
 WASHINGTON
 CENTER

 news

 V O L U M E T W O N U M B E R T H R E E

Director's Letter
The Freshman Year in Washington State: Trends in General Education

Colleges across the country are re-examining their approaches to the Freshman Year and general education. This is also true of the colleges and universities in Washington. While all the national trends and themes are present in our colleges and universities, there are also some efforts unique to Washington state.

I see at least five trends emerging in general education reform in Washington. First, there is clearly a move towards greater focus in the curriculum. Many of our institutions are trying to define with more specificity the purpose of general education. There is a search for strategies for achieving greater vertical and horizontal coherence. As one of my colleagues put it, "The existing approaches often lack a larger rationale; they merely divide up the territory."

Although the general education course distribution system is still very much alive, it's being re-examined in many of our institutions. There is considerable support for a vertical and integrative view that sees the general education experience

Freshmen constitute the most neglected minority and the largest wasted resource in American higher education.

Barbara Leigh Smith
Director

spread across all four years and designed to complement the major. It is significant that schools like the University of Washington, which rely primarily upon the distribution system and set the tone for the community colleges, are exploring more integrative approaches.

A second trend involves a rethinking of the structural factors that affect general education. These include not only traditional dimensions such as class size, the departmental nature of our institutions, and the reward system for faculty, but also the divi-

sion of our curriculum into discrete courses. A great variety of alternatives are being explored, such as linked courses, clustered courses, coordinated study programs and others. Many of the major universities are re-examining large lecture classes with an eye to reducing class size, to provide freshmen with a more interactive learning environment. The training of teaching assistants is being upgraded.

continued next page

Undertaking a variety of efforts to reconfigure traditional courses horizontally into larger instructional packages, Washington community colleges are leading the nation. More than a dozen of our community colleges are involved with the creation of "learning community" model programs. Many of these re-structuring efforts build directly upon what is known about effective educational practice, with explicit attention given to active student involvement, time on task, frequent feedback, collaboration and high expectations.

A third trend in Washington focuses on developing new approaches to foster students' analytical, oral and written communication skills. There is increasing recognition that writing and thinking skills are crucially related, can best be taught in context, and need to be regularly practiced. Washington has been a leader in writing across the curriculum programs; it was the site for the Pacific Northwest Writing Consortium, one of the largest National Endowment for the Humanities writing across the curriculum projects. The University of Washington, The University of Puget Sound, Pacific Lutheran University, Evergreen, Lewis and Clark, and The University of Oregon participated in this effort.

A fourth trend in many institutions involves more holistic approaches toward general education and the freshman year. These typically involve broader concepts about the relationship between the academic curriculum and student services. Often beginning as retention strategies, many of these projects have developed sophisticated means to integrate curricular and co-curricular activities, advising, new student orientation and other support services. Some of our colleges have experienced dramatically improved retention rates over the past five years, an improvement they directly attribute to holistic approaches to the freshman year.

Finally, I should note that the overall process of educational reform in Washington often involves substantial faculty dialogue and sophisticated and well-thought-out faculty development strategies. It's heartening to see undergraduate education being given more status and administrative presence, and special efforts being made to involve the best of the senior faculty in general education.

A number of observers have commented that freshmen constitute the most neglected minority and the largest wasted resource in American higher education. The drop-out rate in too many institutions is appalling. New efforts to build a more coherent approach to general education in Washington state, represent an important beginning.

Barbara Leigh Smith
Director

Spring Quarter Learning Community Programs at Participating Institutions

Bellevue Community College is offering "R/EVOLUTION: Darwin, Marx and the Modern Imagination," a coordinated studies program, with faculty members David Jurji (anthropology), Jerrie Kennedy (English), and Mike Righi (economics).

Bellevue faculty member Pat Alley (formerly Williams) is exchanging this quarter to Evergreen to teach in the "Decisions" program with Duke Kuehn, Terry Hubbard, David Paulsen, and Will Humphreys.

Centralia College continues its "learning community blocks" (a modified federated learning community model) this spring with "A Life Worth Living." Don Foran (English and philosophy), Lynette Rushton (biology) and Sue Hendrickson (English) are collaborating on this human biology and bio-ethics offering. Through seed grant support from the Washington Center, faculty members at Centralia have been planning a full year's offerings of learning community programs for 1988-89.

Edmonds Community College has launched its first coordinated studies program, "Love in the Western World," with Edmonds English faculty Pat Nerison and Margaret Scarborough. Larry Hall (psychology) who is an exchange faculty member from North Seattle Community College joins the Edmonds team.

