

C O R E

Newsletter of the Association for Core Texts and Courses

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April 1997

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A Continental Expansion

80 Schools, 120 Individuals Attend 3rd Annual ACTC Conference

Scott Lee
Associate Director

ACTC formed in 1995 with its first annual conference. ACTC had its start on the East Coast, from Boston to Virginia, with universities, colleges, and community colleges from the Midwest and Canada extending our reach. Now we are spread across North America. Indeed, the growth of ACTC is both surprising and a sign of real hope for undergraduate education.

Of the new schools this year, 26% percent come from below the Mason-Dixon line, 68% are from the east and 32% from west of the Mississippi. Canada contributes 10% of our new institutions. (Special thanks to the Liberal Studies Association of Canada and William Mathie, here.)

What ACTC is revealing, much to the surprise of many, is that the number

of core text programs is robust and growing. In 1996, 53 institutions of higher education registered for the conference. As of the deadline for this newsletter, 80 schools had registered for the conference. This represents a growth of 50% over 1996, 233% over 1995. Further, schools and individuals are truly dedicated to core text teaching and scholarship. We boast a 70% return rate from last year, and of the original 24 universities, colleges, and community colleges of 1995, ACTC continues to attract 55% of them in 1997. Individuals are returning and bringing others from their schools. Out of seventy non-Temple participants last year, 35 individuals are returning; 19 other individuals were recruited by last year's attendees to come in their stead.

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ACTC Memberships, Contributions Increase

At the First Annual and Organizing Conference, charter members decided that a fee structure which included institutional and individual contributions would move ACTC towards a self-sustaining life. Over the 1995 summer, the Board, in consultation with the Director and Associate Director, established a desirable institutional membership of \$1000 for universities, \$500 for colleges, and \$250 for community colleges. An individual membership fee was also agreed upon, at \$45, subject to fluctuation in Conference and other Association costs. The fee this year rose \$5.

At last year's business meeting, the

membership affirmed this dues structure and pledged to seek the funds from each member's respective institution. In fact, quite a few ACTC members have acted on this pledge, going to their administrator, often when resources were scarce, to ask for support.

Equally important are the individual memberships. Last year, we received 38 individual membership fees, for a total of \$1710. This year, the number of our membership contributions has grown to 85, for a total (as of the deadline for this newsletter) of \$4,400. Actual figures will be higher since ACTC typically receives a number of contributions the week before the conference.

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GROWTH continued from page 1

The number of individuals participating in the conference is up. This year, 122 are attending as of April 1. As with last year, the Conference runs four days, but the number of panels has increased from 28 to 37, while the number of panelists has risen from 56 to 95. One of ACTC's important achievements is that 22 schools have sent more than one representative. ACTC's growth into a professional organization will depend on this support.

Nor has ACTC's growth simply been a matter of attendance at the conference. As an accompanying article makes clear, individual and institutional membership contributions have increased. Impressive have been the individual memberships which have risen to 86 from 38, last year. Beyond conference fees, 14 schools contributed institutional membership fees; this increase of institutions beyond last year is a direct consequence of the 1996 conference membership which committed to pursuing institutional support in 1997.

Individual institutions have also contributed their time and energies. This issue of Core is the result of Boston University's financial and staff support. Saint Mary's University of Minnesota's Steve Pattee has set up the online service for both the ACTC listserver and the online Program Directories. Gail Hemmeter, Temple University, has coordinated the Conference and edited the Program Summaries. St. John's, Lynchburg, and the University of Dallas helped us to find plenary speakers this year. Two schools have offered to help ACTC host the conference in 1998 and 1999.

We are very proud that ACTC's increased audience can attract our plenary speakers. This year Louise Cowan from the University of Dallas, Robert Frey of the University of Charleston, Dennis O'Brien from the University of Rochester begin our plenary sessions. The number of plenary speakers has increased by one with the addition to the agenda of a debate between Roger Shattuck, Boston University and Gerald Graff, University of Chicago. In addition, Temple University's Stephen Zelnick, ACTC Director, will speak to the future of ACTC.

We can provide a brief profile of the type of schools that will carry ACTC

into the future:

Highest Degree Offered

- Research and Doctoral Institutions: 23
- Masters Universities: 22
- Baccalaureate Colleges: 30
- Associate of Arts Colleges: 5

Student Enrollment

- Total of All Institutions: approx 502,000
- Institutional Mean: 6,354
- Institutional Median: 3,720
- Smallest: 120
- Largest: 19,972

Affiliation

- Gov/State/Local: 26
- Independent Non-Profit: 20
- Religious: 34

Of course, what is most striking is the breadth of ACTC institutions. They are not lopsidedly centered on any one category in type, student population, or affiliation. An ACTC education is found in all kinds of institutions, a prominent feature of North American education. We educate about 125,000 students per year. And, thus, ACTC schooling is a part of many citizens' education. This represents an important resource of public support for our efforts.

