



Center for Teaching and Learning Newsletter

Vol. 12 No. 3

November 2006

**Research Month
April 2007**

Save these dates!!

Thursday, April 12
*Faculty Research Forum
with
Reception Honoring
Recipients of Grants*

Wednesday, April 18
*CTL Fellows'
Presentations on
Research in Teaching
and Learning*

Thursday, April 19
*Reception for Faculty
Book Authors*

Tuesday, April 24
*Student Research Day
Queens Campus*

Thursday, April 26
*Student/Faculty
Research Day
Staten Island Campus*

Vincentian Mission: Opportunity and Responsibility

*Over the next several issues, Faculty will share their perspectives on the Vincentian Mission of St. John's University as it has influenced their research, teaching and service. In this column, **Vincent DiLorenzo**, Professor of Law and a Senior Vincentian Research Fellow, describes how a request from the Queens Borough President served as a catalyst for him to reflect on Vincentian education. That reflection resulted in the development of a new course and a new approach to and for his law students.*

In the early 1990s Queens Borough President Claire Shulman formed a Task Force to assist purchasers of cooperative apartments of modest means who, in some cases, had been defrauded by developers. They faced the loss of much of their life savings. She asked me to join the Task Force, and later to chair the Legislative Committee responsible for drafting and lobbying for legislative changes that would prevent this fraud from recurring. That work led me to think about our course offerings in the Law School in the area of Legislation. We had no offerings. As I examined what courses other Law Schools offered I was dissatisfied with what I found. The courses consisted of abstract discussions of the legislative process and distinct issues related to that process such as limits on campaign contributions. I thought St. John's could do better than that. It could and should offer a course in which the students used their legal skills to help people, namely to help relatively powerless constituents seek legislative reform. This was how my course in Legislative Advocacy was born.

The course examines the legislative process as a vehicle to address public needs. Each time it is offered a current problem is examined – the nature of the problem, the insufficiency of current legal protections, and the possible avenues of legal reform. The course would permit me to assign any issue of concern. However, due in part to the University's Vincentian Mission, I decided to assign issues affecting constituents of modest means who had few resources at their disposal to formulate and seek legislative reforms. Over the years the students have tackled predatory lending, affordable housing, the need for living wages, the absence of school choice for low-income students and school vouchers as a possible response, mortgage lending discrimination and other, similar topics. They have formulated legislative responses that have, at appropriate times, been forwarded to legislative leaders.

The students have responded very favorably to the class. They see it as an opportunity to use their legal skills to attempt to help others. Some of these students have worked as legislative aides in the past and want to pursue such a career. However, that is not the purpose the course serves. The course not only sharpens the students' legal skills – their problem solving skills and their drafting skills. It also confirms that legal reform aimed at assisting those in need is something to which this University is committed, and something that the students, hopefully, will continue to seek in their work on behalf of bar associations or in a pro bono capacity.

Center for Teaching and Learning

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This newsletter is published monthly during the academic year by the Center for Teaching and Learning.

*Managing Editor:
Lisa Getman*

Diversity at St. John's University: A Summary of Institutional and Survey Data

Clover Hall (Vice President of Institutional Research and Academic Planning, hallc@stjohns.edu)

This summary is part of a comprehensive report developed by the Office of Institutional Research that looks at diversity at St. John's University through demographic and survey data. The University's commitment to the value of diversity is one of the 14 institutional priorities in the Strategic Plan 2004-2008. This commitment is embedded in the mission, vision, and other statements, and is aptly captured in the institutional positioning statement: *"Our community, one of the most comfortably diverse in the nation, reflects this commitment to shared experience where people from all walks of life can come together in an atmosphere of respect and common purpose."*

The educational benefits of having a student body of diverse backgrounds and experiences, and faculty, administrators and staff reflective of the student body, are well researched and documented. Unlike many institutions of higher education that have to develop and implement initiatives in efforts to increase their levels of student diversity, our location in one of the most diverse cities in the country has enabled us to naturally attract a very multicultural student body. St. John's was ranked ninth among racially diverse national universities in the 2007 edition of U.S. News & World Report's *America's Best Colleges*, receiving a diversity index of .66, with 1.0 = highest.

