September 2002

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. 7

Academic Programs Welcomes Andrea Bohn

Andrea Bohn has been named Assistant Dean for Study Abroad in ACES Academic Programs. Dean Bohn officially began her duties on August 21, following the retirement of John Santas, and is housed in 109 Mumford Hall, phone 333-3380.

Andrea (pronounced an-DRE-uh) brings a wealth of experience to the position. A native of Germany, she earned the equivalent of the baccalaureate degree in Agricultural Sciences at the University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart, Germany, and the M.Sc. in Agricultural Economics at Ohio State University. She has lived in Indonesia, Mexico and Nigeria in addition to the U.S. and Germany and has skills in five languages.

Prior to joining the staff at Illinois, Andrea was coordinator of a funded project at Hohenheim for implementing a modular course structure and introducing bachelor and master degree programs in agricultural sciences. She most recently served as assistant to the dean of study programs, providing support for curricula development, quality management, communication, and student counseling.

Dean Bohn's duties include providing leadership for the ACES Study Abroad programs as well as counseling students, assisting with admissions, handling petitions and other general responsibilities. She will also be the academic programs link to ACES Global Connect. She and her husband, Martin, an assistant professor in Crop Sciences, and their son Julian make their home in Champaign.

ACES New Student Welcome
September 17, 2002, 7:00 p.m.
Festival Theatre, Krannert Center

And Says Good-bye to John Santas

John Santas, Assistant Dean for Study Abroad and International Visitors in ACES, retired from the university effective September 1, 2002. A member of the staff in ACES since 1978, John provided leadership for Study Abroad in Academic Programs since 1996. His entire career has centered on international activity, including resident work in Brazil and coordinating various international projects within the College. John and Sandra plan to stay in Champaign, and John will be working with ACES Global Connect starting in November.

A reception honoring John and Harold Kauffman will be held August 30 in the Heritage Room of the ACES Library, Information and Alumni Center.

Educating for the Future

Hopefully we prepare graduates who are ready for the world of work immediately as well as capable of adapting to a changing world. A recent issue of *Change* magazine reported the projected population of the world in 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, International Database). Are we preparing our graduates for a world where India has surpassed China as the largest country in the world, where Pakistan and Bangladesh account for a half million inhabitants, and where three of the ten largest countries are on the African continent (Nigeria, Ethiopia, Congo)? In 1950, half of the ten largest countries of the world spoke European languages; in 2050, only two (U.S. and Brazil) will speak European-based languages as the native tongue

Ten Common Teaching Mistakes

William Buskist (*Teaching of Psychology*, Vol. 27, No. 4) has observed new graduate teaching assistants teach for the last decade. He sees them making simple, technical mistakes regularly and has compiled a list of the ten most common ones. Even veterans have been known to err in these ways.

1. Starting the class cold–"Today we are going to talk about x and here's the first of five definitions for it." No time for small talk or side comments – hit that content and hit it hard. Buskist suggests developing a warm-up. He offers these questions to assist the effort. Are students already familiar with this concept? Is there an everyday example I could use? How might the concept relate to recent events in students' lives?

2. Reviewing graded materials at the beginning of class–Deliver the bad news first, get it out of the way, and move on into the comfort of important content. It works for the teacher but leaves students mulling over the feedback and not focused on the material. Save the graded stuff for last and welcome students who have points to argue to join you for private conversations after class.

3. Projecting a weak presence–Most beginning teachers feel uncomfortable and look it. Images of timidity, awkwardness, and indecisiveness will be taken as signs of weakness that students have been known to take advantage of. Consider having your teaching taped and getting some expert opinions when you view the tape.

4. Weakly integrating major points–Beginning teachers generally have major points, but they don't have effective links and connections between them. Buskist has another set of questions that will help you develop transitions and a more coherent whole. How can I link these topics together? Is there an example or demonstration I can use to link these topics? What questions might I pose to help students see such linkages?

5. Relying too heavily on notes–New teachers write detailed notes. Recent or current students themselves, they are used to writing long complicated sentences about content, meant to be read not heard. When they read those notes to students, they can quickly bore even a motivated crowd. Solution: Make an outline of the material. Put it on the board or overhead and lecture from that. It has the added advantage of helping students organize their notes.

