CTL October Newsletter

The *CTL Newsletter* is distributed electronically every month during the academic year. Highlights from our October issue include:

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**Remember:** The best places to look for faculty-related information are the [CTL Webpage](#) and the [CTL Forum](#).  

**Faculty News:** If you would like to send an entry to “Faculty News,” the deadline for the November issue is **November 2**. We prefer that you email the information to [CTL@stjohns.edu](mailto:CTL@stjohns.edu). Please have your entries follow the style presented in “Faculty News.”
The Word “Catholic” in a Catholic University: “Here Comes Everybody”
Peggy Fanning, CSJ (St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, fanningp@stjohns.edu)

One need look no further than the STJ webmail to find the raison d’être for St. John’s University. Prominently displayed there, the words, “Catholic-Vincentian-Metropolitan,” are striking reminders of the mission to which this University is dedicated.

It is the word catholic that is the focus of this article. The word catholic has many meanings. James Joyce perhaps gave the best description of the meaning of the word catholic (in Finnegan’s Wake), “catholic means ‘here comes everybody.’”

St. John’s University can lay a unique claim to this description because of the welcome it offers to a diversity of persons. It is intentionally universal from a theological point of view. It values pluralism and diversity and encourages both students and faculty of diverse faiths and even non-believers to take part in theological conversations.

Some of the major sources of the animating principles of a university that is truly catholic are the promulgations of the Second Vatican Council. Three church documents are notable for their teachings that explicate essential catholic precepts: Gaudium et Spes, Nostra Aetate, and Dignitatis Humanae.

Gaudium et Spes calls Catholic colleges to a new kind of engagement and dialogue with the world. It challenges the Church’s educational institutions to plunge into the critical questions and controversies of the contemporary world as full partners in an on-going dialogue about civilization and its problems.¹ It calls all Christians to an optimistic and realistic dialogue with all peoples² and declares that in today’s complex world, the common good involves the rights and duties not only of the local community, but of the whole human race, and extends to the care of the planet itself.

This directive underlies the inclusion of the common good as one of the core values of STJ.

Nostra Aetate deals with the relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, specifically on the relationship with the other two Abrahamic faiths, Judaism and Islam, as well as Hinduism and Buddhism. The theological foundation of interreligious dialogue promoted by this document rests on the dignity of the human person. “No matter what religion we profess, we are all created in God’s image.”³

St. John’s is the ideal venue for realizing the document’s exhortation “that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love, and in witness to the Christian faith and life, the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the social-political values of the other religions may be preserved.”

¹Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes, No, 3.
²Ibid.
³Second Vatican Council, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate, No, 5.
⁴Ibid. No. 2.
Dignitatis Humanae deals with the theme of freedom of conscience. The theological foundation upon which the Council builds its argument for religious liberty is once again the dignity of the human person. A student’s education at a Catholic university should include learning and mentoring that advance a young person’s experience of basic human dignity, respect for the sanctity of conscience, and the responsibility for all levels of human good.

The themes of freedom of conscience, of inviolable human rights, and of religious liberty balanced by the care of the common good are hallmarks of STJ.

The universality of learning implied in the word catholic is evident in the inscription placed over the entrance to the St. John’s Library in St. Augustine Hall: “Tolle et lege.” These are the words that led to the conversion of St. Augustine. However, his conversion did not mean the end of intellectual activity. Augustine was a restless searcher for truth.

The life of a student, of a scholar, is filled with a thirst for knowledge which knowledge alone cannot quench. Learning at a catholic university is directed to the experience of self-transcendence which is open to the possibility of eternal truth. Passionate learning, supported by a compassionate community of students and scholars, can be the beginning of a lifelong transformation.

In a recent talk to university professors in Spain, Pope Benedict XVI declared, “The University has always been and is always called to be “the house” where one seeks the truth proper to the human person,” committed to teaching the faith and making it credible to human reason.

It has been said that, in the long run, those who change history most are not those who supply a new set of answers, but those who allow a new set of questions. The challenge of encouraging students to respect our traditions, to formulate a new set of questions and to continue to seek truth in their lives is the never-ending mission of the “house” of St. John’s University.

Note: This article is based on Dr. Fanning’s presentation at the Adjunct Faculty Colloquium in September.

Publish and Flourish
This workshop is designed for junior faculty who would like to become more familiar with the ins and outs of publishing, but all faculty are welcome. We will discuss manuscript preparation for both articles and books, as well as strategies that could increase chances of successful publication.

Date: Tuesday, November 8
Time: 12:15 to 1:40 p.m.
Location: Library room 110 in the back of the University Learning Commons, Queens Campus
To register: Contact the CTL at CTL@stjohns.edu or ext. 1859.
**Faculty News**

**Professor Franklin Camerano** (Social Sciences, cameranf@stjohns.edu) received the 2011 Distinguished Faculty Award from the American College of Healthcare Executives and the Health Leaders of New York Association.

