

Friday @ the Center: February 15, 2008

Celebrating Goldwater Nominees

In the midst of our ongoing series on Problem Students, it seems like a good time to celebrate some of our many accomplished students. Please join me in congratulating Aristides Diamant, Elise Eccles, Jennifer Olson, and Camille Wendlandt, who were recently named as the SPU nominees for the prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Program. The national Goldwater Scholarship provides undergraduate scholarships of up to \$7,500 to sophomores or juniors planning a career in mathematics, natural sciences, or engineering, and planning to pursue an advanced research degree. Aristides, Jennifer, and Camille are biology majors; Elise is an engineering major. SPU's Goldwater faculty coordinator is Professor Benjamin McFarland, Biochemistry. The selection of the final awards will be made in March.

Dealing with Problem Students: #4

Lazy Lizzie or Lennie: This student frequently misses class or arrives late, fails to do the reading, asks questions that reveal a lack of attention to announcements or the syllabus, does not complete assignments, or else consistently turns them in late. She or he appears merely to be going through the motions, and only half-heartedly, at that. Once you've identified a LL, you should meet with that student as soon as possible to discover the root of the problem: Does she have too heavy of a course load? Is he working 40 hours a week? Would she benefit from some personal tutoring? Is he severely depressed? Given the circumstances, make appropriate referrals to the student's faculty or Student Academic Services adviser, Student Life, the Counseling Center, or the Center for Learning, but if it comes down to a bad attitude or pure laziness, clearly explain that LL will be held to the standards of the class and will have chosen the consequences if his or her laziness persists.

A Vote Against the Multiple-Choice Test

What do today's employers want college graduates to be able to do? It turns out to be many of the same things that liberal-arts profs desire for their students. The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) released in January the results of a national survey of employers, reporting that they see a need for significant improvement in the skills and knowledge of recent college graduates. Today's employers want improved skills in the areas of global knowledge, self-direction, writing, and critical thinking. They find college transcripts unhelpful and prefer qualitative evaluations of internships, senior projects, and the results of individual essay tests that measure students' abilities to write, solve problems, and think analytically. They didn't value either multiple-choice tests or institutional assessments very highly. See the full report of the poll, ["How Should Colleges Assess and Improve Student Learning? Employers' Views on the Accountability Challenge."](#)

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