

# news

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## Freshman Interest Groups at the University of Washington: *Building Community for Freshmen at a Large University*

by Claire F. Sullivan, Coordinator, University of Washington FIGs Program, Donald H. Wulff, Assistant Director, Center for Instructional Development and Research, University of Washington.

This fall marked the third year of Freshman Interest Groups (FIGs) at the University of Washington. Based on a model of academic learning communities, the UW FIG program has evolved into a highly successful experience for students, peer advisers, and faculty.

### The Freshman Interest Group Model

FIGs generally consist of 20-25 incoming freshmen who form a community by taking a cluster of courses that provide some curricular coherence. For example, students might enroll in a cluster entitled "The Individual and Society" that involves a sociology class, a speech class, and an English class. Or, they might choose a pre-science/pre-engineering cluster with courses in math,

chemistry and English composition. Typically, at least one course in the cluster is a small class in which only the students in the FIG group are enrolled. The other courses may be larger lecture courses where FIG participants comprise only a fraction of the students taking the course but where the members of the FIG are all in the same discussion section.

In addition to enrolling in the same cluster of courses, students in each FIG meet periodically for discussion facilitated by an upper class peer adviser. These meetings provide opportunities for the freshmen to share their knowledge, vent their fears, learn about university resources, establish friendships, and develop a supportive learning environment. Occasionally faculty members teaching the FIG courses attend the meetings of the students and peer advisers as a way of increasing student-teacher interaction.

**Participating Institutions:** Antioch University, Bellevue Community College, Central Washington University, Centralia College, City University, Clark College, Eastern Washington University, Edmonds Community College, Everett Community College, Gonzaga University, Grays Harbor College, Green River Community College, Heritage College, Highline Community College, Lower Columbia College, North Seattle Community College, Olympic College, Pacific Lutheran University, Pierce College, Saint Martin's College, Seattle Central Community College, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle University, Shoreline Community College, Skagit Valley College, South Puget Sound Community College, South Seattle Community College, Spokane Community College, Spokane Falls Community College, Tacoma Community College, The Evergreen State College, University of Puget Sound, University of Washington, Walla Walla Community College, Washington State University, Wenatchee Valley College, Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Yakima Valley Community College.



The Freshman Interest Group leadership at University of Washington: Donald Wulff, assistant director of the Center for Instructional Development and Research; Claire Sullivan, FIG Coordinator; David McCracken, former assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; and Frederick Campbell, associate dean of undergraduate education, College of Arts and Sciences. (Photo: University of Washington)

## FIGs at the University of Washington

At the University of Washington, as at the University of Oregon where FIG's originated, FIGs were instituted because of concern about the freshman experience. Each fall approximately 3500 freshman begin academic careers at the University of Washington. Although the majority of these freshmen are from the top one-third of their high school's graduating class, they embark on their academic careers with fears and uncertainties about attending a large university. Being "just a number" without a personalized identity or feeling overwhelmed by the academically competitive environment are common concerns for freshmen.

In 1987 an ad hoc College of Arts and Sciences committee of faculty and administrators, meeting to address such needs of freshmen, recommended a Freshman Interest Group program. David McCracken, then Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, responded to the recommendation by establishing a small number of clusters on a trial basis during Autumn Quarter, 1987. As a result of these initial efforts, the various components of the UW FIGs program evolved.

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**I really feel as though my FIG group is a family unit. We are all feeling the same stress, the same pressure, and, because of that, we are able to deal with anxiety together.**

*University of Washington Freshman Interest Group Student*

## **Administration of UW FIGs**

During its initial year, the UW FIGs program was administered through the College of Arts and Sciences and coordinated almost entirely by David McCracken. David enlisted the help of the Central Advising Office to select peer advisors and the Center for Instructional Development and Research (CIDR) to train peer advisors and evaluate the first year of the program. In its second year, the program was administered by the newly-appointed Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Frederick Campbell.

As of 1989-90, Campbell is assisted in the Freshman Interest Group program by Ken Tokuno, Director of Special Undergraduate Programs. The logistics of an expanded program in the second year required additional time devoted to management and coordination, and Claire Sullivan, a Ph.D. graduate student in speech communication and a CIDR staff consultant, was subsequently hired as the program coordinator.

## **Freshman Participation in the FIG Clusters**

The clusters in the UW program have included a variety of tracks of interest to freshmen, ranging from pre-law or pre-business administration to pre-engineering/pre-science or origins of Western civilization. During the first year of the program, students learned of the various options when they met with their advisors to prepare for registration. For the second year, flyers announcing the FIG program were mailed in freshman packets of information shortly after freshmen were notified of their acceptance into the University. Additional flyers were distributed at New Student Orientation during the summer months, and students wishing to register for a cluster selected one during summer pre-registration sessions.

In the first year of the program, 83 students enrolled in four different FIG clusters during autumn quarter. The second year of the program, which also took place during autumn quarter, consisted of eight clusters with nearly 200 students enrolled. The third year, Fall 1989, nearly 400 students enrolled in 20 freshman interest groups.