Demographics

Students of color currently represent 39% of the student body. Although the majority of students still come from the New York metropolitan area, there is student representation from 45 additional states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and US Virgin Islands, and more than 100 countries. Catholics comprise about one-half of the student population, with the remaining student population representing many religious groups including all the major Protestant religions, Jewish, Russian and Greek Orthodox, Hindu, Islam, Buddhist and Mormon.

Females account for 59% of the student population compared to 55% in 1996, mirroring national collegiate trends. One-year retention rates of freshmen who entered in Fall 2005 are highest for Asian students (82%), followed by Whites (79%), Blacks (75%) and Hispanics (74%). Six-year graduation rates for students who entered in Fall 2000 are: 65% for Whites; 57% for Asians; 56% for Hispanics and 49% for Black students. These disparities need to be monitored and addressed as we continue to "develop our academic and institutional culture to be student-centered and committed to lifelong learning."

ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS, FULL-TIME FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF FALL 2006						
	White	African-American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Unknown	Non-Resident
Students	45%	13%	12%	14%	11%	5%
Faculty	81%	5%	3%	11%		
Administrators	73%	10%	8%	7%	2%	
Staff	75%	11%	8%	4%	2%	

(continued on page 5)



Faculty News

November 2006

Professor Joseph Adolpe (Fine Arts, adophej@stjohns.edu) created illustrations for an article on Barack Obama for *Harper's Magazine* (November 2006).

Dr. Blase Billack (Pharmaceutical Sciences, billackb@stjohns.edu) presented a poster with coauthors Vijalaxmi Radkar, a Master's candidate, and Dr. Diane Hardej, Director of Laboratories entitled, "Cytotoxic effects of resveratrol on macrophages and T cells," at the 43rd Congress of the European Societies of Toxicology (Eurotox) and the 6th Congress of Toxicology in Developing Countries, a joint meeting held in Dubrovnik, Croatia (September 2006); also published an invited article, "Macrophage activation: role of Toll-like receptors, nitric oxide, and nuclear factor kappa B," in the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* (October 2006).

Professor Emeritus Michael Capobianco (capobiam@stjohns.edu) gave a bilingual reading of Spanish poems from a book, *Se Hace La Luz*, which he is translating in collaboration with Carolina Diaz at the American Literary Translators' Association conference in Bellevue, WA; also chaired a panel on the Chinese language in which he presented his "Stroke-Sequence" method for learning characters; did a reading of his children's book, *Abdallah and the Bright Strings*, at PS 170 in Brooklyn; an article appeared in the *Staten Island Advance* about his book, *Miryam: A Meditation*.

Dr. Elaine Carey (History, careye@stjohns.edu) presented a paper, "Selling is more of a Habit than Using: Women and Illicit Trade in North America, 1900-1960," at the XII Meeting of Historians of Mexico in Vancouver, British Columbia (September 2006); was invited to present "Narcotrafficante Lola la Chata and her Threat to Civilization, 1930-1960" at the New York City Latin American History Workshop at Columbia University (October 2006).

Dr. Zhe-Sheng Chen (Pharmaceutical Sciences, chenz@stjohns.edu) presented a paper, "Characterization of Human T Cell Line with Acquired Drug Resistance to 6-Mercaptopurine," at the 97th American Association for Cancer Research in Washington, DC (2006); invited two visiting scholars, Drs. Zhi (Wisdom) Shi and Xiaocong (Victor) Huang, to work at his laboratory.

Dr. Christopher Denny (Theology and Religious Studies, dennyc@stjohns.edu) presented a paper, "The Harrowing of Hell in *Piers Plowman*: A Christological Struggle against Violence," at the annual meeting of the Northeast Conference on Christianity and Literature in Brooklyn (October 2006).

