 CTL October Newsletter

The CTL Newsletter is distributed electronically every month during the academic year. To view the current CTL Newsletter please go to the CTL website at:  http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/centers/teach/newsletter.

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Faculty News
If you would like to send an entry to “Faculty News,” the deadline for the November issue is November 6. We prefer that you email the information to CTL@stjohns.edu. Please have your entries follow the style presented in “Faculty News.”

Remember:
The best place to look for faculty-related information is http://www.stjohns.edu/ctl.
Student Engagement and Success: 2008-2009 Graduating Students Share Their Experiences and Plans

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

A collaborative effort of the Office of Institutional Research, University Events, Information Technology, Career Center and other offices.

In spring 2009, a short survey was developed and incorporated into the online process used by graduating students - except the School of Law - to register for participation in commencement exercises. The purpose was to gain insight into some aspects of their experiences at St. John’s, as well as to collect information on their future professional and educational plans.

A total of 2,485 students participated, accounting for 65% of the 2008-09 graduating population (71% undergraduates and 55% graduates). Below are highlights of the survey results. A more detailed analysis is available at www.stjohns.edu/about/ir/surveys. Separate reports have been developed for each school/college and shared with the respective Deans. Unless explicitly noted, findings are similar for undergraduates and graduate students. Results by gender, race/ethnicity, school/college and other characteristics were generally consistent with other surveys.

Approximately 90% of students were satisfied/very satisfied with their overall St. John’s experience and 80% felt that the quality of instruction was good/excellent. Two-thirds of undergraduates and three-fourths of graduate students agreed/strongly agreed that tuition paid was a worthwhile investment. Sixty-nine percent of undergraduates and 61% of graduate students indicated that the Catholic and Vincentian Mission impacted their St. John’s experience positively/very positively. Between 11-32% gave top ratings (excellent, very satisfied, strongly agreed, very positive) to any of these survey items. Open-ended comments mirrored the ratings, with the majority of respondents indicating that they had a good/great and worthwhile experience at St. John’s. The main concerns related to cost/value of tuition and financial aid.

More than one-half of undergraduates and approximately one-quarter of graduate students are planning to pursue further study in the next academic year. Fifteen percent of undergraduates and 44% of graduate students have accepted job offers or are retaining their current jobs. The rest are still looking for jobs or have no employment plans. Responses regarding employment plans were similar whether students were planning to pursue further study or not. Fifty-nine percent of students answered the question relating to how well St. John’s did at providing job preparation/placement, with one-half of
the respondents giving a good or excellent rating, and one-half a fair or poor rating.

Approximately 44% of students had completed internships - a very important aspect of an enriched educational experience. Of these students, 66% indicated that they found their internships on their own, 28% through academic departments, and 21% through the Career Center. When asked about the primary motivation for completing an internship, 91% indicated that it was for experience, 50% for academic credit, and 17% for financial reasons. For both of these items, percentages add up to more than 100% because they were CHECK ALL THAT APPLY survey items. The majority of responses relating to satisfaction with internships available at St. John’s were from students who had completed an internship. Most of the other students did not respond or indicated that this was not applicable to them. Of the students who responded, 77% were satisfied/very satisfied compared to 40% of the students without internships who answered this question.

Correlation analysis revealed that students’ overall satisfaction had a strong positive relationship with quality of instruction and tuition as a worthwhile investment, and a moderately positive relationship with job preparation, impact of mission and availability of internships. This suggests that we can contribute to improvements in students’ experiences, perceptions and outcomes by continued and heightened focus on these areas. Since this is the first of what will be an annual administration of this survey, these results can be used as baselines against which to measure the impact of related engagement and other initiatives in the next year and beyond.

Junior Faculty Research Colloquium

"Public Deliberation Concerning Embryonic Stem Cell Research"
Melissa Yates, Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Thursday, November 5, 2009
This presentation concerns the kinds of reasons and arguments citizens should advance in public debate. In particular, Yates is interested in whether the inclusion of religious conceptions of personhood in public debate should be encouraged or discouraged from the perspective of a civic duty to respect the fact of pluralism.

