

FCPE Newsletter – Issue No. 3 – Spring 2003

Adrienne Sosin – Associate Professor, School of Education

It has been said that literacy is the cornerstone of a free society, and I am a strong believer in the power of the word for social justice.

A brief overview of your area of expertise, research and teaching.

In my career I am lucky to have had opportunities to teach all age levels and in multiple environments, including schools and in the business world. As a literacy specialist, I focus on how readers and writers gain and communicate meaning, and on the social aspects of literacy. Before coming to Adelphi I was Associate Professor of Literacy Education at City College of New York, and prior to that I was an Associate Professor of Education and Director of Student Teaching at Pace University. I have also worked as Assistant Vice President and Director of Training in the insurance industry, in Data Processing, and was a New York City middle and high school teacher. My experiences in these different learning environments have led me to develop a number of diverse interests and research topics. I have conducted research in different aspects of learning, including achievement, multicultural education, school-college collaboration, service-learning and qualitative research methodology. I am currently studying technology infusion in teacher education, and the effects technology infusion has on K-12 learning.

Why did you come to Adelphi?

My reasons for selecting Adelphi are numerous, but the most important reason to me was the opportunity to prepare literacy specialists who can develop literacy in their students, thus contributing to the next generation's ability to communicate. I am also pleased that Adelphi emphasizes liberal education, offers many resources to a diverse student body, and maintains a beautiful campus. In particular, I endorse the conceptual framework of the School of Education, and believe that our mission is highly important and worthy.

What has been your experience so far?

I have been very pleased at the level of response I have received from the Administration, my colleagues in the Faculty, and from the support staff. Most importantly, I am delighted to have already met so many wonderful students. As an example, my Fall 2002 Adolescent Literature class gave me the opportunity to work with highly motivated STEP students and Literacy Master's students whose level of commitment and work was excellent, and made me confident that Adelphi was the right choice.

What do you wish to contribute? What do you feel strongly about in regards to teaching or your specialization?

I hope to be able to contribute to Adelphi in many ways. Since I have studied higher education, adult learning, and teaching as a discipline, I hope to be able to have an impact for the entire institution. I am a Senate representative for the School of Education on our Faculty Senate, and have been active on committees preparing the School of Education's NCATE accreditation application. Most importantly, I want to help Adelphi achieve quality in preparing teachers and literacy specialists for careers in education. It has been said that literacy is the cornerstone of a free society, and I am a strong believer in the power of the word for social justice.

What do you wish to impart to your students?

I am hopeful that my students gain knowledge of our discipline and respect for our profession, but even more importantly, I hope my students gain a love of literacy and the desire and ability to spread their love of literacy to their students.

Barbara Skinner – Assistant Professor, History Department

... I came into this field with a mission to get students interested in the broader world, in its history, and through studying this history, to expand their ability to think critically and analytically.

A brief overview of your area of expertise, research and teaching.

I came to my field of Russian and East European history after a career as a Russian translator and interpreter – a career that took me on countless trips to Russia, including remote areas of Russian arctic and Siberia, primarily for National Geographic magazine. Prior to that, I had taken some time after graduating from Yale to study in Poland, which gave me an abiding interest in that country and culture as well. My interest in both Russian and Polish culture, religion, and history led to an academic interest in the interactions and conflicts of these two competing and often contradictory peoples and cultures, particularly in their borderlands of Ukraine and Belarus.

My research studies the shifting border between Polish Catholic and Russian Orthodox influences – basically the clash of Eastern Byzantine and Western Roman Catholic traditions – during the westward expansion of the Russian empire in the late 18th century. Specifically, I assess the role of religion in the identity and consciousness of the Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples, who were previously under Polish rule and the majority of whom professed the Uniate faith, which combines Orthodox ritual with Roman Catholic doctrine (now called the Byzantine Catholic or Ukrainian Catholic Church). Over the course of a century after their incorporation into the Russian empire, all Uniates there were forced to convert to Russian Orthodoxy. How did this shift in confession impact their culture and identity? What were the political motivations for the conversion? The Russian perspective that condones this conversion has long been the standard perspective presented in our history books. My study, which started with my Ph.D. dissertation, confronts this view with contradictory evidence from the perspective of those undergoing the conversion, supported by documentation from archives in Russia, Ukraine, and Poland.

My interests in teaching are much more broadly based. My general interests in history go far beyond the geographic bounds of Russia and Eastern Europe. I have the opportunity at Adelphi to teach aspects of European history and world history as well. Regardless of the geographic area I am teaching, I am interested in getting my students to understand the intersection of political, social/economic, and cultural trends and to pull them into the mindset of those making and experiencing historical shifts. Basically, I came into this field with a mission to get students interested in the broader world, in its history, and through studying this history, to expand their ability to think critically and analytically.

Why did you come to Adelphi?

This job struck the right balance between working in my field of Russian and East European history and working to enhance my knowledge in the broader field of world history that would help me develop a more comparative approach to my own research and teaching. I have particularly enjoyed reinforcing my understanding of and teaching the significance of global trends and interactions in world history. Russian historians have previously been largely peripheral to the growing field of comparative world history, and I am hoping to be able to break

that mold. Additionally, the friendliness and supportiveness of the other faculty and staff was an important factor as well. I am currently in the difficult situation of working far from my husband, who has a tenured position at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN. I would not have come to Adelphi if it had not personally been a very positive place for me.