Reasons for participating in the UW FIGs are varied. Some enroll for the academic benefits, others for the friendships and social support. Some enroll simply to expedite registration in popular courses. These differences in students are encouraged since the program tries to reflect student diversity in terms of academic achievement, social skill, gender, and ethnicity. Students who choose the FIGs program seem to appreciate this opportunity to learn from others both similar to and quite different from themselves.

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## Peer Advisors for FIGs

Peer advisors for the UW FIGs Program are upper class students chosen on the basis of their leadership, their academic interests, and their knowledge of the university community and its resources. They assume important roles in the program, functioning as facilitators of discussion sessions, as resources to provide support and information, and as liaisons between the students and faculty who teach FIG courses.

To prepare the five peer advisors for these roles during the first year, Don Wulff and Jody Nyquist from CIDR developed a systematic training program that could be pilot tested. The training consisted of a three-hour session before classes began and weekly sessions with the peer advisors throughout the quarter. The

training sessions provided background information on the philosophy and purpose of learning communities, the role of the peer advisor and expectations for fulfilling this role, design of plans for cluster discussions, and potential issues and problems in leading discussions and fulfilling the peer advisor role. In addition, small group, interpersonal leadership, and information-processing theory was incorporated to assist peer advisors in developing the skills needed to facilitate discussion and activities within their groups. During the second year, Claire Sullivan provided the training, using feedback from the pilot program to assist her in adapting and expanding the sessions to meet the needs of the ten peer advisors.

## Faculty and Teaching Assistants (TAs) for FIGs

Faculty and TAs become involved in the UW FIGs program when they teach a course or discussion section which has been selected for inclusion in a FIGs cluster. Although students and peer advisors often invite faculty to special sessions or events, the level of faculty or TA involvement beyond the classroom is determined by the instructors themselves. In the past, faculty who attended weekly meetings with the students and peer advisors talked about their own research and undergraduate experiences, or answered student questions about course material, grades, or exams. The most successful student-faculty interactions, however, have often been informal--going out for pizza together and/or talking about the instructors' own undergraduate days.

**With the network established in the FIG groups, a university as large as ours becomes suddenly more manageable and friendly.**

*University of Washington Freshman Interest Group Student*

## Initial Autumn Quarter FIG Meeting

During the first year of the program, freshmen initially met their instructors on the first day of classes and had their first meeting with their peer advisors during the latter part of the first week of classes. Feedback from the first year of the program suggested that it would be more useful to introduce students, faculty, and peer advisors to each other before the first day of classes in the fall. Consequently, in the program's second year, the FIG kick-off took place on the Sunday afternoon before classes began. Everyone involved in the second year of the FIGs program was invited to attend, and over 100 administrators, faculty, peer advisors and students participated in this event. Although a portion of this inaugural meeting concerned the FIGs program and those involved in coordinating it, much of the time was devoted to individual FIG cluster meetings. This opening meeting was key: it helped form initial bonds within the clusters and gave participants an idea of the larger scope of the program. Freshmen, especially, indicated that they felt more comfortable knowing the faculty, peer advisors, and some of the other people in their FIGs before attending the first day of classes.

## Weekly Meeting of Freshmen with Peer Advisors

Weekly meetings of freshmen with peer advisors explicitly address the needs and concerns of freshmen in each cluster. During these meetings, peer advisors have been especially successful in leading discussions on study techniques, registration procedures, choosing a major, student life at UW and campus involvement. The meeting times have also included campus tours of facilities, including the libraries, computer centers, counseling center, campus art galleries and the intramural athletic center. As a result of these weekly meetings, some groups have become active social groups, going to movies and campus productions together. Just as important, these strong ties carried into the academic realm, as students formed study groups, often dividing up studying responsibilities, sharing notes and offering critiques of each others' work.

## Feedback on the UW FIGs program

During UW's first year of FIGs, Robert Abbott, Donald Wulff and Jody Nyquist at the UW's Center for Instructional Development and Research designed an evaluation of the program. The approach involved obtaining feedback from students at midterm, and using that feedback to develop items for a questionnaire administered at the end of the first year. They also established a method for obtaining longitudinal data about the effects of the program. Using the feedback from the first year, Claire Sullivan continued assessment of the program into the second year, both drawing upon and expanding the initial assessment measures.

Although it is too early to determine the long range impact of UW FIGs, assessment for the first two years has been very positive. All five of the peer advisors in the initial program "strongly agreed" that the program should be continued, and 100% of the faculty interviewed either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the program should be offered to freshmen in subsequent years.

Students, peer advisors, and faculty cite many benefits to the program. When freshman participants were asked to identify the strengths of the FIGs program, their comments suggested that through FIGs they had obtained help with their classes, developed supportive friendships, gained information, increased interest in their classes, and adjusted more readily to the university. As one student explained, "It helped me prepare my work without procrastinating so much. I have found resources other than books or teachers on which to call for help or vent my frustrations. The other FIG members have been very supportive throughout the quarter. Everyone is very caring and understanding."