Green River Community College will finish its first year of coordinated studies programs with a science-based one, "Technology, Culture and the Environment: The American Experience." Associate Dean of Instruction Bruce Haulman (sociology), Crisca Bierwort (anthropology) and Richard Garrick (environmental science) have assembled this examina-



Students sharing writing in Bellevue Community College's winter quarter coordinated studies program, "The New Hero." Photo: Karen Smaalders, Bellevue Community College.

tion of the impact of technology on American culture and environment.

Lower Columbia College will complete its first year of "Integrative Studies" with the coordinated study offering, "Dilemmas in Professional Life." Jerry Zimmerman (law), Harvey Mashinter (philosophy) and Julie Preston (English) are leading an examination of the five main professions—medicine, law, business, the ministry and education—and the ethical and legal dilemmas that arise from those professions.

North Seattle Community College is offering the coordinated study, "Self, Culture and Nature Interlocked!" integrating science, art and visual thinking, English composition and creative writing. The North Seattle faculty team is David Calomeni (biology and ecology), David Harris (art) and Rita Phipps (English and educational psychology).

Seattle Central Community College is offering a host of coordinated studies programs again this spring. "Patterns and Paradigms" will be an 18-credit offering taught by David Dawson (English), Astrida Onat (archaeology), Bobby Righi (mathematics) and exchange faculty member Lovern King (applied social theory) from Evergreen.

"Patterns of Culture and Dynamics of Change," will be a 10 credit offering co-taught by Sandra Hastings (English) and Jim Baenen (anthropology). In the business area, Liz MacLennan (Business), Steve Soderland (economics) and Wendy Rader-Konofalski (English) will be team-teaching for the second consecutive quarter in the coordinated study, "Economics, Power and Communication."

Another 10-credit coordinated study, "Democracy in America," will link American History and English; this one has been developed by historian Dick Keller and English

faculty member Sandra Schrader.

Finally, the Basic Studies Program is offering a 15-credit coordinated study, "Cross-Cultural Perspectives in American History," team-taught by faculty members Rochelle Dela Cruz (English as a Second Language), Tracy Lai (history) and Caryn Kline (basic studies).

Spokane Falls Community College, with support from the Washington Center Seed Grants Program, is offering its first coordinated study this spring. Fran Brewer (English), Tom McLuen (philosophy) and Steve Reames (English) are team-teaching "The American Character." Spokane faculty members Ed Reynolds (English) and Diane DeFelice (biology) are acting as part-time kibitzers in the program; they will be part of next year's teaching teams.

continued next page

continued

The Tacoma Community College—Evergreen BRIDGE program continues into its third quarter with Evergreen faculty member Joye Hardiman and TCC faculty member Caro Church. The third quarter of this year-long evening program geared to adult learners will focus on ancient ethos and contemporary realities of north Africa, South Africa, China, India and Japan, and at the end will involve students in designing local community action/education projects.

Western Washington University's Fairhaven College continues its collaborative work with **Whatcom Community College**. Whatcom faculty member Alan Richardson and Fairhaven's Michael Burnett are team-teaching the Fairhaven "Cross-Cultural Perspectives" course both to Fairhaven and Whatcom students this spring.

Yakima Valley Community College is offering two learning community programs this spring. Judy Moore (biology), Tom Pear (English) and Inga Wiehl (English) are repeating last fall's well-received "Disease as Metaphor and Reality," a triad of courses in biology, English composition and comparative literature which interweaves concepts and issues related to the major diseases of recent times: plague, tuberculosis, cancer and AIDS.

A second coordinated study, involving critical thinking, has been developed by Dennis Konshak (English), Eric Mould (biology) and Dee Tadlock (humanities), with Washington Center seed grant support. Entitled "The Nature of the Beast," it will examine several perspectives on the nature of humankind.



Tacoma Community College exchange professor Yun Yi Ho and Gordon Beck discuss their Evergreen coordinated studies program, which contrasts eastern and western civilizations.

The learning community approach has now spread to Hawaii, with **Hawaii Community College** at Hilo initiating a semester-long coordinated studies. Betsy Diffendal, **Evergreen** faculty member in Anthropology is teaming with Hawaii faculty Ed Kanahale (Hawaiian studies) and Trina Nahm-Miho (psychology) to offer "Ho'oulumau...to grow continually," an exploration of Hawaiian history and culture.



Evergreen exchange faculty member Betsy Diffendal (center) with her University of Hawaii-Hilo Community College team, Ed Kanahele, and Trina Nahm-Miho.

