Welcome Back

I am pleased and excited about the second year of General Education: The Human Community. With a full package structure in Cluster Two and the reorganization of Cluster Four, we can finally say that the GenEd Program is fully implemented.

Pre-registration and orientation went much more smoothly this past summer, and another three thousand incoming freshmen as well as several hundred transfer students have entered the program.

Many new faculty have also joined the university across all five clusters, and I look forward to their contributions to GenEd and to the life of JMU.

In this newsletter, we introduce one of those new faculty members, David Brunner. David joined us this past summer as Technology Coordinator for the GenEd Program. He will have primary responsibility for developing and implementing a computer literacy requirement for incoming students.

Also in this newsletter are descriptions of many of the summer grant projects funded by the GenEd Program. I am very proud of the hard work and creative initiative shown by over a hundred JMU faculty members in these grant projects. Their accomplishments in curriculum development and assessment are truly extraordinary.

Finally, I would like to encourage everyone to read Dr. William Allen’s summer graduation address. Dr. Allen’s broad humanistic view of higher education, grounded in his background as a scholar of JMU, is a challenge to all of us to do our best as educators of the next generation of civic leaders. I was very pleased that he also praised our GenEd Program very highly in his address.

I wish all of you a successful and exhilarating semester. As always, please be in touch with me or a Cluster Coordinator if you have ideas or concerns about the program.

Linda Cabe Halpern

Opinion Surveys of Students & Faculty

During the spring semester 1998, the GenEd Program collaborated with the Office of Institutional Research and the Faculty Senate to conduct opinion surveys on GenEd. The student survey was sent out by the Office of Institutional Research to about a thousand freshmen, randomly chosen from the 1997-98 freshman class. The faculty survey was sent out by the Faculty Senate to all faculty. From the standpoint of the GenEd Program, the purpose of both surveys was to gather information that can be used in the ongoing development of the program.

Results of both surveys are being forwarded to the cluster committees. Full results of both surveys are on reserve in Carrier Library.

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General Education Conversations

Come join us for informal discussions about the General Education program. This semester these conversations will highlight the fine work done by your colleagues in the General Education Development Grant program and each session will focus on a Cluster area. These sessions will be held on the Fridays noted below in the Moody Hall Lounge from 2:30 to 4 PM and refreshments will be served. Please join us for collegiality and conversation!

September 25th. Our first conversation will highlight Cluster Two, Arts and Humanities. The presenters will include Bruce Johnson, Department of English, and Henry Myers, Department of History, who will describe their work in developing new courses and materials for the Renaissance Experience and for the Medieval Experience in Package C, Past Cultures and Modern Perspectives.

October 23rd, November 6th, and November 20th. - Conversation topics to be announced.
1998 General Education Development Grants Awarded

General Education Development Grants were awarded in May 1998 on the basis of proposals submitted to the Grant Review Committee. This committee was chaired by Violet Allain, Assistant to the Dean of General Education, and included distinguished representatives from each college: Dick Travis, College of Integrated Science and Technology; Frank Palocsay, College of Science and Mathematics; Suzanne Baker, College of Education and Psychology; Caroline Marshall, College of Arts and Letters; and Ken Bahn, College of Business.

The grants were awarded based upon the guidelines distributed during the Spring 1998 semester.

Below you will find the titles of the grant proposals that were funded, the names of those faculty who served as directors of the grants, and a very brief description of each grant’s purpose. Over one hundred faculty members from our university community were involved in grant activity directly related to the General Education program and there was grant activity in each of the cluster areas of the program. The grant work of your colleagues has made a significant contribution to the General Education program and it’s a distinct pleasure to recognize their fine accomplishments.

Freshman Reading Program Planning Grant
Directors: Elisabeth Gumnier, English; Nikitah Imani, Sociology; and Robert Patterson, Speech Communication

The purpose of this planning grant was to move toward a pilot of a Freshman Reading Program (FRP) created through collaboration between the divisions of academic and student affairs at JMU. The grant supported the work of the directors and several other faculty in their curriculum development and planning activities and the visit to campus in June of an outside consultant, Dr. William Gracie, Director of Liberal Education at Miami University of Ohio.

