
 WASHINGTON
 CENTER

 news

V O L U M E O N E ■ N U M B E R O N E



Director's Letter— "Working Together to Improve Undergraduate Education"

These past few years have brimmed with debate over the quality of undergraduate education. More than a dozen national reports have both detailed the shortcomings of undergraduate education, and called for a whole array of solutions. Nation-wide, colleges and universities, including many of our institutions in Washington state, are responding, re-examining various aspects of their undergraduate curriculum, and grappling with ways to enhance and sustain quality teaching.

Nonetheless, there is a lingering sense that there simply aren't enough resources to implement the reforms that the national reports are calling for. At the Wingspread Conference this Fall, University of Michigan economist Howard Bowen wondered aloud, "How much will it cost to increase quality—and can we afford it?"

Implementing eight frequently-recommended programs, he estimated, would cost nearly \$2.3 million, or nearly half the budget of the small college upon which he based his analysis. Clearly, such reforms are beyond the capability of most institutions. While not all states and institutions are economically strapped, many are; Bowen's analysis must give us pause about what is realistically possible in terms of reforming undergraduate education.

Allan Odden, noted commentator on public school reform, has come to the same conclusions about the cost of implementing reforms in our public schools. Bowen and Odden, if not fifty state legislatures, and hundreds of Board of Trustees, should be pushing us to become more resourceful, to think creatively about low cost but highly effective approaches to improving the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning.

We believe the Washington Center represents one such approach. Through the collaboration of community colleges and four-year institutions, we have invented a model of curricular and faculty development that is low cost, transferable, systematic, and designed to overcome some of the structural barriers to educational excellence.

Our work rests on several assumptions. First, we can no longer afford to operate as isolated institutions and individuals: student enrollment patterns are only one of many telling signs that the fates of two and four year institutions are intertwined. Secondly, we believe that reform and renewal can spring from opportunities and resources that already exist within our colleges and universities, without massive infusions of money. And, most importantly, we are convinced that the development of partnerships, and the exchange of faculty and ideas through team-teaching in model programs can be powerful in revitalizing both teachers and curricular thinking.

In the past year, we have built new curricular models which simultaneously address the real need for faculty

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Every institution of higher education should strive to create learning communities, organized around specific intellectual themes or tasks.

One of the recommendations of the National Institute of Education's *Involvement in Learning Report, 1984.*

development and the need for more coherence in the undergraduate curriculum. Much of our work this year can be described as an effort to explore the National Institute of Education's recommendation that "Learning Communities" be established on all campuses. We have proceeded on the assumption that rebuilding educational communities and purposes is a central agenda for higher education and a crucial need in our institutions.

Just a year ago, the Exxon Foundation provided the Washington Center with \$50,000 in start-up funds, to explore, inter-institutionally, learning communities and faculty development. At the same time, the Washington State Legislature wrote authorizing legislation for the Washington Center, and urged the State's institutions to participate in the Center's efforts.

In less than 12 months, the \$50,000 of seed money has been leveraged to over \$350,000 worth of programs and faculty development efforts, on seven campuses, involving 50 faculty teaching together and over 1200 students. In addition, quarterly seminars have been held, on important national topics in higher education, drawing together over 150 faculty and administrators from nineteen campuses into a new and ongoing dialogue about strategies for improving teaching and learning.

Numbers can hardly convey the sense of contagious opportunity and common enterprise that I've felt among us over the past year. All of us participating in Washington Center activities have been inspired by the talent in the our institutions, the deep idealism about effective teaching, and the widespread commitment to self-examination and learning from colleagues. In the past year, working together to improve undergraduate education has become more than rhetoric; real programs and partnerships have emerged, and along with them, an agenda for our future.

Barbara Leigh Smith
Director

What's Happening in Participating Schools?

New Programs

At North Seattle Community College, spring quarter brought the initiation of "American Values," a new interdisciplinary program. Four faculty are team-teaching the program: North Seattle faculty Jim Harnish (History); Rita Phipps (English), and Tom Kerns (Philosophy), and visiting Evergreen faculty Nancy Taylor (History). Harnish previously taught in Seattle Central's coordinated studies program, and in Evergreen's Great Books program in the fall of 1985. Phipps was an also an exchange faculty to Seattle Central and Evergreen.

Harnish comments, "I'm more convinced than ever that the most effective way to teach writing is through integrating it with content. I'm also convinced of the value of building a focus around great books. This quarter we're reading some dense material: de Tocqueville's *Democracy*, and Paul Tillich's *The Courage to Be*. The students are rising to it...they're so proud of what they're achieving, as they struggle to understand and write about complex and important ideas. It's marvelous to see them staying after class to continue a discussion, or arranging study parties in the evening...creating a true learning community."

