Dear Colleagues,

I imagine you are as relieved as I am that we will no longer be bombarded with interminable political ads. Whatever your feelings on the election outcomes, we can rejoice that we live in a society where each citizen can exercise without fear or intimidation his/her right to vote. For several years now the American Democracy Project has been the linchpin for student education and engagement in democracy and the electoral process. The ADP is an interactive educational activity that builds on the cornerstone of our general education curriculum, the formation of active and responsible citizenship. Throughout this electoral season, ADP hosted on campus candidate debates, formed group discussions after each of the major nationally televised debates, and registered voters. This active engagement of ADP is another example, among many, how IU South Bend fulfills its mission as a steward of the public trust. What has been most gratifying to me as chief academic officer is ADP’s role in providing to the public non-partisan opportunities to be informed about the candidates’ views on key issues. In our community, Elizabeth Bennion’s name is synonymous with political discourse, whether it is as moderator of debates or as a commentator. This political season has given me a good excuse to feature ADP and its centrality to our educational mission in this month’s newsletter.
For several years a group of faculty and administrators has met to read and discuss a book on higher education. This semester, the EVCAA Reading Group has been reading *What Is College For? The Public Purpose of Higher Education*, edited by Ellen Condliffe Lagemann and Harry Lewis. With rising costs and student indebtedness, the timeliness of this topic is ever more apparent. Legislators, businesspeople and the public increasingly are questioning the value of a college degree. The lead article of the September 21st edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “What is your college degree worth?” appears to delegitimize the value of certain academic disciplines that potentially have low earning power. And with the added burden of student debt after graduation, doubts intensify as to the net worth of certain degree programs. Indisputably some disciplines provide higher starting salaries. But should students choose a career path solely on earning potential? Although I firmly believe that the costs of higher education measured against potential earnings should be carefully considered by students and their families, I feel equally as strong that costs should not be the only measure in determining which major subject to pursue. I remember my mother’s advice to me as I struggled to pick a major as an undergraduate, “Study what you enjoy and success will follow.” So I studied languages: French, Spanish and German. Her advice withstood the test of time and has shaped my professional and personal life. And now after forty-eight years in higher education as student, faculty member and academic administrator, a panoramic assessment of that time affirms that I’ve done alright. My life has been full and satisfying. It’s a story that I am fond of telling and re-telling as I encounter young students who struggle with what to study. I still hold to the ideal, perhaps naively, that students in choosing a career path will be motivated by altruistic reasons that transcend money. I fear though the *Chronicle* article points in the opposite direction. More than a soupçon, the article appears to re-affirm that dollars invested in less lucrative fields of study are wasted. While it might seem practical to pursue majors that provide a higher consumer threshold, there is a false assumption that income trumps other factors in determining success or a life well-lived. Throughout all of history, it has been demonstrated that personal satisfaction and happiness can be achieved in less lucrative or prestigious careers like social worker, school teacher, fire fighter, auto mechanic, dock worker, and carpenter, to name a few. Through their undergraduate education, students in their learning should understand and appreciate the value and dignity of all work, and that whatever profession they choose, they can make singular contributions to society.

This leads me then to a recent presentation by Biniam Tesfamariam and Hossein Hakimzadeh to the Academic Cabinet and the Enrollment Management team on student retention. Their project, *A Call for Early Identification and Intervention for At-Risk Students*, investigated the major factors driving student attrition with recommendations for intervention strategies. Based on demographic data gleaned from high school background, current economic situation and student performance from IU Retain, the study found, not surprisingly, two major determinants affecting retention: student performance in the first semester as measured by risk count and first semester GPA, and economic background. Considering these factors, they found that when students scored below a C in a class, or in aggregate, below 2.0, the odds of persisting to the next semester diminish substantially. They also found a strong correlation between success and unmet financial need, the difference between need and financial aid. Institutionally, these data tell us that in order to ameliorate our retention rates, we need to focus attention on our curriculum and programs to determine if indeed we are serving first year students well. We know that advisors are critical to student success, and unfortunately, there is inequality regarding advisor accessibility; and this must be corrected. NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) data indicate that students want more contact with their advisors. We also know that the first year experience has the potential to get students more speedily connected to the intellectual rigors of a college experience. Early assessment of this year’s inaugural *Reacting to the Past* affirms that students were actively engaged in their learning experiences. A committee of faculty and students has already begun to strategize the incorporation of a first year experience for all students. The report further recommends the hiring of a retention director to coordinate existing university-wide retention efforts.

