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- Nursing program
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*Focus* will inform college stakeholders about College of Arts and Sciences activities and encourage their involvement in the life of the college.*

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Spring/Summer 08
New degree programs offer non-traditional students the education they need

The joy of writing a regular column in Focus is that I never have a lack of good news to spread about the College of Arts and Sciences. One of our most important goals is to attract and retain a well-qualified, high-achieving diverse student body. To this end, we work to design, promote and support attractive, in-demand academic programs, as well as support opportunities for student research and experimental learning.

This past fall, we received news of new degrees approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, including a nursing degree completion program (see p. 5), an undergraduate degree in Religious Studies, and both undergraduate and graduate degrees in Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The Liberal Arts and Sciences degrees will serve as our anchor programs on the ever-expanding Western Illinois University-Quad Cities campus, and will provide attractive educational opportunities to non-traditional students and students transferring from community colleges. Consistent with the WIU values of providing academic excellence and educational opportunity, these degrees will broaden access to a valuable Liberal Arts and Sciences education in Illinois’ second most populous metropolitan area. Those who graduate with either (or both) of these degrees will have a broad perspective in the arts and sciences, as well as a background in one or more cohesive areas of study.

Both degrees are designed to prepare students for a productive life, equipping them with the transferable skills most valued by employers, including critical thinking, cogent and persuasive communication, the ability to analyze situations and synthesize information, and ways to approach and understand issues from a variety of perspectives.

We are working with regional community colleges to provide entering students with educational plans that would guide them through the associate’s degree to the baccalaureate Liberal Arts and Sciences degree.

Western Illinois University’s tuition guarantee program for transfer students provides a great financial incentive for students considering this path. Transfer students who earn an associate’s degree and transfer to WIU the following semester will receive the previous year’s cost guarantee rates. Western was the first university in the state to offer this guarantee, and the only university in the state to include fees and room and board in that guarantee.

We have been preparing for the launch of these degrees for quite a while. Faculty committees developed the proposals, which were considered and approved by the faculty council, provost, president, and WIU’s Board of Trustees before being sent to the Illinois Board of Higher Education for their final consideration and approval. We have also undertaken a strategic reallocation of faculty to the Quad Cities campus to support students in the new degree programs. At this writing, we are completing the searches for two additional faculty to fill positions on that campus.

If you are a non-traditional student – or know someone who is – and are looking for a degree program ideally suited to your needs, I hope you will give us a call.

I wish all of you a happy and safe summer.

Inessa

Photo by Jeff Dodd

Philosophy and Religious Studies chair John Simmons and Dean Inessa Levi.
By Jeff Dodd

The College of Arts and Sciences in December received approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) for its new RN-to-BSN (Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing) degree completion program. Dr. Lea Monahan (see Focus, Fall/Winter 2007, p. 10) came on board in July to lead the newly approved program.

“This degree will add to, and enhance the registered nurse’s basic knowledge of the nursing profession and provide them with the opportunity for career advancement,” Monahan said. “The program, which is a response to a critical shortage of trained professionals regionally and nationally, will be a valuable addition to the College of Arts and Sciences, and Western Illinois University.”

The shortfall of registered nurses could be 340,000 by the year 2020, according to Dr. David I. Auerbach, Principal Analyst of the Health and Human Resources Division of the Congressional Budget Office, writing in the January/February 2007 issue of Health Affairs.

Further, a 2006 study by the Bernard Hodes Group reported in the July 2006 issues of Nursing Management estimates that 55% of the surveyed nurses reported their intention to retire between 2001 and 2020.

Wanda Foster – Director of Nursing at Macomb’s McDonough District Hospital and a member of WIU’s School of Nursing steering committee – is concerned about the long-term shortage of nursing staff both in Illinois and nationally.

“McDonough District Hospital has been somewhat insulated from the nursing staff shortages elsewhere,” she said. “That is attributable in part to our positive work environment and the strong support we show our staff. We have a great retention rate and don’t presently experience the day-to-day shortages other hospitals see. However, our ability to staff over the longer term, say 10 to 15 years from now, is of greater concern. We are looking at potential significant shortages in that time frame.

“MDH has had a long and successful association with Spoon River College’s Associate Degree in Nursing program,” she continued. “We are excited to be a part of WIU’s baccalaureate program and honored to be considered the anchor hospital facility for this program. We welcome those coming into the profession and who are looking for a career path. We see the greatest need for nurses to serve patients at the bedside for 24/7 care.”

College of Arts and Sciences Dean Inessa Levi voiced her gratitude for the work MDH put into the formation of the school.

“In addition to McDonough District Hospital, we thank officials from Carl Sandburg College, Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing (in Quincy), Spoon River College, Graham Hospital School of Nursing (Canton), and John Wood Community College (Quincy),” Levi said. “This has truly been a regional effort. We have strong resources to support the new BSN completion program. This program fulfills the institution’s goal to positively impact our region by meeting the educational needs of our communities.”

Western’s president echoed Dean Levi.

“We are pleased that this new – and much needed – degree program was approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education,” said WIU President Al Goldfarb. “The Bachelor of Science in Nursing fits with the university’s strategic plan goal to enhance academic offerings. We look forward to working with the region’s health care facilities and community colleges to provide this quality academic program to their employees and students.”

Monahan has been busy since IBHE’s December announcement. “We have been recruiting faculty, renovating space and acquiring equipment. We have been working with the Illinois Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education to begin the
Universities, Inc., undergraduate and graduate research symposium at Argonne National Laboratory in Lemont, Ill.

Also, Boley, Milby and Wiewel gave two presentations at the American Physical Society March Meeting at New Orleans, La.

LEE BRICE (History) wrote “Fog of War: The Roman Army in Rome” for Rome, Season 1: History Makes Television, edited by Monica Cyrino (Blackwell Publishing).

AMY CARR (Philosophy and Religious Studies) presented “Enduring Radical Distrust: Sin and Redemption Amongst the Sinned Against” at the American Academy of Religion meeting in San Diego.

DAVID CASAGRANDE and HEATHER McILVAINE-NEWSAD (both Sociology/Anthropology) organized “Immigrants and the Environment” based on their research with immigrants from the Marshall Islands, for the March meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Memphis, Tenn.

MERRILL COLE (English and Journalism) wrote “The Orient of Critique: Ambivalence about the East in Wilde and..."
Western has ‘roundup’ of scholarly conferences

By Sarah Cash

People read “Western” and “roundup” and may think of cattle. But a roundup of ambitious academic conferences hosted by Western this spring promised to boost the College of Arts and Sciences departments’ standing in higher education, contribute to fields of study, and serve the geographic region.

High school and college students, instructors at every level, scholars, artists, plus interesting residents all have had opportunities to inform and enrich their thinking by attending a variety of events.

• 19th Annual Illinois Student Research Conference March 28

Dozens of students from throughout Illinois made presentations at the University Union for this event.

“It is designed to focus on the research effort of undergraduate and master’s-level students,” said conference coordinator Jack Huang, an associate professor of biochemistry at Western.

“Students in all disciplines [are invited],” he continued, “especially in the areas of the biological, computer, mathematical and physical sciences as well as social sciences and humanities.”

A banquet and tour of Currens Hall also were featured.

Since its founding almost two decades ago, the yearly conference has expanded from WIU, Chicago State, Eastern Illinois, Governors State and Northeastern Illinois to virtually all educational institutions in the state.

• 57th Annual WIU/ICTM Conference March 28

This conference – open to math educators, students and anyone interested in learning more about teaching mathematics – always epitomizes the purpose of secondary education and extended studies.

This year’s event, titled “Beauty, Rigor and Connections in Mathematics,” explored how the arts and popular culture can be used to teach mathematics and make concepts easier for students to learn.

Continued on page 9

Gide” for publication in the international, refereed anthology, Indiscretions: At the Intersection between Queer and Postcolonial Theory.

Also, Cole gave a presentation at the Chicago Modern Language Association convention in Chicago in December. He’s been awarded a WIU Summer Stipend grant to conduct research in Berlin.

PETER COLE (History) this winter gave interviews on his book Wobblies on the Waterfront for radio stations in Chicago, New York (twice), Seattle (twice), Kansas City and Champaign, Ill.