Another FIG participant commented, "I really feel as though my FIG group is a family unit. We are all feeling the same stress, the same pressure, and, because of that, we are able to deal with anxiety to-

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**They were a lot more together and enthused. They were the first group I ever had who formed a study guide for the final. They were more confident and interested.**

*University of Washington Freshman Interest Group Instructor*

gether." Another suggested, "It's helped me so much! I've made some great friends and studying with these people all quarter has benefited my grades immensely. Also the linked classes have been much more interesting than three totally different, separate classes."

Focusing on the kinds of information that helps in adjusting to university life, another student said, "Freshman Interest Groups provide a valuable experience. Entering freshmen meet informally with a peer who is familiar with the university. I believe this gives them an edge on other students. FIGs present opportunities to learn the essentials of campus life and make friends who share similar interests. With the network established in the FIG groups, a university as large as ours becomes suddenly more manageable and friendly."

Peer advisors are also very positive about the FIGs experience. One peer advisor suggested that he had "gained hands-on experience as a leader of a small group...(and) new skills and subtle points about interacting with others." Another said, "Personally I gained valuable insights into the working of the university. I was able to get information about things I had always wondered about. The experience of leading a group discussion and being responsible for it gave me new appreciation of the teaching profession." A third focused on the sense of personal satisfaction: "It was a great learning experience--especially for small group interaction and leadership. I really liked the students I met and I hope I contributed something to their college experience--- that makes me feel good in itself."

Finally, one advisor focused on the friendships that freshmen developed during their FIG experience: "When I was walking out of the first session, three of the guys were talking like they'd known each other for ten years. I asked if they knew each other before coming to the UW and they said no, that they met in the FIG. This is the most important thing about FIGs...meeting other freshmen and getting to know them in a situation where most barriers are broken down."

Faculty also see benefits in the program. Typical comments suggested that faculty observed the effects of FIGs in class attendance, group support/cohesiveness, class participation, and quality of students' work. When talking about the effects of the program, one instructor said, "The most immediate effect is that they all showed up every day. It was like they felt more responsibility to me and to each other." Another noted differences in how students related to one another, saying, "They seemed to show considerable mutual support. If one did poorly on a quiz,

you might hear others coaching, i.e., 'This is what you have to study next time,' or 'These are the kinds of questions he will ask....'" Still another, reported that "They did lots of sharing outside of class. For sure, it was one of the most cohesive classes I've ever had." When asked to identify the effects of the program, another reported that "They [students in FIGs] were better prepared. Before and after class, they were often organizing study groups." Finally, one instructor said, "They were a lot more together and enthused. They were the first group I ever had who formed a study guide for the final. They were more confident and interested. As a result I gave more 4.0's than ever before."

## Future of the UW FIGs Program

Because the UW adaptation of learning communities has been positive for the participants, all facets of the program are expanding. The FIG staff are making efforts to inform all incoming freshmen about the positive academic and social benefits of the program. Admissions counselors distribute flyers and introduce the program at Washington state high schools; high school counselors and parents receive information about the program through UW publications; and a brochure has been developed for mailing to all incoming freshmen. In addition, the number of clusters being offered increased to twenty in Autumn Quarter, 1989, with plans under way to incorporate winter and spring quarter FIGs as well. Also, student diversity in FIGs is expanding, through additional efforts to include UW student athletes and students involved in the Equal Opportunity Program (Office of Minority Affairs).

Finally, interest in Freshman Interest Groups now extends beyond the UW campus. Requests are growing, for information about implementation and evaluation of the FIGs at UW. Despite the increased coordination and effort required by the growing program, we continue to view it as a worthwhile venture that contributes significantly to the quality of undergraduate education at the University of Washington. Freshman Interest Groups are low-cost, and simple to assemble. They provide a learning community model that is adaptable to almost any undergraduate setting.

For additional information on Freshman Interest Groups, contact: Claire Sullivan at (206) 543-2551 or Ken Tokuno, Director of Special Undergraduate Programs at (206) 543-5340.

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# Sample Freshman Interest Groups at UW

## Pre-Law

Political Science 202: Intro to American Politics  
Philosophy 114: Philosophical Issues in the Law  
English 198: Interdisciplinary Writing/Social Science

+ FIG Discussion Group with peer advisor

## American Civilization

History 201: Survey of the History of the United States  
Speech 103: Interpersonal Communication  
English 267: Intro. to American Literature

+ FIG Discussion Groups with peer advisor

## Pre-Business Administration

Math 156: Application of Algebra to Business & Economics  
Psychology 101: Psychology as a Social Science  
English 121: Composition: Social Issues

+ FIG Discussion Group with peer advisor

## What do Freshman Interest Groups Cost?

Remarkably little. University of Washington Associate Dean Fred Campbell says that you can start on a shoestring, and then decide what to spend on them. At UW, FIGs started with only a Graduate Teaching Assistant and about \$2500 for promotional materials and supplies. The graduate teaching assistant had responsibility for promoting the program and recruiting and training the peer advisors. As the program expanded, the University developed a more extensive support system for freshman programs as a whole and appointed a Director of Special Undergraduate Programs, Ken Tokuno, who spends about one third of his time administering the freshman interest group program.

