

Synergia

1. The interaction of two or more forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects.

VOL. 27, No. 4

Newsletter of Faculty Development • University of St. Thomas

April-May, 2009

THE HUMAN DIVERSITY REQUIREMENT AT UST

*By Members of the Human Diversity Review Committee**

Thirteen years after the decision to add a Human Diversity (HD) requirement to the core curriculum, many stakeholders still do not understand this requirement despite repeated assertions of its value and of institutional support for its mission from a variety of sectors throughout the university. As members of the Human Diversity Review Committee (HDRC), we hope to both clarify and update our colleagues on this important aspect of our core curriculum.

In March of 2008, the Faculty Senate approved changes to the HD requirement in order to broaden and strengthen this aspect of the core curriculum. On March 17, 2009, the Faculty Senate reaffirmed the importance of including power and privilege as an HD course criterion. Besides the inclusion of power and privilege, other changes impact the areas of inquiry including expanding the number of possible areas from five to seven and requiring that a course address at least two areas instead of focusing on just one.

Areas of inquiry under the new version include race and ethnicity, gender, religion, social class, sexual orientation, disability status, and geopolitical status. This means that a course such as Sociology 251 (Race and Ethnicity) will need to add an additional area of inquiry to continue to be listed as a course meeting the HD requirement.

For many courses, this will not be a difficult adaptation because course content already includes more than one area of inquiry. For example, many sociology classes examine the intersection between race/ethnicity, social class, and gender. Music 130, Introduction to World Music, easily integrates both race/ethnicity and geopolitical status by examining music as social ritual in the context of several non-Western cultures. The course description for Psychology 205, Psychology of Women, discusses sex roles as well as global women's issues.

Results from the Human Diversity Requirement Pilot Survey conducted in 2006-2007 reveal that students were much less likely to agree that their HD courses challenged their attitudes on either sexual orientation or disability when compared to gender, non-Western cultures, or race/ethnicity. We encourage interested faculty to

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develop courses in these areas of inquiry. Electronic forms and information on the HD requirement are readily accessible to all full-time faculty members through Blackboard.

By voting to accept the recommendation of the Core Curriculum Task Force, the 2008 Faculty Senate affirmed that the treatment of structures of power and privilege is central to the requirement, but then asked the HDRC to clarify the following: "... considers ways in which individual preconceptions, stereotypes, and assumptions affect understanding of issues related to diversity. In addition, the course addresses ways in which power and privilege operate at the institutional/systemic level" (2008-2010 University Catalog). In response to this request for clarification, the

(Cont. on next page)

HDRC revised the language as follows: "... considers ways in which preconceptions, stereotypes, and assumptions held by a particular individual, as well as that individual's position within structures of privilege, affect understanding of issues related to diversity. In addition, the course addresses ways in which power and privilege operate at the institutional systemic level."

This language clarifies the distinction between individual attitudes, beliefs, preconceptions, or stereotypes and systems of privilege that operate at an institutional or societal level. A course must address both the individual and systemic levels. For example, a course that discusses race would not only examine individual attitudes and prejudice but the systemic context that created and fostered those attitudes. The analysis of power and privilege at both the individual and systemic level is a necessary component of having a meaningful human diversity requirement.

Often we are asked by both students and faculty members why courses that explore difference cannot count towards the requirement. Quite simply, diversity is much more than experiencing difference. Black feminist writer bell hooks writes about the "fascination with difference that white people have collectively expressed openly (and at times vulgarly) as they have traveled around the world in search of Other and Otherness" (*Belonging: A Culture of Place*, 89).¹ For students to experience difference without encouraging them to analyze and reflect on the structures of power in

which that difference is often produced leaves out the intellectual and ethical dimensions that are crucial to this requirement, and threatens to reduce it to a kind of touristic voyeurism that reinforces the very problems (racism, sexism and the like) that the HD requirement was instituted to address in the first place. We believe though that the Catholic mission of St. Thomas requires us to do more than just to discuss or experience difference.