**ACTC SCHOOLS HAVE
SELECTIVE EDGE,
DEMOCRATIC SPREAD**

Peterson's guide to Four-Year Colleges provides entrance difficulty ratings for students. There are five classes: most, very, moderately, minimally difficult, and non-competitive. These ratings are based on high school class rank of applicants, SAT and ACT scores, and percentage of applicant accepted.

Last year's ACTC schools seem more selective compared to the schools in Peterson's list:

	Peterson		ACTC	
Most	2%	43	4%	2
Very	9%	200	25%	13
Mod	60%	1134	54%	28
Min	16%	293	4%	2
N/C	12%	200	4%	2
Not-appl			8%	5
Total	99%	1888	99%	52

Yet, clearly, the "selective education" of ACTC schooling is also available to all kinds of students.

STATS continued from page 1

Individual contributors this year are:

- Henry Ahner
- Robert Anderson
- Alan Arthur
- Phillip Bailey
- Ellen Belton
- Paula Berggren
- John Black
- Eva Brann
- Dana Burgess
- David Burrows
- Patricia Buskc-Zainal
- Robert Canter
- Theodora Carlile
- Benjamin Franklin Carney
- Phillip Cary
- Brent Cejda
- David Chapman
- William Clarkson
- Darrel Colson
- George Dorrill
- Alex Dunlop
- Renae Edge
- Hansford Epes
- David Faldet
- Joan Faust
- Anthony Floriek
- Robert Frail
- Keith Francis
- Sharon Friedman
- William Grassie
- George Gross
- James Held
- Peggy Heller
- Gail Hemmeter
- Stewart Herman
- Marylu Hill
- John Hittinger
- Peter Hoffer
- John Holt
- Kathleen Hull
- David Johnson
- Brian Jorgensen
- Richard Kamber
- Gary Kocher-Lindgren
- Ronald Kostar
- Anne Leavitt
- John LeBourgeois
- Scott Lee
- Robert Llewellyn
- Joseph Matthews
- Marina Berzins McCoy
- Lucy Miskin
- Laurence Murphy
- Elliot Neaman
- Eli Noujain
- Lawrence Novelli
- Andrea Nye
- William O'Connell
- Sheila Paulos
- Dianne Perkins
- Timothy Peters
- Peter Redpath

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Stephen Zelnick
Executive Director

Every year a new crisis in higher education is announced. This year universities are defunct and it is only a matter of time until private industry takes over with the promise to accomplish our task more effectively and at lower cost. Lines on charts show that soon college tuition will surpass the ability of most families to pay, even while state legislatures cut back funding. Outcomes assessments find that graduates lack general knowledge and basic skills, and that corporations and government agencies need to retrain university graduates to allow them to function at entry level. Students, cramped and anxious about their futures in a society of rapid innovation, have difficulty focusing on their studies. Many students work long hours to pay their bills so that their studies fall on their list of priorities. Leadership in higher education seems to have fallen into the hands of the lawyers and politicians. It can present a depressing picture. Still, many of us manage to fight on. Truthfully, it is not so difficult.

For all the clamor of disaster and the longing for happier times, the true business of education goes on. One hears it said that students are ignorant and inattentive and their values are bad - but *that* is why they are our students. One hears it said that they do not read or write well - but *that* is why they are our students. The books we teach them, at least in our kinds of courses, are still alive, both in themselves and in the accumulated commentary that continues to grow about them. And there are still those special students whose souls do turn in our direction - same as it ever was.

Much in undergraduate education is healthy and vigorous. There is a new interest in building a solid foundation for the curriculum. The wheel has been turning against the student-choice curriculum and the merely fashionable topics of contemporary relevance. One of the prime reference points is the growth of ACTC.

When we began a short three years ago to develop this network of Core Text schools we had in mind a gathering of perhaps a few dozen institutions. We have since learned that there may be several

hundred institutions, of diverse size and description, that support core text courses or programs. We have managed to locate and involve over a hundred institutions this year. In fact, we have grown in the past three years from an original 24 institutions to 53 last year, to over 80 this year.

Before our organizing effort each of us could see ourselves as the last bastion of serious curriculum. ACTC has shown this is not the case. And while these programs may not have always won the full recognition they deserve, they endure. New ones spring up, others grow.