University of Oregon freshman interest groups, coordinated by Jack Bennett in the Office of Academic Advising, are also run at minimal expense. Their budget is as follows:

\$3400 for FIG brochures  
\$ 200 for peer advisor training manuals  
\$ 100 for a survey of FIG students and two student positions (an undergraduate and a graduate)



# Directors' Letter

The turn of the decade brings with it the inevitable urge to look back and forward, and to draw meanings from both the times and time itself. For the Washington Center consortium, 1990 marks our fifth birthday.

When we launched the Center with the Exxon Foundation's support in the spring of 1985, we aspired to build a cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional community of professionals interested in working together to improve undergraduate education. Through working retreats, conferences, faculty exchanges, seed grants, the development of model programs and informal consultants (or "kibitzers"), we worked to create and sustain in the Northwest a widening set of conversations about teaching and learning--conversations that have yielded significant results for faculty and students. It was a gratifying tribute, then, to have The Chronicle of Higher Education feature the Center as "an unusual consortium" last June.

The Washington Center conversations, and related efforts to improve teaching and learning, have expanded rapidly over these five years. Thirty-nine schools are now affiliated with the consortium, and the level of involvement on many campuses is growing. On over twenty campuses, there are model learning community programs--offerings which link courses or course-work together for greater curricular coherence and student involvement. More than a dozen schools are active in the Center's faculty exchange effort. Faculty participating in all



Barbara Leigh Smith,  
Washington Center director.



Jean MacGregor,  
Washington Center  
assistant director.

these endeavors are stimulating each other to explore new approaches and to become more reflective about their teaching.

At a time when teaching is finally receiving some national attention as a critically important enterprise, Washington state is emerging as a region alive with generative work on teaching improvement. The meaning we draw from these past five years is that, collectively, we hold many of the keys to educational improvement in our own hands. As the 1990's unfold, we look forward to continuing to build our common

enterprise in a collaborative context. We want to express our personal gratitude to all of you for being such stimulating, energetic and dedicated colleagues. We feel optimistic about the '90s because of the energy and commitment that we encounter daily through this very satisfying work.

Barbara Leigh Smith  
Director

Jean MacGregor  
Assistant Director

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# Washington Center and Community College Board Co-Sponsor Minority Success Project

The Washington State Board for Community College Education is collaborating with the Washington Center during the 1989 and 1990 academic years on a project to enhance minority student success throughout the community college system. The project will engage community colleges in the state in developing and sharing low-cost, high-yield approaches to recruit, retain and graduate students of color. These colleges will be involved this year: Bellevue, Columbia Basin, Green River, Highline, North Seattle, Seattle Central, Spokane, Tacoma, and Yakima Valley. Additional colleges will join the effort next year.

Center staff Barbara Smith and Jean MacGregor, State Board staff member Jan Yoshiwara and a steering committee representing colleges throughout the state have co-designed the first year of the effort. Through surveys and in-depth interviews at the participating institutions, these individuals are gathering information about each college's efforts and issues with regard to minority student success. The results of this research will become the ingredients for the agenda of a working retreat in February involving campus teams, and several "kibitzers" who are national leaders in the arena of minority student success. An additional element of the project will be a resource document on minority student success, entitled "What Works." This literature review and listing of outstanding national efforts and resources is being compiled by Washington Center consultant Carolyn Brewer. The Spring issue of the Washington Center NEWS will focus in depth on minority student success.

# New Washington Center Members

**Heritage College and City University** are the newest members of the Washington Center. Institutional contacts at these schools are John Daley, vice president for Academic Affairs at City University and Espiritu Dempsey, academic dean, and Robert Plumb, member of the faculty in Education at Heritage College.

Resource people at the October 6 learning communities workshop at Yakima Valley Community College: Steve Reames, Spokane Falls Community College, and Eric Mould, Judy Moore and Roger Carlstrom of the Yakima faculty.



## Fall 1989 Conferences and Presentations

The Washington Center continues to build interest and support for learning community curriculum development work, with presentations and workshops around the region and nation. A major fall event was a learning community workshop October 6 hosted by Yakima Valley Community College. With about 50 faculty and administrators in attendance representing eleven Washington and Oregon Colleges, the workshop's presenters included Jean MacGregor (Washington Center); Larry Reid (Bellevue Community College); Ron Johns and Steve Reames (Spokane Falls Community College); and Eric Mould, Judy Moore, Roger Carlstrom and Gerald Perryman (Yakima Valley Community College).