Dr. Maura C. Flannery (Computer Science, Mathematics and Science, flannerm@stjohns.edu) presented a paper, "Bauhaus and Biology," at the National Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists in New York City (October 2006) and published an article, "Think Small," in *The American Biology Teacher* (October 2006).

Dr. Grace Ibanez Friedman (Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescent Education, friedmag@stjohns.edu) with Dr. Smita Guha completed a pilot Study Abroad Program in Brescia, Italy this summer for education graduate students; the visit resulted in an article just released this September in *La Scuola Materna*, depicting the trip, entitled "Leaving Iowa, Entering Italy: A US American Educator's First Impressions of Italian Child Care;" was re-elected for a two-year term as the co-president of the New York State Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators.

Professor Diane Miller Himmelbaum (Fine Arts, himmelbd@stjohns.edu) participated in the exhibition, "The Art of Persuasion," curated by Dr. Marilyn Kushner, Head of the Department of Prints & Drawings at the Brooklyn Museum, and sponsored by The New York Society of Etchers, at The National Arts Club in New York City (November 2006).

Dr. Donna Geffner (Speech Communications Sciences and Theatre, geffnerd@stjohns.edu) presented "Central Auditory Processing Disorder" at the Baldwin Public Schools (November 2006).

Dr. Francine Guastello (Human Services and Counseling, guastelf@stjohns.edu) presented the paper, "Developing the Writer's Craft: Motivating Students to Write," at the Florida Chapter of the International Reading Association (October 2006) and was invited by the IRA to develop this paper into a book.

Dr. Theodore D. Kemper (Sociology and Anthropology, kempert@stjohns.edu) published a chapter, "Power and Status and the Power-Status Theory of Emotions," in J. Stets and J. Turner, Eds., *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions* (Springer, NY: 2006).

Dr. Patrick P. McCabe (Human Services and Counseling, mccabep@stjohns.edu) co-authored with Linda Kraemer, a doctoral student in the School of Education; Paul Miller and Rene Parmar, in the Department of Administrative and Instructional Leadership; and Marybeth B. Ruscica, Director of University Learning Support Services, the article "The Effect of Text Format upon Underachieving First Year College Students' Self-Efficacy for Reading and Subsequent Reading Comprehension" in the *Journal of College Reading and Learning*; also co-authored an article, "Motivating struggling readers in an era of mandated instructional practices," in *Reading Psychology*.

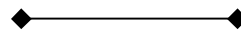
Rev. John H. McKenna, C.M. (Theology and Religious Studies, mckennaj@stjohns.edu) published a review of Owen F. Cumming's *Eucharistic Doctors: A Theological History in Worship* (September 2006).

Dr. Jeffrey Nevid (Psychology, nevidj@stjohns.edu) gave the keynote address, "In Pursuit of the Perfect Lecture: Teaching Tips for Effective Learning," at the Mountain States Conference on Teaching of Psychology, Albuquerque, NM (October 2006).

Professor Mary Noe (Criminal Justice and Legal Studies, noem@stjohns.edu) published the article, "Reversing Years of Neglect of Students with Disabilities," in the *New York Law Journal*; presented a paper on Legal Research and Writing at the American Association for Paralegal Educators in New Orleans (October 2006).

Dr. Miguel Roig (Psychology, roigm@stjohns.edu) presented an invited plenary talk "Plagiarism in the Sciences: What do We Really Know?" at the second annual Mediterranean Editors' and Translators' Meeting, Barcelona, Spain (October 2006).

Dr. Richard Stalter (Biological Sciences, stalter@stjohns.edu) published the abstract, "The Effect of Goose Grazing on Standing Crop and Seed Production of *Spartina alterniflora* in a Jamaica Bay Salt Marsh," in the proceedings of the Eighth Biennial Long Island Sound Research Conference; presented "Forty Years of Community Change at a gamma Irradiated Forest, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Long Island New York" at the Biology Department Seminar (October 2006).