What has been your experience so far?

So far, the students, faculty, and staff have made me feel very welcome. I am also enjoying the smaller class sizes here that enable me to get to know my students better, especially given my previous adjunct work at Indiana University, where classes were much larger. Moreover, I am very pleased with the level of support for my research and scholarly pursuits. The university is generous with support for participating in conferences, and I am now the recipient of a President's Faculty Development Award, which will be of great assistance to continue my archival research in Russia.

What do you wish to contribute? What do you feel strongly about in regards to teaching or your specialization?

As there are not many in my field with the linguistic capabilities to study the Polish/Russian borderlands, I hope to make an important contribution to the field by refining our perspective on issues of identity and cultural development there. Moreover, I hope through comparative application of my research to contribute to the broader discourse on empire and pre-modern national consciousness across all fields of history.

In terms of teaching, as the sole expert in Russian and East European history at Adelphi, I hope to get students excited about studying this captivating part of the world. I am equally as enthusiastic about what I can contribute through my survey courses in world history, where my goal is to inspire all students – history and non-history majors alike – to take an interest in other regions of the world and to understand the interrelatedness of social and cultural development across the globe.

What do you wish to impart to your students?

I hope that I can instill in them a better understanding of distant parts of the world, a respect for other cultures, an interest in the past, and a desire to continually work towards understanding how the past plays a role in the present moment. Knowledge of history adds another dimension – a very rich and multifaceted dimension – to our understanding of the world around us. The facts I am teaching the students will fade, but I hope that I am teaching them how to think about history, how to read it, and how to learn from it.

Grant Updates and News

by Mary Cortina

In late November, I sent an email to faculty that asked about your needs regarding the grant application process. Though I cannot say the following is representative of faculty needs, here is what you said:

Q. What would you like to see more of, in terms of grant support?

A. In general, you would like to have more specifics – information about funding agencies that support your particular research interests; one-on-one discussions about your research; grant announcements and deadlines; and assistance with budgets, timelines, and follow-up with “partner” institutions.

Q. What do you find particularly helpful?

A. Notification of grant deadlines, mini workshops.

Q. What problems do you encounter in the grant process that I could address for you?

A. Budget development; timelines; how to include students in grants; knowing the procedure for accessing grant funds and compensating grant staff and/or consultants.

Other comments?

Q. What is faculty access to “grant writers” to assist with the application, and “how to” use funding databases.

A. You can always meet with me to discuss your research and possible funding sources. I cannot guarantee funding, but the more I know about what you want to do, the easier it is to identify sources and “connect” you with a funder. I am always available for one-on-one meetings.

A “Grant Alert” newsletter was sent to all full-time faculty via email and interoffice mail in late January, which provided descriptions of announcements and deadlines for the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. I will have this posted on my webpage, which is accessed via the Faculty Center for Professional Excellence’s website.

The faculty member/grant proposer is responsible for preparing a budget. Mireille Sabbague, the grant accountant and I meet with the grant proposer to discuss budgets and Mireille usually prepares any budget forms required by the funder. I am available for assistance in designing written timelines for grants, and contacting partner institutions for letters of commitment and other information needed for the grant. Once you have been awarded a grant, Mireille establishes an account for the grant and you follow the usual university policies and procedures for paying students, consultants, ordering equipment, travel, etc. The only difference is these items are charged to the grant and not your department or school.

Self-Evaluation by Students: A Tool for Democratization of College Classrooms

by Michael O’Loughlin

After one year of university teaching I pretty much abandoned lecturing. I remember the occasion well. My students were having considerable difficulty working their way through an assigned book and, frustrated at their lack of progress, I gave an impromptu and highly erudite lecture on the topic. I finished with an expectant “Did that help?” and, to my chagrin, my undergraduates glumly informed me that it did not. In the words of Douglas Barnes¹, whose book we were actually studying, I was asking them to arrive without having traveled. I soon gave up on the attempt to put my own understandings into my students’ heads, and concentrated on helping them to take responsibility for constructing their own understandings.

During the past sixteen years I have developed a variety of strategies for maintaining student engagement. Concomitant with this I have developed multi-modal forms of assessment. I abandoned “objective” tests when I gave up lecturing. In my courses students now typically do some or all of the following:

Weekly writings – weekly responses allow me to keep track of student work effort and give individual assistance to students who are struggling with issues from the readings. Credit is given if each assignment is done correctly, and if inadequate, students may rewrite.

Autobiographical essay – based on the belief that students need to connect new knowledge to existing understandings, I have students explore these connections through an autobiographical essay. Credit is given if assignment is done correctly, and if inadequate, students may rewrite.

Group discussions – based on the idea that students need to talk themselves into the vocabulary of the discipline, students are expected to read before class, and class time is frequently used for discussion. In the early stages of the semester I usually prepare discussion questions to structure the discussion and teach students how to read critically for meaning, Credit is given for active participation.