ACTC has a significant mission. Linking these programs, even loosely, helps us sustain our efforts and strengthen our position within our institutions. ACTC can offer consultancies to programs that need a lift. We offer a network that can be very effective (for example, recently when I received two last-minutes lines to fill, I was able, with several phone calls to ACTC schools, to locate two excellent candidates). Our web page is growing thick with materials related to our activities. This year's conference we see our first book, a compilation of the conference presentations. This Newsletter has made a second appearance.

At the same time, ACTC has yet to find a sustaining funding source that will allow us a staff to meet our growing work load. Sustaining the organization and the arrangements of the annual conference keeps us from extending our agenda - including plans to establish a journal devoted to pedagogical textual readings, a network of jobs for talented core text teachers, and advancing the national discussion about core curriculum.

What we believe we need, and we can have this discussion at our conference this year, is to establish at least two more sites like Temple that can focus ACTC regional activity. We are growing too fast to allow us to manage all the work that must be done out of one office on a part-time basis. I would urge members to think about whether they would consider taking on a major responsibility in building ACTC, especially in the Mid-West and the West.

One spur to this accomplishment is moving the conference out of Philadelphia next year. We are pursuing

the opportunity to hold our next conference on the West Coast, and the conference of 1999 in the Southeast. This should help develop leadership and expanded interest in other regions. We welcome, especially, ideas on how to develop ACTC to meet your needs.

The prospects for advancing ACTC appear excellent. We are an organization with a constituency and a cause, and the very uncertainty about higher education is an opportunity for educators who stand upon traditions that have survived educational crises now for several thousand years.

ACTC WEBSITE and LISTSERVE

We would like to invite you to take a look at the ACTC website at <http://www.smumn.edu/ACTC/ACTC.html>. The site is housed at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota and was constructed by Saint Mary's senior Heather Hamilton with assistance from webmaster Wes Miller and Steve Pattee. Perhaps the most interesting part of the site at the moment is the inclusion of the texts from the major addresses at the 1996 ACTC Conference (under *Conference Papers*). But you will also find lists of ACTC participating institutions, descriptions of core programs at ACTC participating institutions, course summaries, and other information about the organization of ACTC. You are also invited to join the ACTC listserv. The listserv is an easy way to receive information about ACTC activities, to disseminate information to other members, or to engage members in informal discussion. To join the listserv, send an email to:

ACTC@dlists.smumn.edu
with *subscribe* in the Subject. You will then receive a confirmation notice. Do not send any messages until you are officially enrolled. If you have any questions about the listserv, you can contact Steve Pattee at spattee@smumn.edu.

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Robert Rice
Daniel Ritchie
Jon Roberts
Edmund Santurri
Jana Schulman
Peter Swartz
Anne C. Shelley
John Shelley
David Shiner

ACTC DIRECTORS INVITED FOR CAMPUS VISIT, SYMPOSIUM EVENTS

This past November Auburn University invited ACTC Executive Director Stephen Zelnick to visit that campus and meet with the Core Faculty and with several Auburn administrators. The purpose of the visit was to help the faculty think about its role in the university and to provide some strategies for raising the profile of Core Text studies in the university and in the larger community.

The visit of Dr. Zelnick was arranged by Carol Daron, Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Studies. Zelnick met with several members of the Core Curriculum Oversight Committee, delivered a lecture "Real Students, Real Teachers, Real Texts" to the Core Assembly, met with the Human Odyssey Faculty (the Science and Social Science Core Faculty), and with the Great Books and Composition Faculty.

"This is a wonderful way to make ACTC useful to its member institutions", Zelnick remarked. "Such visits help faculties think of themselves as part of a larger educational effort, and along the way, they enter a discussion among themselves they probably wouldn't otherwise have. This is one of the services ACTC ought to expand."

In addition to Zelnick's visit, ACTC Associate Director Scott Lee has been doing some traveling of his own. Lee was invited to speak at a symposium honoring the 50th anniversary celebration of the Basic Program of Liberal Education for adults at the University of Chicago in March. The symposium concerned the outlook for liberal education in the coming years.

Janice Siegel
Allen Speight
John Tomarchio
Dan Tompkins
Stephen Varvis
William Walker
Ronald Weber
Richard Weiner
Hugh West
Jacqueline Wilkie
James Woelfel
Thomas Wymer
Stephen Zelnick

Last year 12 institutions gave varying financial support to ACTC. This year that number has increased to 14 contributions and authorized pledges of support. The earliest contributor and a new one, this year, was the College of St. Catherine's. Other new contributors include:

Bronx Community College
Capitol College
Lynchburg College
Shimer College
University of Chicago

The following schools contributed last year and have continued to do so this year:

Adelphi University
Boston University
College of New Jersey
Providence College
Skidmore College
St. Anselm College
St. John's College
Temple University
University of North Carolina at Asheville

Many, many thanks to all who have contributed and to those who sought support from their institutions. We believe that after this year's conference, as the of both the excellence of the conference and our services spreads, we will be able to justify to administrators the support they have given.

