The year ahead:
Not losing heart in challenging times

Kris Bulcroft,
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

As I look forward to another academic year at Western Washington University, I reflect on the ways we all have been called upon—and will increasingly be asked to be both teachers and learners.

These are both turbulent and stimulating times for institutions of higher education. The new roles that faculty and student support professionals are being asked to play open many possibilities for professional growth. Parker Palmer, senior associate of the AAHE and advisor to the Fetzer Institute, often asks faculty members to consider the ways in which their passion, commitment, and integrity are integrally tied to the act of teaching. Having “heart” is a necessary part of effective teaching Palmer says, because heart is our personal identity with our academic disciplines. It is also that passion for our subject matter, which students often cite as that essential ingredient in their learning process. Pedagogy without heart is insufficient to motivate the minds and intellectual curiosity of our students.

What Palmer, Ernest Boyer and other progressive educational reformers have often failed to note, is that good teachers are also life-long learners. Engaging in the intellectual dialogue that is necessary for institutional change and professional growth requires not losing heart in challenging times.

Spotlight on new faculty
Glenn Tsunokai, Sociology

To Glenn Tsunokai, Western’s Sociology Department “felt so right” when he interviewed for his new faculty position of assistant professor.

“It has great colleagues and resources. There is the attitude that it’s okay to ‘nurture your projects,’ and spend quality time doing your research. I didn’t hear that from other schools.”

Tsunokai recently earned his Ph.D. from University of California-Riverside. He did his dissertation on the emergence of Asian gangs in the San Gabriel Valley, which was having great social impact on this suburban area. His research covered gangs from “a multi-dimensional perspective,” and included surveys of gang members and a stint as an intern with a local police department. New research interests, Tsunokai adds, include focusing on some of the social issues of Native American populations.

This fall, Tsunokai will be teaching Sociology 269, Race and Ethnic Relations. During the year he will also teach Sociology 369, Sociology of Race & Ethnicity. This is Tsunokai’s first faculty position, and—although he admits he’s somewhat “green” when it comes to teaching—he says he’s excited to get into the classroom.

“I like to get students out of their comfort zones. I really like to challenge their thinking, to make them understand that things aren’t always what they seem.”

—See listing of all new faculty, pg. 2
Marcy leads breakfast forum, Oct. 22

Mary Marcy, Ph.D., formerly at Western and now the Senior Administrator for Antioch University’s national grant-funded Project on the Future of Higher Education, will lead a campus breakfast forum on Wed., Oct. 22, 7:30 - 9 AM, in the Solarium (Old Main 580).

The external budget climate is putting tremendous pressure on campuses, threatening the quality of faculty work life and student learning. Marcy will discuss ideas for building a quality work environment for faculty and maintaining student learning, even in difficult budget times.

Campuses will need to think about innovation rather than retrenchment if they are to support the core of the academy. Marcy will share the most recent work of the Project’s Institute for Higher Education, a group of national higher education leaders who are addressing some of these core issues. Discussion will follow Marcy’s talk from 9 - 10 AM.

“Finding the Common Good” panel set for Dec. 4

Provost Andrew Bodman is one member of a panel presentation on Dec. 4, at 4 - 5 PM in Miller Hall 160.

All members of the campus community are invited to attend a special panel presentation, “Finding the Common Good,” on Thurs., Dec. 4, at 4 - 5 PM in Miller Hall 160.

Panel members—which include Provost Andrew Bodman and Faculty Senate President James Loucky, among others—will explore ways that administrators, students, faculty, and student affairs personnel can work together more effectively to enhance student learning environments and outcomes on Western’s campus. Each panel member will identify a common institutional issue or goal. A question and answer session will follow the presentation.

Getting REAL: Capturing Western’s first year experience

Karen Casto & Justina Brown, Center for Instructional Innovation

Four entering freshmen will have their fall quarter at Western chronicled through a documentary video project, which will then be shared throughout the quarter with some of their peers.

The REAL Project was created by the Center for Instructional Innovation for use in select First-year Interest Groups (FIGs) Program seminars. Four FIG students serve as cast members, and have agreed to be videotaped periodically throughout the quarter by CII student employees.

