

FNSM Annual Report
July 3, 2007
Submitted by David G.L. Van Wylen

It is a pleasure to serve as the Associate Dean for a very active and productive Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. This annual report summarizes some of the many meaningful FNSM activities that occurred during the 2006-07 academic year.

Faculty Successes

The heart and soul of the FNSM remains our faculty, and I am pleased to share several faculty successes.

We had several faculty/staff who completed their first year at St. Olaf:

- ◆ **Josh Laison**
- ◆ **Steve Freedberg**
- ◆ **Kris Keuseman**
- ◆ **Nat Schaeffle**

We had two faculty who were tenured and promoted. **Jean Porterfield** was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Biology and **Doug Beussman** was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Chemistry.

Other accomplishments to be noted include:

- ◆ We published over 35 published papers, chapters, and books
- ◆ Many invited talks - elementary schools and churches Northfield; St. Olaf and Carleton; St. Thomas, University of Minnesota; Alaska, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Colorado, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, North Dakota, Texas, Virginia, Missouri, Georgia, Washington D.C; Bahamas, England, Germany
- ◆ New courses approved - ChBi 125/126/127, Biogeochemistry, Literature from the Polar Regions, Directed Undergraduate Research, Practical Methods in Biology, Green Roof, Moral Psychology in Cross-Cultural Psychology, Climate Change
- ◆ Active across campus - CILA, campus committees (chairs of RPC and CEPC), ad hoc committees, chapel talks, admissions events, sporting events

Program Successes

We had an excellent group of Chairs - **Anne Walter** (biology), **Mary Walczak** (chemistry), **Paul Zorn** (MSCS), **Bob Jacobel** (physics), and **Dana Gross** (psychology) - and Program Directors - **Beth Abdella** (molecular biology), **Jean**

Porterfield (biomedical studies), **Shelly Dickinson** (neuroscience), **Julie Legler** (statistics), and **Dick Brown** (computer science).

We had another excellent Science Symposium during Honor's Day, thanks to the hard work by the Science Symposium Committee (**Dave Van Wylen, Deborah Anderson, Kathy Shea, Jason Engbrecht, Greg Muth, and Tory Borovsky**). The theme for this year was *Cosmic Questions: Life, the Universe, and Everything*. The three featured speakers were: Lawrence M. Krauss (Ambrose Swasey Professor of Physics, Professor of Astronomy, Director of the Center for Education and Research in Cosmology and Astrophysics at Case Western Reserve University), Michael S. Turner (Rauner Distinguished Service Professor at The University of Chicago, Chief Scientist and Director of strategic planning for Argonne National Laboratory), and Lisa M. Pratt (Professor of Geological Sciences at Indiana University, Director of NASA astrobiology team project "Biosustaining Energy and Nutrient Cycles in the Deep Subsurface of Earth and Mars"). Associated with the symposium was our annual student research poster session, which attracted more than 60 student presenters.

Our Summer Research Program was again very successful, with over 60 summer researchers and nearly 30 faculty involved. Thanks to **Charles Umbanhowar**, our Director of Summer Research.

This was an important year for the Science Complex, as ground breaking occurred in early December and fund raising progressed sufficiently to enable a one-phase rather than a two-phase project.

FNSM faculty were active writing and receiving grants during the 2002-03 academic year. The highlights were:

- ◆ \$6,196,063.21 requested; \$1,938,977 awarded in FNSM
- ◆ **Paul Roback and Rob Rutherford** NIH AREA grant
- ◆ **Howard Thorsheim** NSF CCLI Phase II National Dissemination Grant Psychophysiology Labs at Itasca Community College
- ◆ \$500,000 S-STEM in math, pending grant in biology
- ◆ **Doug Beussman, Jeff Schweinfus and Greg Muth** NSF CCLI
- ◆ **Charles Umbanhowar, Paul Jackson, Meg Ojala** NCUR/Lancy Nicollet's Mapping Expedition
- ◆ Others grants still pending, several grants submitted not funded
- ◆ Several faculty development grants; FNSM always well-represented
- ◆ Kresge Science Equipment endowment completed
- ◆ Ongoing grant work on institutional and individual grants

Sabbaticals were awarded next year for **Matt Richey, Paul Zorn, Donna McMillan, Jean Porterfield, and Dave Nitz**. **Chuck Huff** will be leading Term in

Middle East in the fall and Paul Jackson will be leading Environmental Sciences in Australia in the spring.

Departing Faculty

Several faculty will be leaving St. Olaf. We appreciate the contributions of the following faculty members and wish them well:

- ◆ **Josh Laison** (Willamette University)
- ◆ **Jumi Hayaki** (Holy Cross)
- ◆ **Annie Murray-Close** (University of Vermont)
- ◆ **Pat Riley** (Northfield High School)
- ◆ **Tony Watson** (University of Minnesota)
- ◆ **Gary Spessard** (started in 1973; retiring to Arizona)