TRACY CRUISE and MELANIE HETZEL-RIGGIN (both Psychology) have passed their licensing exams, and are now Licensed Clinical Psychologists.

ROBERTA DiCARMINE (English and Journalism) has had two papers accepted at two international film conferences in Ireland and the United Kingdom. In July, she will discuss “Besieged (1999) and Dirty Pretty Things (2002): A Critique of Race, Identity and Nationalism in European Cinema” at the 9th Annual European Cinema Research Forum at the Dublin Institute of Technology, and she will give a presentation at a media and film conference in Portsmouth, U.K.

DiCarmine also was nominated as a judge for the Frank Capra Award 2008, a contest created by Film International for Excellence in Undergraduate Film Criticism.

Lastly, she presented a paper on the 1996 film Big Night at the 5th International and Multicultural Conference on Food Representation in Literature, Film and Other Arts at San Antonio, Texas, in February.

RUMEN DIMITROV (Mathematics) gave a presentation at the American Mathematical Society 2007 Fall Southeastern Meeting in Murfreesboro, Tenn., in November.

CURT DUNKEL (Psychology) co-authored “Individuation and Parents as People: Measurement Concerns Regarding Two Aspects of Autonomy” for the Journal of Adolescence.

Continued on page 9

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different media sources, particularly a Truncated Icosahedrons CD sculpture that her Web site says makes math concepts “visible, auditory, tangible and purposeful.”

The conference held sessions for teachers at the elementary, middle-school, junior high and high school levels.

**5th Annual Environmental Summit April 2**

Pulitzer prize-winning writer and Save Our Land, Save Our Towns president Thomas Hylton headlined this daylong teach-in co-sponsored by the English and Journalism department and more than a dozen other WIU programs and departments.

WIU faculty breakout sessions included presentations by Jongnam Choi from Geography, and Lisa Barr, Emily Brackman and Bonnie Sonnek from English and Journalism.

The 2008 theme was “Sustainability as a Magnet for Students, Staff and Donors.”

**“... The Road to Understanding Dinosaurs” April 3**

The College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Biological Sciences, and Augustana College cooperated in presenting “The Present as Key to the Past: The Road to Understanding Dinosaurs,” a one-day conference on campus featuring work by WIU and Augustana paleobiological students plus advisers, Matt Bonnan of Western and William Hammer of Augustana.

“Dinosaurs were the most successful land-living vertebrates ever,” said Bonnan, a vertebrate paleontologist. “Understanding their success as living animals involves interpreting their biology and ecology. This requires us to investigate both the biology of their living relatives — reptiles and birds — and to understand the geological processes at work in modern environments.”

**2008 Creative Writing Festival April 14**

The work of students, teachers and a featured writer were celebrated at this half-day festival hosted by Western’s Department of English and Journalism. High school students from the around the area bring their creative writing for a time of peer sharing, workshops and an awards competition. University faculty share their own work and class methods while visiting teachers attend separate workshops.

This year’s featured writer, John Bradley, is a writing professor at Northern Illinois University and is a prominent author and editor. He is the author of two full-length books of poetry — Love-In-Idleness: The Poetry of Roberto Zingarelli and Terrestrial Music — and the prose/experimental novel War on Words. Much of Bradley’s poetry focuses on social issues. He has edited two poetry anthologies, with a third forthcoming. Bradley has also been awarded two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships for poetry and an Illinois Arts Council grant.

**Undergraduate Research Day April 16**

Out-of-classroom learning is the name of the game during this university-wide forum of research and creativity. Faculty-mentored undergraduate students present projects, papers and activities either completed or in-progress, offering up their scholarship experience to the general public. By creating and sharing a poster in the University Union Grand Ballroom or presenting an individual podium session elsewhere in the Union, students earn valuable skills that can be applied to professional development. Other students simply enjoy the academic fellowship gained by being one of more than 100 involved.

Undergraduate advocate Scott F. Grover said in a 2006 Focus, “Research experience is by far one of the most worthwhile ventures that undergraduates can undertake to further their professional and personal goals of continuing graduate education.”

“The College co-sponsors and actively participates in the university-wide Undergraduate Research Day, especially through our Undergraduate Research Grant competition,” says CAS Dean Inessa Levi.

CAS student participation increased 240% from the first one in Spring 2003 to Spring 2007, notes Associate Dean Sue Martinelli-Fernandez.

This year’s URD featured as keynote speaker history alumnus Steven Catania, who was awarded two College of Arts and Sciences undergraduate research awards for his mentored work with Dr. Lee Brice. Catania is a second-year graduate student in history at Loyola University.

“Steve exemplifies the success that is made possible through our college’s commitment to mentored faculty/student research,” Levi adds. “The College of Arts and Sciences is committed to academic excellence and continues to increase undergraduate research opportunities.”

**7th Annual Secondary Science Education Conference April 18**

Gwen Pollock from the Illinois State Board of Education joined eight WIU faculty members and other
scholars in this meeting serving the professional-development needs of high school science teachers.

Sponsored by Western’s Departments of Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Physics, plus the Illinois Science Teachers Association and the Illinois Biology Teachers Association in cooperation with the national Association of Biology Teachers, the all-day conference featured the following WIU professors: Matthew F. Bonnan (Biological Sciences), Jack Huang (Chemistry), Sue Hum-Musser (Biological Sciences), Scott McConnell (Chemistry), Kenneth McCravy (Biological Sciences), Hillary Parks (Biological Sciences), T.K. Vinod (Chemistry), and Jessica White (Sociology and Anthropology).

Sessions ranged from “Bugs, Be Gone!” (on microbiological safety issues) to “Science against Crime” (on the identification of fibers and fabrics by differential staining).

**IHSA Journalism Sectional Competition April 19**

For the first time, Western’s Journalism program hosted an IHSA Sectional contest for the state tournament for high school journalists.

It’s the third year for the statewide competition.

Dozens of students from Central and Northwest Illinois, ranging from Peoria and Pontiac to Rockford and Galena, competed in 16 events, including news writing, newspaper design, editorial cartoons, info-graphics, photography and sports-writing.

WIU undergraduates served as classroom monitors and area professionals were judges.

**34th Annual African Literature Assn. Conference April 22-27**

Abdul-Rasheed Na’Allah, chair of WIU’s Department of African American Studies, said this was a “big deal.” An international conference that moves to different universities each year, ALA’s yearly confer-

from “Fanfare” page 7

EFRAIN FERRER and VIVIAN INCERA (both Physics) co-authored two articles for Physical Review, and were invited to present their research results in a seminar at Brookhaven National Lab at Stony Brook University in New York in November.

Also, Incera and Ferrer received a renewal for the second year of their $60,000 Department of Energy grant.

RICHARD FILIPINK (History) won a College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Mentoring Grant.

DAVID HAUGEN (Philosophy and Religious Studies) co-authored “Hartshorne’s Process Theism and Big Bang Cosmology Revisited” for the Spring issue of Process Studies, and he wrote the entry “First Meeting of the Vienna Circle” for Salem Press’s Great Events From History: The Twentieth Century, 1901-1940.

PENELOPE KELSEY (English and Journalism) spoke as part of a Native American Literature symposium at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, N.Y.

Also, in early April, she gave a presentation at the Prophetstown Revisited conference at Purdue University.

Kelsey’s book, Tribal Theory in Native American Literature: Dakota and Haudenosaunee Writing and Worldviews, is being published by the University of Nebraska Press.

JOONGOL KIM (Philosophy and Religious Studies) gave presentations at the American Philosophical Association Eastern division meeting in Baltimore and at the APA Central Division meeting in Chicago.

BILL KNIGHT (English and Journalism) presented papers at the 2008 Midwestern Conference on Literature, Language and Media in DeKalb, and at the College English Association Annual Conference in St. Louis, where he chaired a panel titled “Propriety, Legitimacy, and the Apocalypse: The Fate of ‘Civilization’ in Popular Culture.”

Also, Knight, who teaches Sportswriting, wrote biographical entries on Major League Baseball players Mark Grace and Jim Thome for Great Athletes, Second Revised Edition (Salem Press).

MARIE-CLAIRE KOISSI (Mathematics) gave a presentation to the Department of Insurance, Legal Studies and Real Estate at the University of Georgia in Athens in February.