Term papers – provide an ultimate test of the capacity of students to speak the language of the discipline and I grade these rigorously. Letter graded.

Collaborative websearches – help students link course content to the latest knowledge and teach them how to engage in collaborative research. Letter graded.

Applied projects in the field - allow students to demonstrate the to link theory and practice. They are usually given the option of doing these projects in pairs or groups. Letter graded.

All of this sounds well and good. My classroom had many of the trappings of democracy yet I always experienced some discomfort at grading time. Despite my desire to give students their say, I retained all of the grading power. I assigned the grades behind my closed door, relieved that I did not have to confront those students whom I suspected would not have agreed with my decisions. As one of my graduate students aptly expressed it in a journal entry a few years ago: “When Michael said to trust him he looked a lot like Nixon when he said ‘I am not a crook.’” I was busted and so I resolved to address the power asymmetry with my students.

For many years now I have invited students to write self-evaluations at the end of the semester, addressing what grade they believe they have earned in my class. I emphasize the distinction between “earn” and “deserve” and urge them to focus on “earn.” I advise them to address all aspects of the grading rubric, as described above, and to tell me any other information that may help me understand their performance. After I have completed my grading I read the self-evaluations and I guarantee students that if their predicted grade differs by more than a grade fraction from my opinion (i.e., +/-) I will conference with them to try to resolve the discrepancy before making final grade decisions.

Do students take advantage of this process? To the contrary, students are often very conservative graders. They often say what they would like to get, but then go on to analyze carefully what they believe they have actually earned. If my grade is higher than what they assign themselves, my grade holds. I rarely have grade disputes, and the dialogue I have with students, both prior to grading, and when discrepancies arise, has helped keep me honest. I find that knowing I will have to look my students in the eye causes me to approach grading with due diligence. By the way, variation in student motivation, effort, and ability, ensures that my grade distributions are as broad now as they were before I introduced self-evaluation as an element of my teaching. The lesson I have learned from this is that democratization of the classroom that does not draw students into some kind of negotiation of the power inherent in the grading process will be readily recognized by students as possibly well-meaning but decidedly hollow.

¹ Barnes, D. (1992). From communication to curriculum. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Stephanie Lake – Assistant Professor, Sociology Department

... The bottom line was that Adelphi offered me the opportunity to come in, teach the courses I love in a relatively small school atmosphere, and to participate in the curriculum development of an entirely new program.

A brief overview of your area of expertise, research and teaching.

My areas of expertise include criminology, criminal justice, and juvenile delinquency. More specifically: criminal homicide, gender and crime, and punishment policy. I wrote a dissertation entitled "Homicide: Gender Disparity in Sentencing in the Richmond Felony Court," which examined differential sentencing for male and female homicide defendants in Richmond, VA. I've taught the following classes at the University of Virginia and Adelphi: Criminology, Introduction to Sociology, Juvenile Delinquency, Crime and Punishment, Crime Prevention, and Introduction to Forensic Science. We're hoping to get a Criminal Justice Program up and running in the College in the next few years, which is one of the reasons for my hire at Adelphi.

My main area of research involves punishment practices for homicide defendants, but I've also done research with the Drug Courts and with the Prince William County PD regarding their juvenile curfew program.

Why did you come to Adelphi?

I had actually accepted a position at the University of Richmond when I got the call from Adelphi, but decided to come for the interview anyway. I was so impressed by the University's commitment to teaching, and to its faculty, as well as all the efforts made in the past few years to increase enrollment, curriculum development, etc. The bottom line was that Adelphi offered me the opportunity to come in, teach the courses I love in a relatively small school atmosphere, and to participate in the curriculum development of an entirely new program. It's very exciting to enter a program that's expanding or developing new branches, and so it was too good to pass up. I also knew that I wanted to return to NY at some point in the future... so here I am!

What has been your experience so far?

I absolutely love my job! Having taught at the University of Virginia (a large school) and Randolph-Macon College (a relatively small school in Virginia), I knew that the small school scenario was the way to go for me. The people here are SO friendly and helpful (which is a new experience for me.) I've gotten a lot of support... from my department, from the Dean, the Provost, the Faculty Center for Professional Excellence :) , the Registrar's Office, etc... and I look forward to working with these and other campus units in the years to come. Again, to sum up: friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful.

What do you wish to contribute? What do you feel strongly about in regards to teaching or your specialization?

Right now, my main focus in terms of contributing to the academic community here at Adelphi, is in the area of curriculum development. As I mentioned earlier, the provost, along with the sociology dept, ABLE, the Derner Institute, as well as various other related programs, are working together to create a solid and competitive Criminal Justice Program. As of now, I have a few students who are working on a Criminal Justice degree from an interdisciplinary major approach, but in the next few semesters, we hope to get an official major up and running. Very exciting to be on the ground floor of this.

I also am looking forward to continuing with my research on punishment practices and philosophy, particularly at the level of felony homicide.

What do you wish to impart to your students?