“Habitat”
Claudia Sbrissa, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts
Thursday, December 3, 2009
Claudia Sbrissa’s richly colored mixed media drawings, collages, and installations explore the physical geography of the landscape, both natural and urban. She is interested in the architecture, infrastructure, and history of urban environments; how human activity transforms landscape; how landscape can transform us.

All meetings are held from 12.15 to 1.30pm in the Library 150 (Writing Center Seminar Room, Queens Campus). If you have any questions please contact Tracey-Anne Cooper (coopert@stjohns.edu) or Nerina Rustomji (rustomjn@stjohns.edu).
Faculty News

Dr. Blase Billack (Pharmaceutical Sciences, billackb@stjohns.edu) gave a seminar entitled, “Antifungal Activity of Ebselen and Its Analogs,” at the Wroclaw University of Technology in Poland (June 2009).

Dr. José G. Centeno (Communication Sciences and Disorders, centenoj@stjohns.edu) published two articles: “Issues and Principles in Service Delivery to Communicatively-impaired Minority Bilingual Adults in Neurorehabilitation” and co-written “Applying Cognitive Neuropsychological Principles to the Rehabilitation of Spanish Readers with Acquired Dyslexia” in Seminars in Speech and Language which he co-edited (August 2009).

Dr. Zhe-Sheng Chen (Pharmaceutical Sciences, chenz@stjohns.edu) invited three visiting scholars Drs. Wen Deng (MD., Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, China), Peirong Ding (MD., Ph. D candidate, Sun Yat-Sen University Cancer Center, China) and Chunling Dai (MD., Ph. D, Sun Yat-Sen University Cancer Center) to work at his laboratory; presented with students three papers: “Nilotinib (AMN107, Tasigna) Reverses Multidrug Resistance by Inhibiting the Activity of the ABCB1/Pgp and ABCG2/BCRP/MXR Transporters,” “Lapatinib, Erlotinib, Imatinib and Nilotinib are Potent Reversal Agents for MRP7 (ABCC10)-mediated MDR,” and Marine Sponge-derived Siphonate Triterpenoids Reverse P-glycoprotein (ABCBl)-mediated MDR in Cancer” at the annual North American ABC Genetic Workshop at the National Cancer Institute-Frederick, Maryland; was appointed to serve as a Chair of the ABC workshop (September 2009); and was invited to give a Lab of Cell Biology seminar at National Cancer Institute-Bethesda, Maryland (September 2009).

Dr. Anthony Cirelli (Theology and Religious Studies, cirelllia@stjohns.edu) published “Re-assessing the Meaning of Thought: Hans Urs von Balthasar’s Retrieval of Gregory of Nyssa” in the Heythrop Journal (May 2009).

Dr. Tracey-Anne Cooper (History, coopert@stjohns.edu) appeared in the History Channel series, Clash of the Gods, in the episodes “Beowulf,” “Thor,” and “Monsters of Middle Earth” (Fall 2009).

Dr. Christopher Denny (Theology and Religious Studies, dennyC@stjohns.edu) published an article, “Interreligious Reading and Self-Definition for Raimundo Panikkar and Francis Clooney,” in the Journal of Ecumenical Studies (Summer 2009) and presented a paper, “All Will Be Well: Julian of Norwich’s Counter-Apocalyptic Revelations,” at the annual meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America in Halifax (June 2009).

Dr. Judith DeSena (Sociology and Anthropology, desenaJ@stjohns.edu) published the book Gentrification and Inequality In Brooklyn: The New Kids On The Block (Lexington Books, 2009).

Dr. Maura C. Flannery (Computer Science, Mathematics and Science, flannerm@stjohns.edu) published an article, “Going Home Again,” in The American Biology Teacher (October 2009).

Professor Fred Herron (Theology and Religious Studies, herronf@stjohns.edu) has been named Interim Executive Director at Mount Manresa Jesuit Retreat House on Staten Island; published an essay, “Our Transformation in Christ: Thomas Merton and Transformative Learning Theory,” in The Merton Annual.