WALTER KRETCHIK (History) wrote “Haiti’s Quest for Democracy: Historical Overview” in Capacity Building for Peacekeeping: The Case of Haiti (Potomac Books).

DAVE LANE (Psychology) co-authored an article for Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin.

JEFF LAURENT (Psychology) presented a paper at the 40th annual convention of the National Association of School Psychologists in New Orleans, La.

Also, Laurent received a Best in Track Award at the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research symposium this fall.

VIRGINIA LEONARD (History) presented “The U.S. Navy in Latin America: Cultural Observations of the Herndon-Gibbon Expedition of the Amazon, 1851-1852” at the Association of Third World Studies Conference in Lima, Peru, in November.

JOAN LIVINGSTON-WEBBER (English and Journalism) presented a paper in November at the Midwest Modern Language Association in Cleveland.

Continued on page 11
ROBERT MANN (Mathematics) gave a presentation at the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics (ICTM) 58th Annual Conference in Peoria, Ill., in October.

SUE MARTINELLI-FERNANDEZ (CAS Associate Dean) was an invited panelist on Ethics and Education organized by the Faculty of Philosophy of Milltown Institute, the National University of Ireland in Dublin, in collaboration with the Society for Ethics across the Curriculum.

In addition, Martinelli-Fernandez presented one paper and co-presented another with RUTH KELLEY (Psychology).

ROSE McCONNELL (Chemistry) reports that several chemistry students gave presentation at the 235th National Meeting of the American Chemical Society in New Orleans in April.

Also, WIU students also presented research at the 19th Annual Illinois Student Research Conference hosted this year by WIU in March.

JENNIFER McNABB (History) gave a presentation at the Sixteenth-Century Society Conference in Minneapolis, Minn., in November.

MARK MOSSMAN (English and Journalism) had an article, “The Abnormal Body in Wilkie Collins’ The Moonstone,” accepted for publication in Victorian Literature and Culture.

ABDUL-RASHEED NA’ALLAH (African-American Studies) was a convener at the 34th annual conference of the African Literature Association in April.

BRIAN PEER (Biological Sciences) co-presented five papers at the 125th meeting of the American Ornithologists’ Union in Laramie, Wyo., in August.

Also, Peer co-authored two presentations at the 4th Biennial Australasian Ornithological Conference in Perth, Australia, in December.

Lastly, Peer co-authored an article for Animal Behaviour.

GORDON PETTIT (Philosophy and Religious Studies) gave a presentation at the Iowa Philosophical Association in October.


SHAZIA RAHMAN (English and Journalism) gave presentations at the Modern Language Association convention in Chicago in December and at the British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Conference in Savannah, Ga., in February.

DAVID ROHALL (Sociology/Anthropology) co-authored a chapter in Biobehavioral Resilience to Stress (CRC Press).

SERGEI G. SHARAPOV (Physics) wrote an article for International Journal of Modern Physics, and presented a talk on magneto-optical conductivity of graphene at the international workshop on relativistic dynamics of graphene at the Institute for Nuclear Theory, University of Washington in Seattle in January.

SHARAPOV and IGOR A. SHOVKOYY (also Physics) with two collaborators wrote papers for Europhysics Letters and for Physical Review.

SHOVKOYY co-organized an international workshop on relativistic dynamics of graphene at the Institute for Nuclear Theory at the University of Washington, Seattle.

Lastly Shovkovy in January co-authored an article published in Physical Review.

MOHAMMAD SIDDIQI (English and Journalism) gave a presentation at the 50th anniversary conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France. He also chaired a session at the conference.

Siddiqi also was appointed to the international advisory boards of two refereed journals: the Journal of Media Studies at the University of Punjab in Pakistan, and the Journal of Arab and Muslim Media Research at the University of Northampton in England.

JEANETTE THOMAS (Biological Sciences) co-authored “Marine Mammal Noise Exposure Criteria: Initial Scientific Recommendations” in the journal Aquatic Mammals.

RON WALKER (English and Journalism, retired) has established two graduate fellowships that were given out for the first time this spring. The Ron and Leslie Walker Graduate Fellowships will benefit the graduate program in English.

S’THEMBILE WEST (Women’s Studies) organized a panel, “Icons of Injustice: Persistent Stereotypes of Black Female Bodies,” for the National Council for Black Studies 32nd Annual Conference in Atlanta in March.

CRAIG TOLLINI (Sociology/Anthropology) gave a presentation about WIU student beliefs on science and evolution at the “Evolution: The Perspective from
Global Challenges and Cultural Identity,” reflected by award-winning female authors who offered keynote speeches: Sefi Atta, who won this year’s Wole Soyinka Prize for African Literature, Veronique Tadjo, Niyi Osundare and Tanure Ojaide.

Another notable presence was well-known Nigerian cinematographer Tunde Kelani, who manages Mainframe Film & Television Productions.

- 33rd Annual History Conference
  April 26

Putting “the ‘story’ back in history,” Western’s History Conference this year sought to serve history buffs, professional or not. History and social studies teachers, secondary and college students or avid readers of history all benefited from 12 sessions over an array of topics. Two presentations were “Ballads and Breadlines: The Music of the Great Depression” and “Consumption of the Countryside: Commodifying Nature in Nineteenth Century America.”

Its keynote address was from James H. Willbanks, director of the Department of Military History at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. A Vietnam veteran, Willbanks has written three books, including the 2006 title A Concise History of the Tet Offensive.

Cash is a senior English major from Pekin, Ill.
A FAIR TRADE: 
Anthropology and Sociology students get a buzz raising awareness as well as funds

By Jeff Dodd

When looking for fund-raising activities, student participants in the Western Anthropology and Sociology Club (WASC) did not turn to traditional bake sales and car washes. Instead, they looked within the discipline they study and saw they could raise global awareness among the community they serve as well as money to support scholarships and club activities. Through their efforts, the university community, as well as alumni and friends of WIU, can purchase fair trade coffee and chocolate through WASC.

WASC is made up of students from all departments interested in the study of sociology and anthropology, or who have an interest in applying cultural ideas and theory to their own fields of study. The diversity of WASC membership ensures that not every year will be the same, and that students are continually exposed to new ideas in different areas of study, from business to geography to graphic arts. In particular, the students have found that the university goals of promoting sustainability and highlighting personal responsibility for global issues provided a unifying theme for the group.

“The club saw this as more than a fund raising opportunity,” said Casey Suhling, 22, a senior English and Journalism major and president of WASC. “This is also an awareness raising program about sustainability and fair markets.”

“We want to change the way consumers view consumer goods,” added Krystal Harwood, 23, a senior Forensic Chemistry major and WASC’s vice president. “The Fair Trade movement is not about flocking to cheap products. It is about helping people who help us.”

According to WASC faculty advisor Jess White, visiting assistant professor of sociology and anthropology, the Fair Trade movement in the mid-1900s started selling goods to Americans produced by refugees around the world who were displaced from their homes due to the actions of colonial governments or armed conflict. Though the movement is most widely known for coffee and chocolate, it includes a variety of handicrafts as well. Because of the popularity of Fair Trade Coffee, many roasters and consumers now think about the welfare of coffee workers and work to ensure fair wages for them. Buying Fair Trade is about purchasing products with the producer in your mind.”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

In addition to the socio-economic benefits of Fair Trade coffee, the movement benefits the environment as well. According to the Global Exchange (www.globalexchange.org) a San Francisco, Cali., based human rights organization that promotes global social, economic, and environmental justice, coffee farming originally developed in Ethiopia as a ground group beneath diverse shade trees that provided habitat for wildlife such as birds, butterflies, insects and animals.

“The Fair Trade coffee sold by WASC is organic, shade-grown coffee,” said White. “Coffee doesn’t need continual direct sunlight to grow. Brazil retains forest canopies, which preserve the flora and fauna of the various regions. In agricultural co-ops, individual farmers can plant their crops so as not to clear cut forest for coffee farming, nor do they have to spend the money for large amounts of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Instead, they employ traditional farming methods to produce their crops. These traditional techniques for farming coffee are much better for the environment.”