Faculty News

If you would like to send an entry to "Faculty News," the deadline for the **December** issue is **December 4**. We prefer that you email the information to CTL@stjohns.edu. Please have your entries follow the style presented in "Faculty News." Material included in CTL Faculty News will be sent to Dominic Scianna for distribution in a news release.

Faculty Growth Grants Program

The deadlines to apply for a Faculty Growth Grant are:

Monday, January 22, 2007

Monday, April 2, 2007

For more information please contact the Center for Teaching and Learning at ext. 1859 or email CTL@stjohns.edu.

(Diversity at St. John's University: A Summary of Institutional and Survey Data continued from page 2)

More than three in four full-time staff members are female, compared to one in two administrators and one in three faculty members. Full-time faculty of color account for 19%; administrators are 25% and staff are 23%. As shown in the above table, there are also variations among ethnic groups in each category. Percentages for part-time faculty (16%) and administrators (28%) are fairly similar to full-time, with part-time staff of color appreciably higher at 35%. Although the level of diversity has been increasing incrementally over the past few years, the University recognizes that there is still much to be done to increase the level of diversity and ensure that these groups are more reflective of the student population. Some related objectives and recommended strategies are addressed in the University's Strategic Plan including an endorsement of the following principle: *In an effort to mirror more closely our student population, all academic and administrative units of the University will be committed to recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, administrators and staff.*

Perceptions Relating to Diversity

The St. John's community recognizes and consistently identifies diversity as one of the top strengths of the University. Survey results confirm this, while also indicating potential areas for discussion and improvement. Some examples follow.

In the 2006 **National Survey of Student Engagement**, **significantly higher** percentages of our students in comparison with a peer group of private institutions indicated that: their experience at the institution contributed to understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds; the University encouraged contact among students from different economic, social, and racial/ethnic backgrounds; they had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity; and that they had serious conversations with students who differed from them in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.

Results from the survey, **Your First College Year** (YFCY) administered in Spring 2005, were similar for first-year students at St. John's and private institutions in relation to issues of adjustment, socializing and diversity. Results were generally lower for Staten Island than students on the Queens campus. Asian students indicate that they feel more isolated from campus life; more worried about meeting new people; more intimidated by their professors; and have heard faculty express stereotypes about racial/ethnic groups, more than any other group.

Of all ethnic groups, Hispanic students gave the highest ratings to experiences with students of a racial/ethnic group other than their own in relation to: sharing a meal; having meaningful and honest discussions about race/ethnic relations outside of class; sharing personal feelings and problems; socializing; and attending events sponsored by other ethnic groups.

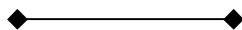
In the **HERI Faculty Survey** conducted in Fall 2004 /Spring 2005, **levels of agreement of St. John's full-time faculty were higher than private institutions** on the importance of enhancing students' knowledge of and appreciation for other racial/ethnic groups, creating a diverse multi-cultural campus environment as a priority at the institution, and respecting diverse values and beliefs.

Responses were similar for St. John's faculty and private institutions in some areas. Nine out of ten agree that a racially/ethnically diverse student body enhances the educational experience for all students. Approximately one-half agree on the need for stronger reflection of racial and ethnic diversity in the curriculum, and on the importance of increasing the representation of minorities in faculty or administration as an institutional priority.

Responses were lower for St. John's faculty than for private institutions on the importance of promoting gender equity among faculty (44% - STJ; 50% - Pvt.), or increasing the representation of women in the faculty and administration (40% - STJ; 47% - Pvt.) as institutional priorities.

In light of our unique strengths and the few challenges addressed in this summary, there is much that we can all do to support the following principle endorsed in the University's institutional priority on **commitment to the value of diversity**: *The University will build upon its progress in diversity, celebrate its*

achievements and continue to identify and respond to future challenges. Share your ideas and accomplishments with the CTL.