Related to the above referenced data is timeliness to degree. Far too many of our students do not graduate within four years. A team of administrators from Academic Affairs and Students Affairs recently visited Indiana State University in Terre Haute to learn more about their four year graduation pledge to students. It’s widely known that the State Legislature and the Indiana Commission for Higher Education have placed financial incentives for public universities to increase retention and graduation rates. There is considerable pressure to restructure curriculum and student services to expedite graduation within a four-year timeframe. What we learned from our colleagues at Indiana State will serve as a template in developing our own four-year pledge to students. More of what we propose will be forthcoming.

In the interim, I wish for you and your families a Happy Thanksgiving! In spite of the daily challenges we face, we have much to be grateful for in our academic community. And since we celebrate Veterans’ Day in November, I want to be sure to thank the veterans among our faculty, staff and students, and all those who are currently serving in the military.

Sincerely,

Alfred J. Guillaume, Jr.,
Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

"...we need to focus attention on our curriculum and programs to determine if indeed we are serving first year students well."

EVCAA News • November 2012 • Indiana University South Bend
School Activities and Events

The Ernestine Raclin School of the Arts continues its many events. In the past week alone the campus’ first ballet was performed with Swan Lake, preceded by John Mayrose’s composition Amelia performed by the IU South Bend Philharmonic. In addition, world-renowned mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves [link] performed a recital as well (pictured at left with EVCAA Alfred J. Guillaume, Jr.). By all accounts both events were huge successes and well attended.

The Judd Leighton School of Business and Economics sponsored a Business Outlook Panel on November 10th. The panel featured economic and business experts from IU Bloomington’s Kelley School of Business as well as IU South Bend’s Leighton School. The panel made its 2013 economic forecast. News coverage may be found at [link link2]. A South Bend Tribune photo appears below (left to right: IUB’s Charles Trzcinka and Ellie Mafi-Kreft and IUSB’s Rob Duceff). The Leighton School will also conduct an ethics in business panel on Friday, November 16 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm in the SAC that includes university and community business leaders. Lunch served; RSVP to bajwilli@iusb.edu by November 12.

Announcements

The Deans’ Seminar Series schedule for 2012-13 has been posted. Please visit the [link] to see the full schedule and abstracts of the presentations for the academic year. The next seminar will take place on November 16 when Bobby Meyer-Lee, Associate Professor of English, will present on “Sailing on the Roiling and Murky Waters of Literary Value.” As is the custom, drinks will be available and attendees are welcome to bring their lunch.

Nominations for the Eldon F. Lundquist Award, IU South Bend’s highest faculty award, are due to the EVCAA’s office by Monday, November 19. The award is “made to a meritorious faculty member of Indiana University, South Bend Campus, who has exhibited excellence in teaching, scholarly or artistic achievement, and diversified relevant service, preferably in community service throughout the Michiana region.” [link]

Application materials for associate faculty for Merit Status are due to the unit’s chairperson by January 11, 2013. This status recognizes professional commitment to IU South Bend and provides benefits to the faculty member. [link]

Kudos

Congratulations to Ganesh Vaidyanathan (BUSE) on the September publication of his text book Project Management: Process, Technology, and Practice by Pearson Prentice-Hall.

A student spotlight on IU South Bend undergraduate Edmond Irankunda of Rwanda appeared in the IU electronic publication inside IU in the October 24, 2012 issue [link]. Edmond is a nursing student and is active on campus. The feature discusses his efforts and experience at IU South Bend as a student as well as a brief interview.

Three of Ilan Levine’s (PHYS) experiments are featured in the magazine symmetry and presented for a general audience. See the article “Voyage to SNOLAB” at [link].

IU South Bend Research Award Lecture

On Wednesday evening, November 14, Professor of French Lesley Walker will present her Research Award Lecture in Wiekamp Hall room DW 1001 at 7 pm. The title of the lecture is “When Girls Read Rousseau or a Rake’s Progress.” The poster for the award lecture may be found at this [link].
Elizabeth A. Bennion, Associate Professor of Political Science and Campus Director of the American Democracy Project, has been working long hours this fall, often staying on campus until 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. What would keep a professor here so late, so often? For Bennion, it’s the opportunity to educate and engage students, and the local community, in the election process.