These resources are necessary for ACTC to accomplish its three aims: to advance the use of core text curricula in North American education, to promote career positions and recognition for administrators, teachers, and scholars who have dedicated part or all of their careers to these texts and courses, and, finally, to provide publication fora for scholarship and pedagogical research. Association fees and conference fees help to pay for administrative costs (secretary, mailings, phones), hotel

expenses (dining, room rentals including each panel session room), speaking honoraria, and incidentals such as program printing costs.

Contributions and fees are tied directly to conference costs, which are significant. Naturally, ACTC's growth in participants has been accompanied by increases in costs. In 1995 the first conference cost \$8,875 to produce. Last year ACTC grew by 120% in attendance, and our conference costs were about \$18,500. This year if we double again, we can expect similar increases.

There are not many economies of scale. Costs per person of the meals remain the same whether we have 33 individuals as we did in the 1995 dinner, or 100 as seems likely for the 1997 dinner. ACTC ties the plenary sessions to the meals so that we share common intellectual concerns and a good social atmosphere over the course of the conference. But this link between meals and speakers means that plenary session room rentals and meal costs are assessed for the full conference in the conference registration fees. A similar link exists for the panel sessions and room we hold them in. In an effort to keep the panels small and open, ACTC provides as many panel sessions and paper presentations as it can afford. For every panel session, each of these rooms costs money.

Finally, as many attendees know, ACTC will be publishing a Conference Proceedings with University Press of America. Again, members will have the opportunity to be considered for publication in this book and all attendees will receive a copy. Again, there is a subvention fee linked to the aims of ACTC. Between this Core Newsletter and the Proceedings, ACTC will have begun to build a forum, audience and, hence, recognition of the scholarship and pedagogy of the core text profession.

ACTC is grateful for the support of members and attendees. We hope you find that your money is well spent, for ACTC is dedicated to a close and worthwhile use of those funds. Finally, we hope that this year's conference will send participants home who will not only help ACTC to grow financially next year, but to increase its membership from each individual institution so that real change in undergraduate education can be effected on the North American continent.

Core Currents

Postdoctoral Fellowships Address Need for Mentoring, Stability

Friday's conference panels on the "Interdiscipline of Core Texts" include one ("Teachers, Fellows and Mentors," 10:15 a.m.) devoted to the issue of mentoring in Core programs in general and the role more specifically that postdoctoral teaching fellowships can play in such programs. What follows is a brief sketch of some recent experiences with such fellowship programs at two ACTC institutions.

One recurrent problem for many Core programs has been the need to rely on part-time faculty to shoulder increasing parts of their teaching load. When college and university budgets get tight, restrictions on full-time, tenure-track hiring leave administrators with few options beyond the awarding of term teaching contracts to part-time faculty. Core programs, particularly, are beset by this difficulty, since they frequently lack the institutional resources and internal political clout that departments have.

The consequences - for both faculty and Core programs - are among the most painful known in present-day academe. For many part-time faculty, attempting to stitch together several term teaching appointments in order to make ends meet, Garry Trudeau's *Doonesbury* parody last year of university hiring procedures as gypsy faculty auctions did not seem much of a comic exaggeration.

For administrators of Core programs, too, the difficulties of recruiting, retaining and encouraging their best faculty have presented new challenges. Specific training in the texts and pedagogical approaches of Core programs is rarely a part of graduate training in the humanities, which means that recent Ph.D.'s - having concentrated on narrow research issues in order to be in the job market in the first place - often find themselves faced with unfamiliar texts and without mentors to advise them on issues that arise in the classroom.

Several experimental programs have attempted to find a way of mitigating these consequences for programs and their faculty - even if a longer-term solution seems not to be at hand. One such attempt has been the establishing of postdoctoral teaching fellowship programs that give new candidates in the job market the security of a multi-year contract and some sense of institutional connection, as well as the opportunity to find mentors concerned with the development of their teaching.