**Professor Lynn Caporale** (Scientific Inquiry, caporall@stjohns.edu) organized and chaired the international conference, *Effects of Genome Structure and Sequence on the Generation of Variation and Evolution*, hosted by the Center for Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science and the Cancer Institute of New Jersey at Rutgers (August 2011).

**Dr. Elaine Carey** (History, careye@stjohns.edu) received the STJ 2010-2011 McNair Mentor of the Year award; gave the lecture, “The Women who Made it Snow,” at Ithaca College’s Perspective on History Lecture Series (March 2011); presented “Day Trippers: Drugs, Border Crossings, and Moral Panic, 1910-1960,” at the Alcohol and Drug History Society in Buffalo, NY (June 2011); gave the workshop, “Academic Publishing in an Economic Downturn,” at DePaul University, Office of Diversity (April 2011); published “Featured Q and A: What Roles Are Women Playing in Mexico’s Drug War?” in *Inter-American Dialogues* (April 2011) and coauthored “The Daughters of La Nacha: Profiles of Women Drug Traffickers,” in the *NACLA Report on the Americas* (May/June 2011) [the Spanish version “Las hijas de La Nacha: Mujeres, drogas, y la frontera was published in *Milenio Semenal*, 716 (24 julio 2011) and reprinted in other Mexican newspapers and news blogs].

**Dr. José G. Centeno** (Communication Sciences and Disorders, centenoj@stjohns.edu) published a first-authored article, “A Preliminary Comparison of Verb Tense Production in Spanish Speakers with Expressive Restrictions,” in *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics* (October 2011).

**Dr. Zhe-Sheng Chen** (Pharmaceutical Sciences, chenz@stjohns.edu) was an invited speaker at the Gordon Research Conference-Multidrug Efflux System in Les Diablerets, Switzerland (June 2011); published an invited review article, “Multidrug Resistance Proteins (MRPs/ABCCs) in Cancer Chemotherapy and Genetic Diseases,” in *The FEBS Journal*; coauthored with **Dr. Charles Ashby** (Pharmaceutical Sciences, ashbyc@stjohns.edu) the article, “Up-regulation of P-glycoprotein Confers Acquired Resistance to 6-mercaptopurine in Human Chronic Myeloid Leukemia Cells,” in *Oncology Letters*; coauthored with **Dr. Tanaji Talele** (Pharmaceutical Sciences, talelet@stjohns.edu) the article, “The Blockade of Her2/neu, Binding to Hsp90 by Emodin Azide Methyl Anthraquinone Derivative Induces Proteasomal Degradation of Her2/neu,” in *Mol Pharmaceutics*; and was selected as an Editorial Advisory Board Member of *Acta Pharmaceutica Sinica B*.

**Dr. Guofang Chen** (Chemistry, cheng@stjohns.edu) published with **Dr. Zhe-Sheng Chen** (Pharmaceutical Science, chenz@stjohns.edu) and **Dr. Huizhong Xu** (Physics, xuh@stjohns.edu) an invited review article, “Biosynthesis of Nanoparticles by Microorganisms and their Applications,” in the *Journal of Nanomaterials*.

**Dr. Maura C. Flannery** (Computer Science, Mathematics and Science, flannerm@stjohns.edu) published an article, “Second Jobs,” in *The American Biology Teacher* (October 2011).

**Dr. Theodore D. Kemper** (Sociology and Anthropology, kempert@stjohns.edu) published a book, *Status, Power and Ritual Interaction: A Relational Reading of Durkheim, Goffman and Collins* (Ashgate, UK: 2011).

**Dr. Anna D. Martin** (Economics and Finance, martina@stjohns.edu) co-chaired the inaugural FMA Applied Finance Conference on the Manhattan campus of St. John’s University (May 2011).

**Dr. Richard Stalter** (Biological Sciences, stalterr@stjohns.edu) published the article, “Biological Flora of Coastal Dunes and Wetlands: *Uniola paniculata* L.,” in the *Journal of Coastal Research* (2011).
Teaching Our Students to be Workforce-Ready
Lisa-Ann O’Connor, Career Counselor (oconnorl@stjohns.edu)

Are we teaching our students the skills corporate recruiters are looking for? How do recruiters identify high-potential candidates among the many college graduates seeking employment? These questions are more important than ever in the current economic climate as we turn on the evening news to see the Occupy Wall Street protests, and reporters asking the burning question of whether a college degree is truly worth the investment in such a challenging economy.

