirty. I was in no mood to sign overloads. Scott was patient, polite, and insistent. He had to have this course. He was going to be a doctor. "I have to communicate important messages. I want to learn how to do it right." The deep-set, brown eyes never wavered. Mine dropped--

he had a point. Later, I chided myself for being a pushover. When would I learn a student could feign interest in any course if it fell into the right time slot?

My first mistake with Scott was the assumption his interest was feigned. It turned out to be all too genuine. This error was compounded by a second. I assumed I know enough about communication to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of my students. Scott's academic appetite was voracious. The course had barely begun and he was asking questions I couldn't answer, raising issues I'd never considered, and reading books I didn't know. Even my best-reasoned, most eloquent response did not settle an issue. It only stimulated more questions.

I couldn't help feeling a bit relieved when the semester ended. I didn't know anything else to teach Scott. The experience was humbling, and yet there was exhilaration as well. I was forced to admit here was a student more dedicated and determined about learning than I had ever been. Here too was a student brighter than I. The revelations startled me, but once the admissions were made I was ready to learn something far more significant. Students can teach us if we let them.

The pictures in my mind moved again. This time when they stopped I saw Ron--an average student thoroughly convinced of his ordinariness. Yes, he could play baseball, but that was just about it. "I'm not much of a student," he told me, and that pretty well summed up his less than adequate writing skills, his 2.1 GPA, and his general disinterest in anything academic. At then end of his sophomore year, Ron had yet to confront an intellectual idea that mattered.

Ron had also yet to confront a teacher who thought he mattered. I treated him like someone special. It wasn't hard. He was and is a unique human being without duplicate. It seemed like such a simple solution. Ron responded very much like my Swedish ivy when I finally got around to giving it some fertilizer. He started to grow. Almost before I knew what happened both Ron and my ivy were discovering places they had never been before. Ron found out that nonverbal communication I lectured about in class he actually used when he played baseball. My ivy discovered the window latch around which it proceeded to grow. In both cases the very obvious changes attracted attention and the two continued to flourish.

From Ron I learned teachers have power--power that can affect and change students. It would be nice if the power was inherently creative. It is not. But then the power is not inherently destructive either. Rather, the potential for teachers to influence students simply exists. Unfortunately, most teachers neglect to use this influence to accomplish any effect.

I wanted to move on. I remembered Eileen--what the professionals call a "nontraditional learner". Eileen was thirty, married, and a mother who wanted a college degree. For some reason she felt inferior--felt as if she had never accomplished much that mattered, at least to her. Get a college diploma and she would have tangible proof of an accomplishment that mattered. It was a noble

challenge. Eileen had not been near a classroom since high school. She and her husband were struggling financially with a huge dairy farm which meant there was no money for college. She financed the venture with a part-time secretarial job. Her arrival in class marked no small accomplishment, but for Eileen that was only the first step. She didn't anticipate the second step would be easier, and it was not.

As the date for the first exam approached, the tension rose noticeably. There were office calls and embarrassed questions asked quietly. "I don't know how to study the texts." "I don't understand things I've written in my notes." The very brown eyes twinkled, but the face was serious. "I tell the cows about what I read in the text. Some of them seem as slow as me."

On the day of the test the anguish was visible. I hoped for the best--so much appeared to be at stake. The best turned out to be C minus--a shaky two points from a D. Eileen was in my office when I returned from class. She quietly closed the door and sat down. There was stubborn determination as we painstakingly went through the test question by question. Neither of us mentioned the tears that accidently spilled on the last page.

By sheer gut determination Eileen made it in my class and many others. From that remarkably strong woman I learned there are values in education I have too long taken for granted.

I suppressed the urge to remember more. It was time to return. I took a sip from my still full punch glass and smiled. I could live with the answer-even if it did open to public scrutiny my humanity. I owe students a great deal.

CAAP AWARDS

Sixteen faculty in ACES were awarded grants totaling \$52,500 for the Creative Academic Activities Program in 1996-97. The 14 projects are summarized here. Feel free to contact the faculty who worked on the projects if you desire additional information. Their names are included following the project title. The techniques used and materials obtained are excellent examples of how innovation can be used to improve the student experience in ACES. Congratulations to all the faculty who successfully completed the projects.

Revise of HDFS 100 to meet GEN ED requirements

Brenda L. Seery

The course has been approved as a GEN ED--Social and Behavioral Sciences

option. In addition, Dr. Seery developed a series of 12 discussion activities, and a webpage was created with one assignment using the chatspace. The course is taught in 114 DKH to utilize the multimedia projection equipment.

**Create WWW site for PL PATH 100 to increase students' agricultural literacy
Cleo D'Arcy and Darin Eastburn**

Video and written materials have been developed on late blight and Irish potato famine and on Dutch elm disease and monoculture. Next step is to create a website, with testing by students in Plant Pathology 100 during Fall 1997.

Provide hands-on experience with domestic farm animals

and relate this to animal biology, ANSCI 199S

Walt L. Hurley

A new course developed to provide opportunity for students to learn fundamentals of animal-animal and animal-human interactions within the animal's environment. Emphasis is on hands-on activities for the vast majority of students who do not have experience with domestic farm animals, utilizing on-farm laboratories and workshops.

Develop website for students in ANSCI/BIOL 316

Michael Grossman

A website for the course, using VCI and other tools, contains typical course information plus class exercises, problem sets, special projects and review materials. Links are made to course materials. A Java calculator was incorporated to allow students to perform calculations while on-line.