At Villanova and Boston University, two such postdoctoral fellowship programs are now in their third year. BU's program had its genesis as part of a National Endowment for the Humanities grant designed to offer opportunities for recent Ph.D.s to focus on the pedagogical concerns facing them in teaching interdisciplinary courses - issues which current graduate training in the humanities often fails to address. The grant was designed so that the fellows would have sufficient time before facing classroom responsibilities to sit in on courses, attend seminars on program texts and discuss their experiences

with senior faculty mentors. Fellows were free from all teaching responsibilities during their first year in the program, so that they could devote themselves fully to such pedagogical preparation. The program has had three entering classes, each with two fellows.

Villanova's Core Humanities program also initiated a postdoctoral fellowship three years ago - in this case, without outside funding. The Ennis Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowships provide, as do BU's NEH Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowships, a three-year appointment for fellows, although, unlike the BU program, fellows are teaching from the very first year. Currently, says Jack Doody, the assistant dean for the core curriculum at Villanova, there are six Ennis Fellows. "It's been an integral part of our success story," says Doody. The fellows comprise a group which has developed an ethos of its own - not only within the program, but within the university. As an example, he mentioned the success of a campaign, first inspired by Ennis Fellow Debra Romanick, to ban the sale of *Cliff's Notes*

At Villanova, the fellows comprise a group which has developed an ethos of its own, even challenging the sale of *Cliff's Notes* in the bookstore.

in the university bookstore. "They've been the cultural vanguard of revolution," Doody said.

At BU, as the NEH sponsorship of the fellows program ends, Assistant

Dean Brian Jorgensen also points to the fellowships' benefits - both for the program and for the career path of the fellows. "It's allowed us to select some of the brightest and most promising humanities teachers and given us the benefit of their fresh approach to things," Jorgensen said. Two of the six BU fellows now completing their fellowships have recently received tenure-track appointments at other institutions. Philip Freeman, a Harvard Ph.D. in Classics who opted for the fellowship over other offers, says it has been an excellent preparation: "aside from personal growth, a postdoctoral fellowship in the Core has enhanced my professional opportunities. More and more colleges are requiring teachers to participate in their various interdisciplinary Core curricula. Since the job market is so difficult, it makes good practical sense to broaden one's abilities. In fact, I am certain the tenure-track job which I have accepted for next year would not have been mine without the training I received at BU."

The programs do not, Doody and Jorgensen agree, provide a solution to the various ills besetting faculty development for Core programs. Yet both are encouraged by their experience and both are currently seeking private sources of funding to continue the fellowship programs.

REVIEW: STANLEY LOMBARDO'S ILIAD

CORE welcomes reviews of books that may be of interest to members of ACTC - new translations and editions of books frequently taught in core programs as well as books on the pedagogy of core programs and the mission of undergraduate liberal education.

Stanley Lombardo's new translation of the Iliad (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company Press, \$9.95) is engaging and very readable, without taking excessive liberties with the text. One's primary reaction will probably depend upon one's feeling about Lombardo's often rather colloquial rendering. At times Lombardo brings out a power in the verse that can be lost in a more formal style, as Agamemnon's "The girl is mine" rather than a more literal "I will not release her." (1.35). At other times, however, Lombardo's decision not to leave a sense of formulae in his language may lead to impressions not implied by the text, such as Achilles' reference to "my own natural mother" rather than to "the mother that bore me" (24.608) or to the "Bronze-kneed" rather than "well-greaved" Achaians (6.558). In an intriguing decision Lombardo has also set the similes off from the text in italics, without a grammatical connection to their context. This creates a rather dazzling and impressive effect in moving us between the world of battle

and the "ordinary" world of the similes, but could prove confusing to first time readers.

At its best Lombardo's style brings the text to life, and can give it, for those familiar with other translations, a vibrancy that brings out implications in the text that a jaded eye may miss. But the style can also jar, as in Menelaus "I missed the bastard!" (3.391) or Zeus' "Then you will know who is supreme around here" (8.20). Overall, however, what is lost in Lombardo's translation, along with the occasional nuance (as Achilles' looking "from under his brows" at both Agamemnon in Book 1 and Priam in Book 24) is the formality and elegance of Homer's diction, while what is gained is the immediacy and flexibility of phrase that Homer can, and translations in general cannot, combine with that formality.

The translation contains as well a map and a Glossary of major characters that the undergraduate reader should find extremely useful, as it briefly describes all the characters the student needs to know, and avoids the confusion of listing each and every fallen warrior. For those interested in the fallen a catalogue of combat deaths, as well as an index to all the speeches in the poem, is also included. Sheila Murnaghan's introduction provides an excellent background understanding of Homeric society and the Homeric gods,

which is quite inclusive while still of a manageable length (about 40 pages). Overall this is an accurate and lively translation which includes many features useful to the first-time reader, but which may not be to every reader's taste.

-Stephanie Nelson

CORE

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