Dear Colleagues,

On the eve of perhaps the most historical presidential election in modern times, I reflect once again on the important work that we do daily in the classroom, in the hallway conversations with our students, and in the interactive research and learning experiences we share with them. Thanks to Elizabeth Bennion and the American Democracy Project, there were a number of activities centered on responsibility to vote: debate parties, the celebration of Constitution Day (visit the ADP blog), the voter registration of eighty-eight new voters, speakers for a special forum on Safeguarding Your Vote, and a series of lectures on key issues facing voters.

We have heard repeatedly from the words of the Founding Fathers to the sages of modern times that the preservation of our democracy is dependent on an educated and informed citizenry. The core value of what we do in the teaching of chemistry, philosophy, business ethics, or literature rests with how well we have taught students to think critically and expansively, without pre-conceived bias, about what they are learning. We teach our students to do research and to weigh with appropriate analysis and judgment the importance of their discovery, and afterward to be confident to express persuasively in writing and in discourse.
their informed and reasoned opinion. The tools we give them develop into life-long assets that perpetuate inner growth and self-realization. Ours is a sacred trust between professor and student.

I was reminded of this trust a few days ago when a non-traditional student, aged forty-two came to see me at the encouragement of one her professors. She mentioned to me that as a strictly conservative Christian woman, she felt increasingly uncomfortable in the university’s liberal environment. She mentioned that there was little tolerance and acceptance of her conservative views. But, because she understood that a university degree would provide more opportunity for her to improve her life, she felt she had no other options and elected to stay. I was saddened by her story; I do not want any student, conservative or liberal, to feel intimidated because of what they believe. It was a teachable moment; we talked at length about the purpose of higher education, about the journey of discovery, learning and self-growth. As we neared the end of our conversation, she seemed to understand that the learning process involves reading and learning that may challenge core beliefs, and that what is learned may be uncomfortable. Ultimately the growth process for her is not that her conservative views are wrong or right, but that her core beliefs are reached through informed and reasoned judgment. One of the lessons of higher education is teaching students that living in a democracy requires all views to be acknowledged and respected without fear that core beliefs will be endangered.

If you haven’t visited the “Writing on the Wall,” tableau that was in the Grille until recently, I encourage you to view it on the second floor of the Associates building. There is still time to express in writing or pictures what democracy means to you.

The Assessment Committee sponsored eight faculty members’ attendance at the Assessment Institute in Indianapolis. Pat Henry, Jill Bryant, Elisabeth Bennion, Mike Darnel, Alan Larkin, Deidra Turner and Donna Pandori represented a wide range of departments and offices on campus. In addition to attending, Hossein Hakimzadeh, Lynn Williams and Robert Batzinger presented information on the IU-Retain system they developed for identifying at-risk students.

- Pat Henry, a long-time member of the assessment committee, especially appreciated the pre-conference session led by Barbara Walvoord. The mantra she came away with was, “Start with what you are doing; figure out what works and does not; and, use the findings to improve learning by acting on the findings.” She also affirmed the idea that, “you do not need to use prepackaged tools to gather good data on how your students are doing.”
- Alan Larkin, an admitted novice in the area of assessment, responded enthusiastically to a number of the sessions he attended. “Like many college professors I have never had to take a course in how to teach, or even thought much about issues like assessment and accreditation.” In addition to a crash course in assessment, he came away with ideas that he immediately put to use in his classroom.
- Jill Bryant returned inspired to explore developing evaluation tools for courses in her program. Many attendees mentioned how energized they were. “Attendance at this Institute renewed my enthusiasm for assessment and reaffirmed my belief that if it is used to increase student learning the effort it takes is worthwhile.” If you’re new to assessment, and would like an introduction to the topic, or if you’d like to catch up on the latest techniques and scholarship, put the Assessment Institute on your calendar for next year!

