

Friday @ the Center: September 1, 2006

Welcome Back!

It's September—time to ramp up and start thinking about retreats, syllabi, committee work, and grant writing. I hope your summer was both restful and productive! Here in the Center we're busy organizing for a new year of supporting you in your task as Christian teacher-scholars. This weekly E-newsletter provides information relevant to that task. Your comments about and suggestions for *Fridays at the Center* are always appreciated! The Center has a new Administrative Assistant beginning on Sept. 5: Jaclyn Stockton. After earning her B.S. in Public Communications at the University of Idaho, Jaclyn worked for eighteen months in Student Financial Services at SPU. Their loss is our gain. Welcome, Jaclyn!

Speaking of Syllabi . . .

A good course syllabus presents an enticing destination, a detailed map, and a sense of the expedition guide—you. It's crucial to distribute a printed syllabus or make one available on Blackboard the first day of class. (Don't read it out loud to the class, though. That's boring. Look for more thoughts about the first day of class in next week's *F @ C.*)

The destination: the syllabus needs to provoke student interest by providing an attractive goal: this is what you will get out of this class; this is what you will learn, or be able to do. This is how this class can build your character, make you a more interesting person, better prepare you for life as a Christian, citizen, and employee, help you get into medical school, etc.

The map: the syllabus explains how students are going to reach this appealing goal by outlining what will happen in and outside of class—reading, discussion, group work, projects, papers, exams. It should also include information about important course policies, so you aren't making up rules as you go along. Some faculty prefer to wait until the first day of class in order to allow the students to help formulate some of the policies, such as those involving food or cell phones. Once established, course policies can then be distributed the next class period. Other instructors prefer to define their own policies and include them on the initial syllabus. A few standard course policies do need to be communicated at the outset, including 1) the University's commitment to academic integrity, with reference to the Undergraduate Catalog; 2) a statement about academic accommodations for disabilities, 3) an evacuation gathering spot in case of an emergency during class time, and 4) the University policy on announcing closures due to inclement weather. If you need a sample statement for any of these items, just ask me or your department chair.

The guide: finally, the syllabus should convey a sense of your personality and your passion for the material, in a winsome and infectious manner. You want to suggest to your students that the course will be difficult but worth the effort, and that you are going to do your best to help them succeed.

Teaching 101

New or newer full-time and adjunct faculty are invited to attend Teaching 101, a faculty seminar to be held on Saturday, Sept. 9, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you wish to attend, please register with me (gallaghe@spu.edu) by noon, Sept. 6.

Going for Grants

Be aware that many external grant applications for support during the summer or academic year (2006-07) are due during the fall. Grant applications for internal SPU programs will be due on Feb. 1, 2007. Don't forget to clear any external grant applications through the procedure at <http://advance.spu.edu/corporations/externalgrants.asp>.

Grant of the Week: The American Association of University Women's Summer/Short-Term Research Publication Grants fund women college and university faculty to prepare research for publication. Applicants may be tenure track, part-time, or temporary faculty or new or established scholars and researchers at universities. Time must be available for eight consecutive weeks of final writing, editing, and responding to issues raised in critical reviews. Funds cannot be used for undertaking research. Applicants must have received their doctorates by the application deadline. Scholars with strong publishing records should seek other funding. Application deadline is November 15. See http://www.aauw.org/fga/fellowships_grants/american.cfm.

Happy Labor Day!

Susan

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