**Develop system for delivering lecture material & lab manuals on WWW for
ANSCI 231, 331, 303 and 308**

David Miller

A digital camera (Kodak DC-50) and storage drive were used to collect and store images to add to websites for the courses. The sites also include information from lectures and laboratories. Short video clips will also be added to the sites. An external Jaz drive is used to store the increasing volumes of images.

Expand of TSM 111 to meet GEN ED requirements

Philip Buriak

The course, Humanity in the Food Web, is a GEN ED--Humanities option, a COMP II option, and an approved Honors Course. A homepage was developed, and the instructors used e-mail and other means to attract a broader student base. Students use the web to prepare for discussions and debates, and used weekly journal entries via e-mail for peer evaluation and discussion among students and instructors.

Create web page for ANSCI 150 James Robinson

A web page for the course, World Animal Resources, was developed with assistance from the AIM lab. In addition, color transparency sets and books from the World Bank and other sources were purchased since no suitable text exists for the course. A series of guest lecturers is also used in the course.

Revise FSHN 120 to meet GEN ED requirements

Sharon Donovan

The course, Contemporary Nutrition, has been approved as a GEN ED--Natural Science and Technology: Life Science option.

Create interdepartmental environmental chemistry program, NRES and Chemistry departments collaborating

Richard Larson

After an extensive analysis of issues, related programs and faculty interest, a tentative program of course work was designed. The program features a core of nine hours from a selection of seven courses, plus six hours of electives. The proposal has been presented to the two departments and the Environmental Council.

Electronically cross list 200-level ACE courses

Gerald Nelson

The project involved the initial development of ACELink, which has also been awarded grants from the Sloan Center. ACELink allows students to move to sites of related information while they complete ACE courses. Next steps include the ACE 100 Web Book, a set of interactive chapters that parallel the course text, and to develop interactive exercises for 200-level ACE courses.

Revise HDFS 316 to meet GEN ED requirements

Reed Larson

The course, Adolescent Development, was revised with the goal of increasing enrollment and to be approved as a GEN ED--Social and Behavioral Sciences option. The course will be lecture/discussion, with plans for a graduate-level discussion section. Grading guidelines were developed for evaluating weekly reaction papers.

Develop American Dietetic Association accredited internship Karen Plawecki and Kris Campbell

Computer Software was purchased for five specific areas in dietetics. The interactive programs are designed to assist students in simulated experience they will encounter in the "real world." The materials have been used in FSHN 329, and will also be utilized in four other courses and a proposed dietetic internship.

Create a biological diversity discovery course focussing on ecological, geographical and sociological ramifications Mike Irwin

A new course entitled Biodiversity: Its Ecological and Sociological Ramifications was developed to explore four aspects of biodiversity. Course materials were compiled and appropriate new materials obtained. The course will be taught Spring 1998.

Upgrade desktop publishing capacities and skills

Ann Reisner

Software to improve the desktop publishing capacities in the Orn Hort labs was obtained, to be utilized in the new AECE curriculum. In addition, four new software programs (digital photography, layout, web publishing and illustration) were obtained in sufficient quantities for faculty access.

ACES Awarded

PITA Grant

The College has been awarded one of six grants from the Provost's Initiative in Teaching Assessment. The initiative is designed to promote innovative approaches

to the assessment of teaching performance throughout UIUC.

The ACES project will address three areas of assessment. Peer evaluation procedures will be developed and implemented, including faculty enrolled in the Teaching College course offered in fall 1997, their mentors, the Academy, department heads, and selected ACES committees. Classroom observation and pre- and post-observation conferencing techniques will be included.

Student evaluation of teaching procedures is also a part of the year-long project. Early feedback and student interviews are two methods being considered to supplement ICES. Self-evaluation techniques and a model for assessment will be a part of teaching portfolio development as an on-going record and assessment of teaching effectiveness.

Project leaders include Cleo D'Arcy (Crop Sciences), Phil Buriak and Bruce Litchfield (Agricultural Engineering), Shelly Schmidt (Food Science and Human Nutrition) and Kirby Barrick.

A Glimpse at the New Students for Fall 1997

Summer Orientation sessions are finished, and the new student group for Fall 1997 is about complete. Here is a sneak preview of what the group looks like (includes new freshmen and new transfers).

By Department: Animal Sciences 129

Agr Engineering 57

ACE 156

Crop Sciences 24

FSHN 91

HCD 74

NRES 72

By Type: Freshmen 519

Transfer 84

By Gender:

Male Freshmen - 44% Transfer - 50% Female Freshmen - 56% Transfer - 50%

By Area (self-reported):

Urban (>100,000) 74 12.3%

Urban (50-100,000) 98 16.3%

Urban (10-50,000) 170 28.2%

Town (<10,000) 94 15.6%

Farm/Rural 152 25.2%

(Average farm size for the 89 who gave it was 828 acres)

By County (selected): Cook 168

Dupage 57

Lake 55

Champaign 41

Will 19

Kane 11

McHenry 10

81 others

Background:

Enrolled in a vocational program in high school - 36%

4-H participant - 16%

FFA participant - 18%

International study experience - 3.4%

Interested in international study - 48%

Visits to UIUC:

ACES Open House 32%

4-H event 9%

FFA activity 12%

High school athletic event 22%

UIUC athletic event 42%

Visit faculty member 13%

Campus visitor center 24%

Teachers and students must always remain free to inquire, to study and to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding; otherwise our civilization will stagnate and die.

--Earl Warren

Visiting friends/family 67%

VISIT the Academic Programs home page at <http://w3.aces.uiuc.edu/Acad-Prog/>



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