The centrality of the study of human diversity to a liberal arts education is articulated in the 1996 Introductory Statement from the Working Group to Develop Criteria for the Human Diversity Requirement:

It provides vantage points for reflection on our own experiences, beliefs, and practices. It forces us to confront instances of oppression, and to recognize that the experiences, beliefs, and practices of various peoples and cultures have been at times misrepresented or underrepresented in academic discourse and in the discourse of American society. It helps us make the world more just, more peaceful, and more harmonious.

This same statement also outlined its significance for a Catholic education:

Following the radical call of the Gospel, the Church demands justice for the vulnerable and for the economically, socially, and politically oppressed.

Citing *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, it argues that Catholic universities must

"become more attentive to the cultures of the world today" and to realize that various diverse cultures provide "a wealth for the whole of the human family."

The HD requirement serves the mission of the University of St. Thomas by helping "students to be morally responsible leaders, who think critically, act wisely and work skillfully for the common good." We appreciate the work of the many faculty members who teach courses that meet this requirement and encourage other faculty to consider doing so as well. Please contact any member of the HD committee for more information.

*The Human Diversity Review Committee:

Co-chairs: Sherry Jordon
(Theology) and
Lisa Waldner (Sociology)
Chris Kachian (Music)
Andy Scheiber (English)
Heather Shirey (Art History)
Buff Smith (Sociology)

¹hooks, bell. *Belonging: A Culture of Place*
www.amazon.com/Belonging-Culture-Place-bell-hooks/dp/0415968151/ref=pd_bbs_12?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1237409536&sr=8-12. 2008 Routledge.



SUMMER EVENTS CO-SPONSORED WITH FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Make Writing Across the Curriculum Happen at UST!

June 22-26
9 a.m.-noon

- For faculty (not English) teaching core courses at the 100/200 level or any courses at the 200/300 level.
- Stipend: \$500
- Deadline to apply: **April 6, 2009** email Pat Alexander (pmalexander)
- Questions: Contact Erika Scheurer, WAC Director (ecscheurer)

Are you interested in infusing writing into your courses more effectively and efficiently? Apply for the Writing Across the Curriculum Faculty Development Seminar.

Led by Dr. Chris M. Anson, nationally-recognized WAC specialist

Save the date: July 14!

Challenges of the Faculty Career for Women: Success and Sacrifice

A retreat for UST men and women

Based on the book of the above title, edited by Maïke Ingrid Philipsen, this retreat will allow participants to discuss challenges they have faced at UST and strategize solutions. The book of essays is divided into three sections: early, middle and late career faculty. The retreat will give faculty an opportunity to discuss specific issues they have faced with their peers. In the afternoon, we will strategize ways to build mutual support among faculty in the three stages. Participants will get a complimentary copy of the book and lunch will be provided. Enrollment will be limited. Watch your email for registrations forms this month!

Sponsored by Faculty Development and the Luann Dummer Center for Women

CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES SEMINARS

The Center for Catholic Studies is sponsoring two faculty seminars this summer.

The first, *Religion in the Post-Soviet World: Burdening Heritage and Promising Prospects*, will be a week-long seminar on the situation of the Church in the nations of the former Soviet Union, with a particular emphasis on Ukraine. The seminar will be directed by Myroslav Marynovych, Vice Rector of the Ukrainian Catholic University and founder of its Institute of Religion and Society. He has been active in Ukrainian affairs since 1975, when he became a member of the Helsinki Watch Group that

monitored human rights abuses in Soviet Ukraine. In 1977, he was arrested and sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment in a labor camp and 5 years of exile. He was rehabilitated in 1991. The seminar will be held from 9 a.m. - noon on June 8-12.

The second, *Catholic Poets Down Under*, will a two-day seminar on two Australian Catholic poets, James McAuley and Les Murray. The seminar will be directed by Stephen McInerney, Lecture in Literature at Campion College, Sydney, the only Catholic Liberal Arts College in Australia. The seminar will be held from 9 a.m. - noon, June 22-23.

Details on each seminar are available on the world-wide web at: <http://courseweb.StThomas.edu/KWKemp/CSFSS>.

Each seminar will be open to faculty from all departments in the university. There is a stipend of \$500 for the week-long seminar and \$200 for the two-day seminar.