Resources Redux

Maura C. Flannery (*College of Professional Studies, flannerm@stjohns.edu*)

The resources I describe below are ones that I've mentioned in this newsletter or in CTL workshops, but they are so useful that I think they deserve more attention. I see my role as that of an annoying voice in your head reminding you to do what you've been meaning to do, but never get around to doing. So use these resources NOW!!! Then you don't have to feel guilty when I mention them yet again in the future.

Keeping Up with Technology—Somewhat

Staying current with advances in technology is an impossible task, but we need to make an attempt. We need to know at least some of the new ideas and resources available, not only so we don't come across as clueless, but also so we can find resources that might actually be useful to us.

One of the best ways to dip into the waters of change is to take a look at the website of the Educause Learning Initiative. There are always interesting articles posted there, as well as links to a diversity of other sites (<http://www.educause.edu/eli>). Right now, articles on web savviness are featured, and if you click on Learning Technologies, you'll find an introduction to a series of articles called "7 Things You Should Know About . . ." The series is really misnamed, because it has now grown well past seven, to over a dozen articles.

The original seven things you should know about included clickers, blogs, social bookmarking, and podcasting. If these ideas are foreign to you, then start with these articles. Each is a two-page introduction to the topic written by someone who knows how to translate technology into readable English. Links are provided to sites with more information on these topics and to sites that offer the services described.

This is a great way to find out more about the technologies that are coming to be used in teaching. You might not want to use any of them, but you will at least be in a position to make a reasoned decision on use. Also, you may be surprised. A couple of years ago, I looked up "social bookmarking" simply because I had no idea what it was, and the name was odd enough to warrant investigation. Social bookmarking is using an external site on the web to store your internet bookmarks. Usually bookmarks are stored on your hard drive, so if you use a different computer, they are not available to you. If you store them on a free external site like <http://del.icio.us>, they are available to you on any computer you are using. Also, you can share your bookmarks with others—that's what makes it social. I also like it because you can file a site under more than one category.

I am not arguing that each of the topics featured in "7 Things" is a gem. Personally, I wasn't too impressed with Google Jockeying—using the Google search engine to find information during class. But I found Mapping Mashups (geography on the web) to be interesting, even though I haven't used it yet in my teaching. And thanks to "7 Things" I now know what Facebook and YouTube are. It's a good idea to check out this site from time to time, just to find out what the next "new thing" happens to be.

Another Reminder

At CTL workshops and other events, I often remind faculty of the value of Tomorrow's Professor, a listserv that is an effortless way to keep up with the latest in teaching and learning. Here the emphasis is not on technology as such, but on the myriad issues that confront college faculty from teaching to research and beyond. To me this is one of the handiest resources around. Once you've joined the listserv, you don't even have to visit the website again. The information comes to you.

When you are on the Tomorrow's Professor listserv, you receive two emails a week (even the spam-phobic can deal with that). Each contains a short article, often something that has been published elsewhere in

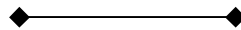
the teaching and learning literature. Recent postings include articles on balancing teaching and research by integrating the two (#755 in the series), the use of clickers for student feedback in the classroom (#757), and dealing with rejection of a journal article (#754). These topics indicate the breadth of the subjects discussed. You won't find every posting useful, but enough of them will be that you will be very glad to have signed up. You can find all the past articles at <http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/postings.html> and from there you can also access the subscription page.

The Teaching Professor, the Forum, and Teaching Excellence.