Professor Rahul Karnik, (Information Technology and Computer Information Systems/Decision Sciences, rahul@stjohns.edu) was selected for the first green AV standard, Audiovisual Systems Power Management, task group to develop and write an international ANSI Standard for the control and use of electrical power for audiovisual systems.

Professor Stephanie Navon Jacobson (Fine Arts Dept, jacobsos@stjohns.edu) exhibited in: "My Long Island" at the Islip Art Museum, Islip NY (Summer 2009), "Artists Invite Artists" at the Graphic Eye Gallery, Port Washington, NY (September 2009), and "Heartbeats" at the Art League of Long Island, Dix Hills, NY (September 2009); was a judge for the Suburban Art League Juried Membership Show (June 2009) and the National Art League 2009 Drawing Exhibition (October 2009).

Dr. Jay Nathan (Management, nathanj@stjohns.edu), gave the lectures “Managing Nepal’s Industries and Businesses for Effective Globalization,” “Nepal: Proper Management for Sustained Economic Development,” and “Mongolia: Strategic and International Management of New Product Development;” these lectures were funded by the Tribhuvan University of Nepal, Management Association of Nepal, and the Fulbright Alumni Association of Nepal, and the National University of Mongolia, respectively (June and August 2009).

Sister Barbara Sudol CSFN, DA (English, sudolb@stjohns.edu) published the children’s book, Kangaroo Kraal (Vantage Press, 2009).

Dr. Vivian Valvano Lynch (English, lynchv@stjohns.edu) published an essay, "Secret Gardens: Unearthing the Truth in Patrick O’Keeffe’s The Hill Road," in Irish Fiction since 1990: Diverse Voices (Manchester University Press, 2009); presented a paper, "‘Let Me Like A Soldier Fall’: Louise Dean’s This Human Season," at the American Conference for Irish Studies (ACIS) International Conference, National University of Ireland in Galway, Ireland (June 2009); chaired a literature panel, "Metaphors of the Sea," at the American Conference for Irish Studies (ACIS) Mid-Atlantic Conference, Monmouth University in Long Branch, NJ (September 2009); chaired a literature and film panel at the New York State College Teachers of English Conference at St. John’s University Manhattan Campus (April 2009).


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**Faculty Growth Grants Program**

The upcoming deadlines to apply for a Faculty Growth Grant are: January 25, 2010, and April 12, 2010.

If you have any questions regarding the application procedures look at our website under Growth Grants Program (http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/centers/teach/growth) or email us at CTL@stjohns.edu.

Yvonne Pratt-Johnson (The School of Education, prattjoy@stjohns.edu)

In this Series, Vincentian Research Fellows from across the university share their experience in actualizing the Mission through their research, teaching and service. Below, Professor Yvonne Pratt-Johnson of the School of Education presents the centrality of “caring” in the preparation of all teachers but especially of those who work with immigrant children during their cultural transition.

As an educator, I believe I should not only be concerned with teaching courses, but also with changing lives, by shaping attitudes and dispositions toward teaching, and working with culturally and linguistically heterogeneous groups. Thus, my on-going goal is to help educate students to grow into caring and sensitive teachers who respect all people, regardless of their cultural, linguistic or socio-economic backgrounds.

I work with graduate students in “Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages,” a School of Education program which prepares teachers to instruct today’s culturally and linguistically diverse youth. This program is particularly important at St. John’s because of our location in the most culturally diverse county in the nation. In addition to addressing methods for educating teachers about English language learners and about the myriad factors that impact immigrant children’s education, my experience in training such teachers has led to my research focus on educational caring and teacher sensitivity.