Interested faculty should write to Kenneth W. Kemp (KWKemp) by **April 6**. A selection of participants will be made from among the applicants on that date. Late applicants will, of course, be included if space is available.



TEACHING WITH CLICKERS

Amy Verhoeven (Biology)

I used student response cards (“clickers”) for the first time this year in a large introductory biology course (80 – 90 students). I found them extremely helpful in teaching such a large class. At first I used them primarily to gauge my students’ level of understanding of topics we were covering. After talking about the topic, I asked them a question to determine their comprehension of the concepts. This was extremely effective in both forcing me to stop and evaluate their understanding more frequently than I’d done before, and in providing me with a more accurate snapshot of the overall class understanding, compared to monitoring only the few students that always answer questions. It’s also great for the students to see how their level of understanding compares with others in the class.

Later in the semester I started using clickers to quiz the students

on material they were supposed to read prior to coming to class. Even though quizzes were worth just a few points, the overwhelming majority of students felt that these quizzes were helpful in forcing them to keep up with the material and therefore improving their performance in the course. It also helped me immediately identify areas we needed to spend more time on in class.

*Carol Bruess
(Communication and Journalism)*

In COJO 111, a class in which we have an average of 100 students, clickers have been an excellent method of immediately and swiftly giving paperless quizzes. And with the swipe of a few keys, all 100+ grades are instantly uploaded to Blackboard. Slick.

We have also used clickers to measure students’ opinions and thoughts on key topics; “clicking in” allows everyone to have a *voice* without necessarily having to speak. One of the greatest benefits is allowing students to anonymously

weigh in on *difficult* topics; so far we’ve seen deeper and more interesting conversations because all students can instantly weigh in *and* assess how their experiences or ideas compare with their peers. Last semester, for instance, during a lecture on power and privilege, we polled students on a key but delicate question: “Because of my race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation, I have felt like ‘the other’ at some time in my life.” Agree or disagree? A few seconds passed and a bar graph appeared boldly on the large screen. Over 90% agreed. We advanced to the next clicker-question and watched as the entire class responded, in mere seconds: “In my life, I have benefited the most from the unearned assets that stem from my: a) race or ethnicity, b) gender, c) socioeconomic status, or d) sexual orientation.” Interesting. The results are slightly different than we would have guessed. Our discussion has the powerful jump-start we were looking for.

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UPCOMING APPLICATION DEADLINES FOR FACULTY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Note that deadlines are 4 p.m. on dates below. Late applications are not accepted. All proposals must be emailed by 4 p.m. of the designated day to palexander@stthomas.edu. Please see the FDC website for instructions and application forms, at www.stthomas.edu/fdc.

Faculty Partnership: April 15 for Summer

Partnership-in-Learning: April 15 for Summer

Distinguished Visitor Grant: One month prior to visit until May 1

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK ...



*Sue Chaplin (Faculty
Development Director,
Biology)*

Trying to stay up with the students...

There is no doubt in my mind that students are more facile with new communication technology than I am, but every now and then I surprise them with a new twist they haven't heard about or tried. Recently, I was reading an article in the Teaching Professor on how to turn cell phones into a modified "clicker", i.e., student response tool. Why not – they obviously have them on while they are in class anyway.

The www.PollEverywhere.com website allows you to build individual polls (questions) with a variety of multiple choice or written responses, have the students respond by texting their answers to a special number designated by

PollEverywhere, and then show the results in live time as they respond. Furthermore, the website allows you to save your polls (questions) as a PowerPoint slide show, or insert them into an existing slide show, much like the clicker software does.

Students can use the web browsing function on their smart phones to "vote" instead of texting if they wish. The streamlined software is extremely easy to use and the service is completely free for those wishing to poll audiences of fewer than 30 (there is a graduated fee for larger audiences). PollEverywhere gives you a graph of results and individual (but anonymous) answers to the free response questions. The significant limitations to using this technology are the dependence on students having cell phones with unlimited texting capability, internet access in the classroom, and time to conduct a survey that is quite a bit slower than the commercial student response systems (e.g., Turning Technology).