6. Not talking to the class–New teachers have a tendency to talk to the board or read from the overhead. In this culture (and most others), we face people and speak to them directly.

7. Giving ambiguous demonstrations–Demonstrations are an excellent, active learning technique with great potential for getting students' attention and making important points in the process. Those benefits accrue only if the point of the demonstration is clear. Tell them the point!

8. Posing vague questions–Often the "vague" question is really just a very open one designed to give students lots of latitude when they respond. Unfortunately, they don't know that. They believe that all questions have right answers and since they don't know the answer to this one, they must not understand the question. Buskist includes an example of a vague question: "What do we know about attribution?" Compare that question with: "What are the key elements of attributions?"

9. Not reinforcing student participation–Ignore student comments, or take them for granted, and you won't have them for long. This doesn't mean making much out of an inferior or incorrect answer, but it does mean acknowledging student effort and giving praise when it is merited.

10. Not repeating students' questions or comments –Especially a problem in large classes, shy students aren't sure they want to be participating in this big class anyway. They speak quietly so that even the instructor can barely make out the answer. Repeat the answer; ask the student or someone else to say it again so that everyone can hear. Even your most eloquent answer makes little sense if students don't start out knowing the questions.

Adapted from an article in *The Teaching Professor,* February 2002.

ITS Classroom Training

The Division of Engineering Resources, Office of Instructional Resources, provides training sessions for instructors who have been assigned to teach in an Integrated Teaching System (ITS) classroom. Interested instructors should go to the web site at http://www.oir.uiuc.edu/des.

Rooms in ACES-area buildings that are ITS classrooms include: 150 ASL, 180 Bevier, 242 Bevier, 103 Mumford, 313 Mumford, and W-109

Turner.

Teaching Students to Think Critically

By Elisah J. Nixon in *The Teaching Professor*, March 2002.

As a new faculty member, I was midway through my first semester when I realized three things: 1) most first-year students and some upper-level students were not thinking critically about the subject matter; 2) they did not know what critical thinking was; and 3) I needed to slow the pace, even eliminate discussion topics, in order to familiarize students with the process and provide the time necessary to apply critical thinking skills. Based on my initial experiences, I developed a list of strategies I'm now implementing.

Define Critical Thinking to Students – Like most professors, I assumed that students knew how to think beyond rote memory. After students expressed their confusion and uncertainty, I decided to begin a discussion of critical thinking with Bloom and Green's clear definition. "Critical thinking generally embraces all forms of higher-level thinking that are more complex or deeper than mere acquisition of knowledge and factual recall." I have also developed a handout that lists several higher-level, critical thinking skills. (Note: Contact K. Barrick for a similar list.)

Discuss the Difference Between Rote Learning and Critical Thinking – When I forced my students to think critically, they protested. In an effort to ease their pain and bolster confidence, I used an exercise that demonstrated the superiority of critical thinking. I made two columns on the board, one marked rote learning and another marked critical thinking. Then I had students brainstorm the characteristics of each. By the end of the discussion, they saw the inadequacy of rote-level thinking and understood that it requires only a certain limited kind of intelligence.

Create a Critical Thinking Environment – Even after the above exercise, I still felt that students were reluctant to work on their critical thinking skills. I discovered that they felt intimidated when they were asked to think out loud or respond to questions in front of the other students. To ease their concerns I pointed out repeatedly that critical thinkers are risk takers and that they stand to learn more and understand better when they try.

Debrief Students After Completing Practice Assessments – Students want to know whether or not they are thinking critically. I learned that it was important to acknowledge their effort. I identified what they did well, lauded their risk-taking, and noted any progress. Then I talked about skills that were used incorrectly, inefficiently, or not at all.

Prepare Students to Take Assessments Requiring Critical Thinking – My students also expressed fear of essay and problem-solving questions, fear that was based on not knowing what the test would be like or what kind of responses the instructor was expecting. Demystifying the test-taking process eases students' test anxiety. Share exam logistics (number of questions and their types) with them and explore study and test-taking strategies. Providing an opportunity for students to take a practice quiz or test before the scheduled assessment also reduces anxiety. I plan to give students a practice take-home test the day I pass out the syllabus.

