

Interdisciplinary and General Studies Annual Report, 2006-2007

The IGS Faculty is a complex one, with many small programs and units as well as several larger ones, and with faculty members from many different disciplines. The College has a long tradition of supporting interdisciplinary teaching, learning, and scholarship and IGS faculty members provide innovative leadership in interdisciplinary studies. Many of the most exciting areas of human learning and discovery are interdisciplinary; many disciplines are themselves becoming more interdisciplinary; and it is often in interdisciplinary endeavors that students and faculty are the most creative and active learners and scholars. Among the many accomplishments of IGS faculty members, I would like to particularly mention that a number of Bob Entenmann's essays have been translated into Chinese, collected in a book, and published in China.

Africa and the Americas, American Conversations, American Racial and Multicultural Studies, and American Studies

Between them, these four programs provide students with a learning community, two interdisciplinary majors and two interdisciplinary concentrations, all of which continue to attract students and provide insight into the American experience as well as an small introduction to Africa. This was another busy year for those involved in various aspects of American study. So busy, in fact, that only American Conversations has turned in a report. This year's AmCon staffing included two new instructors, Chuck Huff from NSM and Gary Gisselman from FA. Student retention issues seem to be getting resolved, and steps are being taken to ensure greater continuity in teaching. Challenges that appear on the horizon include recruiting teachers into the program and saving spaces for SSS students. Mike Fitzgerald returned from leave to lead both ARMS and AFA. Last spring, Jim May appointed a task force to consider ways for St. Olaf to strengthen the study of Africa. The task force provided its recommendation at the end of fall semester, and is waiting to get reaction from CEPC before taking further steps.

Asian Studies

Asian Studies had another successful year under the leadership of Phyllis Larson, who returned from her sabbatical leave. The department carried out a successful tenure-track search, and is looking forward to welcoming Luying Chen as the new Chinese language teacher. Asian Studies will also be welcoming a language teaching assistant from China and, due to increased enrollment, will add an adjunct position in Chinese. There is still need for additional assistance in Japanese language instruction. Together with Carleton College, St. Olaf applied for a Fulbright visiting scholar from Japan. Our Fulbright scholar, Professor Takubo, interacted with linguistics and Asian Studies students and faculty and taught a successful half-course during spring term. The department weathered the move from locations in Old Main and Annex to new quarters in the lower level of Steensland. This temporary home has the advantage of gathering all the language faculty in one location close to the other languages in Old Main, but it has several disadvantages, particularly the temporary nature of the location and the lack of private and quiet work space. Asian Studies faculty have worked this year to revise the

Asian Conversations program, with the intention of strengthening the language component and including solid research. The Asian Studies Department provides an excellent model for a successful interdisciplinary department, with its combination of appointments to the Asian Studies Department itself, joint appointments with other departments, and faculty with appointments in other departments teaching Asian courses offered under other department labels. Challenges include insufficient AAA support, and the need for others to consult Asian Studies faculty when Asian-related matters and language teaching issues come up on campus.

Environmental Studies

Environmental Studies completed a self-study and then hosted outside evaluators Monty Hempel and Stephanie Pfirman in November. The department received the outside reviewers' report in January and is in the process of modifying the major and concentration in response to both the self-study and review. ES faculty have been active professionally, presenting papers at regional, national, and international conferences and publishing papers. Students as well as faculty have studied the use of campus lands north of North Avenue, and both faculty and students have investigated the environment in a wide variety of settings abroad and off-campus domestically. Future tasks will include assisting the Department to gain greater visibility and cohesiveness, addressing issues of joint appointments, and continuing to develop the program in response to the self-study and outside review.

Hispanic Studies

Hispanic Studies, with an allocation of only .17 FTE every other year, manages to provide students with both a major and a small concentration. Requirements for these will need to be adjusted in tandem with changes in the Spanish curriculum, which have recently been put into place. This will take place under the leadership of Sylvia Carullo. The Hispanic Studies program continues to sponsor events and bring important speakers to campus. Due to Bush administration policy, the possibility of offering the Cuba interim has unfortunately disappeared, however, Hispanic Studies majors and concentrators have a number of other opportunities to study abroad in relevant areas of the world, increased this year by the approval of new programs in Argentina and Chile.

Integrative Studies

This was a successful year for CIS, characterized by solid continuity and positive change. Enrollments in CIS seminars were healthy, indicating interest on the part of students, as well as attention paid to information and recruiting. Integrative seminars are an excellent opportunity for faculty to explore new areas of interest while providing students with courses not available through regular department offerings. In response to the rising number of students interested in film and other visual media, CIS continues to be active in conversations about developing film studies at the college. Challenges facing CIS include the course acronym (IS), which is easily confused with independent study, and the need for better ways for students to locate interdisciplinary courses in the class/lab. In

addition, the out-of-the-way and inaccessible location of CIS on the sixth floor of Holland is an on-going problem, which we hope can be solved when the new science facility comes on line and makes new spaces available elsewhere.