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

WASC coffee is among the finest available. “The coffee we sell is roasted by the Just Coffee Cooperative in Madison, Wisc., about one week before it is received,” said Suhling. “We have been selling coffee periodically at the University Union and in Morgan Hall. At Valentine’s, we expanded our product line to include Divine chocolate, which was very successful. Other products are also available off-campus sold during special events, like at the Pineapple Inn here in Macomb last fall.”

According to White, the sale of
Religious Studies approved as new CAS major

Beginning this fall, Western will be just the second public university in Illinois to offer a religious studies program, as the Illinois Board of Higher Education in February approved a B.A. in Religious Studies degree.

Approved by WIU’s Board of Trustees last summer, the degree seeks to offer a foundation for understanding culture and enhance the University’s commitment to a liberal arts education.

“Providing pioneering educational and research opportunities is a key mission for the College of Arts and Sciences,” said CAS Dean Inessa Levi. “The degree in religious studies is yet another way for us to provide those new opportunities for our students.”

Several religious traditions will be explored in the 120-semester-hour interdisciplinary major, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, according to John Simmons, chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. Religions’ ties to spirituality, science, violence and other factors also will be featured.

“The majority of religious studies programs in Illinois are offered at private colleges and universities with significantly higher tuition,” Simmons said. “Students in the WIU degree program will benefit from University’s innovative GradTrac and Cost Guarantee programs, which allow students to complete their baccalaureate degrees in four years while paying the same tuition, fees, room and board.

“I’d like to thank Dr. Levi for her vision and support in making this unique educational opportunity a reality for Western undergraduates,” he added.

Save the date to celebrate the big 5-0!

College of Arts and Sciences celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, and invites you to join the fun. On Friday, October 17, the college will host its second annual scholarship fund-raising dinner as part of the celebration.

Last year’s inaugural event attracted more than 140 people to socialize, enjoy the evening and raise almost $7,500.

This year, the dinner begins at 7 p.m. in the University Union on Western’s Macomb campus. The cost is $50 and a portion of the proceeds will go to support scholarships in the College of Arts and Sciences. Participants will enjoy dinner and the lively sounds of the college’s faculty band, “The Endnotes.”

For more information or to reserve your seats, please call us at (309) 298-1828 this summer.

This fall, you’re invited to also join CAS faculty, staff and alumni at noon the day after the scholarship fund raiser – Saturday, October 18 – at “The Right Place” tent for Homecoming 2008 at Hanson Field. “The Endnotes” also will perform before the big game against Indiana State, and many friends, faculty and other familiar faces will be present.

“The Right Place” tent is free and open to the public. Lunch also will be served in the tent, and meal tickets will be available to purchase at the door.

Author’s note: Dr. Jess White also contributed significantly to this article.

"The Endnotes" performing at the 2008 Spring awards ceremony.
New technologies reshaping the modern classroom

‘Clickers,’ other gadgets reach students immersed in MySpace and YouTube

By David Moon

Engaging young adults inside university classrooms can be as challenging as keeping kids’ attention at home. Some say that’s because many of the so-called Millennials – the generation of young people born between 1980 and 2000, following the Gen-X’ers – grew up in a barrage of rapidly moving images via media as varied as TV and iPods, cell phones and an ever-present Internet.

From MySpace to YouTube, however, technology is not just second nature for most of today’s college students. Technological bells and whistles are expected. So the struggle to get and keep students’ interest is helped by innovative technologies exploited on different levels by WIU and the College of Arts and Sciences.

In the last decade, technology has played a progressively larger role in the classroom. Smart Boards, e-mail, online and electronic classrooms, and wireless Internet access (including online scholarly databases such as Lexis-Nexis), all have profoundly changed the educational landscape. Technology can allow more creative and innovative ways to present information to students, faster and almost unhindered access to information for students, and even ways for students and professors to interact remotely.

However, while innovations such as PowerPoint presentations have helped teachers to clarify and streamline lectures, they’ve yet to fully engage the tech-savvy student body inside the classroom, some say.

As a result, attempts are being made to change this.

The advent of podcasting lectures (course casting) – whereby a professor records their in-class lectures and then uploads them to the Internet – means that students who miss important class meetings will still have access to vital information. In fact, they can download it right to their iPods or MP3 players and then be up to speed for the next class. If they don’t understand a point made in the lecture, the students can then e-mail the professor their questions and receive answers prior to the next class.

According to Chad Dennis, Instructional Technology Systems Manager for the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research at WIU, podcasting is fast becoming an integral tool for the classroom.

“I think podcasting has many uses in higher education,” Dennis said. “Podcasting provides anytime/anywhere learning for the student on the go. Students can easily download content from a class they missed due to sickness or listen to the day’s lecture while working out or walking from class to class. I have had one-on-one consultations with faculty who are in the forefront of using this technology. One faculty member has taken to podcasting as a means of getting content to his students as he is recovering from surgery. He has been using a laptop from his bed and is able to continue classes via podcasts. I believe the use of this technology will grow and continue to be a valuable way of delivering instruction.”

But what about real-time in-class feedback and interactivity?

Enter the eInstruction response system in which students use wireless Classroom Performance System (CPS) response pads (clickers) to answer questions posted by their professors. The clickers are connected to the professor’s computer, which can immediately crunch the data input and alter the...
course of the day’s lecture.

It is much like the “Ask the audience” lifeline on the show Who Wants To Be A Millionaire. Teachers either ask a question or embed one within their PowerPoint presentations, and the system records and analyzes the student’s answers – instantly. It can also be used to take attendance, chart progress and cross-reference results.

This lets professors quickly spot weak or problem areas – issues the students are having trouble understanding – and to be able to instantly adjust material to focus on those areas. It also involves all students instead of just the ones who raise their hands.

However, the system is not without its snags. It’s complicated to set up for the typical professor, and students must purchase their clickers and a registration code from a bookstore, which cost students about $60. However, clickers will last them through their entire career at WIU, and they can even sell them back to the bookstore once they’re done with them.

Biology professor Eric Ribbens – who’s been using the clickers in the classroom since last Spring – is adamant about the benefits of this technology and speaks from personal experience.

In an article he wrote for the Journal of College Science Teaching, “Why I Like Clicker Personal Response Systems,” Ribbens notes quantifiable results in his own classrooms. “My biology class got better grades… Overall, my students averaged about 8% higher, and I believe they learned the material better. Attendance increased about 20%, and students seemed to enjoy the course experience more.”

He goes on to note that, “the big impact has not been on them (students), but me. Suddenly I had a large new window into their abilities.”

This window is enabling professors who utilize this technology to truly cater their courses to their respective class bodies, further personalizing their education and also engaging the students, and the potential is great.

But as Peggy West, Instructional Technology Systems Manager, notes, “I think they (clickers) are useful in large lecture-hall situations where there are limited opportunities to facilitate collaborative and student-centered teaching. I don’t think they are as useful in small seminar-type settings where actual discussion, group projects, and collaborative learning techniques are feasible.”

Thus, the clickers have their place.

So, while new innovations are inevitable, such examples highlight the importance of the responsible implementation of new technology, especially when integrating it into the classroom. (See box at right.)

Nevertheless, according to James Schmidt, Associate Dean of Western’s College of Arts and Sciences, the demand for CPS clickers is increasing on campus.

“I’ve had a lot of professors talk about integrating the clickers into their classrooms,” Schmidt said. “We’ve actually settled on a specific model of clicker so that students can use the same one in every class. These clickers use radio frequency, as opposed to infrared (like television remote controls that rely on line of sight), and they work better.”

Schmidt adds, “There is no cost to professors or to the university to implement this technology. And the cost to students is minimal. It’s comparable to a professor requiring an ancillary textbook for the course.”

Moon is a senior Journalism major from Galesburg, Ill.
Concerns about conservation and climate change, sustainable energies and stewardship of resources are increasing, but with new attention comes not just escalating anxiety but rising enrollment in a special WIU program that could help.

The College of Arts and Sciences’ Institute for Environmental Studies (IES) offers students from many disciplines valuable knowledge and career options. The Institute is seeing incredible growth, helped by the leadership of its director, Roger Viadero.

Viadero, a professor of biology and also the president of the national Aquacultural Engineering Society, has been with the department since last year. He says IES has a lot to offer students, with many opportunities.

IES is “a focal point for multidisciplinary scholarship research,” he says, adding that his job and the institute’s goal is to “create opportunities and put groups together.