I feel very strongly about teaching students in my Introductory Sociology courses, as well as the Criminal -Justice -related courses, to think critically about what they read in the paper, see on the news, etc. Specifically looking at crime statistics, reports, initiatives, etc., coming out of the mass media, political campaigns, etc., I feel it's very important to instruct students on how to interpret all this information analytically and where to go for the "real scoop." In my Introductory course, I also feel it's important to get the students to develop their "sociological imagination," to see the world in a new light.

The Case for Teaching Students Online Research Skills

by Eliose Bellard

Background

Where do I begin without sounding like a broken record? Many of you have heard me extol the need for 'information literacy' to be incorporated into the Adelphi curriculum at meetings, classes and any other time I can bend an ear. The Association of College and research libraries has incorporated information literacy competencies into the Standards for Higher Education and Middle States has adopted those standards for accreditation. In fact, our own General Education Committee has included 'information literacy' as one of its goals and objectives for the new freshman seminar proposal to be instituted next fall.

Most faculty feel they do their part by having a librarian come to their classes and instruct the students on library resources, while others feel their students merely need some computer training in order to transfer traditional library skills to this new online environment. I believe, however, that students need more than instruction on library resources or training on database mechanics to cope with the volume of information and changing information environment that faces them today. What is needed is a more systematic and structured approach to teaching these skills to students.

What is an information literate student?

Information literacy is the intellectual framework that students use to acquire information regardless of the discipline, source, or format. An information literate student means having the ability to understand the need for information, how to access and retrieve information, and navigate a variety of sources and formats –whether online or in print. An information literate person can evaluate the information effectively for quality, validity, and reliability in terms of the knowledge they seek, and can use the information both productively and in an ethical manner.

For the most part, students do not come to the academic arena with any information literacy skills in place. Library and research skills are not taught in high school or middle school. Many are computer literate but really do not know how to search or locate information beyond a basic search screen. Given the amount of available information, the research process has become far too complex for anyone to try to learn all these skills on their own. The information landscape is changing so rapidly that even librarians who are trained specialists have difficulty keeping abreast of the continuous advances. Bringing a librarian to your class to teach some of these skills, can be very helpful, but doesn't begin to address the information literacy needs of the students.

The Internet Challenge

With the electronic library, and commercial search engines so easy to access, many students are relying more and more on the internet to meet their informational needs. This removes them

further from the traditional library and librarians where they would be introduced to some information literacy concepts. Without information literacy instruction using electronic libraries and search engines effectively and efficiently becomes even more difficult. Students don't really understand the differences between a search engine and a research database. Many can not distinguish the difference between a web page and a published article.

To further complicate matters, there is a lot of misinformation concerning the internet. Take for instance the myth that... "Everything is on the internet!" Many students think that all information has been put online, they don't think about the fact that web sites and search engines don't store information over time like a library. The World Wide Web is a fluid medium that is constantly changing and sites are replaced, edited and changed all the time. Often, most of the quality resources on the net are password protected and therefore not freely accessible through search engines. Clearly the Internet presents educators with many challenges.

Quantity versus Quality

Even when students use library resources, the volume of references can be intimidating and overwhelming. The quantity of sources available to students, makes locating quality sources more frustrating and time consuming. Let me give you an example. If a student needs information on a topic, they have access not only to our library resources, but also the resources of libraries and databases from all over the world. Via a PC, students can:

- access our catalog and other catalogs throughout the world
- view millions of websites on the Internet
- search hundreds of online databases that index thousands of journals, magazine and newspapers in every discipline for every subject, available in full text, and/or
- retrieve an interlibrary loan document.

From this plethora of sources, they must select the best available sources, evaluate the material for validity, and deal with a variety of digital formats. One can understand why some students get overwhelmed, frustrated or just give up. Having students expend so much energy on the research process shifts their focus from actually learning.

A Prescription

I would recommend that information literacy must be initiated early in the Adelphi student's academic career and built upon throughout the curriculum in graduated stages. Freshman need to be introduced to finding valid information resources in the library and on the web, and how to use them in the academic arena; sophomores and juniors can build upon these basics and be taught how to identify primary and secondary sources, or locate empirical research in scholarly journals related to their field; and seniors or graduate students should learn how to locate and use more advanced subject specific tools and sources to validate their own research.

More and more teaching faculty see a need for library instruction beyond basic skills and are requesting classes that are subject related or devoted to web resources and evaluation. The library has tripled its instruction classes in the last three years, and demand continues to grow for these classes. Some Universities and Colleges are now placing a variety of information literacy competency standards into courses that are writing intensive for each discipline. This process would build on the basic foundations of information literacy by introducing more advanced skills and strategies for life long learning.

No librarian can teach all that is necessary in one or two classes. Having information literacy skills distributed throughout the disciplines and taught at different levels would guarantee that students are getting all the skills necessary in a more cohesive and collaborative environment.

This would eventually eliminate some of the redundancy when librarians teach the information literacy classes for the more subject specific or assignment related classes, and would allow for more hands-on learning and further investigation.