Tacoma Community College is finishing its second quarter of a new Bridge Program with Evergreen. Planned for and offered to adult students in the evening, the Bridge Program prepares students for upper division work at Evergreen's downtown Tacoma campus. Both winter and spring quarters have been built around the program theme of "The City as Cultural Mirror." Faculty teams have included Yun-yi Ho

(History), Gwen Harris (Music), and Dick Lewis (English) from Tacoma Community College, and Margaret Gribskov (Journalism, and Education) and Betsy Diffendal (Anthropology) from Evergreen. This quarter's content is comparing ancient Athens with the Chou Dynasty settlements of the same period in China.

"Designing a program which can reach and retain many first generation college students is a real challenge," says Betsy Diffendal. "What's been most exciting for me has been creating a climate where these adult students feel free to ask about the content they're learning, and to deepen their understandings—in this case about the culture of cities—in terms of their own city lives."

Evergreen began its own experiment with the federated learning community model this spring quarter. Entitled "Counseling the Culturally Different," the learning community

federates or links three courses: Cross Cultural Communication, Drugs and Alcohol in Modern Society, and Transcultural Approaches to Counseling. Faculty member Victor Shames (Chemistry) is the Master Learner in the program: his role is to take all three courses along with the students, and to lead integrating seminars with the students each week.

Dean Barbara Leigh Smith views the program as an experiment at Evergreen, and a new and different approach to "coordinated study." "The model will probably be used on a fairly small scale at Evergreen, Smith indicates, "but I think it has some advantages: we are using part-time faculty to teach some of the constituent courses. This provides a way to integrate part-time faculty into Evergreen's team-teaching setting, as well as to provide for faculty development, through the Master Learner role."

Plans for other new model programs—both federated learning communities and coordinated studies—are in the works for next year, at Western Washington University, Bellevue Community College, Lower Columbia College, and Centralia College.

Faculty Exchanges

Spring faculty exchanges include Evergreen faculty Hiro Kawasaki at Seattle University and Nancy Taylor at North Seattle Community College, Seattle Central faculty Audrey Wright at Evergreen, and Evergreen faculty Bill Winden at University of Washington. Jerry Zimmerman from Lower Columbia College is spending his sabbatical leave at Evergreen in their Management program. Dick Lewis and Yun-Yi Ho are teaching the second quarter of a new inter-institutional bridge program between Evergreen and Tacoma Community College with Evergreen faculty Elizabeth Diffendal.



Bellevue, Centralia, and Seattle Central faculty discuss interdisciplinary programs



Left to right: Bobbi Righi (math/Seattle Central C.C.), Rachel Levine (nutrition/Seattle Central C.C.), Jan Ray (math/Seattle Central C.C.). Righi and Ray will be exchange faculty at TESC in the Human Development Program in 1986-87.

Inter-Institutional Curriculum Planning Retreat

This newsletter's photographs capture the people that are part of the Washington Center process, as they worked together over the weekend of May 9-10 at Camp Bishop, a rustic Y camp outside of Shelton. That weekend, the Washington Center hosted what may be one of the first attempts at inter-institutional curriculum planning. Sixty faculty and administrators from seven institutions spent two days planning interdisciplinary programs for next year, and working together on both content, teaching and logistics issues common to all their programs. In at-

tendance were representatives from Bellevue Community College, Centralia Community College, Evergreen, North Seattle Community College, Seattle Central Community College, Seattle University, Tacoma Community College, and Western Washington University.

The retreat included teams who will be launching new programs for the 1986-87 academic year, or will be exchanging faculty in team-teaching situations. Additional faculty, who are veterans of exchange and interdisciplinary program teaching, were on hand to serve as informal advisors and curriculum consultants.

Faculty Exchange Project Expands

At the heart of the Washington Center's efforts this year is an inter-institutional faculty exchange program which now involves faculty from eight institutions: Western Washington University, University of Washington, The Evergreen State College, Seattle University, North Seattle Community College, Tacoma Community College, Seattle Central Community College, and Lower Columbia College.

Faculty exchanges are arranged on a minimal or no-cost basis. The Washington Center offers only some brokering help, and minimal funds, as necessary, to assist exchange faculty with housing relocation costs. Faculty find it invigorating and stimulating to be teaching in a new setting, with new colleagues. Administrators view it as a particularly effective form of faculty development. As Ron Hamburg, Dean of Instruction at Seattle Central Community College recently commented, "An unanticipated additional benefit for the faculty at Seattle Central was the renewal aspect of these faculty exchanges. We didn't realize this process would lead to so much faculty development effort, and such feelings of well-being about teaching."