“The opportunities are endless,” says Viadero. “Skills learned from IES build focus, broaden appeal and are noticed by employers.”

Students from IES go on to find careers in a variety of fields including scientists, engineers, city planners, policy makers, fund raisers and community organizers.

WIU offers a minor in Environmental Studies, attracting students from fields inside and outside the sciences, including English, community health, education, journalism and even the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration.

Viadero is musing about expanding IES’s offerings, anticipating and meeting students’ needs.

IES’s faculty also is excited about program progress – including a recent addition to the WIU campus. WIU received a donation of 77 acres of land located on West Adams Street about 2.5 miles from campus, from Rodney and Bertha Fink, establishing the Rodney and Bertha Fink Environmental Studies Field Laboratory and Conservancy. This land will allow students to research plant and animal life without having to leave the county.

“Now if a professor wants to show his or her students something, they don’t have to drive 45 minutes each way to the Kibbe Life Science Research Station [on the Mississippi River],” Viadero says. The Fink property has about one-half mile of East Lamoine River frontage and the land is protected under three U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation agreements.

“And if students from other departments want to use the land, they can,” he adds. “If an art student wants to sit and paint a picture by a tree, they can.”

IES also is working with the federal and state governments, plus other groups including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District, the U.S. Coast Guard and other stakeholders to create a lasting partnership that can create even more growth and opportunities.

“One of the best aspects to the institute is being new,” Viadero explains. “Nothing is set in stone yet so we can offer students the opportunity to get into the ground level of something that is growing. The flexibility is good, the teaching is high quality, the student-teacher relationships are strong with great personal attention, and many of the field biologists in the program are very well known and have good reputations.”

The environment is increasingly and more obviously important to civilization, so new energy in a fresh program helps keep it strong and vital. Viadero says he’s pleased with the help and support he’s getting from the College of Arts and Sciences and the University at large, and sees a lot of great things in the future – along with a lot of well-prepared students coming out of IES ready to take on the challenges of the planet.

Harmon is a senior journalism major from Keokuk, Iowa.
Fink gift provides Western students with local ecological laboratory

By Darci Shinberger

Rich habitats and varied ecological systems will be available for students and faculty to study as a result of a donation of 77 acres of protected land a couple of miles west of WIU’s campus.

The land – which includes about half a mile of frontage property along the East Lamoine River and is governed by three United States Department of Agriculture conservancy agreements – comes from Rodney and Bertha Fink of Macomb. Rodney was Dean of the College of Applied Sciences, and Bertha was an instructor of health sciences.

The gift sets up the Rodney and Bertha Fink Environmental Studies Field Laboratory and Conservancy, to be managed by the College of Arts and Sciences’ Institute for Environmental Studies (IES).

“The Fink’s gift expands undergraduate research activities, which is an essential component of the College of Arts and Sciences’ mission,” said CAS Dean Inessa Levi. “Students involved in undergraduate research are better prepared for the future, their careers and for graduate programs.”

The diversity of habitats there will provide students from many disciplines, such as biological sciences, geography and geology, with opportunities to work as individuals and as part of multidisciplinary teams, Levi continued, adding to WIU’s educational and research capabilities at the Alice L. Kibbe Life Sciences Station in Warsaw, Ill., and Vishnu Springs, north of Tennessee, Ill.

Rodney joined Western’s agriculture department as an associate professor in 1968. He served as its chair before being named Dean of the College of Applied Sciences in 1974. He retired in March 1992. Bertha, who received her Master’s degree from Western, taught health sciences from 1976 to 1981.

“We purchased this land 20 years ago so it could be preserved for future generations, and Western was in our thoughts when we bought it,” the Finks said in a statement.

“The University has meant a lot to us as a family and has been a big part of our lives. Our four children have Bachelor’s degrees from Western, and one continued and received his Master’s degree from Western as well.

“We’re happy that the land will be used for faculty and student research, and that there will be an area so close to the city limits that remains a preserved natural area;” they added.

The Rodney and Bertha Fink Environmental Studies Field Laboratory and Conservancy also will enhance Western’s environmental awareness and sustainability efforts, said Dan Hendricks, WIU’s vice president of advancement and public services.

“Bertha and Rodney have always had a strong interest in their students and a commitment to undergraduate and graduate programs at Western,” Hendricks said.

“Throughout their careers at Western, the Finks have provided outstanding service to their respective colleges and to the University. We are thankful for their generous gifts that support environmental studies.”

Photo by Visual Production Center

Dozens of unspoiled acres have been preserved by Rodney and Bertha Fink, who donated the land to WIU for study.
Remembering the past, the change

(Editors note: On the occasion of Western marking five decades since its College of Arts and Sciences was founded, President Al Goldfarb’s words are noteworthy. “We are a university to be reckoned with on the national level,” he said this year.

“U.S. News & World Report again ranked us as a top-tier Midwestern Master’s-granting institution. While times have changed, we have remained true to the visions, values and traditions that make us strong.”

Focus called on two of WIU’s living treasures to share a few thoughts about some of those traditions and some of Western’s changes since the late 1950s.

Yan Lwin is a physicist who taught at WIU from 1965 to 2006, and Beth Stiffler is an English teacher who taught at the campus Lab School until 1973, when she went to WIU’s English department, retiring as chair in 1987.)

Beth Stiffler: When we came to Macomb in 1952, the campus of Western Illinois State Teachers College was composed of six buildings. Some 100 faculty taught about 1,500 students. The president, dean of men, and dean of women were the administrators. The mission of the college was to prepare teachers for the public schools, chiefly of Illinois. Western was a “suitcase school” with little entertainment for the students. Drs. Garwood and Morgan, Mr. Simpkins and Rock Hanson all were retired and living in Macomb.

Yan Lwin: In one sense I occupied several seats in different areas of an “opera house” while the play and performance had been in progress. I, along with my colleagues and friends, played the role of the audience [at Western], but also contributed to the ongoing performances. The play is ongoing, improving, facing challenges and, above all, exciting.

When I arrived at this “opera house,” WIU and Macomb, the student population was roughly about one half of the current enrollment. Everyone knew everyone else. Physics, along with chemistry, biology and geography, occupied Tillman Hall. Memorial Hall was the library and it allowed only faculty to enter the area of book stacks.

Stiffler: I taught in the Laboratory School, now Simpkins Hall, where some 350 students participated in a broad and varied curriculum with many extra-curricular activities from pre-school through senior high. They were subjects of education majors from the departments of the college; Laboratory school instructors taught observation classes for these future teachers.

Lwin: My teaching assignment consisted of two courses, one undergraduate course and another graduate course. In addition, I was responsible for three sections of recitations and lab taught by three other instructors. It meant I and my colleagues were teaching full-time, all day, every week each quarter. Also, we were recruited twice a quarter to chaperone student dances and parties at Greek organizations.

Co-eds were not allowed to come to the classroom in their jeans. Faculty were expected to wear their ties and coats. One of my chemist friends, Professor Norbert Goeckner, wore his colorful bow tie or cowboy string tie. Attendance was a must. Everyone stayed in dormitories and very strict curfew hours were observed.

Stiffler: I measure the growth at Western by thinking of our youngest son, who began pre-school in the basement of the Home Management House (now Alumni House) until his high school graduation, the old school having been replaced by a new campus school without windows (now Horrabin Hall).

Historically, the rather quiet, pleasant, interlude during the 1950s and ’60s was interrupted by amazing growth everywhere and unforeseen changes. Suddenly, it was hard to find a place to park on the campus. Buildings, new streets and tall dormitories were sprouting up everywhere. To meet the needs of the increased student enrollment, more staff and faculty were needed. Offerings in the curriculum were increased and changed to meet the needs.

Lwin: In less than eight years, the student population grew to nearly 20,000 from 6,000. The “opera house” had to be enlarged and expanded. The faculty and staff grew. More major disciplines came to exist. New facilities were added. The old golf course area was transformed and Currens Hall and other new buildings were built.