The Library currently has basic components of information literacy in place throughout the campus. All undergraduate incoming freshman and the Honors college students get two 50 minute classes. The need now is to get undergraduates beyond the basic competencies. On the graduate level the School of Social Work Masters Program gets a three hour mandatory class. Having all the graduate programs institute something similar would be beneficial. It would guarantee that all our students would be introduced to the basics, especially some anxious older students who are returning after several years away from the academic arena. It is imperative we meet the needs of all our students at several different levels.

In conclusion, information literacy education needs to be integrated more systematically into the curriculum at Adelphi. It is a necessary part of the educational process that every student needs in order to be a successful graduate of our institution.

The Center for Career Development: A Resource for Faculty, Students and Alumni

by Pat Mitchell

Each semester, the Center for Career Development sends its newsletter Postings to all Adelphi faculty members. Recognizing that students see their professors often and may go to them with a variety of questions, we hope that keeping faculty informed about our services and programs will be an effective way to keep our students informed. (Even though we send bright postcards to students inviting them to participate in events and we post flyers around campus, many students need a face-to-face reminder.) The newsletter summarizes the services offered at the Career Center in Post Hall and gives the complete schedule of events for the semester. If the newsletter is not handy, all of its information is available on the Career Development web site.

Instructors of the Freshman Orientation Experience course are probably most familiar with the workings of the Career Center. All FOrE students meet here for two class sessions to discuss steps they can take to select majors and careers and begin building the resumes that will lead to success. Students complete an interest assessment (the Self-Directed Search), conduct an information interview and write a paper outlining the steps of their career development. We are delighted that some students follow up with a more detailed interest assessment and career development counseling.

For graduating students and alumni, the On-Campus Interview Programs, which bring employers to campus for pre-scheduled half-hour interviews, are well under way. All of the resumes have been reviewed by career counselors and forwarded to employers to make their selections. Educators and social workers will interview at the University Center on March 11 and candidates interested in business or government positions will interview on April 3. We have also forwarded resumes to out-of-state public schools for interviews on March 20.

Major events that do not require pre-registration (and would greatly benefit from classroom announcements where appropriate) include:

- **New York City Public Schools** (job fair and fingerprinting) – Friday, March 21, 1-6 p.m., C.W. Post Campus Hillwood Commons
- **Nursing Job Fair** – Monday, April 14, 4-6 p.m., University Center Ballroom
- **Dress for Success Fashion Show** – Monday, April 28, 1-2 p.m., University Center Lobby

- **Annual Job Fair** – Wednesday, April 30, Noon-3 p.m., University Center Ballroom

We hope that, in addition to encouraging your student to participate, you will be able to attend some of our special events this year. You are always welcome at our April job fairs to chat with employers, or you may want to join us for breakfast before our Education/Social Work Recruitment on March 11 or our Corporate Recruitment on April 3. Our greatest need for your participation is at our October Career Information Fair which provides an opportunity for students to chat with faculty and alumni about their choices of majors and/or careers. We need faculty from every academic program. We hope you will consider joining and, perhaps, nominating an alumnus or two.

The Career Center is open year-round from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with extended hours on Wednesdays to 7:30 p.m. during spring and fall semesters, and on special Saturdays during the recruitment season. Professional career counselors are available by appointment and during drop-in hours to advise on all career-related matters, such as:

- Choice of major or career
- Assessments of interests and values related to careers
- Designing a job search
- Resume review.

The Center publishes a Job Search Guide which is distributed free to students who visit the center or attend workshops. Faculty may obtain copies upon request. The Guide addresses resume preparation in detail and gives sample resumes appropriate to Adelphi academic programs. The same information is available on our web site. We request that students and alumni review the Guide prior to bringing in their resumes or emailing them for review.

There are several other publications distributed at the Career Center at no cost to students and there are reference materials for a wide variety of careers, as well as employer directories. The career library houses binders with current job listings sorted by field. Full-time jobs are also posted on the Internet through Monstertrak. The Career Center posts on-campus employment listings, handles campus job applications and verifies work study awards.

Our credential file service may be of particular interest to faculty, since you write many of our students' letters of recommendation. At the Center for Career Development, students and alumni may set up files of confidential and non-confidential letters which will be kept for forwarding to potential employers or to graduate or professional schools. Thus for any individual you can write one letter instead of several.

In closing, I would like to extend a special invitation to all Adelphi faculty. We call it "Career Classes on Call," and it could mean that you might never have to cancel a class when conflicting circumstances arise. Just call us and, if a counselor is available, we will cover a class with a career topic such as:

- Choosing a major or career
- Building a resume: a four-year plan
- Writing resumes and cover letters
- Preparing for a job interview
- Finding the right internship
- Or any other career-related topic you prefer.

Most faculty who visit the Center for Career Development come away with information and materials that is of value to their students. If you have not visited us, we hope you will soon.

The Joys and Frustrations of Office Hours – A High Personal View

by Stephen Z. Goldberg

All faculty are expected to keep a regular schedule of office hours and the fact that the faculty is available to students is one of the strong points of Adelphi. Students who choose to avail themselves of faculty office hours are taking an advantage of a resource unique to universities such as Adelphi. One of my strongest recollections of my undergraduate years, at a university that I love where I got what I believe to have been an excellent education, was timidly going to a professor's office to ask if he would endorse a recommendation written by a graduate teaching assistant. I knew that the professor had no idea who I was.