This focus is inspired by and grounded in the Vincentian mission because it recognizes the need to satisfy the emotional and psychological needs of immigrant children before and in connection with meeting their linguistic and pedagogical needs. I expose my students to core Vincentian values by creating a classroom environment in which an ethic of caring and learning is articulated and developed through themes of caring for self, caring for classmates, and caring for those who may be different from oneself. Values like respect, human dignity, sensitivity, and social responsibility find a natural place in a classroom where persons are the central focus. Not only do students learn about the importance of helping immigrant children and others to learn effectively and in a respectful environment, but they also see how caring forms a part of this and of all positive educational equations. Just as St. Vincent de Paul cared about the whole person, my students learn that each pupil must be treated as a whole being and given the help, consideration, and support that his or her needs demand. This applies whether the student is a new immigrant still learning in a specialized environment or is a member of our nation’s broad and diverse educational “mainstream.”

While teaching graduate students to put these principles into practice, I try to engage them in activities that lead to an experiential understanding of what it is like to live in a new culture. This transition holds many challenges with life-long impact. To provide for this experience and under the auspices of the School of Education, I recently led two groups of graduate students on study abroad trips to the Dominican Republic (DR). The DR was chosen because it is the country of origin for the largest contingent of immigrant children in the New York City public school system.

The Santiago-based Catholic University — Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) hosted our St. John’s group. A major component of this program was each student’s opportunity to live individually with a host family. This allowed them to immerse themselves in the culture in a very real and personal way while experiencing the hospitality and warmth of Dominican families. It allowed them to learn about some of the adjustment issues newcomers of every age experience in coming to a new country. While students appreciated this aspect of the program, they invariably stated that the highlight of the trip to the DR was their time spent at the Padre Emiliano Tardiff Orphanage in Santiago. In the caring spirit of the Vincentian tradition, the groups purchased and delivered a number of items needed by the children of the Orphanage, including clothes and food. Some students also purchased books, crayons, paper, and toys. They used their visits to drop off these items, but they also took time to interact with the children. Workers at the orphanage marveled that busy university students would spend entire afternoons with the children,
reading to and playing games with them. These examples exhibit how Vincentian seeds of respect and service planted in the students’ hearts and minds take root and then blossom into beautiful flowers — acts of kindness and care. Giving things is important but so are caring relationships. Indeed, the DR study abroad program in all its aspects, academics and service, has proven to be a resounding success. Plans are now underway to bring a third group of St. John’s graduate students to Santiago for the summer of 2010.

Reflecting on the life and work of St. Vincent de Paul and the experience of my graduate students, I recall Vincent’s insistent vision and message of care. He taught and showed that we are responsible for the community in which we live and for the community in which we learn and teach. Within that community, we are called to serve with respect toward all members—uplifting, building, and supporting whoever we can, especially the vulnerable, the weak, and the needy. In that experience we come to know the truth: “It is in giving of ourselves, in caring for others, that we do indeed receive.”

The Center for Teaching and Learning is Proud to Announce the Launching of Its New Web Site


Besides providing up-to-date information to faculty on teaching and learning issues, the site’s main aim is to highlight the great teaching strategies developed by St. John’s faculty. There are a great many wonderful things going on at the University, yet these good ideas are often only known within a particular department or college.

Here’s a chance to share your teaching approaches with others. Just send a few sentences about your idea along with any materials you would also like to share. This is a public site which means that you are also contributing to by making St. John’s better known as a great teaching institution.

As you can see if you visit the site, we are just in the early stages, but we hope to keep expanding if you provide us with the information.

Please join us in the endeavor. We hope the CTL Forum will be a great meeting place for good ideas, as well as where you can find out what’s going on at the CTL.

International Education Week

The University celebrates International Education Week, November 16-20, with a number of activities. Most focus on student interests, but the CTL is sponsoring a panel on Global Studies from a faculty perspective. It will be held on Wednesday, November 18 at 12:15 p.m. in the Library, Room 110.
New Technology Applications and New Pedagogical Approaches: A Report from the Ninth MERLOT Conference

Tracey-Anne Cooper and Susan Schmidt-Horning (St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, coopert@stjohns.edu, and schmidts@stjohns.edu)

As Center for Teaching and Learning Associates we (Tracey-Anne Cooper and Susan Schmidt-Horning from the History Department of St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) attended the Ninth Annual International Conference of MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching) in San Jose, California, this August. We would like to share some of the information, ideas, and inspiration we garnered during the three-day conference. Obviously space constrictions will preclude detailed descriptions, but we have included web-site information where applicable and would welcome questions via e-mail.