The interviews with cast members will be combined to make six segments, centered on specific topics, including transition to college, setting goals, test-taking, and personal growth. Segments will be shown in the FIG seminars every other week. The CII is hopeful that the REAL project will be a valuable tool to spark in-class discussions on such issues, as well as help students connect more quickly with their peers and to the academic environment at Western.

The idea for REAL is based on a similar project created by Trinity Western College. The CII learned of the project at The First-Year Experience International Conference in Vancouver, B.C. in July 2003.

REAL cast members (clockwise from upper left): Christopher Sullivan, Lauren Allain, Michael Moore, and Erika Martinez.

WELCOME NEW FACULTY

Communication Sciences and Disorders: Eva Baharav
Engineering Technology: Bradley Kelitto
History: Andrew Duffin, Roger Thompson
Liberal Studies: Jonathan Miran
Modern & Classical Languages: Masanori Deguchi, Mayumi Mitsuya, Cornelius Parsch, Hsin-I Tseng
PEHR: Randall T. Burtz, Jennifer Leita, Leslie Ochs
Political Science: Amir Hassan Abedi-Djourabchi, Vicki Hsueh
Psychology: Jennifer Devenport, Diana Gruman
Sociology: Glenn Tsunokai
Decision Sciences: Ilhyng Kim
Management: Jongwook Kim, Bo Bernhard Nielsen
Art: Louisa Iarocci, Julia Sapin
Dance: Andy Noble, Dionne Sparkman-Noble
Music: David Meyer
Fairhaven College: Marita Dingus (starts winter qtr), Teri McMurtry-Chubb, Raquel Montoya-Lewis
Ed Foundations/Woodring: Shulamit Gribov
Educational Leadership: Kristine McDuffy
Elementary Education: Joanne Carney, Tracy Beisenherz
Human Services & Rehabilitation: Lee Williams
Secondary Ed. Catherine Ashcraft
Environmental Sciences: Ruth Harper-Arabie
OCTOBER

Breakfast Forum with Mary Marcy, Ph.D., Sr. Administrator with The Project on the Future of Higher Education—See details on opposite page.


JANUARY

The REAL First Year Student

Thurs., Jan. 8, at 4 – 5 PM, MH 186

According to Beloit College’s 2003 Mindset List, this year’s first-year students:
—Have never gotten excited over a telegram, a long distance call or a fax.
—Have always had a PIN number.
—Have been “dissing” and “burning” things all their lives.
—Think that “Ctrl Alt Del” is as basic as “ABC.”

We’ve all heard that “knowing your audience” is a key element to effective instruction. Karen Casto and Justina Brown from the Center for Instructional Innovation will share results from recent national and WWU surveys, as well as REAL, a reality-based video project created at Western (see pg. 2).

FEBRUARY

Using Real Data in the Classroom

Thurs., Feb. 5, at 3:30 - 5 PM, VU 567

“The explosion in both the amount and variety of quantitative information, and the necessity of using such information in daily decisions, make the need for quantitative literacy both new and urgent.” —Randall Richardson and William McCallum

Join professors from departments across campus, including English, Sociology, and Mathematics, as they describe how they integrate quantitative literacy in their course curricula. Refreshments will be served.

For more information, please contact: Karen Casto, x/4943 or Karen.Casto@wwu.edu

NOVEMBER

What’s in a Seminar?

Thurs., Nov. 6, at 4 - 5 PM, MH 160

North Seattle CC has a highly successful, nationally recognized program of interdisciplinary, team-taught coordinated studies and linked courses. A book seminar is one of the key elements in creating these learning communities. Join Jim Harnish to learn how to teach students to prepare for and interact in book seminars with examples of reading lists, writing assignments, evaluation instruments, and communication skills. This workshop is ideal for those faculty wanting a greater understanding of the art of seminaring, or who have a seminar linked to a larger course.

—Harnish has been a faculty member at North Seattle CC since 1970 and is a founding member of the Washington Center for the Improvement of the Quality of Undergraduate Education. Harnish has also been chosen as a Carnegie Scholar for 2003-04 at the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

DECEMBER

Finding the Common Good: A Panel Presentation—See details on opposite page.