Diffendal reports that the learning community approach is gaining significant interest at other community colleges in the Hawaii community college system. In January, a panel of Hawaii Community College faculty and Diffendal made a presentation at an Excellence in Teaching conference in Honolulu. To date, three other community colleges have arranged for Diffendal to meet with their faculty and help them think about ways that learning communities might benefit their curriculum. Diffendal sees this as a very cost-effective process for introducing learning communities to the Hawaii community college system. Several Hawaii Community College faculty will also be coming to the Washington Center's spring planning retreat to kibitz on the learning community planning efforts in Washington state. Betsy's exchange partner, Jan Kido, will be coming to the retreat to help plan her two quarters in Washington next year.

Washington Center Announces Seed Grant Awards

The Center is continuing its Seed Grants program to fund small (\$500 to \$3000) projects for collaborative, boundary-crossing work to build and improve curricular coherence and to improve teaching effectiveness at the undergraduate level. Awards were made during Winter quarter to:

Antioch University for the development of a program of advanced undergraduate study for inmates at the Monroe State Reformatory, to complement course work offered by Edmonds Community College. (Sally Fox, project director).

The University of Washington School of Nursing for a joint working conference with the nursing faculty at community colleges in the Puget Sound area. The conference focused on competencies (and their curricular implications) for both the associate and bachelor degree programs. (Anne Loustau, project director). The conference drew 90 participants representing every nursing program in the state as well as some out-of-state observers.

New Washington Center Members

We are pleased to welcome Gonzaga University and Walla Walla Community College to the Washington Center consortium. The contact people are:

Gonzaga University
Father Peter Ely, *Academic Vice President*

Spokane Community College
Tony Embrey, *Assistant Dean,*
Liberal Arts Division

Walla Walla Community College
Joseph Rich, *Dean of Instruction*

Conferences of Interest

National Conference on Student Centered Learning

May 25-27

Western Washington University

Featuring Arthur Chickering and Lee Kniefelkamp

For further information, contact:

Linda Reisser, Western Washington University: 206-676-3427

AAHE Third National Conference on Assessment

June 8-11

Chicago, Illinois

For further information, contact:

The AAHE Assessment Forum AAHE, Washington, DC:
202-293-6440.

Critical Thinking and Educational Reform

August 7-10

Sonoma State University

For further information, contact:

Richard Paul, Sonoma State University: 707-664-2940.

Association for General and Liberal Studies

October 13-15

Wilkes College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

For further information, contact:

Michael O'Neill, Wilkes College: 717-824-4651, extension 415.

POD Conference (Professional and Organizational Development Network)

October 13-16,

Keystone Colorado

For further information, contact:

Laura Border, University Learning Center, University of
Colorado, Boulder, Colorado: 303-492-5474



University of California mathematician Uri Treisman described his cutting edge work in a recent seminar sponsored by the Washington Center. Photo: Steve Davis, Evergreen.

Winter Presentations and Seminars

Uri Treisman, award-winning mathematician from the University of California, came to Olympia February 19 to speak on his outstanding efforts in teaching college math to minority students at Berkeley. Treisman's presentation at Evergreen was attended by about 40 faculty and administrators from various Washington Center institutions, including Olympic College, South Puget Sound, Seattle Central, North Seattle, Shoreline, Bellevue and Tacoma Community Colleges, University of Washington, Seattle University, Western Washington University, as well as representatives from the Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Superintendent of Public Instruction's Office. Treisman described his work at Berkeley, which involved scrutinizing the ways students study math as well as re-examining the way mathematics is taught. New, collaborative approaches to teaching calculus at Berkeley have dramatically improved the success rate of black and Hispanic students at UC. Treisman's program has been widely emulated in a variety of different settings.

■ **For further information on this project contact the Washington Center.**

The Washington Center held its first major conference in eastern Washington March 4, at Eastern Washington University's Higher Education Center in downtown Spokane. Entitled "**Writing and Thinking Across the Disciplines**," the conference drew a sell-out audience from throughout eastern Washington, Montana, and Idaho, with several individuals representing colleges from Wyoming and Oregon. Presenters included Jerry Cederblom (University of Nebraska-Omaha), Georgine Loacker (Alverno College),



Participants at the "Writing and Thinking" conference participate in a debate demonstrating how controversy can be used constructively to enhance student thinking abilities. Photo: John McCollum, Spokane Falls Community College.

John Bean (Seattle University), Deborah Hatch (University of Washington), Tom Malloy (University of Utah) and Craig Nelson (Indiana University).