Our hosts, MERLOT, have a free, extensive, searchable portal site at www.merlot.org which enables professors to review websites and share learning exercises that they have used in conjunction with those sites. It is an expanding repository, already having 20,000 higher education learning materials. Dr. William Paquette of Tidewater Community College, who won the Innovative Use of MERLOT Award, presented on the more than 150 exercises that he has produced and shared on MERLOT which help develop active learning in conjunction with history web-sites. Sorel Reisman, the Managing Director of MERLOT presented on the newest features of the MERLOT site; these included a social networking site, a you-tube channel, the KEEP toolkit from Carnegie, and an allied repository called COMPASS, which is a portal for administrators in Higher Education with the purpose of having materials in collections which administrators can use – folios, faculty development, library and information services, online courses, and pedagogy.

MERLOT also presented another exciting aspect of their recent development in a panel discussion aimed at faculty development entitled “ELIXR: Using Web-Based, Media Rich, Case Stories to Encourage Innovation in Teaching.” The site http://elixr.merlot.org currently offers twenty-three modules featuring videos of faculty sharing their stories of exemplary teaching. These models feature short videos (2-5 minutes) of professors describing challenges they have encountered, teaching strategies that have worked for them, and actual classroom footage as they implement new techniques; the modules are also accompanied by a summary of the main points addressed, and PDFs of useful documents. Many of the videos are interdisciplinary, some devoted to specific courses like organic chemistry, geology, business math; and each video features at least four faculty members telling their stories. We watched the module on making the first day of class “first class” – it was organized into elements like motivating students, framing course content, expectations, and we found this extremely useful. One of the goals of the project is to foster collaboration and to act as an online repository of media rich resources for faculty to share their pedagogy.

Student portfolios were a hot topic at the conference. We attended a session on www.efolioworld.com which was developed at Minnesota State College. The goal of the product is to develop authentically assessed life-long, life-wide reflective efolios, which are an organized, goal-driven set of items which document and display the student’s knowledge, disposition and skills. The collection of the efolio evolves with the student and they complete it by answering a survey arranged under a set of “standards.” First the standard is stated, secondly the student indicates how it was achieved, thirdly they upload evidence of their achievement, and lastly, and probably most importantly, they reflect on their experiences and self-assess their performance. The professor’s role would be to contribute to the documentary evidence with their own assessments based on a rubric for each of the standards and to guide the reflective process. We could readily see an application of a similar efolio for our students at St. John’s, with our “standards” being our core learning goals.

Probably the most controversial session we attended was on the development of an Electronic Teaching Assistant (or eTA), presented by Michael Tang, of the University of Colorado. The application he is developing helps write and grade multiple choice exams, has an academic search engine and applications to
improve students’ reading speed, comprehension, and retention and to detect plagiarism. The controversy arises with the application that automatically scores student essays, which certainly raises some serious pedagogical and ethical issues. Dr. Tang’s beta testing showed a 70-85% correlation between the essay grades produced by humans and the machine, which, while impressive, would have to be used advisedly.

Tracey-Anne chaired a hands-on workshop entitled “You have your Second Life Avatar. What’s Next?” which was extremely helpful. Cris Guenter of the California State University, Chico presented in person, joined remotely from Chico by Ann Steckl. The presenters logged everyone onto Second Life and took them on a virtual tour, which began at the virtual Chico campus, which has extensively embraced Second Life and has many different meeting rooms and lecture halls for on-line teaching. The next stop on the virtual tour was the Cincinnati University area of Second Life, where we got some professional clothes, hair and shoes for our avatars. The avatar is the cartoon figure that represents you in the Second Life world, and most come looking and dressing like eighteen-year-olds, so it was useful to make them a little more dignified. The tour then proceeded to a virtual Harlem and a tour of the Apollo Theatre, and finally we went to a creepy hotel to solve a murder mystery, which was a good place to pick up basic movement and action skills. There was a lot to be learned in these two hours, but it was enough to tantalize and fire up enthusiasm to explore the possibilities of using Second Life in teaching, which I believe a few St. John’s professors are already doing. Anne and Cris did such a great job teaching the novices in the session that no-one got lost, and there were a few funny moments too, such as when Tracey sat on some stranger’s head (virtually of course), but at the end of the session we were fully prepared to move on and explore on our own.