In late October, Jean MacGregor, Valerie Bystrom and Bobby Righi (Seattle Central Community College) and Judy Moore (Yakima Valley Community College) traveled to Central Oregon and Chemeketa Community Colleges for introductory workshops on learning communities.

Jean MacGregor paid an extended visit to Minnesota, where she presented a learning community workshop at the annual meeting of the Bush Collaboration, a 55-college faculty development consortium in Minnesota and North Dakota. She spent additional days on the campuses of Anoka Ramsey Community College and Augsburg College.

In June, North Seattle Community College's Jim Harnish presented on learning communities at the San Diego State University conference on "Rethinking the Curriculum: Toward an Integrated Interdisciplinary Education."

Barbara Leigh Smith was in Phoenix in October working on learning communities in Arizona with faculty and administrators from a variety of colleges and universities. In January, she returned with a Washington Center team, including Jim Harnish (North Seattle), Rochelle Dela Cruz (Seattle Central), and Eric Mould (Yakima Valley) for more extended work on learning community development and teaching approaches.

Washington colleges are increasingly receiving visitors from out-of-state who want to learn more about learning communities and new approaches to teaching and learning. Teams that have been in the region recently include Lane Community College, University of North Dakota-Williston, Central Oregon Community College, Anoka Ramsey Community College (from Minneapolis), and Eastern Oregon State College.

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# Ways of Knowing Conference

■ "The intellect often tends to usurp all other experiences of the world. While we certainly need it and can't write good stories without the intellect, it isn't where the story comes from."

■ "The poetic imagination deals with what's been left out and dis-owned. Too often in the modern world we only want to deal with what's easy and successful in our lives...."

■ "It's important to teach in a connected way that includes who we are as teachers."

■ "The poetic imagination's task is to bring together the great universal story of which you are a part and the present moment in which you exist."

■ "If we care to succeed in a genuine multicultural society we must pay attention to voice and its critical companion, listening. Many of us fear that if we really listen, we may hear things we don't want to hear."

■ "A decade of feminist literature can be summarized by saying that relationships matter."

■ "It's time to renegotiate the subject-object difference rooted in our old ways of knowing. Collaborative learning recognizes that knowledge is created and that the message is also the context in which it is created and transformed."

These are a few of the many insightful comments from participants in the Center's major Fall Conference, "Ways of Knowing." It was an illuminating experience for all involved. The two-day gathering in Olympia drew more than 200 people, many large teams of faculty and administrators, and participants traveling from as far away as Missouri and Illinois.

The conference explored a variety of perspectives about diverse ways of knowing, and drew upon literature in psychology, philosophy, women's studies, poetry and other fields. As with most Washington Center conferences, the aim was to offer and combine theory and practice, and to feature both national and regional thinkers and practitioners.

The conference featured two keynote presenters. Parker Palmer, author of *To Know as We Are Known* and *The Company of Strangers* explored what it means to engage students in a mutual search for "the community of truth." Jill Tarule co-author (with Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, and Nancy Goldberger) of *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, provided an overview of perspectives in feminist epistemology and pedagogy, and speculated on the work that still needs our attention.

Morris Berman, author of *Coming to Our Senses* and *The Re-enchantment of the World*, used slides to explore the totemic basis of civilization. Hawaii Community College-Hilo exchange faculty Janice Kido led sessions on cross-cultural

communication and ways of knowing, which explored how cultural frames of reference shape our ways of seeing and understanding the world. Evergreen faculty member in psychology Ryo Imamura introduced the Myers-Briggs personality type and its implications for teaching and learning. Drawing on the work of Howard Gardner, Robert Sternberg, David Perkins, Reuven Feuerstein and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Dee Dickinson, Founder of New Horizons for Learning, provided an introduction to the "multiple intelligences" work, leading-edge research in the cognitive sciences.

A variety of participatory workshops involved individuals in practicing different ways of knowing through drama, poetry, reflective journals, dance, and drawing. Artist and mind mapper Nancy Margulies introduced participants to the practice of mind mapping and also created mind maps of the keynote addresses at the conference. Sandra Nisbet, an Evergreen faculty member and well known local actress, involved participants in techniques for dramatizing documents. Poet David Whyte, whose presentations were described as "spell binding," enabled participants to explore the power of myth and the poetic imagination. Marilyn Frasca, member of the Evergreen faculty, introduced Ira Proff's "Intensive Journal" approach for linking the personal to the professional. Hardy souls who weren't too tired at the end of the first day of the conference explored European folk-dancing to the lively music and instruction of the Mazeltones, a wonderful Seattle group who specialize in klezmer tunes and other music from around the world.



"Ways of Knowing" presenter Nancy Margulies draws a mind map of Jill Tarule's address on women's ways of knowing.



"Ways of Knowing" conference presenters Parker Palmer and Dee Dickinson with conference participants.