Course Enhancement and Training: GKin 100 Lifetime Fitness and Wellness
Directors: Judith Flohr, Kinesiology and Challace McMillin, Kinesiology

This grant gave funding to do course refinement and provide training for new faculty and graduate teaching assistants who will be teaching the GKin 100B course. The Instructor’s Notebook for this Cluster Five, Package B course was also revised.

Resources for Integration in Cluster One, Package A
Director: Lynette Long, Speech Communication

The purpose of the grant was 1.) to complete the construction of a website for Cluster One, Package A which would be used by the faculty in this package to promote interdisciplinary integration and 2.) to provide a reference guidebook for new and continuing faculty teaching in this package which would help them maximize the connections with the other courses in the package but still maintain their unique teaching style.

Developing Workshops to Enhance Instruction in Large Science Classes in GenEd Cluster 3
Directors: Kit Murphy, Biology & Solange Lopes, School of Education

The overall goal of the proposed work was to increase incorporation of sound pedagogical principles into the classrooms of Cluster Three science courses. The directors developed a training program to increase understanding of learning styles exhibited by students and to promote the level of student involvement during classes.

Directors: Timothy Carter, Sociology and Anthropology and Mary Lou Wylie, Sociology and Anthropology

The directors and several other faculty members substantially revised the content of the Cluster Four course, GSOC 210, Social Issues, in terms of its level of analysis and theoretical context and to encompass a global focus. This modification was necessitated by students and faculty members.

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David Brunner joins us as the new Technology Coordinator for the General Education Program to promote the use of technology and to develop tools for evaluating and assessing the technology competencies of our students.

He joins us from “across the pond” and when you talk to him, he may sound like a Brit, but he is actually Canadian born to a British mother and a Polish father. David was shipped back to England at the age of three and was raised just outside London, but any trace of Cockney would be difficult to find.

Educated at Hull University in the northeast of England, he gained a “Degree in Difficult Sums” or more specifically “Pure and Applied Mathematics.” He then earned a graduate teaching certificate from the University of London and a Master’s Degree in Information Systems Engineering. His career consists of thirteen years as a classroom teacher and then ten years as a teacher educator for technology and mathematics for those wishing to teach in the seven through twelve age range. His career in computing dates back to 1976 when he wrote his first computer programs using punched cards and batch processing. “In those days you actually understood what was going on inside the computer”.

David has a special interest in the use of technology as a communications tool, and has presented papers in the UK, US (Orlando, Dallas) and Eastern Europe. He would also be the first to point out that he is not a ‘computer geek’, and does not consume pizza and coke at two in the morning while hunched over a computer. He considers himself to be a communicator first and foremost, and enjoys the way in which technology continually evolves and moves on, providing new opportunities and new challenges as well as a few frustrations along the way.

Teaching is something he has always enjoyed and that continues here at JMU with classes in Information Presentation for those students who are not CS majors. You will also find him presenting workshop sessions for CMM on “Distance Learning” and “Bargain Hunting” on the Internet.

On the weekends, if you look in the skies above Newmarket, you may see him piloting a sailplane, having recently gone solo and receiving his first three gliding badges this summer. When he is grounded, you can find him in Moody Hall, Room 1B, and he can be contacted by phone at 540/568-2508 or e-mailed at brunnedj@jmu.edu.

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The grant work entailed the development of a carefully coordinated GSCI 104A course offering that parallels and enhances the existing GSCI 101A course, Physics, Chemistry and the Human Experience in Cluster Three, Package A. Multimedia presentations were incorporated to give depth to, and elaborate on, lecture and textbook material.

Development of a Common Syllabus for GHUM 102, God, Meaning and Morality
Directors: Diana Edelman, Philosophy and Religion and Iain Mclean, Philosophy and Religion

The grant supported the development of the content and the syllabus for the new course, GHUM 102, God, Meaning and Morality. This course is one of the offerings included in Cluster Two, Package D, Reality and Imagination.

Developing a Psychology Portfolio
Directors: Charles Huffman, Psychology; Cheryl Talley, Psychology; and Ashton Trice, Psychology

The directors of this grant developed a series of out of class exercises for inclusion in a Psychology Portfolio that specifically addresses the learning objectives for Cluster Five.

Development of a New Course, GHUM 252, East Asian Civilization, The Great Tradition
Directors: Chong K. Yoon, History and Sallie B. King, Philosophy and Religion

A new course for Cluster Two, Package C was developed which focuses on the
civilization of East Asia. This course explores the great traditions - philosophical, religious, historical, political, literary and artistic - of the peoples of East Asia.