For me, slowing down and eliminating content areas were a challenge because I initially thought students would view it as a negative or a sign of unpreparedness. I was wrong. Most students viewed my slowing down as an effort to improve their critical thinking abilities, which they now consider valuable to their learning.

Note: The definition for critical thinking cited in the article appears in Instructor's Resource Manual for Your College Experience: Strategies for Success (4th ed.,) by J. Gardner, J. Jewler and J. Cuseo.

Orientation to ACES

Nearly 700 students who are new to ACES for Fall 2002 experienced Freshman and Transfer Orientation in June or August. Thanks to the Academic Programs staff for the hours of work in preparing for and conducting ACES Orientation sessions for students and parents. And special thanks to faculty and others from ACES departments who assisted.

ACE: Lyle Fettig, Jennifer Ifft, Mandi Alt, Yupin Patarapongsant; **AG ENG:** Michael Hirschi, Alan Hansen, Dini Reid, Phil Buriak; **ANSCI:** Tom Carr, Joe Gooding, Gennifer Hartschuh; **CRSCI**: Fred Kolb, Jerald Pataky, Darin Eastburn; **FSHN:** Terri Cummings, Beth Reutter; **HCD**: Gerry Walter; **NRES**: Tim Marty, John Edgington, Dianne Noland, Bruce Branham, Gary Kling, and Mary Lowry.

Perspectives on International Higher Education

From an article by Philip G. Altbach in *Change*, May/June 2002.

A conceptual understanding of globalization and internationalization is needed to make sense of the varied and complex ways they are affecting higher education in the United States and worldwide. In broad terms, *globalization* refers to trends in higher education that have cross-national implications. These include mass higher education; a global marketplace for students, faculty, and highly educated personnel; and the global reach of the new Internet-based technologies, among others. *Internationalization* refers to the specific policies and initiatives of individual academic institutions, systems, or countries that deal with global trends. Examples of internationalization include policies relating to recruitment of foreign students, collaboration with academic institutions or systems in other countries, and the establishment of branch campuses abroad.

Even before September 11, 2001 international education was receiving increasing attention, with American colleges and universities adding *global awareness* and *intercultural competencies* to their mission statements and learning outcomes for general education. These efforts are intended to enhance the skills of college graduates in a global workforce, to enable students to participate in solutions to pressing global problems, and to promote global peace and understanding. These significant educational goals immediately come to mind in discussions of international education. But the picture is far more complex.

Deep inequalities undergird many of the current trends in globalization and internationalization in higher education, and they too need to be understood. A few countries dominate global scientific systems, the new technologies are owned primarily by multinational corporations or academic institutions in the major Western industrialization nations, and the domination of English creates advantages for the countries that use English as the medium of instruction and research. All this means that the developing countries find themselves dependent on the major academic superpowers.

Editor's Note. The author suggested that following resources on globalization and internationalization.

Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange by Todd M. Davis, New York: Institute of International Education, 2002.

Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States of America and Europe: A Historical, Comparative, and Conceptual Analysis by Hans deWit, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishers, 2002.

Preliminary Status Report 2000: Internationalization of U.S. Higher Education by Fred M. Hayward, Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 2000.

Public Experience, Attitudes, and Knowledge: A Report on Two National Surveys About International Education by Fred M. Hayward and Laura M. Siaya, Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 2001.

Reforming the Higher Education Curriculum: Internationalizing the Campus edited by Josef A. Mestenhauser and Brenda J. Ellingboe, Phoenix, AZ: American Council on Education/Oryx Press, 1998.

Internationalization of Indian Higher Education edited by K.B. Powar, New Delhi: Association of Indian Universities, 2001.

The Globalization of Higher Education edited by Peter Scott, Buckingham, UK: Open University Press and the Society for Research Into Higher Education, 1998.

Student Mobility on the Map: Tertiary Education Interchange in the Commonwealth on the Threshold of the 21st Century, London: UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, 2000.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS is a publication of the College of ACES, Academic Programs, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. *Academic Programs* is also accessible at: http://w3.aces.uiuc.edu/Acad-Prog/goodteach.shtml
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