# Washington Center Seminars and Conferences

**A Retreat on Building Learning Communities for Developmental Level Students.** January 11-12, 1990 at Rainbow Lodge, North Bend, Washington.

**An Orientation to the Washington Center and its work for faculty development leaders.** February 2, 1990 at the SeaTac Hilton.

**Minority Student Success Project Working Retreat,** Rainbow Lodge, February 20-21, 1990. Co-sponsored with the State Board for Community College Education. By invitation only.

**Spring Curriculum Planning Retreats at Two Sites:** April 20-21, 1990 in eastern Washington at the Bozarth Center of Gonzaga University, in Spokane.

May 11-12 in western Washington at the Pilgrim Firs Camp near Port Orchard.

# Other Conferences of Interest

**American Association for Higher Education** April 1-4 in San Francisco. The theme of the conference is "Today's Choices..Tomorrow's Faculty: Shaping the Future Campus." For additional information, contact AAHE at 202-293-6440.

**American Association for Community and Junior Colleges** April 22-25 in Seattle.

**Washington State Board for Community College Education Assessment Conference** May 3-4 in Seattle. For additional information, contact Jan Yoshiwara at 206-753-4691.

**Washington Association for Developmental Education Annual Conference** May 4-5, 1990 in Seattle. For additional information contact Laurie Cohen at 206-587-2924.

**National Conference on Racial and Ethnic Minorities.** June 1-5, 1990 in Sante Fe, New Mexico. For further information write Dr. Maggie Abudu Green, Executive Director, Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73037-0005 or call 405-325-3936.

**American Association for Higher Education Annual Assessment Conference.** June 27-30 in Washington D.C.

**Association for General and Liberal Studies Annual Conference** in Baltimore, October 25-27, 1990. The theme of the conference is "Learning Communities and the Nature of the Liberal Conversation." Proposals for sessions are due April 1, 1990; send proposals to Clarinda Harriss Lott, English Department, Towson State University, Towson, MD 21204.

# New Publications

**Zee Gamson, Art Chickering and Louis Barsi** have published two new inventories which carry one step further their "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education." (Their first piece on this subject was reprinted in the Fall 1987 Washington Center NEWS). Designed as self-reflective tools, the new inventories are being distributed by the Johnson Foundation. For free copies of the Institutional Inventory and the Faculty Inventory write to the Johnson Foundation, Inventories of Good Practice, Processing Center, P.O. Box 17305, Milwaukee, WI 53217.

*Learning Communities: Creating Connections Among Students, Faculty, and Disciplines*, co-authored by **Faith Gabelnick, Jean MacGregor, Roberta Matthews and Barbara Leigh Smith**, will be published by Jossey Bass in their "New Directions in Teaching and Learning Series" in Spring, 1990. This book reports on more than five years' experience with learning communities in Washington and elsewhere in the United States.

Edmonds Community College faculty **Margaret Scarborough, Pat Nerison and Anne Martin** have written an extensive program history of a coordinated studies program which they taught at Edmonds in 1987. "Building Learning Communities: A Coordinated Studies Handbook" is so well put together that we have reprinted it. Call us at the Washington Center if you are interested in receiving a copy.

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**I see such a disparity between rhetoric and reality. Is teaching really valued? How can a TA effect change to bring greater equality in emphasis between teaching and research?**

**Twenty-Eight  
Washington  
TA's Attend  
National  
Conference as  
Washington  
Center  
Fellows**

In November, the University of Washington's Center for Instructional Development and Research (CIDR) hosted the Second National Conference on the Training and Employment of Teaching Assistants. Its theme, "Preparing the Professoriate of Tomorrow for Teaching: Enhancing the TA Experience," reinforced the new and growing nationwide interest in the quality of TA training and teaching. Nearly six hundred educators came to Seattle for this three-day event.

Through a seed grant conceived by CIDR and funded by the Washington Center, 28 TA's from the University of Washington, Washington State University and Eastern, Central and Western Universities attended the conference as Washington Center Fellows. The seed grant effort built visibility and involvement of Washington TA's in the conference, and provided opportunities for the Washington group to get to know one another and identify common issues and interests.

At a breakfast gathering early in the conference, the TA-Fellows introduced themselves and discussed their interests in the conference. Many anticipated recharging their batteries and learning practical ideas for better meeting the needs of their students. Others wanted to explore ways institutions can offer incentives for TAs to become better teachers. Almost all the participants spoke poignantly of the pressures they face as they balance their own graduate studies with their interests in teaching.

At the end of the conference, the Washington Center fellows reconvened to discuss the issues that the conference had raised for them. Below is a sampling of some of their reflections and suggestions:

■ "I want to talk with others about how to balance the pressures of being a first year graduate student with being a first time TA."

■ "What's needed in this state is more involvement of faculty and leadership at the top to support quality teaching for TA's. There just isn't enough faculty support for good teaching."