In almost every case this year, the exchanging faculty were involved in team-teaching in an interdisciplinary program—a process which ensured both the meeting of new colleagues, and immediate immersion in the new institutional setting. Just as importantly, three or four "receiving faculty" were experiencing and interacting with a new colleague as well. This pattern quickly produces a "multiplier effect" in our institutions. By the end of 1987, we estimate that over 125 visiting and receiving faculty will have been involved in teaching settings with new programs and colleagues.

Exchange faculty from Seattle Central Community College described their experience teaching at Evergreen in the following terms...

"Yeasty...nourishing...a constant bubbling of ideas and shared perceptions...how very privileged all this is! What a very special experience was afforded me in being a part of Evergreen...It may mean survival for many, and certainly has extended my half-life as a teacher." (Rachel Levine)

"Not all of our delight arises from watching each other at work. A good deal comes from working together, planning the curriculum, choosing books, arguing about strategies and meeting inevitable crises. In every program each of us must take some intellectual risk. The excitement of participating in active learning has transformed us." (Valerie Bystrom)

Evergreen faculty teaching at Seattle Central also found the experience stimulating. Hiro Kawasaki, who taught Fall quarter at Seattle Central and Winter at Seattle University notes, "I enjoyed the array of students common to the city environment: older adults, working people, and a broad range of ethnic and social backgrounds...great to listen in the hallways to multiple languages being spoken...and learn from and with students who lead such dynamic lives beyond the classroom."

Where is the faculty exchange program going? Washington Center Director Barbara Leigh Smith indicates that as many as twenty-five exchanges are scheduled over the next eighteen months. The number of interested faculty increases daily. "We believe that the faculty exchange program in Washington is the most unique and effective faculty exchange effort in the country. It is the only one we're aware of that is tied to team-teaching, and the development of new curriculum. And it's the only statewide effort which involves ongoing exchange relationships between



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Faculty evaluation of her first team-teaching experience, set up through the Washington Center.



Left to right: Nancy Finley (psych/Seattle Central C.C.), Sandra Hastings (literature/Seattle Central C.C.), Rachel Leving (nutrition/Seattle Central C.C.), and Rosetta Hunter (Chair, humanities and social science/Seattle Central C.C.)

two- and four-year institutions. We can all only benefit from such relationships."

In the 1986-87 academic year Western Washington faculty Sy Schwartz and Helen Darrow will be teaching at Evergreen in a new joint Western-Evergreen teacher education program. Seattle University will send Carl Swenson (Computer Science) to teach with three Evergreen faculty in their freshmen "Society and the Computer" program, while Evergreen philosopher Mark Levensky will go to Seattle University. Seattle Central

Community College will send Jan Ray (Math), Bobbi Righi (Math) and Nancy Finley (Psychology) to Evergreen and receive Evergreen faculty Marilyn Frasca (Visual Arts), York Wong (Political economy), and Gail Tremblay (Arts, Native American Studies). North Seattle Community College will send Larry Hall (Psychology) to Evergreen in exchange for Evergreen faculty Nancy Taylor who is teaching at NSCC this quarter in their new inter-disciplinary program.



e're looking particularly at developing a network of rural or underserved teachers, and ways to tie them together to give them access to distinguished scholars and each other.

National Humanities Faculty Comes to Washington

The National Humanities Faculty, now renamed the National Faculty of Arts and Sciences, will be establishing its first regional office in the Pacific Northwest in the next few months. The regional office will be located at The Evergreen State College.

Created in 1968 by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council on Education, and the American Council of Phi Beta Kappa, the National Humanities Faculty was charged to improve the teaching of the humanities in the nation's schools by providing opportunities for school teachers to work directly with distinguished scholars, teachers, artists, and writers in the Humanities.

In order to serve quite diverse interests and needs in both urban and rural school systems, the National Faculty adopted a widely acclaimed strategy. It operates with a small central office, (now based in Atlanta, Georgia) and a board of trustees, and a large pool of over five hundred eminent teachers from universities, community colleges, schools, and the creative and performing arts.

Building on the resources and programs that are already in place in a school or school system setting, the National Faculty's approach (as Executive Director Ben Ladner puts it) is a "porous one." It tailors flexible programs designed to deepen teacher's understanding of subject matter, improve the effectiveness of their teaching, and to develop more coherent and stimulating courses and programs.