Another innovation I recently learned about is Google Docs. The creative people at Google are famous for turning a problem on its head, and they have come up with a solution to the frustrations of students working on collaborative

assignments (or even committees working on collaborative documents). Rather than emailing updated versions of a document to each other generating countless versions of the same document, Google Docs creates a URL for the one document on which everyone works, and sends an email to the contributors when the document has been revised or updated by any one of them, saving each version as it is submitted. Sharing the document with the instructor allows that person to check on which students are doing specific work on the project, and the quality of the contribution each student is making. Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, and PowerPoint slide presentations can all be shared on Google docs, and the set-up is incredibly easy. Set up a free account at www.google.com, and you're off and running. Google has even prepared a two-minute YouTube video to illustrate how to use it: www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRqUE6IHTEA.



Synergia is published by The Center for Faculty Development, University of St. Thomas.

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The lobby area and resource room of the Center will be open from 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. M-F. Please stop by!

The opinions expressed in articles in Synergia are not necessarily those of the Center for Faculty Development.

INVITING INTERESTED FACULTY...



By Cynthia Fraction
(McNair Scholars
Program)

The central and distinguishing feature of an [MIT] education is that it incorporates research, academics and community into an education that is greater than the sum of its parts...the higher education of the future must go beyond classroom learning.

*Dr. Richard Light, Professor, Harvard
Graduate School of Education*

I want to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful faculty at the University of St. Thomas who served as faculty mentors to students in the McNair Scholars Program this past year.

It is with sincere pleasure that I serve as the Assistant Director of the University of St. Thomas McNair Scholars Program under the direction of Dr. Lawrence T. Potter. The McNair Scholars Program is designed to work with students on college campuses identified as future leaders and scholars in their fields. This prestigious program helps students pursue graduate education in multiple fields of study, engaging in many scholarly activities while being closely mentored by a faculty mentor as they learn the fundamentals of advanced research.

Faculty are the foundation of student learning on any college campus. The endless dedication and support shown by faculty in academic programs like a McNair

Scholars Program is an invaluable experience. As a result of the program activities and faculty mentorship that students received this year, many are presenting at national and international scholarly conferences. Some will engage in summer research opportunities at major research institutions, such as the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Other students have received admission to graduate schools, such as UC Berkeley and the University of Washington, with one admission directly into a Ph.D. program at the University of Minnesota.

As we gear up for a new year we look forward to once again working with faculty and the outstanding students they teach. We invite you to visit the McNair Scholars Program website for more information about the program www.stthomas.edu/diversity and to hear student testimonies about their experiences. We are always interested in talking to students who might be interested in becoming scholars and faculty who would like to mentor them.

Special thanks to UST Faculty:

John Abraham
Tonia Bock
Father Jean Pierre Bongila
Mark Felton
Jean Giebenhain
Sally Hunter
Todd Lawrence
Nekima Levy-Pounds
Amy Muse
Buffy Smith
Roxanne Prichard
Mary Reichert

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."

Malcolm X

Research Grants Funded for 2009-10

John Abraham – Engineering
Bernard Armada – COJO
Renee Buhr – Political Science
Dobrina Georgieva – Finance
Steven Hipp – School of
Divinity
Lily Hwa – History
Adam Kay – Biology
Matthew Kim – Economics
Clinton Lanier – Marketing
David Todd Lawrence – English
Marie Lopez del Puerto –
Physics
Michael O'Donnell – COJO
David Penschansky – Theology
Luz Saavedra – Economics
Buffy Smith – Sociology and
Criminal Justice
Magda Stolarska – Mathematics
Bob Werner – Geography
Elizabeth Wilkinson – English
Miriam Williams –
Organization Learning and
Development

University Scholars Grants Funded

Carol Bruess – COJO
Ann Johnson – Psychology
Ray MacKenzie - English

Teaching Enhancement Grants - TBA

INTERNATIONAL INFO

Professional Development and Study Abroad



By *Richard J. Rexeisen*
(Marketing)

One of the highlights and distinct privileges of my professional career has been the opportunity to teach and direct students in our study abroad program. I have also used the opportunity to build a meaningful research stream beginning with the question, “Does study abroad have a measurable impact on student learning outcomes?”