During my many years at Adelphi I have had a variety of experiences with office hours. Some of the good ones have been real high points in my teaching experience; some of the bad experiences have been among the most depressing.

For many of us, office hours represent a time to return phone calls, read mail or journals, or do other academic work. Sometimes, when they are scheduled right after a class they are a chance to unwind after an intense experience in the classroom. Of course, none of these activities are what office hours are designed for, but it is an inescapable fact that most students do not actually take advantage of the opportunities office hours provide. I should add that I recognize that for some students office hours are not at convenient time, even if a faculty member has scheduled those hours at a variety of different times. My personal strategy is to schedule hours before and/or after a scheduled class and at a number of other times as well, trying as best I can to avoid times when I know students to be in another class.

Probably the biggest obstacle for students coming to my office hours is their fear that they will show their lack of understanding of material I have covered. Of course, this is exactly why a student should come to office hours, but human nature being what it is, I am not surprised. I think it is exactly for this reason that faculty should encourage students to utilize all manner of academic support, especially peer tutoring which is beneficial to both the tutor and the person being tutored.

I am probably perceived as having a rather strict classroom demeanor, although I try to sprinkle jokes and stories into the class period to give students a chance to relax their brain cells for at least a little bit of time. I also try to convey to students that I do not consider any question to be silly or stupid. Any student who asks a question is seeking knowledge and should be encouraged, although in many cases class time can not or should not be devoted to the answer. I encourage students to pursue these questions during office hours. Perhaps my classroom persona discourages students from coming to my office, but I think that students who do come find me concerned with their specific questions and issues. Office hours give the faculty member important, albeit limited, feedback about the students' understanding of material presented. Students usually come with very specific questions, and a careful hearing of those questions can not only indicate the concerns of that specific student but often cause me to reiterate a point, in a new way, to the entire class.

So now on to some of the highs and the lows. Clearly the most exciting office hour experiences are when a student comes in to discuss material and the student has attained a high level of mastery which enables the discussion to move beyond what was presented. Is this common? Most certainly not, but it does happen on occasion. More commonly good students come in when they are stuck on a specific point and it is relatively easy to work with such students to

clarify the point of confusion or misconception. One of my best experiences with office hours was a few years ago in the chemistry course for nursing students when a group of three students who were friends all turned up each week. They always had a variety of questions and I think the small group environment was beneficial to all of us. In a sense they had the benefit of asking questions directly to me, but also of essentially doing peer tutoring for each other as they explained answers among themselves. I would say that these students, who were by no means the top students in the class, each improved her performance by a full grade. In this case the improvement was truly performance based.

Since we are all human and want to know that students have some interest in doing well in our courses, another important case is that of the mediocre student who makes a real effort to try to improve by utilizing office hours. Clearly, especially in a quantitative subject like chemistry, we are not in the business of confusing effort for performance. However all of us have encountered a student where the grade could be either, for example a C+ or B-. The hard working student, who has made the effort to come to office hours and has clearly devoted time to the course is much more likely to get that B-, at least from me.

So what are some of the low points associated with office hours. Clearly the worst situation is when students come in to discuss their failing performance on an exam. One wonders where they were when they could have come in to ask questions which might have helped them learn the material. How many times have we heard a failing student ask, "what must I get on the next exam to get an A in this course?" Closely related is the situation when a student does come in and it is clear that his/her level of comprehension is extremely low. Here, I believe honesty and sympathetic counseling is most important. In my own field I encounter many students who think they want (or their parents pressure them) to be doctors, despite the fact that they have either poor records or no background in science from high school. In these cases a sympathetic ear and encouragement that different people have different strengths is important.

Moving down through the low points we arrive at the student whose only question is "will this be on the exam?" Perhaps this is not as bad a question as it strikes me. It is certainly legitimate from the student's point of view to try to optimize the effectiveness of his/her study time, but I must confess that I am still put off by the question since to me it reflects a lack of interest in the material itself.

My worst experience was with a student in Fall 2002. He was a transfer student from another four year college who was enrolled in Chemistry 111. After a disastrous performance on the first exam he came to me with some questions about the homework assignments related to material on the second exam. Basically, his questions were, "how do you do these problems?" When I asked him what he had tried he replied that he hadn't looked at the problems at all, he just wanted me to tell him how to do them. After a bit of discussion I tried again with a new set of problems, which I discovered he had also not ever attempted. Again he simply wanted me to do the problems for him. When I explained that he had to play an active role in the process he stormed out of my office. Given his attitude he should have withdrawn from the class, but simply stopped coming and ultimately got an F in the course.

Of course such narratives should never end on a down note, so I want to mention one of the really true high points of office hours. This is the ability to interact with students on a personal basis independent of the course and course material. In Fall 1983 I returned from a sabbatical in Israel and began sprinkling my lectures with anecdotes and stories about my experiences. Some years later there was an Egyptian woman in one of my classes. She came to my office to talk simply because she recognized from my stories that I might have some understanding of

her difficulties being away from her family and alone in a new culture so different from her own. The fact that she viewed me as a sympathetic person (and a male no less) to whom she could talk is a memory which I treasure. When she had trouble getting a flight home for the intersession break she came to me and I was very pleased that I was able, as a result of my own frequent flying experience on a certain airline, to contact the airline and successfully negotiate for her.