Susan chaired a workshop on video recording and publishing brief interviews during conferences, poster sessions, or campus events. The speaker used a small Flip video recorder with a built-in USB enabling easy uploading, and he encouraged participants to interview each other and use the devices. This session promised more than it delivered and the audio quality of the resulting videos was subpar, but the idea behind it seemed useful. The speaker also noted necessary considerations when doing the interviews, such as gaining permission to record and publish online (i.e. YouTube), and he shared his detailed release form. One benefit of this fast and easy video recording might be to share sessions with colleagues who could not attend conferences; another might be to record student presentations which could then be shared or used in their efolios. As we develop the public history program at St. John’s, the use of these recorders could prove very useful for teaching oral history interview techniques and for students to use in various public history exercises.

All in all, the conference was well-organized and very useful, with good sessions on both faculty development and teaching with technology. MERLOT has a good product and a keen desire to remain cutting edge, and as our university expands its technology horizons, we should perhaps look into partnering with them and certainly consider contributing our own pedagogical expertise to their repository.

Teaching with Technology: Engaging Students with Audience Response Systems

Hosted by Turning Technologies and the Clinical Pharmacy Practice Department
Date: Friday, November 13, 2009
Place: Donovan Hall Community Room
Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Lunch will be served, so please RSVP to Sharon See at sees@stjohns.edu by November 2.
The First Annual Undergraduate Applied Social Justice Research Essay Competition
Sponsored by St. John’s University Libraries and The Friends of the Library

The competition is open to all current St. John’s University undergraduate students of any discipline.

FIRST PRIZE $500
SECOND PRIZE $300

Essays will be judged by the following criteria:

- Excellence in undergraduate research with extensive use of the St. John’s Libraries’ collections
- Demonstrated ability to evaluate and synthesize library resources
- Shows evidence of developing an understanding for the processes of research and inquiry
- Cogent explanation of relationship between this research and applied Catholic social justice teaching
- Displayed originality of thought and depth of research
- Clarity of the writing, organization and proper documentation
- No more than 12 double-spaced pages (entries can be between 5 and 12 pages) using standard 12-point font
- Properly cited and formatted using MLA, APA, Chicago or appropriate discipline citation standards

Research projects may be either based upon independent research or a class assignment, and must have been completed during the 2009-2010 academic year. By submitting an essay for consideration, applicants certify that the essay is his/her own work, and that all sources have been given proper credit. All essays must be written in English. Essays will be reviewed by an academic committee.

Applicants are required to submit their contact information, a brief abstract, and a bibliography, along with a letter of recommendation from a supervising faculty member, no later than February 1, 2010.

The deadline for submission of the essay is February 26, 2010. Essays should be sent electronically as an attachment (MS Word or PDF format) via the St. John’s University student email account. Send the essays to Caroline Fuchs at fuchsc@stjohns.edu or Kathryn Shaughnessy at shaughnk@stjohns.edu with the subject line “2009-2010 contest submission.” Essays should contain a title page that includes 1) essay title, 2) student’s name, 3) student’s email address, mailing address & phone number, and 4) name and contact information for supervising faculty.

Winners will be honored at a library reception during Research Month in April, in which they will give a short presentation on their research topics. Their essays will be published on the library blog. For further information concerning the contest and submissions to the essay competition, contact Caroline Fuchs at fuchsc@stjohns.edu or call 718.990.5050