Thurs., Dec. 4, at 4 – 5 PM, MH 160

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER: PETER FROST

Author of “Toxic Emotions at Work” and Edgar F. Kaiser Chair in Organizational Behaviour at the Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia

Wed., Feb. 4, Time & Location TBA

Dr. Frost will discuss his research and his new book, “Toxic Emotions at Work” (Harvard Business School Press, 2003). In his book, he argues that a world run on human capital requires human responses to the often harsh realities of business—most leaders are shirking this vital responsibility. Consequently, self-appointed pain managers—“toxin handlers” —are currently shouldering the burden of emotional pain for entire organizations.

Frost also discusses the main sources of organizational toxicity, and outlines ways organizations can develop and formalize caring and constructive responses.

“Toxic Emotions” is the 2003 recipient of the prestigious George R. Terry Award from the Academy of Management. A passionate educator, Frost is also the recipient of numerous teaching awards, including the 1998 Academy of Management Distinguished Educator Award. Frost’s visit is co-sponsored by the CII, TLA, and Western’s Center for Excellence in Management Education.

For more information:
Frost’s UBC website: http://www.sauder.ubc.ca/faculty/directory/faculty/frost.cfm
Toxinhandler.com: http://www.toxinhandler.com/
*Toxic Emotions at Work* is also available for checkout at the CII, MH 156.
Professional Development Series 2003 - 04, con’t from pg. 3

MARCH

Weapons of Mass Instruction (Or, Doing More with Less)
Thursday, March 4, at 4 - 5 PM, MH 186

As fiscal resources shrink and class sizes grow, faculty face a bigger challenge in how to infuse innovative instructional methods into their large lecture courses. Join a panel of Western faculty members from various departments who’ve found some cost-effective ways to both save time and help their students learn.

APRIL

Collaboration Awards Ceremony
Thursday, April 1, at 4 - 5 PM, LOCATION TBA

The campus is invited to celebrate the achievements of those faculty and students who have collaborated on a project or research that has benefitted the campus community. Criteria for these first-ever awards will be reported in upcoming issues of Praxis, and also made available this fall on the Office of the VPUE website: http://pandora.cii.wwu.edu/vpue/

MAY

Documenting Teaching (The Course Portfolio)
Thursday, May 6, at 4 - 5 PM, MH 186

Join Carmen Werder for this perennial favorite workshop. By focusing on a single course, the course portfolio affords an opportunity to think about a class in new ways with the goal of enhancing it. This workshop will provide an overview of the portfolio process, sample portfolio models, along with specific strategies for creating a portfolio for a specific course.

JUNE

Innovative Teaching Showcase / CII Open House
Thursday, June 4, at 12:30 - 2:30 PM, at the CII, MH 156

Meet the Showcase’s featured instructors and be there for the premiere of the 2003-04 Showcase of best teaching practices. CII directors and staff will be on hand, the multimedia will be rolling, and refreshments will be served.

Not losing heart, con’t. from pg. 1

quires we also consider what we might learn, rather than relying on what we already know.

Unless we continue to learn, we cannot sustain the heart necessary so that others might learn. Yet, most of the rhetoric still revolves around enhancing teaching, supporting faculty development to foster innovations in the classroom, and restructuring rewards to better foster scholarly teaching. Far less often do we talk about the ways in which all members of the campus communities must embrace the dual roles of teacher and learner.

Western will face some difficult decisions in the near future. We will debate how to do more with less. We will ponder what a quality undergraduate education means in the 21st century. We will consider new technologies and different modes of instruction. We will wonder if our efforts make any difference in the collective understandings of our students and colleagues. We will learn.

Some teachers lose heart. These times make it more difficult to retain the passion that is the foundation of our own teaching and learning. My agenda for 2003-04 is to work within and help sustain our community of learners in ways that will replenish our hearts, and help give us the courage to be both teachers and learners. It is my hope that in such a community, more of us will be able to keep the heart in what we do, as individuals and as an institution.