So, office hours can be good, bad, and sometimes ugly. But office hours ultimately can be one of the most important venues for interactions between faculty and students.

The Pohle Colloquium

by Robert Bradley

This history of mathematics ... many historians would be tempted to say: "that's not history!" And it's probably even more likely that a mathematician would say: "that's not mathematics!" Whatever it is, and wherever it belongs in the pigeonholes of academia, the history of mathematics is alive and well at Adelphi, thanks in large part to the Pohle Colloquium.

The History of the History of Math Colloquium

The Frederick V. Pohle Colloquium on the History of Mathematics, hosted by the department of mathematics and computer science at Adelphi, usually meets on the first Wednesday of the month during the academic year. Since its inception in September of 1998, the Pohle Colloquium has brought almost three dozen mathematicians, historians and philosophers to Adelphi to share their research with a group consisting of members of the Adelphi community, and faculty members from nearby colleges and universities.

The colloquium is named for the late Frederick Valentine Pohle, former professor and chairman of mathematics at Adelphi University, who was an applied mathematician and an amateur historian of mathematics; 'amateur' in the true sense of the word, meaning 'one who loves.' Fred was a passionate student of the subject, he had an impressive collection of history of mathematics books, and he taught the one history of mathematics course that Adelphi offers.

I've been the colloquium coordinator in the department of mathematics and computer science since I first came to Adelphi. In the Fall of 1998, when I was also chairman, the idea came to me of having a regular series on the history of mathematics, which by then I counted as my primary field of research. The first speaker was my former doctoral student, Patricia Allaire, herself a historian of math, and now associate professor at CUNY Queensborough. Between Pat and myself, we found we had enough personal contacts to flesh out a full schedule of 5 talks for 1998-99. We needed a name for the series, and it seemed only appropriate that we name it after Fred Pohle. Thanks mostly to Pat's energy and organizational skills we've kept the colloquium going for five years now, averaging 7 presentations per year.

The Pohle Colloquium on the Web

Almost from the very beginning, we have had a web site to promote the colloquium and to keep our audience apprised of upcoming events. In the early days, our address was something like www.web-dev.adelphi.edu/~bradley/yadda/yadda/yadda, but in January 2000 we secured the domain name www.pohlecolloquium.org, and now that's our little corner of cyberspace. We hope you'll visit us online.

An even bigger technological breakthrough took place in May of 2001, when we started videotaping the talks, making the digital video available on demand at our web site. We are

extremely grateful to Adelphi's Faculty Center for Professional excellence for shooting the video, and to the Office of Information Technology for producing the digital files and making them available on the university's servers. Most of our talks since May '01 are available on the website, but a few speakers have chosen not to be taped, and we were also unable to shoot Professor Antonella Cupillari's presentation of March 2002, due to the campus-wide power failure that occurred that day.

If you would like to sample some of the offerings on the web site, let me recommend the talks of October and November 2002 as good starting points. Just look on the left hand side of the page, under the heading Video Archive. The first of these, by Ronald Calinger of the department of history at Catholic University in Washington, DC, is recommended for mathphobes. Ron gives an excellent talk about an important figure in the court of Frederick the Great of Prussia, who just happens to be a mathematician. There are no equations or geometric diagrams in Ron's talk, but there is a great deal to be learned about the Silesian Wars, the rise of the Berlin Academy of Science and Literature, and the place of academies in 18th century intellectual life. It's an example of what is often called 'externalist' history of mathematics. On the other hand, Homer White of the department of mathematics at Georgetown College spoke the next month about the same mathematician – Leonhard Euler – in a presentation that revels in the mathematical details and features plenty of diagrams. Homer's talk is a classic example of 'internalist' history of mathematics.

Thanks to our supporters

Although we've had speakers from as far afield as Berlin and San Bernardino, CA, most of our presenters are from universities within a few hours drive of New York City. Simply put, with seven or so speakers a year, we don't have the resources to fly people in from the four corners of the earth and put them up at expensive hotels. During the first couple of years, Pat and I frankly ran the operation on a shoestring, although we are extremely grateful for everything that the Dean has been able to commit to the department's budget for colloquia. In recent years, however, we've been the beneficiaries of some very generous support from a handful of professors emeritus of the department, who are also regular audience members. Thanks, Mike, Herb and Bob!

You're Invited

The Pohle Colloquium meets in October, November, December, February, March, April and May. Unless otherwise announced, the talks are at 4:00 on the first Wednesday of the month in Alumnae Hall, room 116. Coffee is served at 3:30. You can check out the schedule of coming talks at www.pohlecolloquium.org.