Based on recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we still have a positive answer for that final question. The data show that college degrees are still a worthwhile investment when measured against employment outcomes (see Figure 1). We still see a decrease in unemployment, and an increase in median weekly earnings for those who have at least a college degree. Yet many students are still struggling to find jobs in their field, while employers are reporting that they are having difficulty filling vacant positions because they cannot find qualified applicants. Employers are particularly interested in sharing their needs with college level educators, and are seeking to develop partnerships with professors and other University professionals to help increase the quantity and quality of the future pool of educated workers (Hagerty, 2011).

![Figure 1.](image)

According to *HR Magazine* (Grossman, 2011), companies are seeking students who are able to demonstrate the following competencies on a consistent basis:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Change Management
- Building and Leading Cross-Cultural Teams
- Ability to Influence and Build Coalitions

(continued on next page)
With these expectations in mind, below are some tips for incorporating workforce readiness education in courses across the curriculum.

Within the curriculum professors can provide students the opportunity to discuss the student’s performance (grades) and development (aligning personal goals and expectations) as it pertains to the subject matter. Planning for these evaluations at the mid-semester and at the conclusion of the course, will allow for students to become more comfortable with articulating their thoughts/knowledge in a more concise and clear manner.

Whenever possible, encourage students to work together as a team to solve case studies and other real world problems. Teamwork assignments allow students the opportunity to solve a problem in a cross-cultural environment. It may be helpful to have students assign each team member a specific role, and provide them with a rubric of how each role would be evaluated. The evaluation should allow students to reflect on their strengths and areas needing improvement as well as provide the members of their team with similar feedback. In addition to helping students develop skills in teamwork and collaboration, this will also help them develop leadership skills and the ability to evaluate their own and others’ performance. As future leaders, it is important for our students to practice receiving and providing constructive feedback.

In the workplace, personal development discussions may often be separate from performance review discussions, therefore knowing how to communicate their knowledge of an assignment from the angles of performance and development is important to shaping our students as future leaders. Grossman (2011) provides a sample rubric for how employee performance may be evaluated by corporate managers (figure 2). Using a generic tool, such as the one included below, for assessment can lead to discussion about standards in various industries, and will encourage students to articulate their own expectations and goals for development.

At the core of many of the competencies listed earlier, is the development and demonstration of cross-cultural communication skills and knowledge of the global society. It is imperative, now more than ever, for our students to know about and discuss global issues. On a consistent basis through mediums such as Blackboard, have students post and write summary reports on newsworthy articles from an international prospective that relate to topics being discussed in the course. Projects could also be assigned in which students are asked to integrate these findings into real-time change as it affects the current industry they are aspiring to pursue a professional career.

Figure 2
Our students are going to be expected to master these skills and gain transferable experience both within and outside the classroom through internships, academic service learning, study abroad, and participation in student and professional organizations. For additional information about how the Career Center can help students prepare for their careers, please contact Dr. Michelle Kyriakides at kyri-akim@stjohns.edu or 718-990-1361.

REFERENCES:

**Research Month 2012: Student Research Events**
We’d like to remind all faculty that *Student Research events* will be held during Research Month, April 2012.

As faculty, we know firsthand the range of creative research projects that our students undertake in our courses. But it can be difficult for students and faculty to make others aware of this rich body of work. This is where Student Research events comes in—they provide the one time every academic year when faculty from every college and discipline can showcase their students’ efforts for all to see.

This celebration is open to a variety of presentations. Last year we featured oral presentations, panel discussions, poster sessions, film screenings, and art exhibits. We’d like to continue this tradition of emphasizing a range of creative and scholarly accomplishments. If you would like to showcase some of your students’ work, come collaborate with us! Just email your idea to studentresearch@stjohns.edu.

We are contacting you now so you can keep your eye out for interesting work surfacing in your Fall 2011 courses as well as in the Spring 2012 semester.

**Journal Club: Getting Students to Talk**
Next to getting students to read assignments, getting them to participate in class is sometimes the most difficult thing to manage in the classroom. In “Getting Students to Talk,” David Brooks comes up with some novel ideas, including having students memorize and recite passages. You might not want to go that far, but you might have other good ideas to share. So join us for a discussion of this article and the possibilities of making your classes more interactive.

To read the article click on: “[Getting Students to Talk](#)”

**Date:** Wednesday, November 9  
**Time:** 12:15 to 1:40 p.m.  
**Location:** Library room 110 in the back of the University Learning Commons, Queens Campus  
**To register:** Contact the CTL at [CTL@stjohns.edu](mailto:CTL@stjohns.edu) or ext. 1859.
In this series, Vincentian Research Fellows from across the University share their experiences in actualizing the Vincentian Mission through their research, teaching and service. Below, Professor James Bethea discusses a method in which he sensitizes students to their own prejudices and biases, and emphasizes cultural competency as necessary to assist clients within our diverse society. Through increased self-awareness and greater understanding of the influence of culture on career development, the students will advance the social justice principles of respect for each individual and the dignity of work.

