

Faculty of the Humanities 2003-04 Report
Rick Fairbanks, Associate Dean for the Humanities, Emeritus
June 14, 2004

Accomplishments, honors

Faculty

- Book publications:
 - Nancy Aarsvold and Margaret O’Leary (Norwegian) *KlikkNorsk: An Interactive Norwegian Phrase and Grammar Reference* (Skandisk)
 - Jim Farrell (History) *One Nation Under Goods: Malls and the Seductions of American Shopping* (Smithsonian)
 - Steve Hahn (History) *The Invention of the Creek Nation, 1670-1763* (University of Nebraska Press). Nominated for the 2004 Wheeler-Voegelin Prize, awarded for the best work in ethnohistory by the American Society for Ethnohistory.
 - Gordon Marino (Philosophy), Editor, *Basic Writings of Existentialism* (Modern Library); Editor, with Paul Houe, *Søren Kierkegaard and the Word(s): Essays on Hermeneutics and Communication* (C.A. Reitzel)
 - LaVerne Rippley (German), *Waumandee, Wisconsin 1860-1960: An Affectionate Portrait*, (Northfield, 2003)
 - Anthony Rudd (Philosophy) *Expressing the World: Skepticism, Wittgenstein and Heidegger* (Open Court)
 - Douglas Schuurman (Religion) *Vocation: Discerning Our Callings in Life* (William B. Eerdmans)
 - Elaine Siemson (Religion) *Constructing a North American Theology Through the Work of Joseph Sittler: Embodied Grace* (Edwin Mellen)
 - Charles Taliaferro (Philosophy), Editor, with Paul Griffiths, *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology* (Blackwell)
- Scholarly publications and presentations too numerous to mention
- Promotions:
 - Gwen Barnes-Karol (Romance Languages) to full professor
 - Laurel Carrington (History) to full professor
 - DeAne Lagerquist (Religion) to full professor
 - Maggie Broner (Romance Languages) to associate professor (and tenured),
- Released time grants awarded:
 - Rich Durocher (English),
 - Steve Reece (Classics)
- NEH Summer Seminar/Institute Participants:
 - Jeanine Grenberg (Philosophy)
 - Geoff Gorham (Philosophy) “The Intersection of Philosophy, Science, and Theology in the 17th Century”
 - Karen Sawyer Marsalak (English) “Shakespeare’s Playhouses: Inside and Out 2004”

- Edmund Santurri (Religion) “War and Morality: Rethinking the Just War Tradition for the 21st Century”
- Millicent McIntosh Fellowship for Recently Tenured Faculty (Woodrow Wilson Foundation): Steve Reece (Classics) “Homer’s Winged Words: Junctural Metanalysis in Homer in the Light of Oral-Formulaic Theory”
- John Barbour was appointed the Martin Marty Chair in Religion and the Academy

Departments and programs

- External reviews: Classics Department in the fall of 2003. The report indicates that Classics at St. Olaf is a program of the highest national stature and, further, is the envy, in its emphasis on language instruction (over against teaching texts in translation), of many departments in the country.
- The Dean’s Council has recommended the expansion of The Great Conversation to two full cohorts, assuming continuing student demand the ability to staff an expanded program.
- Tenure-track searches successfully completed: Greg Walter (Religion), Constructive Theology
- History made the first St. Olaf hire of Dennis Hidalgo under the auspices of the Consortium for a Strong Minority Presence.
- 2004 marked the 15th anniversary of the FLAC program.
- Curriculum revision
 - English: revision of the major
 - History: revision of the major
- Charles Wilson was appointed Associate Dean for the Humanities, term beginning June 1, 2004

Facilities

- By the continuing grace of Pete Sandberg work is currently being done to finish the renovation of the Boe Chapel basement.
- The “Art Barn” saw its first year as a video and audio recording studio under the auspices of the World Languages Center. A total of 1052 recordings were made in this first year of operation.

Students

- In Classics, Kathleen Burt and David Schiedler received Awards for Outstanding Accomplishment in Classical Studies from The Classical Association of the Middle West and South.
- In German, Tobias Gopon was awarded a Fulbright grant for Salzburg, Austria

Challenges

- As I said in last year’s report we continue, in my view, to teach too many students. The most recent IRP data (as of 2001) shows that the Humanities have the highest student course/fte ratio in the college. I have yet to hear an argument

justifying this, but rather have heard that this is the way it is at most colleges like St. Olaf. In 01-02 (my own most recent data) I determined that only 28% of the courses in the Humanities have an enrollment below 20 students. For English, History, Philosophy, and Religion that percentage was 20. Since most of our courses under 20 are at level three, the Humanities as a whole has 21% of sections under 20 at level one and 18% at level two. It is important to recognize here that the Dean's Council, in recognition of the situation just described, did authorize of shift of fte to the Humanities for a one-year period. This was made possible by the lower than average number of sabbaticals for academic year 04-05. The rising number of sabbaticals for outlying years means that this transfer is likely to be a one-year phenomenon.

- As I also said last year we need to follow the example of our colleagues in the natural sciences and provide our students with meaningful research opportunities. National NSSE data confirms that a meaningful research experience with a faculty mentor is highly valued by undergraduates.
- Another item repeated from last year: we need to pursue greater integration in our general education curriculum. While this issue will be addressed at a college-wide level, we are in a position to build integration from “the bottom up” by enriching the First Conversations program. In addition to integrating Religion 121 sections with FYW sections, we have the possibility of linking either of those courses with, for example, first-year seminars in History. There is also no reason why we couldn't be linking paired HWC courses or courses that provide the HWC and ALS-L credit for the same period (e.g., Romanticism, Renaissance and Reformation, etc.)

Personal note

Finally, since this is my last year at St. Olaf, let me close with a personal note. It has been honor and (largely) a pleasure to serve as Associate Dean for the Humanities. It has unquestionably been an honor and a pleasure to work with the Dean's Council and James May, Provost. I have had the good fortune at St. Olaf in my administrative duties to work with old, dear friends and to make new ones. I thank those friends and the college itself for what has been for me a very good 16 years.