Hammer and Bennett’s (2002) intercultural development inventory (IDI) is used to assess intercultural sensitivity. I also take several measures of ethical and moral reasoning in addition to an instrument designed to measure environmental attitudes. In all cases the instruments have a well-established history of use in the literature. Data is collected pre-departure, at the conclusion of the program and then again four months after the students return home.

Phil Anderson and Leigh Lawton collaborated with me on two articles that were published focusing on the impact of study abroad on the development of intercultural sensitivity. I also collaborated with Jamal Al-Khatib on an article currently under review that focuses on moral reasoning, environmental attitudes and their relationship to cross-cultural sensitivity. Another article was published in collaboration with Rich Sathe that addressed the question of how to assess the economic value of an academic program, and yet another article was

published focusing on the impact of study abroad on environmental attitudes.

While space constraints do not permit much elaboration, I am pleased to report that study abroad does, in most cases, have a significant positive impact on our students. If interested, you can contact me by email (rjrexeisen@stthomas.edu) for the titles of additional articles on study abroad research. Several more articles are in process including the development of a comprehensive model of study abroad that will help to organize and inform future research.

My current research is focusing on the question, “Given what we have learned about learning outcomes, what interventions can be introduced to improve the effectiveness of the study abroad experience?” My goal is to complete the first phase of this research by the spring of 2010. If successful, in addition to likely publication, my research will simultaneously complete two cycles of an assurance of learning program prescribed by AACSB. Admittedly I hope to eventually be able to use this information to improve the global/cross-cultural programming of our domestic curriculum.



SPRING GREETINGS FROM THE FACULTY CENTER FOR ELEARNING

By *Eric Larson (IRT)*

Two decades ago, University of St. Thomas faculty discussed Cardinal Newman’s *The Idea of a University*. At the time, the University of Minnesota’s “Gopher” (a precursor to what we now know as the “World Wide Web”) was a year in the future and the “High Performance Computing and

Communication Act of 1991” was merely a twinkle in Al Gore’s eye.

Twenty years later, how has “teaching with technology” changed? Does it matter that the world’s “intellectual capital” (and humanity itself) is now instantly accessible from a pocket-sized device? What does the faculty-student relationship look like now that it faces no geographic or temporal limits of classrooms and offices?

The Faculty Center for eLearning provides a physical and virtual home to foster these kinds of discussions. Its goal is to provide an environment for conversations about technologies – conversations that move beyond the “mechanics” of Microsoft Word or library databases and instead ask whether you can transform the learning experiences of your students. At the same time, we consider and respect the long tradition of university education that predates any technology beyond chalk and erasers. A course that depends on technologies like Blackboard is not inherently better than one delivered solely in a classroom... but it is different, and today’s students are more and more accustomed to their learning experiences being mediated by some sort of electronic communication.

Watch the Center’s website (www.stthomas.edu/elearning) for details on a series of spring “conversations” about teaching with technology at UST. The agenda is flexible because you, the St. Thomas faculty, need to guide the Center in its activities. Please share your initial reactions in an e-mail to the Faculty Center for eLearning mailbox at fcl@stthomas.edu, or talk directly with a member of the working group (listed at www.stthomas.edu/elearning/about/workinggroup).



FACULTY DEVELOPMENT IN APRIL

The Faculty Development Center is offering or co-sponsoring the following workshops in April. Register for these events by e-mailing Pat Alexander (pmalexander@stthomas.edu) with your interest at least one week prior to the workshops.

Active Learning Techniques

Monday, April 6, 2009
2:30-3:30 p.m.
MOH 417 (MPLS)

Energize your classes with active learning techniques such as CIQ, clickers, buzz groups, newsprint dialogue, critical debate, chalk talk, video, snowballing, spot the error and more.

Led by Dr. Stephen Brookfield, UST Distinguished University Professor, Education.

Discussion on Racism and Privilege

Tuesday, April 7
3:30-4:30 p.m.
MHC 155 (St. Paul)

This workshop is a faculty discussion with Tim Wise, author of *White Like Me: Reflections on Race From a Privileged Son*. The session is co-sponsored with the University Lectures Committee and Multicultural Student Services.

- A “Teaching With Cases” workshop previously scheduled for April has been postponed until fall.



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