“What is an American?”: A Gate Course for “American Identities”
Directors: Suzanne Bost, English and Susan Facknitz, English

This grant supported the directors and other faculty members in the development of GHUM 120, What is an American?, a new course for Cluster Two, Package A, American Identities. This course integrates the literary, historical, philosophical, and religious texts of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian American, Latinos, and European Americans.

ETC: Critical Thinking Software to Supplement GPHL 120 and Other Critical Thinking Courses
Directors: W.M. Knorpp, Jr., Philosophy and Religion and T.R.V. Adajian. Philosophy and Religion

The purpose of this grant was to continue the development of the computer software, Exercises in Thinking Critically (ETC), for use in GPHL 120A, a Cluster One, Package A course, and other Critical Thinking courses. ETC consists of large number of critical thinking exercises, linked by hypertext with essays and carefully analyzed examples that explain relevant concepts and key points about the exercises.

Summer Workshop on Global Music for Development of GMUS 205 and GMUS 206, Cluster Two, General Education Program

Director: Jeannie Little, Music

The grant funding supported the workshop activity of several faculty members to develop two new music courses for Cluster Two, Package B, GMUS 205, Global Music to the 18th Century, and GMUS 206, Global Music 18th Century to the Present.

Faculty Summer Workshops: Strategies for Teaching Information Literacy in General Education
Directors: Lynn Cameron, Coordinator of Library Instruction and Rebecca Feind, Liaison to English Department

This grant supported the attendance of faculty at workshops designed to orient professors teaching in Cluster One to the Go for the Gold program and present strategies for effectively integrating the program into their general education classes.

Cluster Four Assessment Instrument Development
Director: Jessica Adolino, Political Science

This grant work contributed to the development of an assessment instrument for Cluster Four. A pilot version of the test will be administered during the Fall 1998 semester with a final version being utilized on assessment day in Spring 1999.

Course Development: The Renaissance Experience, GHUM 250
Director: Bruce Johnson, English

GHUM 250, The Renaissance Experience, a new course for Cluster Two, Package C was developed with special emphasis of using a strong interdisciplinary base.

Cross-Cultural Experiences
Directors: Suzanne Bost, English and Mary Lou Wylie, Sociology and Anthropology

The grant was used to support the collaboration of a number of faculty members representing different disciplines as they developed the course, GHUM 252, Women’s Creativity and Cross-Cultural Experiences, for inclusion in Cluster Two, Package C. This course will introduce students to printed and visual texts that represent the diverse experiences of women from a global perspective.

Cluster One Writing Assessment: Training Faculty to Rate Student Portfolios
Director: Christina McDonald, The Writing Program

This grant supported the training of a core group of faculty to serve as resident “experts” in rating student portfolios. This training, which included the contribution of an outside consultant, ensures a theoretically and pedagogically sound foundation to a new approach to writing assessment for Cluster One.

Task Group for Cluster Five Package C
Director: William Kimsey, Speech Communication

Faculty teaching in Cluster Five, Package C evaluated modes of instruction, course materials and learning activities for both GEIC 101C, Individuals in the Human Community I: The Individual Perspective, and GEIC 102C, Individuals in the Human Community II: The Community Perspective.

A Medieval Reader for “The Medieval Experiences” Course
Director: Henry A. Myers, History

This grant supported the work of faculty members to produce a reader which will provide familiarity with sources of the medieval experience for the GHUM 250 course in Cluster Two, Package C.

Achieving Cluster Three Objectives, An Integrated Summer Workshop
Directors: Roddy Amenta, Geology and Environmental Studies; Gene Robinson, Geology and Environmental Studies; and Kit Murphy, Biology

Faculty members were supported by this grant to attend an integrated workshop. The workshop participants were oriented to the Cluster Three objectives with particular emphasis on the Package A course offerings and were given an insight into some of the teaching methodologies of the faculty who have experience teaching in this package.

Media Literacy in GMAD 150E
Directors: Alan Neckowitz, Media Arts; Charles Turner, Media Arts; and Kevin Reynolds, Media Arts

This grant supported the directors’ work in integrating new course materials, print and non-print, in the Cluster One, Package E course, GMAD 150E and refined the course website.