The choice to locate the Faculty's first regional office in the northwest, Ladner commented, had to do with this region's "special, indigenous, grass roots feelings about the importance of education... its high degree of commitment to the National Faculty idea... and the mix of public and private resources. We're looking particularly," Ladner said, "at developing a network of rural or underserved teachers, and ways to tie them together to give them access to distinguished scholars and each other."

Ladner also envisions the development of model projects in more populated areas, and a state or region-wide effort to engage the resources of higher education on behalf of the betterment of schools. The National Faculty's northwest office should be in place on the Evergreen campus by mid-summer.

Ford Foundation Awards \$75,000 for Curriculum Coherence

The Ford Foundation recently announced the award of \$75,000 to the Washington Center for a two-year project focusing on improving curricular coherence. Particular emphasis will be on faculty exchanges and the development of interdisciplinary programs designed to increase coherence in community college programs.

Ford Foundation program officer Allison Bernstein indicated that Ford's interests have to do with the forging of more and better linkages between two and four year institutions. "Too often," Bernstein observes, "undergraduate education is misconstrued as that which takes place in four-year schools. Too often, students are caught between the parameters of a two-year institution and a four-year one. We have a desire to see tangible strategies for establishing closer partnerships between faculty, institutions, and courses of study."

Nineteen Institutions Join Washington Center

Nineteen institutions—listed on the newsletter's front page—are now affiliated with the Washington Center. Self-selecting, the member institutions are committed to working together to improve undergraduate education. Members include two- and four-year colleges as well as both public and private institutions. All member institutions are represented by both faculty and key administrators. With additional funding, the the Washington Center's plans call for the expansion of the Center to include additional institutions, with an emphasis on Eastern Washington.

Washington Center Planning Committee (standing left to right): Bernard Steckler (Dean, Matteo Ricci College, Seattle U.), Bob Larson (sociology, Seattle U.), Barbara Leigh Smith (Washington Center Director), Ed Dolan (Bellevue C.C. Dean), Paul Jacobson (Tacoma C.C., chemistry), Rosetta Hunter (Division Chair, humanities and social science, South Central C.C.), Lucy Charnley (Dean, North Seattle C.C.), Jean MacGregor (Assistant Director, Washington Center), Frank Garratt (Dean, Tacoma C.C.), and Margaret Gribskov (education, TESC)



Planning Committee Established for Washington Center

In January, the Washington Center drew together a planning committee. Composed of administrators and faculty from eight of the participating institutions, the committee will set priorities for the Center, and serve as a focus for short and long term planning. Next year's planning committee activities will include implementing the Ford Foundation grant, fund-raising for the Washington Center, and evaluation of the Center's ongoing programs: the seminar series, the faculty exchange program and the model curriculum efforts.

The following individuals are current members of the planning committee:

- **Bellevue Community College**
R. Edmund Dolan, Dean of Instructional Programs
Patricia Williams, Faculty, English
- **North Seattle Community College**
Lucille Charnley, Dean of Instruction
Jim Harnish, Faculty, History
- **Seattle Central Community College**
Ron Hamburg, Dean of Instruction
Rosetta Hunter, Chair, Humanities & Social Sciences
Valerie Bystrom, Faculty, English
- **Seattle University**
Bernard Steckler, Dean, Matteo Ricci College
Father David Leigh, Director, Honors Program
- **Tacoma Community College**
Frank Garratt, Dean of Instruction
Paul Jacobson, Faculty, Chemistry
- **The Evergreen State College**
Barbara Leigh Smith, Senior Academic Dean
Nancy Taylor, Faculty, History
Margaret Gribskov, Faculty, Journalism, Education
- **University of Washington**
David McCracken, Associate Dean, Arts & Sciences
Richard Hartman, Faculty, Economics
- **Western Washington University**
Pete Elich, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
John Miles, Dean, Huxley College
William Stoeber, Director, Liberal Studies

Mailing List

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Name _____

Address _____

Send to The Washington Center, L 2211, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA 98505, or call (206) 866-6000, ext. 6606.

Coming in the Autumn Issue

- **Resources:** a list of tapes, articles, and bibliographies related to current Washington Center efforts: learning communities and interdisciplinary studies, and approaches to active and collaborative learning.
- **Reports:** on new model programs at Western Washington University, Centralia College, and Bellevue Community College.
- **Curriculum Coherence Efforts:** Reports of curriculum review and improvement efforts at participating institutions.



Washington Center

for the Improvement of the Quality of

Undergraduate Education

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