In my graduate-level course “Career Development,” I introduce my students to the basic social justice principles of Respect for Each Human Person and the Dignity of Work. I begin with a discussion of Frank Parsons (1854-1908) and his advocacy for meaningful employment through vocational counseling of underserved populations. As a result of his work with underrepresented individuals and underserved immigrants, Parsons is widely known as the “Godfather of Vocational Guidance.” His efforts made a significant impact on the field at the systemic level and spurred practical changes. However, the career counseling field soon evolved to reflect the views of the dominant culture and its values regarding work. These include: emphasis on autonomy and individualism, the centrality of work in people’s lives, the notion that individuals have equal access to opportunities, the belief that wealth is a core value for everyone, and that the career development process is linear and rational.

The increasingly diverse multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-lingual population in the U.S. continues to impact our labor force. This increases the critical need for counselors to provide culturally relevant counseling services to diverse individuals. These rapidly changing demographics, the widening gap between the upper and lower socioeconomic classes, and our current distressed global economy indicate a need to return to the career counseling field’s roots. Critical to the counselor is an understanding of how clients make meaning of work based on their contextual experiences rather than solely on their individual talents and personality.

Given the dramatic changes in the cultural, ethnic and racial demographics, I have incorporated activities into my Career Development course, which challenge students to think beyond these assumptions embedded in traditional career counseling theories and practice. Students in the course are still exposed to traditional career counseling theories and assessment (e.g., Super, Holland) and study newer theories/perspectives (e.g., Ecological Career counseling approaches, Narrative/Constructivist Theories, etc.). However, I approach the career development process through a more inclusive lens. This includes examining the barriers clients face in considering careers and employment such as identification with oppressed demographic groups; the many systems involved in the career development process; and the fact that choice is not always a part of an individual’s or group’s career decision making process.

In this course, one method I use challenges students to assess their own biases regarding stereotypes and the world of work. The students engage in a discussion of the importance of self awareness in dealing with those considering career choices and work situations. By stressing the need for respect for the dignity of each person, students grasp how pre-conceived notions, ideas, beliefs, etc. about an individual or cultural group, can have a profound impact on the counseling relationship. Additionally, the students learn that having a solid awareness of others is vital in becoming culturally competent. For example, early on in the semester students engage in an in-depth group processing exercise focused on “stereotypes” of various cultural groups in relation to the world of work. Students are asked to write down the first thing that comes to their minds when a specific cultural group is listed on the board. In addition to race (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, etc.), I identify other groups such as people with disabilities, the elderly, gender preferences, etc. to show that culture extends beyond race and ethnicity.
This activity is always interesting because generally when I ask volunteers to share their thoughts, the responses are overwhelmingly positive across groups. I then “break the ice” and share a stereotype about my culture (African American). I proceed with posing the same question and challenge the students to honestly and openly discuss the negative stereotypes regarding the aforementioned groups. By doing this exercise, students become increasingly aware of their personal values and beliefs regarding cultural groups. They then consider how this information relates to the career counseling process. Furthermore, students learn about non-traditional and creative forms of career assessment since traditional assessments have been normed primarily on White samples and do not always reflect the experiences of diverse groups. Role playing has also been effective, particularly as it includes “real life” situations and “client characters” who are dealing with current societal problems (e.g., high school students’ transition to the world of work, racial and ethnic group discrimination for many People of Color as they seek employment and experience in the workplace itself).

Next fall, in conjunction with my students, I plan to develop and implement a service learning project that will allow students to use their skills gained from the course to advocate for clients in the community. My hope is that such experiences will empower students to respect the dignity of each person as a unique individual, to be active agents of change relative to social justice for all, and to be contributors to make this world a better place for all and more satisfying and advantageous for all workers.

Faculty Growth Grant Program
The upcoming deadlines to apply for a Faculty Growth Grant are:
If you have any questions regarding the application procedures look at our website under Growth Grant Program or email us at CTL@stjohns.edu.

Comics in the Classroom? Graphic Novels, Graphic Memoirs, and Higher Education
Caroline Fuchs, University Libraries
Sophia Bell, Institute for Writing Studies
David Farley, Institute for Writing Studies

Do you love comics and graphic novels? Are you struggling to find ways to incorporate them into your teaching curriculum? Or do you think the use of graphic novels in the classroom is another example of the “dumbing down” of academia? Come join the debate. Share your thoughts, comments, opinions – and favorite graphic narratives! We can begin by discussing Eugene Yang’s article “Graphic Novels in the Classroom.”

Date: Monday, November 7
Time: 1:50 to 3:15 p.m.
Location: Library room 110 in the back of the University Learning Commons, Queens Campus
To register: Contact the CTL at CTL@stjohns.edu or at ext. 1859.