International and Off-Campus Studies

St. Olaf continues to be ranked number one in the number of students sent abroad from liberal arts colleges, in the Open Doors Report prepared annually by the IIE Network. A total of 763 students studied off-campus in 2005-2006. Of these, 209 went on semester or year-long international programs, and 414 studied at international sites during January interim. This was almost the same number as last year. New developments this year include using a new program provider in Morocco, moving from Marrakech to Fez. This worked very well. New semester programs were approved by IDOCS, including ACM Botswana, IES Argentina, CIEE Chile, and Washington Internship Institute. The ACM has ended or suspended the Urban Education in Chicago, Central European in Czech Republic, and Semester in Russia in Krasnodar. The IOS office conducted a self-study during the calendar year 2006, and invited Betsey Brewer, Bill Hoffa, and Orv Gingerich as outside reviewers to campus in December. The office will continue to assess possible programmatic and structural changes based on the self-study and outside review. The biggest concern raised in the review was the way fees are structured and budgets constructed. This has already been addressed with a new fee structure put into place in time for students studying in fall 2007. For most programs, this new fee structure has created greater transparency and equity. It is a problem and has raised concerns, however, for the programs in Norway. New exchange agreements have been signed with ECNU in Shanghai, University of Oslo, and Telemark College. The admissions office has agreed that students coming from Norway may substitute high school grades in English for the TOEFL or IELTS test. Several other Norwegian institutions, most notably the Norwegian School of Business and Economics, have approached the IOS about signing exchange agreements. The IOS office, and particularly Eric Lund, was actively involved in the Global Citizenship theme year, and assisted in organizing and sponsoring many activities. In addition, Eric Lund was the convenor of a subgroup working on the assessment of global understanding under a Teagle grant. As usual, the IOS office was also actively involved in hosting visiting scholars, principally from China, Thailand, Myanmar, and Tanzania, as well as Kierkegaard scholars from around the world. Director Eric Lund and other staff members are active in regional and national organizations such as HECUA and NAFSA, among others. In addition to his many administrative duties, Eric Lund completed an article on "Scandinavian and Baltic Lutheranism 1550-1670." Faculty from across campus are involved in IOS in a variety of ways, serving on IDOCS, acting as program advisers, serving as field supervisors for term programs, leading interim programs and serving as hosts to visiting international scholars.

Kloeck-Jenson Endowment for Peace and Justice

No report.

Library

The library underwent a review by outside consultants, R2, who provided an extensive report and list of suggestions. The library is engaged in making changes in governance structure and practices in response to this report, as well as self-study. For further information, see the College Librarian's annual report on the Dean's webpage.

Linguistic Studies

Linguistic Studies provides students with a means of combining relevant courses from a variety of departments into a coherent concentration. Those students who wish to go beyond the concentration are able to use the CIS to create individual majors on linguistics topics. The program continues to host events, and was actively involved in the Global Citizenship theme, and particularly in the area of "expressing who we are through language". Linguistic Studies graduated 9 concentrators this year, and several of them will pursue careers connected to linguistics. Linguistic Studies concentrators have been actively engaged in collaborative research with faculty members, and several students have been involved in linguistics research through the Center for Interdisciplinary Research. As with many other interdisciplinary programs, Linguistic Studies faces challenges such as the difficulty of keeping track of available courses from across the curriculum and the number of independent study courses required for students to finish the concentration. One challenge that needs immediate attention is the lack of capacity in English 274. This course is required for Education, English and Linguistics majors/concentrators and does not have enough capacity to fulfill all these demands. Linguistic Study is due for a review, but this will likely have to wait until 2008-09.

Media Studies

Media Studies has grown in its five years of existence from graduating four concentrators to 24 in the class of 2006. In addition to those students completing a concentration, or even a major through CIS, the three courses offered with Media Studies FTE have proven enormously popular with students, leading to heavy enrollment pressure. Director of Media Studies Bill Sonnega has been working on a modest restructuring of the program and course offerings. These will be proposed to appropriate College committees in the future, and we hope will help cope with student demand for Media Studies courses. Director Bill Sonnega completed a sabbatical during spring semester and David Booth ably served as interim director. Even while on leave, Bill participated in some of the discussions around introducing film studies to the campus.

Middle Eastern Studies

The successful revival of Term in the Middle East may well allow more students to complete the concentration in future years. However, the program is greatly hampered by the limited number of courses offered on campus relating to the Middle East. So far the College has not found a mechanism to increase the number of courses related to the Middle East nor to offer students the opportunity to study Arabic. These are issues in

urgent need of attention. Sheri Been and Peder Jothen ably led Term in the Middle East in 2006-07, and this August a group led by Chuck Huff and Jenny Howenstine will leave for a revised program that eliminates Greece and returns to the US in December.

Nordic Studies

The Nordic Studies Program works closely with the Norwegian Department to sponsor many guests and activities. The visiting scholar program was unfortunately suspended this year and in 2007-08. Hopefully, this can be restored in future to reinvigorate a successful exchange that has gone on for many years and has enriched our campus community and curriculum with visiting scholars from Norway who have taught interim courses ranging from Nordic children's literature to the role of NATO, and many others.