■ "I see such a disparity between rhetoric and reality. Is teaching really valued? How can a TA effect change to bring greater equality in emphasis between teaching and research?"

■ "I am struggling with several others to teach an introductory science course to 1400 scientific illiterates. I am looking for answers."

■ "I am a Chinese medical microbiologist struggling to be a good TA. I'm here to learn more about being an effective American TA with American students!"

■ "TA's need to demand models from their professors--models for quality teaching as well models for scholarly excellence."

■ "TA training must include more information on dealing with the minority and ethnic students and issues of gender and race."

■ "I'm TA-ing in science at the U. and am discouraged about the brain drain in my department from teaching assistantships to research assistantships...and the implications of this for effective teaching..."

■ "I am fence-sitting, I think, about whether to stay in academia at all. It is difficult to watch the stress that young faculty go through as they enter tenure track positions."

■ "The most important lesson I leave with from this conference is that teaching undergraduates well is far more difficult and far more important than I thought."

At the end of the conference Wilbert McKeachie argued that we've made great progress in terms of what we know about effective teaching. At the same time, the political economy of higher education is increasingly hostile to implementing some of the needed changes. McKeachie challenged us in higher education to put what we know into practice. Part of the answer may indeed be in more effective TA training. Teaching Assistants are, indeed, the professoriate of tomorrow.



# What's Happening: Learning Community Programs and Faculty Exchanges at Participating Institutions

**At Bellevue Community College** three learning community programs are being offered Winter Quarter: "The Water Web" with Roger George (English), Mark Plunkett (science), and Julianne Seeman (English); "The Televised Mind" with David Jurji (anthropology), Jerrie Kennedy (English), and Craig Sanders (communications and American studies); and "The Scientific Revolution" with David Stacy (math) and John Stewart (physics). In terms of faculty exchanges, Bellevue faculty member Pat Alley is at North Seattle Community College and Bellevue economist Michael Righi is at the University of Hawaii-Hilo.

**Edmonds Community College** is offering a learning community combining geology and English, taught by Pat Nerison and Maureen Lewison.

**Everett Community College** continues its "Women on the Move to a Four Year Degree" clustered course program and reports growing interest in this program. Aimed at increasing the retention and transfer of women, the program is taught by Paul Marshall, Ann Jackets, Julie Buchholz, and Wadiyah Nelson.

**Green River Community College** is offering a linked-course program during Winter Quarter combining Introductory Geology and General Physics and taught by Bob Filson (geology) and Marv Nelson (physics).

In Winter Quarter **Lower Columbia College** offers an Integrated Studies program called "The Human Matrix" combining English composition, psychology, world literature, and American political institutions. The team is David Benson (history), David McCarthy (literature), and Michael Strayer (psychology).

**North Seattle Community College** continues to offer an array of linked courses and coordinated studies programs Winter Quarter. The coordinated studies offering, "American Values," is taught by Bellevue exchange faculty Pat Alley (English), Neil Clough (history), Jim Harnish (history), and Diane Hostetler (drama). Linked courses are being offered with Economics 202 (Don Trimble) and Math 156 (Vicky Ringen). Other English links include courses in electronics and drafting. Further information on North Seattle's approach to learning communities can be obtained by calling coordinated studies coordinator Dave Mitchell.

In Winter Quarter **Shoreline Community College** continues its successful work with "combined classes" with Dennis Peters and Louise Douglas teaching combined classes in speech and English under the title, "Making Sense of Education." Alexander Maxwell and Don McVay, combining biology and English, are teaching a program called "The Zoo is You." Meanwhile, Amy Mates and Lloyd Keith are again working together pairing English and History. Finally, Carol Doig and Diane Gould are teaching "The Communication Connection" combining studies in mass media and society, and English.



The Washington Center's state-wide evaluation committee continues with its work on student-centered approaches to assessment. Chatting here at the Center's summer retreat are Carl Waluconis (Seattle Central Community College), Dan Larner (Western Washington University), Jean MacGregor (Washington Center), and Jack Bautsch (Seattle Central). (Photo: Teresa Grigsby)

**Seattle Central Community College** continues its broad array of learning communities with numerous offerings in the academic transfer, allied health, developmental and ESL divisions. "A Bite of Seattle" is being offered with David Dawson (English) and Larry Silverman (English), and "The Right Thing to Do: Personal and Social Ethical Dilemmas" with Linda Damico (philosophy) and Sandra Hastings (English). "Speaking for Ourselves: Cross Cultural Visions and Connections" is being taught by Gilda Sheppard (sociology), Tracy Lai (history), Minnie Collins (English), and Ileana Leavens (art history). "The Far Side of Knowledge: Humors, Vapors and AIDS" includes Astrida Onat (anthropology), Evergreen exchange faculty biologist Janet Ott, and Carl Waluconis (English). "Of Nature and Nurture" is led by Judie Stein (psychology), Viola Spencer (English), and Margaret Dickson (nursing). "Introduction to American Culture" is being taught by Cynthia Imanaka (sociology) and Lynn Sharpe (English as a Second Language). "Business, Power and Communication" instructors are Rosemary Adang (English), Liz MacLennan (business), and Dan Mocanu (mathematics).