Vice President Patrick O’Meara, International Programs and Education, from IU Bloomington, recently visited the campus to meet with faculty and administrators about President McRobbie’s strategic initiatives in international education. As a follow-up to that meeting, Scott Sernau, director of international programs at IU South Bend had meetings with the International Advisory Committee and other interested faculty to discuss the new opportunities available for international travel and research. He recently posted the following information on the campus bulletin board. If you missed these meetings, visit the International Affairs site: www.indiana.edu/~ovpia. Buttons right under the changing photo on that page link to the IU International Strategic Plan, to the IU Newsletter (featuring, among other things, overseas scholarships), the just posted 2008 International Factbook (including info on IU South Bend programs and international students), and the new line of grant opportunities. For updated information on our IU South Bend 2009 lineup of overseas study programs visit http://www.iusb.edu/~sbintl/study.shtml.

Applications are being accepted for the Director of UCET (job description). Jenni Klein will be completing her second third-year term at the end of this academic year and will be retiring in December of ’09. Under Jenni’s leadership, UCET has matured into unequivocally the finest teaching excellence center in the Midwest. I encourage all tenured faculty to consider this important faculty leadership position.

If you haven’t yet visited the fifth floor of the Schurz library, I encourage you to do so. In the atrium, there is a photographic display of Susan Moore’s students from their Street Photography class in Florence, Italy last year. This event is an inaugural monthly display of student and faculty art thanks to the collaborative leadership of Michele Russo, Dean of Library Services, and Marvin Curtis, Dean of the Raclin School of the Arts.

Kudos to Alexander “Lexo” Toradze for a spectacular performance with the London Symphony Orchestra. In attendance was Dean Marvin Curtis who reported that Lexo had four standing roaring ovations.

Kudos to Asghar Sabbaghi whose book, Economics of Water Resources (Springer), was translated in Chinese.

John McIntosh, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, will conduct a full-day workshop on Elder Suicide sponsored by the Owensboro Regional Suicide Prevention Coalition, Inc., in Owensboro, Kentucky on November 6. The annual conference event will be held on Brescia University’s campus.

Sincerely,

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

---

Award/Grant Opportunities:

The deadline to have nominations for the IU South Bend Distinguished Research Award to Erika Zynda (ezyn@iusb.edu, A1246C), Coordinator of Contracts and Grants has been extended until 11/14/08. Eligibility and procedures may be found at http://www.iusb.edu/~acadaff/awards/research.html.

The deadline for Faculty Research Grants and Curriculum Development grants has just passed, but the R&D Committee is still accepting applications for Seed Grants <http://www.iusb.edu/~sbres/randd/seedgrant.html> and Research Project Initiation Grants <http://www.iusb.edu/~sbres/randd/RPIG.html>. More information is available from Erika Zynda, ezynda@iusb.edu.

Grants for Graduate Students: The Graduate Student Research, Service, and Leadership (RSL) Grant Program is a competitive funding program for full- or part-time graduate students that provides support for research, service, or leadership projects. Details about the RSL grants as well as the Graduate Travel Grant Program may be found at http://www.iusb.edu/~graduate/graduategrant.shtml.

---

Deans’ Seminar

The third Deans’ Seminar of the year will be held, Friday November 21st at noon in the UCET Classroom. Julie Elliott, Assistant Librarian, will make a presentation entitled "Reading Promotion in Academic Libraries" in which she will discuss her research on reading promotion in college libraries. As always, drinks will be available and please feel free to bring your lunch. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Future Dean’s Seminar Dates

February 20, 2009 - Hayley Fraysland
March 27, 2009 - Julio Hernandez
April 17, 2009 - Rolf Schimmrigk

---

All staff and faculty are invited to attend the premiere showing of the new DVD - “Divided Waters: Healing a Community’s Past.” The DVD will be shown at 9 a.m. Friday, November 14 in Wiekamp 1001. The DVD tells the story of why the Natatorium project is so important to the South Bend area. Coffee and cookies will be served. If you have questions, or if there is a group that you would like to show the DVD to, please contact Dina Harris, Diharris@iusb.edu, or 520-4131.

---

Finding the Unseeable: THE HUNT FOR DARK MATTER

Ilan Levine • Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy • IU South Bend

7 pm • November 18 • Wiekamp 1001

The 2008 Faculty Research Award Presentation

---

VCAA News • November 2008 • Indiana University South Bend