I protested to then-president Dr. Knoblauch, who hired me, that the lack of a library facility in the new plan for the science building and he immediately drew a circle and told the architect, ‘This will be the new library for Currens Hall,’ which gave me a new excitement in 1968-69. Thus the library facility for physics and chemistry is attached to the original, rectangular-shaped building of Currens Hall, unique and very functional.
Stiffler: During their senior year, college students taught regular lab-school classes under the supervision of the instructors. A memorable incident among the many that occurred was during a serious uprising on the campus which was quelled after several days. One morning, a young male college student with whom I worked appeared in my office wearing a black armband. The word of this apparently soon reached the school principal, who appeared at my door with the order that I have the student remove it before going to teach. I told the principal that I would not do this since the students should have the chance to ask the student teacher why he wore it. My student teacher taught his class wearing the armband.

Lwin: When I came to WIU, the number of physics majors was about 100, not counting the students who took physics for their requirements in other majors. WIU had the second largest physics-major enrollment in the state after the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

I served under seven presidents and at least nine deans of the College of Arts and Sciences, [plus] seven or eight provosts and seven chairs of my department before I retired in 2006. I am very optimistic about WIU and the leadership. President Al Goldfarb has initiated many positive changes and has worked tirelessly for WIU’s very good image. Our dean, Inessa Levi, has brought about a very positive change to our College and brought the importance and significance of CAS’ role in this serious venture and popular culture.

That year:
Nuclear fusion is artificially created on January 24.
That March, the first data point on the Keeling Curve is recorded at a Hawaiian observatory, starting the accumulation of measurements that eventually showed an increasing amount of carbon dioxide in Earth’s atmosphere, strengthening the study of global warming.
Modern consumer credit is created by American Express, which introduces a charge card to compete with the Diners Club. The Bank of America soon launches its BankAméricard, which becomes Visa.
The U.S.S.R. satellite Sputnik reenters the atmosphere and burns up; a month later the first U.S. satellite, Explorer I, is successfully orbited.

**The world in 1958**

To more fully appreciate the strides that Western has made since it grew into a full-fledged university in 1958, consider that year’s headlines and popular culture.

The top films are The Defiant Ones, Gigi, South Pacific and Vertigo, and at the Oscars, David Niven wins Best Actor and Wendy Hiller Best Supporting Actress for Separate Tables; Susan Hayward wins Best Actress for I Want to Live and Burt Ives Best Supporting Actor for The Big Country. Hollywood’s top money-making stars are Marlon Brando, Glenn Ford, Rock Hudson, Jerry Lewis and Elizabeth Taylor.

More than 45 million U.S. households have TV sets. On them, 14 of the Top 30 television shows are westerns, led by Gunsmoke, which earns a 39.6 rating.

On stage, the musical Li’l Abner closes at New York City’s St. James Theater after 693 performances. Flower Drum Song opens there later in the year, to play for more than 600 performances.

The Recording Industry Association of America issues its first gold record certifying it sold 500,000 copies – for Perry Como’s single “Catch a Falling Star.” Other hit records on the radio and in jukeboxes include Jerry Lee Lewis’ “Great Balls of Fire,” Sheb Wooley’s “Purple People Eater” and David Seville’s “The Chipmunk Song.” Elvis Presley joins the U.S. Army.

In Europe, the Common Market forms, later to evolve into the European Union.

Charles DeGaulle is elected president of the fifth republic of France, and Nikita Khrushchev becomes premier of the Soviet Union.

Boris Pasternak’s Dr. Zhivago is published, but banned in the Soviet Union, which pressures him to decline the Nobel Prize for Literature.

U.S. President Eisenhower signs the bill approving statehood for Alaska the following January.

Edmund Hillary reaches the South Pole.

In South America, U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon is shoved, booed and his motorcade stoned by demonstrators protesting his goodwill tour of Latin America.

The National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) is established.

In sports, Boston Red Sox star Ted Williams becomes the highest paid ballplayer, earning $135,000. St. Louis Cardinals slugger Stan Musial — the 8th Major Leaguer to get 3,000 hits — becomes the Redbirds’ highest paid player, at $100,000. Three-time National League Most Valuable

Continued on next page
Player Roy Campanella of the Brooklyn Dodgers is paralyzed in an auto accident. Arnold Palmer wins his first major golf tournament, the Masters, and Floyd Patterson scores a Technical Knockout after 13 rounds against Roy Harris and is heavyweight champion.

As imports, pre-Nissan Datsuns started slow.

The price of a first-class postage stamp goes up after 26 years—from 3 cents to 4 cents.

Dozens of students and teachers are injured or killed at a fire at Our Lady of Angels School in Chicago.

More than 5 million Americans are jobless in the worst recession since World War II; the unemployment rate tops 6.7%.

Johnny Hart’s comic strip “BC” first appears.

The John Birch Society forms.

The first Pizza Hut opens in Kansas; Rice-a-Roni is introduced; for breakfast, new products include Cocoa Puffs and Cocoa Krispies.

More than 430,000 cars are imported, including the new Datsun from Japan (52 Datsuns are sold in the United States that year).

The Air Force Academy opens in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The U.S. Supreme Court orders the integration of Little Rock High School in Arkansas.

Cardinal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, Bishop of Venice, is named Pope John XXIII.

The Hula Hoop comes out and the skateboard is invented.

— Bill Knight

By John Hallwas

For obvious reasons, writing about the future is more difficult than writing about the past, but the challenges are related. Each is an effort to distinguish significant cultural patterns and reflect complex relationships among individuals, values and institutions.

Perhaps no force is reshaping world culture as much as pluralism, which not only diversifies faculties, student bodies, communities and nations but slowly dissolves the prejudice against other racial, cultural and religious groups that has been characteristic of mankind. Fifty years from now, Western will be even more pluralistic, as will Macomb, the state of Illinois and America herself.

That development will continue to make it hard to achieve meaningful community. Exclusivistic claims to cultural superiority, on racial and religious grounds, will be even more widely challenged and disapproved than they are now. More important for uniting people will be commitment to common ideals and respect for historical traditions. Among those ideals, environmental concern will be a major cultural force, locally and worldwide, in 2058. It will increasingly unite Americans and others in an effort to save the planet and secure humanity’s future.

Through its extension into theology, which is beginning in our time, a sense of connection to the always-in-process natural world and the ever-mysterious universe also will help to provide a meaningful spiritual orientation for millions of people. At Western, the environmental studies program will be larger and more influential. So will the religious studies program, as more and more young people realize that a meaningful spiritual quest often takes educated people beyond family and cultural tradition.

There also will be a renewed emphasis on liberal arts education. Among the forces driving that renewal in 2058 will be the continuing explosion of available information and the widespread use of misinformation and propaganda for public manipulation. Those developments, accelerating in our own time, will increasingly dramatize the need for perspective, sensitivity and thinking skills, which come only with a broad-based education.

Western and other universities will increasingly see themselves as indispensable counters to self-serving, manipulative political and commercial forces. Also, technology undoubtedly shapes our lives, but as Anthony Kronman points out in Education’s End, it also encourages “an ignorance about ourselves” (about human limits, values and responsibilities), which can and must
What students need

By Bill Knight

It’s possible that some college graduates could look back at their university experience and think of their education in terms of Reality TV.

The Apprentice or just Survivor?
Dancing with the Stars or Moment of Truth?
American Idol or The Biggest Loser?

To help ensure students’ futures are not disappointing and frustrating but productive and fulfilling, administrators and faculty are working to anticipate and balance their desires and needs with society’s. A recent report concludes that what students today need are skills for life and work in the 21st century: a liberal-arts education based on critical thinking, pondering big questions, collaborations, communications and integrated ways to solve problems.

“The liberal education’ headlines the kinds of learning needed for a free society and for the full development of human talent,” says College Learning for the New Global Century, from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU).

That assessment underscores similar judgments reached by professionals and WIU alumni who’ve dealt with graduates looking to enter the workforce.

“Here is my philosophy based on my life’s experiences in education, business and politics,” said Larry Ehmen, a 1961 WIU graduate.

“Students should be taught to think and reason, which includes the mastery of the ‘three R’s’ – reading, writing and ‘rithmetic. No matter what the subject, it can be used to teach students to think. I happen to be partial to physics, since that was my major.”