On the faculty exchange front, Seattle Central mathematician Bobby Righi is teaching at Hawaii Community College-Hilo at the University of Hawaii-Hilo for the remainder of this academic year.

Seattle Central also did two "express courses" in English between Fall and Winter Quarter sessions. These seven-day, forty-hour courses provide a Quarter's worth of intensive work in English or math. Use of micro computers and collaborative work is central to this model. The Seattle Central "express courses" are modeled on LaGuardia Community College's successful program. The reports are that the students in the Fall "express" continue to meet as a group and are doing excellent work! For further information call Rosetta Hunter, Chair of Humanities and Social Science.

Seattle Central is accelerating its commitments to serving people of color this year through two new programs. A new "transfer center" is being established, geared especially toward under-represented populations. This model, successfully used in Dallas and at Miami-Dade Community College, is designed to facilitate transfer between two- and four-year institutions. This project is part of a Ford Foundation-funded initiative involving twenty-four colleges. Seattle Central will also begin a "Middle College" program during Winter Quarter; it will be organized around coordinated studies. These new initiatives will be discussed further in the Spring issue of the Washington Center NEWS.

After an enormously successful initial Quarter of learning communities Fall Quarter (purportedly retaining all but one student in a program aimed at high risk students!), **Skagit Valley College** is offering a Winter program called "Sex, Lies and the Media" combining English 101 and a mass media course. Instructors are Cheryl Morse (English) and David Rosenfield (communications).

**South Puget Sound Community College** is offering linked courses in psychology and English Winter Quarter with Olli Newsome (psychology) and Darlienne Jensen (English). Meanwhile, English instructor Michael Shurgot is sitting in on Introduction to Philosophy, preliminary to teaching linked English-philosophy courses Spring Quarter. In Winter Quarter Phyllis Villeneuve is also teaching a philosophy course in "Practical Reasoning and English 101" as a unified block. An additional SPSCC offering combines Developmental English taught by Nancy Elliot, Developmental Math (Linda Pecklar) and a Study Skills course called "Becoming a Master Learner" with Joe Townley.

In Winter Quarter **Spokane Community College** is offering its first coordinated studies program, "Journey to Oz," an interdisciplinary humanities offering with instructors Scott Kramer (philosophy), Lynn West (English) and Scott Orme (literature).

In Winter Quarter **Spokane Falls Community College** offers two ten-credit programs. "Classics and the Computer" combines world literature and advanced composition with instructors Steve Reames (English) and Barbara Fulsass (library science). "Literature: How to Read and Write About It" combines literature and developmental reading and writing with Jan Swinton and Sherry Gaiser. An additional note about SFCC: Jan, who runs the Communications Learning Center, was reassigned Fall Quarter to audit Diane DeFelice's biology class to prepare for a biology-study skills linked course that the two will offer in Spring.

**Tacoma Community College** offers several learning communities Winter Quarter after successfully filling its Fall offerings. "In Search of Meaning: A Study in Drama" is offered for 10 credits with Marlene Bosanko and Tamara Kuzmenkov. And the successful BRIDGE program TCC offers with The Evergreen State College continues with nearly fifty students in the lower division offering. Evergreen biologist Willie Parson leads this effort with TCC faculty member Chiyuki Shannon. This program constitutes one of the largest inter-institutional minority initiatives in the state of Washington.

Two sections of linked courses are also offered at TCC Winter Quarter with English and reading courses taught by Stephanie Allen and Kathy Bair, and Marilyn Mahoney and Laddonna Jahns. Also, English 101 and Business and Computers will be taught as linked courses.

**The Evergreen State College** has four visiting exchange faculty Winter Quarter. Green River Instructor Wayne Luckman continues a year-long exchange in the "Tale of World Cities" program with Sarah Pedersen, Eric Larson and Rob Crawford. Seattle Central's Todd Lovington continues a two-quarter assignment in the "Energy Studies" program with Rob Cole. Hawaii Community College-Hilo faculty member Janice Kido is spending Winter quarter at Evergreen as a roving multicultural studies kibitzer and consultant to the faculty. Meanwhile, Tacoma Community College counselor Dick Patterson is spending Winter and Spring Quarter at Evergreen working in the Counseling Office in exchange for Evergreen biologist Willie Parson who is teaching in the TCC-Evergreen BRIDGE program.

**Yakima Valley Community College** offers two sets of linked courses Winter Quarter. Physical anthropology is linked with biology for non-majors and taught by Eric Anderson (anthropology) and Eric Mould (biology). Speech 120 (Voice and Articulation) taught by Millie Stenehjem is linked with Music 110 (Beginning Voice) taught by Scott Peterson.

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