Dear Colleagues,

Is it possible that an academic year has rolled by so quickly? Were the months between August and May truncated? Or have I suddenly awakened from a Rip Van Winkle slumber? Welcome Week is still a fresh memory of frenzied hustle and bustle on the mall as student leaders invited green-behind-the-ears newcomers and gawkers alike to join their club. Suddenly the burgeoning blossoms of spring evoke the grand graduation march of pomp and circumstance. This annual ritual of joyful family gatherings celebrates academic achievements. Our academic lives are marked by these beginnings and ends. Each new academic year, as if I too were a beginning student, I am filled with hope and anticipation about college life. Each spring, as the graduates cross the stage, I share their excitement, trusting that their education under our tutelage will allow them to grow beyond the expectations they harbored on their first day on campus.

Such were the ruminations I proffered last week at the Nursing Pinning Ceremony, a favorite year-end activity to which I eagerly await an invitation. To the nursing graduates, I expressed my sincere wish that their education had been transformative; that now as graduates of IU South Bend they would see the world differently than when they first stepped on campus; that in going forth on their life’s journey, they would see the world expansively, embracing its quilted mosaic of cultures, customs, and ethnicities. I trusted too that in their discovery of the world that they would be open to new possibilities, understanding that their college diploma allows them to be and act...
differently in the world, perpetually learning and growing. I am hopeful that they, like all of our graduates of yesterday evening, understand their obligations as world citizens by using their gifts and talents in service to the global community.

Many of these graduates will remain in Indiana contributing in small and large ways to the economic and social well-being of our community. This is particularly critical as the state struggles with issues as wide-ranging as job creation, economic development, educational access and attainment, and availability of social and health services; hence, the impassioned interest throughout the state in increasing high school graduation rates and increasing the number of citizens with baccalaureate degrees. Nationally, Indiana ranks 43rd in the percentage of residents twenty-five years and older with a baccalaureate degree (U.S. Census Bureau). Statewide response has been to push colleges and universities to increase retention and graduation rates, and IU South Bend has acted accordingly through strategic admissions, increased attention to advising and expanded student support services. Statewide initiatives include early college, monetary incentives for accelerated high school graduation and dual high school/college credits. While some of these tactics might benefit the gifted and highly motivated student, the wisdom of hurrying the high school diploma, and shortchanging the systematic pace of cognitive and emotional maturation, is troubling. The baccalaureate degree is devalued and marginalized, shifting from higher learning and advanced intellectual attainment to plebian credit accumulation.

In last month’s newsletter, I invited you to share your “worth living” list. Cathy Buckman, our director of admissions, responded quickly. Her eclectic list includes Billie Holiday; a perfect day in the back bowls of Vail; sunset on Lake Michigan; dingying around Chicago Harbor at night; Paris; a French baguette; grandkids; splitting a bottle of wine with your best friend; Shelley’s “Prometheus Unbound;” W.B. Yeats; David Bowie; the Beatles; Borodin’s Nocturne; Christopher Fry’s “The Lady’s Not Burning;” Santana’s drum solo (Michael Shrieve) at Woodstock; a woodland garden; the outlaw, Josie Wales; Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude; and the Na Pali Coast Kauai. And she retorts, “Like you, I could just keep on making lists.” Are there others willing to share their “worth living” list?

And if you’re willing to share comments regarding your summer reading, as did Anne Brown last fall, I’d gladly include them in future newsletters. I’m eagerly looking forward to a summer respite, ensconced with my stack of books, puttering in the garden and traveling to both coasts. And whatever your summer pleasure, I wish as well happy reading and exciting travels to near and distant places. The new school year is just around the corner. Thank you for your diligent work throughout this past year.

Sincerely,

Alfred J. Guillaume, Jr., Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Monika Lynker and Rolf Schimmrigk

The research of Dr. Rolf Schimmrigk has centered mostly around fundamental questions aimed at the unification of all interactions and the problem of quantizing gravity. The research of Dr. Monika Lynker has been centered on answering one of the basic questions in physics: what are the fundamental building blocks of matter and how do they interact? Collaboratively, Drs. Schimmrigk and Lynker have worked on the study of string theory ever since graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin. One of the recent themes in Rolf and Monika’s collaborative work has been the problem of phase transitions in string theory, as well as non-perturbative dualities in string theory.

They have collaboratively published a total of thirteen original papers, three proceedings contributions, with one further original paper in submission. The most prominent of their collaborative publications is their co-discovery of “mirror symmetry,” in part in collaboration with Philip Candelas. Their collaborative work on mirror symmetry in string theory has given rise to a large literature of thousands of papers in both physics and mathematics. It has led to a new subfield in mathematics, as reflected in new entries of the Mathematics Subject Classification. This work has been cited in more than 250 refereed articles and is reviewed in dozens of books, including Brian Greene’s best-selling book “The Elegant Universe.” A Google search on “mirror symmetry and string theory” yields about 59,400 results.

The research of Rolf Schimmrigk and Monika Lynker is currently supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation, including support for the summer research of four undergraduate students.

Our thanks to Lee Streby for the text of the research profile that appears here.
Kudos

Congratulations to Hossein Hakimzadeh (Informatics) for the use of IU-RETAIN on the University of California San Marcos campus. IU-RETAIN is the early warning/retention system developed and refined by Professor Hakimzadeh and his students over the past several years. The software is used quite successfully and with high faculty involvement here at IU South Bend to identify students who may be having academic problems early and to prompt interventions and actions that might lead to student success and retention.

Congratulations to Tim Willig (History) who received a New Frontiers Exploration Traveling Fellowship Program award recently to support his research efforts.

Congratulations to Elizabeth Bennion (Political Science) who was accepted to attend the 2011 HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) Denver Summer Institute. The 2-week long institute is devoted to “Advancing Women Leaders in Higher Education Administration.” Similarly, Linda Chen (Assistant Vice Chancellor) has been accepted to attend the ACE (American Council on Education) National Leadership Forum for Women Administrators held in Washington, DC in June. These are exciting professional development opportunities for these campus leaders.

IU South Bend Faculty Honors

IU South Bend faculty were recently recognized for their teaching excellence by their selection to receive a Trustees Teaching Award for 2011. A total of 18 IU South Bend faculty received this recognition this year. Past recipients of the TTAs may be found at this [link]. The 2011 IU South Bend faculty recognized are:

Raman Adaikkalavan, Computer & Information Sciences
David Blouin, Sociology & Anthropology
Yi Cheng, Mathematical Sciences
Julio F. Hernando, World Language Studies
Barbara J. Keith, Nursing
Matthew E. Mooney, Education
Kelcey Parker, English
Kathy L. Ritchie, Psychology
James M. VanderVeen, Sociology & Anthropology
Sue A. Anderson, Nursing
Rebecca Brittenham, English
John B. Davis, World Language Studies
Lee Kahan, English
Gwendolyn Mettetal, Education & Psychology
Yosuke Nirei, History
Theodore Randall, Sociology & Anthropology
James M. Smith, Political Science
Hong Zhuang, Business & Economics

All-IU Faculty Recognition

IU South Bend recipients of All-IU Awards were recognized on April 8 at a dinner in Bloomington as part of Founder’s Day events. The honorees were: Gwendolyn Mettetal (second from right), Herman Bachman Lieber Memorial Award for teaching excellence; Gail McGuire (not pictured), Sylvia E. Bowman Award for teaching excellence; and April Lidinsky (far right), W. George Pinnell Award for Outstanding Service. Online stories about the recipients may be found at this [link]. Pictured here are other members of the IU South Bend family in attendance, including the Chancellor and EVCAA.