University Commitment to Community & Society

by Ronald S. Feingold

It was not long ago that Adelphi's mission and direction did not give much consideration to community and society. However, when one considers Adelphi's strengths, one finds numerous professional programs that are community service oriented. One also finds a relatively small college with faculty committed to their students and social issues, and it is this mix of programs and ideology that suggests that an appropriate mission for Adelphi University is to connect Adelphi to the community and the improvement of society. For some, this means identifying new knowledge through research, for others it means curricular developments in the preparation of future professionals, and still others through faculty and student collaborations with community support services.

A mission that wishes to connect the university to the community and improve society is not uncommon; however, there is little doubt that at Adelphi University this mission can be more than mere talk or something written for the catalog. Instead, it can truly be a guide, a priority for all programs and can be realistically implemented through courses and curricular experiences that impact students in a way that helps to develop students who are truly caring and committed individuals.

As an example, in my Department, Health Studies, Physical Education and Exercise Science, where I am the chair, connections to society and community are a priority, not only for the department, but also for the professions that I represent. These connections, perhaps are bit more obvious than in some other majors, such as disease prevention, development of active lifestyles, development of social skills, and development of respect for all and fair play are just a few of the attributes that can be developed.

Within the professions that fall within health and physical education, these changes did not come easy. The profession's focus had been on the product, specifically getting children fit, winning games and knowledge about disease. Little effort was focused on behavior change and specifically on the process of the activity. It is within the process that one truly grows and learns. It is within the process that one may focus on life skills and see that the gymnasium and field is really a laboratory about life.

In 1989, as health and physical education were once again threatened to be eliminated from the schools, I was asked by my profession to prepare a "position paper" in support of health and physical education. And a month later, I was asked by the State Education Department to prepare an "adult role paper", one that envisioned an adult who went through twelve years of health and physical education. It was within these two papers that the philosophical foundation was established for a change in direction from one that focused on the product to one that focused on the process and the development of "life skills". These "life skills" included besides a physically active person, a person who is cooperative, respects all people of all cultures and abilities, cares about others, shows leadership and followership skills, a problem solver and plays with fairness. In 1993 I was elected EDA President, in 1999 national president and now am International President. Therefore, over the past ten years, I have been in a position to make a direction change in my profession at the local, national and international levels. Of course, however, it is the teacher and/or coach that ultimately teaches to the process and recognizes the potential for development of positive "life skills" or one who continues to focus on the product.

With the above in mind, our teacher preparation program at Adelphi attempts to prepare teachers who view that they have the potential to impact children's lives in a very positive way, in a way that will make each and every child exposed to them, a better and caring person. Our students, therefore, besides focusing on this philosophy in introductory courses, learn how to implement this philosophy through various teaching methodologies. In addition, our students are responsible, as juniors, to work with the community and / or schools in the development of a project. Each faculty member and each student are committed to helping others. Although I have focused on health and physical education, every major at Adelphi has the same potential to connect to societal issues. The environment, world peace, development of self -esteem, drug abuse, violence in society, etc., are just a few of the unique contributions our faculty and students can make.

Besides the philosophic commitment and methodologies integrated throughout the curriculum, and the expectation of a junior community project, the university has also initiated a few outside

projects. Athletes Helping Athletes is a program brought to Adelphi four years ago. This program brings together high school athletes selected by their counselors and coaches to come to Adelphi for leadership training. They then go back to their schools and work with elementary and middle school children on alcohol, drug abuse, and violence prevention. At present approximately 1400 high school students come to Adelphi for this training, and our own department majors are required to take a leadership course with the directors of the program, so that they will be able to work with the high school students that come to Adelphi.

Another project has been Walk for Heart. One may have seen the increased publicity about Adelphi's role in walk for heart from MaryAnn Mearini (development office) and Kathleen Watchorn (Goodcuff/Proto's Office). You may have also noted that students, faculty, administrators and staff walk together as a team, working together for the good of others. In the case of American Heart, the money is for research and education programs. In the case of Adelphi University it is for building a team for the good of others and for the respect of all participants (faculty, staff, students) as part of the Adelphi team. Last year we had over 175 attend the walk, probably more than any company on Long Island and certainly more than any of the other universities. The Adelphi participation is more than a fund raiser and is more than a walk, but it is the within the process, the participation of all, each with equal respect and dedication to human survival. It is a model of caring and community welfare for our students, and it brings respect and dignity for all those that participate. It is the model that only Adelphi University can have, whereby all parts of the university work as a team to make a commitment to community and society.

Some ask, what is education? There are various definitions, and one can learn a lot of facts and become very knowledgeable about a specific discipline. But is there anything greater within the education process than instilling a commitment in our students in helping others?

What is P2P?

This acronym stands for the **Peer to Peer** program where student instructors help other students with technology-related issues. This program, which starts March 3rd, meets once per week at different times and is collaboration between the IT department and the Faculty Center for Professional Excellence. Students can walk-in, at designated times, and receive instruction on a variety of computer-related topics. Such topics include:

- Designing a website
- Making PDF's
- File Management
- MS Office (Word, PowerPoint, Access, Excel)
- Downloading files
- E-mail and computer settings
- Blackboard Basics
- Zipping files, and many other topics.

Please mention to your students that this free, helpful service is available to them. Sessions take place in the Hay- Lab in the Swirburl library. For scheduled times, call the Helpdesk at X 3333.