

## Friday at the Center: September 16, 2005

### Day of Common Learning

As you plan for fall quarter, remember to schedule The Day of Common Learning on Oct. 19 into your course. Classes between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. will not meet, but you are encouraged to develop creative ways to encourage students to attend the morning plenary and the afternoon sessions—by connecting your course with the theme, and assigning students to write about or discuss one or more sessions. The focus this year is “The Faith of the Next Generation,” with a morning plenary presentation by Dr. Christian Smith. The afternoon sessions are shaping up nicely, with topics ranging from U2, Praying with Teens, Youth Culture, Faith in Textbooks, and a panel of faculty talking about “My Faith as a Teenager, and how it has changed.” HOWEVER, we still need more session sponsors. Please contact me with your ideas as soon as possible.

Sessions can be presented by a single faculty member; feature a panel of faculty, staff, and students discussing an issue; two faculty members leading an interactive workshop, etc. As an educational community, SPU is uniquely gifted to think about the faith of the next generation from a variety of perspectives—social, theological, cultural, scientific, physical, and artistic. A complete listing of all seminars, with descriptions, will be available on the Day of Common Learning website by October 3.

### Teaching and Learning Circles

Are you interested in meeting regularly with other faculty to discuss teaching? Consider joining a Teaching and Learning Circle, sponsored by the Center for Scholarship and Faculty Development. Each group will consist of five to eight faculty, who will meet three times a quarter to discuss a book about teaching, which the Center will provide. Circle One will read *Leaving the Lectern*, by Dean A. McManus, an emeritus professor of Oceanography from the University of Washington. Professor McManus describes how he changed the way he taught—moving from traditional lecture and exams to cooperative learning and student projects. It’s a humorous and readable account of a research scientist who was never taught how to teach but gradually fell in love with helping students learn. Circle Two will read *Teaching as Believing*, by Chris Anderson, a professor of English at Oregon State University. A highly personal and meditative book, *Teaching as Believing* traces Professor Anderson’s re-commitment to his Catholic faith and his struggles to incorporate that faith into his classroom at a secular institution. While his context is different from our own, I think many of his experiences and comments are perceptive and applicable. Parker Palmer describes this book as “a seamless weave of intellect and love that honors the highest standards of the academic vocation and the deepest needs of the human heart.”

If you are interested in joining either of these Circles, please send me an email to that effect, along with a list of the usual times during a week in fall quarter that you would be available to meet. And if you and some colleagues would like to form a third Circle to discuss a particular aspect of teaching, send me a proposal!

### More Syllabi Suggestions

Syllabi should 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 whether food will be allowed, what should be done about cell phones, what the policy regarding tardiness, etc., is. Once agreed upon, the course policies can then be printed and distributed (or posted on Blackboard) the next class period. Other faculty prefer to establish their own policies and include them on the initial syllabus. A few standard course policies do need to be communicated at the outset of the class,

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.

Watch for the new CSFD Brochure appearing in your mailboxes next week!

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