The CTL has many resources that faculty are invited to borrow and read. We know you are all busy, so you might not want to read an entire book, but we also have a number of periodicals that have wonderful articles. Two of the best are newsletters with short, but thought-provoking articles. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum* takes a rather philosophical view of issues in higher education. In the October 2006 issue, the editor, James Rhem, discusses "The High Risks of Improving Teaching." He deals with the fact that as faculty try new approaches in the classroom, they often face opposition from their students who are comfortable with the status quo. In other words, active learning strategies, which are so valued by faculty, are frequently unattractive to students who would rather be passive—it's a lot less work. In addition to interesting articles like this, the *Forum* also runs a monthly column by Linc. Fisch, a professor emeritus with decided views on teaching. His ideas are always provocative and sometimes very useful in dealing with nuts and bolts teaching concerns.

While the *Forum* tends to take the long view, *The Teaching Professor* deals more with classroom issues. The articles are written by faculty who are passionate about helping their students learn. I can almost guarantee that you will find at least one article in each issue that you can directly apply to your teaching. In the November 2006 issue there is a one-page summary of "Reminders for Improving Classroom Discussion." Written by Roben Torosyan of Fairfield University, it includes hints on commenting about group dynamics, balancing student voices and opinions in a discussion, and summarizing what has been learned.

And while I am on the topic of CTL resources, I should mention another newsletter that you can have delivered. It is *Teaching Excellence*. The CTL offers a subscription to this two-page publication at the beginning of each academic year. The latest issue deals with "Student Plagiarism" so it is very topical and useful, as are most articles in this series. If you haven't subscribed yet, just call us at ex. 1859 or email us at CTL@stjohns.edu.



A Librarian Recommends . . .

Our librarian is back again with another interesting article from *Inside Higher Ed* (<http://www.insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/news/2006/11/10/online>). In it, Elia Powers describes the "Growing Popularity of E-Learning" as assessed in a survey conducted by the Sloan Consortium, a major nonprofit organization that focuses on online education. Among the interesting findings are that faculty seem less enthusiastic about the value of e-learning than do administrators and students. Faculty at private institutions were the least accepting, with only one in five being positive about such programs. To check out the survey yourself, go to <http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/survey/index.asp>.

Teaching with Games

To many of us, using games in the classroom seems a little on the light side, academically speaking. However, there is more and more evidence that games can be very effective active learning tools. Two good articles on the subject are found in the latest issue of the *ALT Newsletter*, an online publication sponsored by the Association for Learning Technology in Britain (<http://newsletter.alt.ac.uk>). In "Game On for Learning," Sara de Freitas surveys a number of different types of games that can be used in college courses. While "Learning in Immersive Worlds" is a review of game-based learning that includes cases studies of how games can mirror everyday situations.

Is there ONE faculty member who has had a great impact on your life?

Consider nominating him or her for **one** of the University's teaching awards.

THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL TEACHER-SCHOLAR AWARD

This is given annually to a **full-time, tenured member of the St. John's University** faculty who has taught a minimum of 10 years at St. John's before being nominated, has not previously been a recipient of the award, and has established a distinguished record of continued excellence in teaching and scholarly achievements, both within and outside the classroom.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Full and part-time faculty members are eligible to receive Teaching Excellence Awards. These awards are given to those who have been at the university for at least 5 years and have a record of excellence in teaching and scholarship.

To be valid ALL sections of the nomination form must be completed. **Deadline for nominations is Monday, December 11, 2006 by 4:30 p.m.** Send completed nomination form below to: **Dr. Maura C. Flannery – Center for Teaching and Learning – Bent 281 – St. John's University, 8000 Utopia Parkway, Queens, NY 11439.**

NOMINATION FORM

I would like to nominate Professor _____ of
(Please print)

_____ for:
(Department/Division)

Check **ONE** of the following:

_____ St. Vincent de Paul Teacher-Scholar Award

_____ Teaching Excellence Award

Reason for Nomination: _____

Name of Nominator: _____
(Print)

Check **ONE**: _____ Student
_____ Alumni
_____ Colleague

Contact Number or email address _____
(optional)

To be valid, ALL sections of the nomination form must be completed by **4:30 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2006.**