The Washington Center sent the largest "campus team" (31) in the country to the annual meeting of the **American Association for Higher Education** in Washington D.C. March 8-12. New to AAHE were Joye Hardiman (Evergreen), Steve Reames (Spokane Falls Community College), Alexander Maxwell (Shoreline), Jerrie Kennedy (Bellevue), Carolyn Dobbs (Evergreen), Bob Filson (Green River) and Eric Mould (Yakima Valley).

David McCracken, Don Wulff, and Jody Nyquist (all of The University of Washington), Barbara Leigh Smith (Evergreen), Roberta Matthews (LaGuardia Community College), John Howarth (University of Maryland), Dick Zelle and Cindy Avens (Daytona Beach Community College) presented a workshop at AAHE on the various types of

continued next page



Jerry Cederblom, University of Nebraska-Omaha, presenting the keynote address at the Spokane "Writing and Thinking Across the Disciplines" conference. Photo: John McCollum, Spokane Falls Community College.

continued

Learning Community Model Programs. Barbara Smith and Ron Hamberg (Seattle Central Community College) participated in the AERA (American Education Research Association) sessions which generated research questions around the major conference themes. There was certainly no shortage of panels on collaborative learning at AAHE this year!

A gathering was also held at AAHE for Washington Center folks and others interested in **collaborative learning**. This included those associated with Project CUE—Collaborative Undergraduate Education—Karen Romer of Brown University is the CUE contact; the newly established (FIPSE-funded) Collaborative Learning Project at Lesley College in Cambridge Massachusetts, (contact: Anita Landa); leadership in POD—the Professional and Organizational Development Network—Joanne Kurfiss, University of Delaware is the contact, and others.

Rosetta Hunter and Rochelle Dela Cruz of Seattle Central Community College made a presentation on their allied health coordinated studies programs at the Student Success Strategies Conference in Portland. They focused on “Linking Coordinated Studies and the Under-Prepared Adult with Vocational Pathways” Hunter, the Humanities and Social Science Division Chair at Seattle Central, was recently awarded the **Horace Mann Leadership Award** by Antioch University, for her exemplary work in developing coordinated studies programs.

In early March, Center Assistant Director Jean MacGregor traveled to Lewis Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho, to lead faculty workshops on learning community designs.



The Washington Center Planning Committee, during their annual planning retreat, at Alderbrook.



The newest members of the Washington Center Planning Committee (from left): Fred Campbell (Dean of Undergraduate Studies, University of Washington), Rudy Martin (Faculty member in humanities, The Evergreen State College, and Director of the northwest office of the National Faculty), and Carl Swenson, (faculty member in mathematics, Seattle University).



Carl Waluconis, faculty member in English, Seattle Central Community College.
Photo: Lucy Hart, Seattle Central.

First Timers' Perspectives on Collaborative Teaching

by Carl Waluconis, Seattle Central Community College

A growing number of experienced college faculty have recently become first-time collaborative teachers. Many joined their teams with a sense of anxiety and even self-doubt. After all, their individual territory, which had been solely their own for so long, was about to be invaded. These apprehensions frequently gave way, however, to many discoveries, and happy surprises.

Marilyn Smith, an English instructor at North Seattle reflected on a time of extreme nervousness about changes she thought she might have to make in her expectations and at-

His faculty team in their early meetings were like "the natives who set up camp."

David Jurji
Bellevue Community College

titudes. When the program began, the doubt changed to delight, at the "wonderful opportunities collaborative teaching provided."

These "opportunities" varied, naturally, with different faculty. Joe Green, at Lower Columbia College, talked about the experience of being closer to his studies and closer to the students because of "the reinforcement provided by team teaching." If

something was not working in the classroom, he and his partner on the team, Carl Rousch, would immediately meet to discuss possible solutions to the problem. He spoke of ten-minute walks during breaks where teaching ideas would germinate—ideas which could be immediately

continued next page

continued

applied. One of the results was that they replaced a lecture format, which was not working, with a series of seminars. The program, he said, gave him “all the positive aspects of continual peer evaluation throughout the quarter.”

Carl Rousch, a biologist, and Green's partner, called it a joy to be able to view things and “try things differently in the classroom from the perspective of the humanities.” Their program field trip to Cedar Grove at the end of the quarter was a high point in the “communality of purpose” which the program achieved. Carl was struck by the discovery that his teaching colleague, the students and he were all looking for answers to the same questions, and remarked how humbling and enlightening it was to see this. Rousch and Green agreed that the exploration of each other's disciplines was a demanding and intense activity, but that is was the most satisfying aspect of their quarter together.