Working with student volunteers from the non-partisan Political Science Club, and work-study intern, SGA Secretary Matt Kavanagh, from the American Democracy Project, Bennion organized, advertised, and hosted one televised congressional candidate debate, two Convention Watch parties, three live St. Joseph County candidate debates, four presidential debate watch parties, and five voter information sessions: a Times Talk, two election forecasting sessions, and two post-election discussions. The American Democracy Project also hosted six voter registration tables, a seven day classroom registration campaign, and eight voter information tables, reminding people when to vote and how to get information about election rules. The series started on September 17th with a Constitution Day voter registration drive, complete with free popcorn and nachos for those who could complete Constitution-theme crossword puzzles or games. It ended with an Election Night Party in the River Crossing “Lodge” – where approximately 90 students gathered to color their own electoral college maps and share predictions as the results come in.

Bennion measures the success of the series in three ways:

- “The biggest success was the number of people we reached. Our live candidate debates drew 180 people, while our televised debate watch and Election Night parties drew another 375. It was wonderful to see The Lodge filled with students eager to hear and compare the candidates, side-by-side. There was excitement in the air as students reacting to the candidates’ performance and shared opinions with their peers. And, of course, the numbers above do not include people who benefited from our information tables or the 155 people we registered to vote.”

- “A second indicator of our success is the positive media coverage we received for our events. Our events were highlighted in 12 newspaper stories, and 8 stories on the local broadcast news. Outlets covering our events included: South Bend Tribune, Elkhart Truth, The Preface, WSBT, FOX28, WNDU, WNIT, and ABC57.”

- “A third indicator of the importance of our work is our success in attracting donors and supporters. Dining Services was extremely generous in providing pizza and beverages, the Office of Housing and Residence Life provided the ideal space for our debate watch and election night parties. Indiana Campus Compact was generous in providing funding to advertise our events, print event programs and materials, and offer appropriate refreshments to participants. In addition, the IU South Bend Bookstore volunteered the use of their windows to advertise the Election 2012 Event Series. Each of these partnerships was critical to our success.”

Educating voters, building partnerships, and highlighting the important role of the university in our community are all important goals of the American Democracy Project. Bennion believes that all of these goals were furthered by this fall’s Election Series.

With the election concluded, the American Democracy Project is planning expansion in two areas: service learning and global citizenship. The ADP sent a team of seven faculty members to the national Global Challenges Institute in Washington, DC. Bennion is eager to work with the team to expand the ADP’s work to further the institutional mission of preparing globally competent citizens. A grant from IU’s Women’s Philanthropy Council has also allowed the ADP to expand into service learning, through the creation of service learning fellowships and faculty development grants. The IU South Bend’s first service learning fellow, SGA Vice President Lowell Ritter, worked with Bennion to plan to successful service events in September and October. Students gathered on September 15th to celebrate the 9-11 National Day of Service by working at the Unity Gardens. Fifty more students gathered on October 27th for Make a Difference Day, spending their day volunteering at five local agencies.

Bennion encourages all members of the campus community to keep in touch with the American Democracy Project and to enjoy the pictures, news stories, and other highlights by “liking” The IU South Bend Political Science Club and American Democracy Project and Service Learning at IU South Bend on Facebook! This is the best way to stay up-to-date with the ADP news. People can also check out the ADP website (http://www.iusb.edu/ADP), read the all-campus electronic bulletin board, or request to be added to the American Democracy Project email list by emailing Dr. Bennion at ebennion@iusb.edu.

FACEBOOK URLS:
IU South Bend Political Science Club and American Democracy Project http://www.facebook.com/IUSBpolisci
Service Learning at IU South Bend http://www.facebook.com/iusbservelearning

A media log may be found at this [link]. Among the newscoverage:
Five students/volunteers from the ADP/POLS Club were featured in a WNDU story after a live broadcast of a congressional debate. The students were: SGA President Hannah Dill, Service Learning Fellow Lowell Ritter, ADP Intern Matt Kavanagh, POLS Club volunteer Christiann MacLean, and POLS Club Vice President Allyssa Phillip. [link] An additional story from that evening highlighted the absence of one of the candidates from this debate [link]. This was the third time that ADP had participated in the Bi-Annual 2nd District Congressional Candidate Debate and ADP plans to continue its partnership with WNIT in the future as well.

James Smith, Assistant Professor of Political Science, appeared throughout the entire evening on Channel 16 WNDU (NBC affiliate) as the political expert for their election coverage.