Ehmen, a Quincy, Ill., resident, was elected to a four-year term as Adams County Recorder in 2000, ran an office-supply business in Quincy and Hannibal, Mo., for 20 years before that, and taught high-school physics for 17 years after leaving Western. That gives him business and political insights into education he expressed in a 2006 lecture for WIU’s College of Arts and sciences: “What the Heck Am I Doing Here?”

He said, “As I started teaching, I still never had a clear understanding of what this education thing was all about. You need to learn to think, to reason and use logic.

“I am very passionate about education,” continues Ehmen, who serves on the WIU Foundation Board Executive Committee. But “my business experience showed that if you bring me a person who has the ability to think and has a command of the ‘three R’s,’ I will train that person to do the job that I hired him or her to do. This solid educational base will also make the road easier for those who choose to specialize in specific disciplines such as law, medicine, engineering, etc.”

Another Western alum, who graduated decades after Ehmen, says she’s concerned about recent college graduates.

“My experience with mentoring, teaching, training and overall interaction with those that are still in school or just out of school is not flattering,” says Evelyn Kelly, a 1983 WIU graduate who received her M.A. in Political Science at Western in 1990 before earning her J.D. and L.L.M. law degrees.

“I am discovering that but for the existence of email, MTV and instant gratification; these children do not know how to find the answer,” Kelly continued. “My experience is that if the answer is not available instantly or quickly, then the student is at a loss to find it. One of my colleagues likens it to the roadblock theory. The students and graduates of less than 10 years get hung up on roadblocks and are not equipped to do an end run around the roadblock, nor do they have the skills necessary to recognize that there is a roadblock that they can get around.

Essential Outcomes

Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for 21st-century challenges by …

• gaining knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages and the arts;
• building intellectual and practical skills by engaging big questions, both contemporary and enduring, through inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and problem solving;
• practicing personal and social responsibility, including g civic knowledge and engagement local and global, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and foundations and skills for lifelong learning, all anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges; and
• integrating learning through synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies, demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.
“The art of problem solving is stuck in a grade school age range,” continues Kelly, an attorney with the Bronson & Kahn law firm in Chicago. “Instead of looking for a solution, if a computer program crashes and a set of documents cannot be amended/corrected or produced, there is a complete disconnect that those documents could be easily prepared with a typewriter. Solution: Make a set of copies, white out where the corrections need to be made, type the corrections in. The response is usually ‘How do I do that?’

“I liken the search for an answer as an adventure,” she adds. “Asking question is like pulling the knob on a pinball machine. You never know where the ball is going to go next, so go with it. I am concerned that the two generations younger than me have had way too much visual stimulation from video and television and not enough stimulation of the other senses. Hence, it may be more difficult for them to ‘make the connection’ if the answer cannot be found in a 30-minute television show or a short movie or from searching Google.”

Many people – and college students, and their parents – may think that choosing a “marketable” college major is the key to future economic opportunity, the report says.

“Guided by this conviction, many students see study in their major field as the main point of college, and actively resist academic requirements that push them toward a broader education,” it says. “Many policy makers hold a similar view of career preparation, evidenced by their support for occupational colleges and programs that promise initial job readiness but not much else.

Those who endorse narrow learning are blind to the realities of the new global economy. Careers themselves have become volatile. Studies already show that Americans change jobs 10 times in the two decades following college, with such changes even more frequent for younger workers. Moreover, employers are calling with new urgency for graduates who are broadly prepared and who also possess the analytical and practical skills that are essential both for innovation and for organizational effectiveness.

This report places special emphasis on liberal education as the portal to economic opportunity because so much of the public – and so many students – have been told just the opposite. Today, powerful social forces, reinforced by public policies, pull students – especially first-generation and adult students – toward a narrowly instrumental approach to college. The report urges educators to resist and reverse that downward course.

A liberal arts education has nothing to do with the political label of liberal, of course. A liberal arts education cherishes inquiry and discovery, human ideals, logic and the value of learning, and colleges of arts and sciences offer depth and breadth – from the humanities to basic sciences. A liberal education has been America’s premier educational tradition since the nation’s founding, and the AACU report builds on its core strengths: broad knowledge, strong intellectual skills, personal and social responsibility.

The 2007 report specifically recommends less attention to narrow,

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**Findings on selected liberal education outcomes**

- Eight percent of college seniors are "proficient" at level-3 math, up from 5 percent of freshmen
- Eleven percent of college seniors are "proficient" at level-3 writing
- Six percent of college seniors are "proficient" in critical thinking, 77 percent are "not proficient"
- Less than 13 percent of college students achieve basic competence in a language other than English
- Less than 34 percent of college students earn credit for an international studies class; of those who do, only 13 percent take more than four classes
- Less than 10 percent of college students participate in study abroad programs
- Between 5 and 10 percent of college students achieve basic competence in a language other than English, take more than four international studies classes, and participate in study abroad programs
vocational or technical skills and more emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking. The conclusions resulted from a month-long survey of 305 executives at companies with at least 25 employees, but are echoed in comments like Kelly’s and other respected alumni from WIU’s College of Arts and Sciences, who sense that education should anticipate and engender universal talents to reason and analyze.

“I am finding that it is harder for students to have the luxury of long discussion in a group to ‘brainstorm for solutions’, ” adds Kelly, who just wrote the chapter for navigating new construction closings from a seller/developer perspective for the Chicago Bar Association. “Every moment is micromanaged for them so there is no sense of control over their time and environment, and if they cannot perform in short time frames – i.e., text messaging and email – or with the Internet constantly distracting them [they’re confused]. Are students then expecting the answer to be just handed to them because that is the path of least resistance? The concept of delayed gratification is not a concept that has been inculcated in our educational environment.

“A strong liberal arts foundation that presents many opportunities to exercise those skills necessary to function at a higher thinking level is more invaluable to me,” she continues. “I can present the problem and then the employee can look for the situation appropriate solutions. And there is usually more than one right answer. Unfortunately, students are not encouraged to look for more than one answer and debate the merits of either position.”

For the 21st century, the council defines liberal education as a comprehensive set of aims and outcomes essential for all students because they’re important to all fields of endeavor. So universities, according to the AACU, should make priorities out of essential learning outcomes and the Principles of Excellence [see box] and “reclaim the connections between liberal education and democratic freedom.

“It is time to guide students away from limiting choices and toward a contemporary understanding of what matters in college,” it states. “The way forward is to make a new commitment to provide a horizon-expanding liberal education for all college students, not just for some. In a democratic society, the goal must be to extend opportunity and excellence to everyone, and not just to a fortunate minority.” Employers already agree with educators who recognize that students need an expansive and versatile education rather than narrow training alone. Another Western alum agrees.

“I would encourage students to take opportunities to develop critical-reasoning and communication skills,” says Patrick Magoon, a 1976 WIU graduate in Sociology who’s now president and CEO of Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago. “All those are used at all levels and transferable to any professional opportunity,” he continues. “To me, critical thinking is, to some extent, a basic set of skills to analyze problems, taking apart processes, problems and people. How to analyze something is applicable to anything you do in the workforce.”

According to a definition in the American Federation of Teachers’ American Educator magazine, critical thinking is made up of reasoning, making judgments and decisions, and problem solving.

“These are abilities useful for members of a team, or a supervisor, or a leader,” Magoon adds. “The requirements are the same whether [you’re] getting a backhoe out of a job site or executing a marketing plan, or applying objectives. I’d suggest developing the respect of cultural, racial and economic diversity [too].

“If someone doesn’t have these particular skills, it’ll be obvious in 15 minutes.”

Magoon’s peer at a major downstate Illinois corporation contributed to the AACU report.

“At State Farm, only 50% of high school and college graduates who apply for a job pass the employment exam,” said Edward B. Rust Jr., chairman and CEO of State Farm Insurance Companies, based in Bloomington, Ill. “Our exam does not test applicants on their knowledge of finance or the insurance business, but it does require them to demonstrate critical thinking skills and the ability to calculate and think logically. These skills plus the ability to read for information, to communicate and write effectively and to have an understanding of global integration need to be demonstrated.

“This isn’t just what employers want,” Rust continues. “It’s what employers need.”

The report concludes with a challenge – to administrators and teachers, parents and students, employers and society.