All faculty new to collaborative teaching were in agreement about the rigorous challenges. Marilyn Smith emphasized the importance of both planning and flexibility. Instructors were called on to give up some activities which they formerly considered indispensable, leaving their syllabi at the door, as it were. The trade was that students in the program were learning skills in ways that no other class could offer.

Some instructors reported they had to be much more flexible with their time. With impromptu faculty work sessions, and eager students, they could never count on leaving school at the same hour every afternoon. Ralph Duffy, from North Seattle, pointed to the time-gobbling activity of making team decisions on everything from giving and grading exams to setting agreed-upon expectations of student behavior in class.

He spoke of ten-minute walks during breaks where teaching ideas would germinate—ideas which could be immediately applied.

Joe Green
Lower Columbia College

Evergreen faculty member Leo Daugherty, teaching in a team at Seattle Central Community College, explained that faculty new to team-teaching (including himself) “generally tend to worry too much.” But Leo was delighted with the quality of the team he taught with (Nancy Finley, Jan Ray, and Dick Keller) in his exchange last fall, and was impressed with his colleagues' conscientiousness about developing together as a team, “something not everyone is willing to commit to.” Also, his expectations were exceeded by the “spectacular administrative and staff support given to new collaborative programs” at Seattle Central.

David Jurji at Bellevue Community College looked at his team-teaching experience from another perspective. He saw the team as a “model for shared authority,” which immediately creates a living, shared discourse with the students. David, an anthropologist, described with excitement the way his faculty team in their early meetings were like “the natives who set up camp.”

And if set up successfully, the experience of running the camp can be synergistic. Marilyn Smith is convinced her program could never have been completed by any one faculty member on their own: “statistically, it was so much more than 1 + 1 + 1.”



Exchange faculty to Evergreen this year include English faculty members Fran Brewer (left) from Spokane Falls Community College and Betsy Hilbert from Miami-Dade Community College.

The faculty team provided for her, “a fantastic range of ideas on which to draw, a natural result of involvement with the same colleagues for fifteen contact hours and more every week.” Marilyn was especially impressed with her team member Larry Hall’s ability to weave threads from her previous lectures into his. Ralph Duffy, the third member of that team, recalled the fun—both for faculty and students—of the developing back-and-forth banter that developed between the faculty over the quarter.

At Yakima Valley, Inga Wiehl’s overwhelming impression was feeling that she and her teaching team

members were becoming more excited and articulate about their subject matter, and more intellectually engaged with one another than they had been in years.

Each of the teams with whom I’ve spoken seem to find their own ways of transforming initial anxiety and doubt into an intellectually rich and highly affirming experience. As is often the case, dedication, rigor and the willingness to risk must partially make up for the lack of experience in this work. But the result is that collaborative teaching adds to the classroom a new territory, a fresh dimension, the exploration of which becomes a tantalizing activity.

Coming in the Fall Issue:

- Our 1988-89 Workshop Schedule
- Reports on the Washington Center Seed Grant Projects

Washington Center Staff

Barbara Leigh Smith, Director
Jean MacGregor, Assistant Director
Laura O’Brady, Program Assistant

Mailing List

Please return this form if you or additional people you know of should receive our publications:

Name _____

Address _____

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

Washington Center Planning Committee

Bellevue Community College:
Edmund Dolan and Pat Alley

North Seattle Community College:
Lucille Charnley and Rita Phipps

Seattle Central Community College:
Ron Hamberg, Rosetta Hunter, and
Valerie Bystrom

Seattle University:
Bernard Steckler and Carl Swenson

Spokane Falls Community College:
Ron Johns and Steven Reames

Tacoma Community College:
Frank Garratt and Paul Jacobsen

The Evergreen State College:
Rudy Martin

The University of Washington:
Fred Campbell and Jody Nyquist

Western Washington University:
Peter Elich, John Miles and William
Stoever

The Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education

- established in 1985 at Evergreen as an inter-institutional consortium devoted to improving undergraduate education. The Center focuses on low-cost, high-yield approaches to educational reform, emphasizing better utilization and sharing of existing resources through inter-institutional collaboration. Established with funding from the Exxon and Ford Foundations, the Center is now supported by the Washington state legislature.
- includes 36 participating institutions: all the public four-year institutions, 23 community colleges, and seven independent colleges.
- supports and coordinates inter-institutional faculty exchanges, the development of interdisciplinary "learning community" programs, conferences, seminars and technical assistance on effective approaches to teaching and learning.

 **Washington Center**
for the Improvement of the Quality of
Undergraduate Education

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Olympia, WA
Permit No. 65