



Friday @ the Center: November 17, 2006

The November *Teaching Professor* . . .

. . . has recently been sent to your department chair (in CAS) or dean. This month's articles include helpful "Reminders for Improving Classroom Discussion" and suggestions for holding "Office Hours in a Different Format." An essay reporting the results of experimenting with an alternate assessment exercise for an introductory chemistry course will be of interest to those teaching other courses, and an update on the latest research on course portfolios may be helpful, as well. Ask your chair or dean when you might expect to see this month's *Teaching Professor*.

Check on Advisees' GPAs

The discussion in Faculty Senate earlier this week about the problems undergraduates face when they have a GPA under 2.5 and are unable to enter any major (except Theology and Psychology) reminds us of the importance of keeping an eye on our advisees' GPAs. When I was directing the University Scholars program, I used to run a GPA check on all the students in the program once a quarter (they needed an especially high GPA to stay in that program). It's easy enough to set an Outlook reminder for yourself to do this once a quarter. When it's time, log into the Faculty and Advisor Menu and go into the Control Center. Click the button to get the summary list of your advisees. For each one, go into the transcript, and click on "Transcript Totals" to view the cumulative GPA. For me, checking everyone's GPA all at once worked the best, but others (such as first-year advisors) may prefer to check their students one by one as they meet with the students. Anyone getting dangerously close to a 2.5 who has not yet entered a major needs some special advising attention.



NESSIE insights

According to recently released data from the latest National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), students from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds are more likely to remain in college when they engage in collaborative learning in class; participate in educational activities outside the classroom, such as service learning; and interact personally with faculty members.

Students across the board are more satisfied with their education and more likely to remain in college when engaged this way, but the gains from such practices are even greater for students from minority backgrounds.

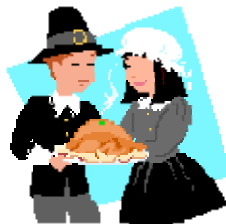
The Chronicle of Higher Education reports, "This year's survey found that student engagement had a 'compensatory effect' on grades and students' likelihood of returning for a second year of college, particularly among underserved minority populations and students entering college with lower levels of achievement. Data indicated that activities such as collaborating with peers on

projects inside and outside the classroom helped students overcome previous educational disadvantages. 'When institutions use effective educational practices, they provide a small boost to students who are lower achieving when they start college,' says George D. Kuh, director of the survey and a professor of higher education at Indiana University at Bloomington. For those students, 'the more engaged they become, the better their grades are, and they start catching up to students who started college with a higher level of achievement'" (Nov. 17, 2006).

Grant of the Week: Offer a Summer Seminar

Interested in offering a summer seminar for college teachers at church-related institutions? Applications are now being accepted to convene the Lilly Fellows Network Program's Summer Seminars for College Teachers for 2008, addressing a major issue of special concern for scholars and teachers in the church-related academy. Previous Summer Seminar topics have included Postmodernism and the Humanities; Peace and Justice in the Bible and Quran; and Spirituality and Social Justice: Lessons from the Civil Rights Movement. These seminars are designed for faculty at LFP institutions, with preference for those in early stages of their career. Proposals should come from an experienced faculty member who will design and lead the seminar. Participants will read a set of common texts, engage in disciplined discussion of the seminar topic, and write on some aspect of the seminar topic. Each seminar will meet for a three or four-week period on the campus of a Network school, or for two weeks with participants returning for three or four days at a designated additional time, typically the home institution of the seminar director. The institution selected to host will be awarded \$56,000. If you are interested in proposing a seminar, please talk with me. For more information, see http://www.lillyfellows.org/summer_seminars.htm. Application deadline: March 1, 2007.

Friday @ the Center will not appear next week because of Thanksgiving vacation. Enjoy your celebration of our many blessings!



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