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The Principles of Excellence

1. Aim high—and make excellence inclusive
2. Give students a compass
3. Teach the arts of inquiry and innovation
4. Engage the big questions
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Patrick Magoon
Around the corner or around the globe, retired biologist Paul Nollen gives back

By Alex Degman

The hallways and rooms inside the Methodist Church off Adams Street in Macomb are quiet on Good Friday; most offices are closed for the holiday.

One light remains on, however. The Habitat for Humanity office on the first floor of the church is where retired WIU biology professor Paul Nollen spends most of his day.

Nollen retired in 1999 after a career at Western starting in 1967, when and his wife Sheila moved to Macomb. He said jobs were plentiful in the late ‘60s, and he liked several aspects of what Western had to offer.

“It was the best offer that I had as far as what I wanted to teach,” he said. “The money was good at that time, which would look like nothing now. And I knew this area pretty well because my mother grew up just north of here in Raritan.”

Nollen said he was also looking to work in New York, Washington and Kansas.

Teaching is something that Nollen had always wanted to do, he said — he taught high school in Oconomowoc, Wis. after serving in the U.S. Army for three years with the Medical Corps. He said he wanted to teach biology because of his influences in high school.

“My role model was a biology teacher,” he said. “She taught history and biology, so I minored in history and education in college and majored in biology.”

From 1967 to 1999, Nollen was a parasitologist, which is a person who studies a variety of animal parasites and bacterial diseases caused by insects, among other things. He said his work in the Army got him interested in this field.

“I worked in a laboratory where we actually did work on those diseases,” he said. “So once I got back into graduate school I looked to see if parasitology would be a viable place to do my thesis, and it was, so I just carried through with that.”

One of Nollen’s accomplishments at WIU was starting the biology honors program, which he ran for 21 years. He and his wife recently established a $60,000 endowment that awards annual scholarships to outstanding junior and senior honors biology students.

“The honor students are the cream of the crop,” Nollen said with a smile. “I wanted to do something for as many of them as I could. The money off that endowment pays for four honors students to get $1,000-a-year stipends starting as a junior, and is renewable as a senior.”

Nollen said the scholarship is renewable as long as the students keep their grades up and keep doing their research.

“I wanted to give the best of the students a little support,” he said. “As tuition and book prices go up, it
might not seem like much anymore, but they appreciate it.”

Nollen has been keeping himself busy since his retirement nine years ago. He said he and his wife are avid gardeners and maple syrup hobbyists. He and Sheila own about 80 acres south of Macomb and recently conducted a seminar teaching people how to make the sticky substance.

Habitat for Humanity takes up most of his time, however. He became president of Macomb County Habitat for Humanity in 2002, and when the executive director retired in 2003, he took over that position.

“We build houses in [McDonough] County for people that are deserving – they can’t get a decent loan [and] they’re willing to work on the house,” he said. “That’s what Habitat does.”

Habitat has always interested him, he said, and he had time to do it once he finished his academic career.

In addition to local activities, Nollen has taken three mission trips to Africa. He went over for the first time in 2001 with a group known as the Marion Medical Mission. With them, he helped with a shallow-well program, which builds wells that provide safe drinking water to villages throughout Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi. Nollen worked in Malawi that year.

When Sheila retired from the University Library in 2002, the couple went over together in 2004, when he resumed helping with shallow wells and she worked in school systems. They returned in 2006.

Nollen said while his experiences were worthwhile, he doesn’t know if he’ll make it back anytime soon.

“I’m getting a little old for this,” he said, laughing. “Once you’re there, it’s pretty rigorous. We lived pretty much according to Western standards, but still, you’re out every day driving this truck and you can’t even imagine how bad the roads were.”

He said he felt the work to be worthwhile because the people the program helped were so appreciative, and he has a lot of good memories.

“You come back [to the states] and say ‘I’ll never go back again, it was too tough,’ but you forget that. You forget all the things that went on, but the good things you do remember make you say, ‘Ehh … maybe I’ll go back.’ ”

Nollen said he’s not involved with the scientific community anymore, but he still makes time to go over to the Biological Sciences department every now and then to maintain contact with friends and colleagues. And he’ll never forget the memories he made while teaching at Western. He said being named a distinguished professor was one of the best highlights of his career.

“We picked the outstanding professor in ’91-92, and I was chosen,” he said. “I got to go around to [the other Board of Governors campuses] and talk about my research. It was essentially a year off. I was fortunate enough to be picked in the first place, and now they don’t have [the BGU] anymore. Nobody will get that again.”

For the rest of the afternoon on Good Friday this spring, the Methodist Church off Adams Street remained quiet. All except for that one light in the Habitat office, which remains on even during quiet periods. This perfectly mirrors the life of Paul Nollen, who, even in retirement, continues to make a huge impact on the world around him.

Degman is a senior broadcasting major from Evanston.

Hallwas is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at WIU. He has written more than 20 books and monographs, including First Century: A History of Western Illinois University.

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be countered by learning in the liberal arts. And globalization is yet another force that, by mid-century, will make knowledge of major cultures, social complexities, historical processes and environmental realities indispensable. For that same reason, Western’s International Studies program will also be more important than it is today.

The demand for distance learning classes should also increase significantly by 2058, as technology continues to make teachers and classes available to individuals at any location. However, young people will surely continue to prize personal contact with teachers and relationships with other students.

Because colleges and universities are significant cultural centers, providing plays, concerts, lectures and adult education classes that are open to the public, and because people are enjoying much longer, healthier retirements, the value of having condo or townhouse units for older people on or adjacent to a campus will be increasingly evident, too. (Close proximity to athletic events will also make those units attractive for many buyers.) That kind of housing will surely be at the edge of Western’s campus long before 2058.

We can also hope that in 50 years, increasing numbers of Americans will recognize that education is, most deeply, not preparation for a career, but a lifelong process that is the means of real freedom, individualism and self-fulfillment. If that view becomes more widespread, Western and other institutions of higher education will have truly succeeded.
By Bill Knight

There was no one brush with destiny where a calling to teach was made obvious to Robert Gabler, the educator who for years led Western’s Geography and Geology department, International Programs, and Faculty Senate before his 1990 retirement.

“I really didn’t go to school with any vocation in mind,” Gabler says from his Florida residence. “But my father had been a college professor and he had a good life – we had a good life.

“I was always interested in education,” he continues, “and when I was finishing my schooling, there were only a few places to get a job as a geologist, and two of them – Saudi Arabia and Venezuela – were where guys were getting shot at. Teaching seemed like a better deal.”

Gabler studied at Ohio University in Athens, where he also began to appreciate the pace and lifestyle of a campus and community.

“I really enjoyed the experience of a college town,” says Gabler, who eventually earned his Master’s degree at Penn State and Ph.D. at Columbia, where he worked with prominent professor George Renner.

“I taught for a couple of years at Hunter College [in New York City], while working on my doctorate and teaching at Columbia – everybody was doing what they had to do – but I must have the seeds of a country boy in me,” he continues. “When I came in 1957, Macomb seemed like it had the best possibility to become a really fine small college town.

Western president [Frank] Beu took this kid without much experience and hired me, the bank gave me a loan, and I’ve never lost touch with Western since.”

In decades of service to WIU, Gabler received three University Presidential Citations for teaching excellence, edited the Bulletin of the Illinois Geographical Society, authored innumerable articles in his fields and authored key textbooks.

“Dr. Gabler’s contribution to our department, the university and geographic education is unparalleled,” said Professor Chris Sutton, former chair of the department of Geography.

Gabler dismissed such praise.

“My feelings about Western are as strong as when I left,” says Gabler, who taught part-time for a few years after his retirement. “I enjoyed my time there and [realize] that there aren’t many universities anywhere with such faculty and leadership. I’m immensely pleased with the College of Arts and Sciences and the university as a whole.

“In fact, [the Illinois Institute for] Rural Affairs started in our department and remains a major contributing factor to the university, to the community and to the discipline,” he adds. “Most regional universities lose interest in their surrounding areas, but doing things for west-central Illinois is right, and it’s part of what makes Western a great university.”

A part of Gabler’s legacy is the Robert Gabler Lecture Series, which brings to WIU prominent speakers during the Department of Geography’s annual Geography Awareness Week each November.

“I’ll always be associated with the department as long as I can be,” he says. “If my name is associated with Western ad infinitum, it’ll be a wonderful thing.”
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