Russian Language and Area Studies

This year saw the return of Marc Robinson from his sabbatical leave. While on leave, Marc developed a new interim course on Russian Theater, which was launched successfully and will likely be repeated. The RLAS department had a successful academic year, graduating five Russian language majors and eight area studies majors. Two recent graduates have been accepted into the Slavic program in Madison. Anna Kuxhausen has been a dynamic addition to the department, and for the first time this spring was able to offer a FLAC component to the Modern Russia course. Paddy Dale returns in the fall, and both he and Bryn Geffert have been added to the department faculty with FTE-neutral joint appointments. A late-breaking opportunity to invite a Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant to campus was successful, and the department looks forward to welcoming this new addition to their program.

Shaw-Olson Center for College History (St. Olaf Archives)

As always, this has been a busy year for the Archives. A new agreement was signed last June, which formalized the relationship between St. Olaf College and the Norwegian-American Historical Association. This agreement means that Gary DeKrey and Jeff Sauve also serve as archivist and assistant archivist for NAHA as well as for the College. The archives accessioned 25 new collections, generated 1757 new electronic collection records, and created 888 full text alumni magazine records. Public education and outreach included everything from major to routine assistance to patrons, both internal and external, treating and preserving historical records, creating exhibits, and authoring public history items.

Women's Studies

This was a busy year for Women's Studies, graduating 8 majors and 27 concentrators this spring. Women's Studies, like several other ID programs, struggles with enrollment pressures leading to long wait lists, especially in the introductory course, as well as with turnover in faculty able to teach and provide leadership in the program. Managing access to the introductory course at an appropriate time in a student's career, as well as access to

other courses serving the program continues to be problematic. Mary Cisar volunteered to teach the intro course during summer school this past summer, in the hope that this would help relieve some of the pressure. This does not seem to have been the case, as students took the course in the summer primarily to fulfill GE requirements. Mary Titus and Judy Kutulas attended an ACM Conference on Women and Gender Studies programs in liberal arts colleges. This has led to a number of new initiatives and discussions, including moving the program in the direction of Gender and Sexuality Studies. WS hosted several significant events, and also ran Women's History Month. Though the programming for this was successful, it needs an institutional home and budget outside the WS program.

Writing Program

The Director of Writing continues to oversee three general areas, First-Year Writing (including English 107, English 110, and GE 111), WRI courses, and Writing in the Major. Constant challenges in staffing for GE 111 demonstrate the need for flexibility and creativity, since significant variables complicate accurate enrollment prediction and thus staffing needs in GE 111. Demographic changes point to the need to evaluate both English 107 and 110, and devise methods to meet the needs of students who graduate from US high schools but still need explicit writing instruction aimed at English Language Learners (ELL). In addition to the continuing challenge of staffing GE 111, the Director of Writing continues to work with issues of WRI offerings, assessment, and the First Year Experience.

Challenges facing the IGS Faculty and the Associate Dean

- Though most of the programs are thriving at their current level, several could benefit from some sustained attention. Several programs have had substantial increases in student interest but without concomitant increase in resources.
- Assisting ID programs in working with other departments that provide courses that support ID majors and concentrations. Working on joint appointments, joint hiring, or at least being involved in hiring decisions with implications for GE programs.
- The IGS dean has special responsibilities for Writing, Oral Communication, Ethics, and Multicultural studies, all GE components not specifically affiliated with an academic discipline. Each presents its own challenges.
- The need for adequate space for IGS chairs, directors, and programs must be addressed. Space issues are particularly urgent now with many IGS programs housed in temporary and/or inadequate quarters. Space and program identity are often interrelated, and several programs would benefit from some designated space.
- As with space, so too with staff support. Most IGS programs are supported by the generosity of the neighborhood Academic Administrative Assistants, but overall, we have too many faculty doing their own support work for IGS departments and

- programs. A modest amount of AAA support for some IGS programs is now in place. More could still be done in this area.
- The IGS programs are supported by modest operating budgets, which do not fully meet the needs of some programs.
 - Enrollment pressures in some ID programs and courses continue and need to be addressed.
 - More aggressive seeking of grant funding to support IGS programs is needed.

Several new initiatives were begun or started to be discussed this year, and will continue in the upcoming year. These include African Studies, Summer Undergraduate Research in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Interdisciplinary Studies, and devising a modified self-instructional language program in order to extend our capacity to offer instruction at both beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of critical less-commonly taught languages.

2006-2007 has been a challenging and exciting year. It has been a busy year as well, as I have continued the task of Fulbright Program Adviser after serving on the faculty committee for a number of years. This year saw record numbers of Fulbright applicants and a very high success rate as well. Several IGS departments were involved in hiring decisions and program reviews. I have greatly enjoyed getting to know better and work with leaders of the IGS programs and departments, and colleagues Jim May, Arnie Ostebee, Mary Cisar, Lynn Steen, and my fellow Associate Deans. I look forward to the next year of service to the College, my last as Associate Dean for IGS, and to serve the Faculty and the College to the best of my ability.