

CORE

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ACTC Bigger and Better Than Ever

Robert E. Wright
Conference Coordinator

The phenomenal growth of the Association for Core Texts and Courses continues into its fifth year and conference. Teacher-scholars and administrators from Canada, the United States, and the Central Asian

nations of Krygyzstan and Tajikistan have flocked to ACTC's conference, website, and listserve in the largest numbers ever. Clearly, a large number of educators seek to advance the use of core texts in required undergraduate core curricula, especially when a spring trip to New Orleans is involved!

This year we expect 184 individuals from 116 institutions, 39 states/provinces, and 4 nations to participate in the conference. Individual and institutional participation has increased 26.6 % and 24.14 %, respectively. The number of panelists in 1999 has risen from 98 to 129, while the number of
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WELCOME TO NEW ORLEANS! FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORS

J. Scott Lee
Associate Director

This year our conference has been sponsored by honors programs at Southeastern Louisiana University and Louisiana State University. We owe real debts of gratitude to two longtime members of ACTC for their support and extended, hard work: Jim Walter, Professor of English and Director of the Honors Program at SLU, and Bainard Cowan, Professor of English and Comparative Literature and instructor in the Honors Program at LSU.

Jim has edited and funded this Newsletter, brought in numerous first time attendees and panelists, and provided a substantial contribution to the conference. He, as did Bainard, located the hotels we are using and worked with the ACTC staff on the financials so that this 5th Annual Conference could be a reality. In addition, his persuasive pow-

ers have helped to bring the National Endowment for the Humanities to our conference. Jim's colleagues have been contributors to panels and willing chairs.

Similarly, Bainard has funded and compiled the program and conference folders and brought in new members and panelists. Bainard also helped in finding plenary speakers and provided a substantial contribution. Finally, he helped with staffing the registration table.

To both these wonderful members, ACTC expresses gratitude and appreciation for all they have done.

For ACTC's entire existence, we have been fortunate in having institutions eager to sponsor our conferences and activities. Temple has provided much overhead and staff support for all five years of ACTC's life. Last year, the banner was picked up by the University of North Carolina at Asheville and Peg Downes. Boston University and St. Mary's University

of Minnesota have provided valuable staff and expertise on our *Proceedings* and our net activities. With SLU's and LSU's support this year, ACTC is building an enviable record of institutional commitment.

Discussions and plans are underway for the 2000 and 2001 conferences. As was announced last year, ACTC is also discussing the possibility of participating in a conference in Tajikistan in the summer of 2001. To all, for this interest and support we say many thanks. It is because of you that ACTC's growth has been exciting and remarkable.

The National Endowment for the Humanities is being represented at the conference by Janet Ray Edwards, Senior Program Officer in the Research and Education Division. Ms. Edwards will be available to meet with individuals who wish to discuss ideas for applications to any NEH programs.

ACTC Activities Increase and Bear Fruit

J. Scott Lee

ACTC has begun several projects which are now beginning to bear fruit. After the Second Annual Conference showed that ACTC was going to be a growing professional organization, the membership decided to publish its proceedings. Contracting with Uni-

ROBERT WRIGHT, CONFERENCE COORDINATOR, JOINS STAFF

Robert Wright, ACTC's Conference Coordinator, joined the ACTC staff late last fall. As an economics history specialist and core text teacher, he has taught in the Intellectual Heritage Program at Temple for two years. His contribution to this year's conference has been invaluable.

For many of you, Robert has been the first person to contact you on ACTC's behalf. He has helped participants to form a number of paper topics and panels. He set up ACTC's first database to coordinate all the information that is flowing in before the conference and will be developing and implementing a new one for us this summer.

In short, Robert has been vital to building the conference to the 185 participants that we have this year. Our deep appreciation is extended to this dedicated, hardworking core text teacher.

versity Press of America and using a subvention from each attending conferee, ACTC was able to collect and edit its selected papers from the Third Annual Conference under the title: *Tradition and Innovation: Selected Papers*, edited by Scott Lee and Allen Speight. Indeed, Allen's editorial work and Boston University's generous financial support, through the Associate Dean of the Core Curriculum, Brian Jorgensen, made the proceedings possible. ACTC is indebted to Allen and Brian for helping to bring ACTC's work before the wider educational community. Each attendee at the third conference will receive a copy and orders are being accepted by UPA and ACTC.

Similarly, the proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference in 1998 have been partially selected and copy edited by Jane Rodeheffer and David Sokolowski at St. Mary's University of Minnesota. Lee, of the American Academy for Liberal Education, is helping in the editing, also, and UPA is the press. We expect the volume to go to UPA by mid to late summer.

St. Mary's University of Minnesota has been in charge of our listserve and website. Those interested can sign on the listserve by sending a request to spattee@smumn.edu. Our

thanks to Steve Pattee for his work. Over the summer we expect to add the many new programs descriptions that we have received. This will be a third edition, another measure of ACTC's expansion. Members who are seeking to find materials to show their administration the kind of work ACTC does are urged to consult the web site and program descriptions at <http://acad.smumn.edu/actc/actc.html>.

ACTC currently has other projects in mind. We are seeking help with publishing theme volumes on core text education. We are also formulating the principles for an online bibliography of core text teaching bibliographic and teaching aids. During the business meeting any member is welcome to suggest such a project to the general membership, officers, and board.

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panel sessions remains at 34, an increase of .8 (from 2.9 to 3.7) persons per panel over last year. Most importantly, this growth has not come at the expense of quality; the organization continues to attract teacher-scholars with national reputations, important administrators, professors from all areas of knowledge, highly-motivated assistant pro-

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Letter from the Executive Director

Stephen Zelnick
Executive Director

In the past, those of use who organize the ACTC Conference have worried each year over meeting registration targets to cover costs and also to attract enough people to offer a conference rich with contacts for those who attend. This March we faced a new worry, overbooking. Despite planning for significant growth in attendance, we have received registration requests that have far exceeded expectations.

Five years ago, thirty-five people attended our first conference. This year we have one hundred and ninety people registered and have had to turn many others away.

What drives this expansion? It might just be New Orleans, no doubt an attractive venue (I have had my mind on beignets at the Café du Monde for several weeks). Or perhaps this explosive growth reflects a keener approach to "selling" the conference (Robert Wright, of Temple University's Intellectual Heritage Program has done a splendid job as conference coordinator this year).

I would prefer to think, however, that our success has had much to do with how ACTC defines itself and with the performance of our previous conferences.

From the first, ACTC has adopted a positive outlook on core texts and core teaching.

While around us many organizations and individuals have framed the issues defensively, decrying the inroads of multiculturalism and the politicalization of the curriculum, ACTC has chosen instead to concentrate on the good reasons for core text curricula, practical advice on how to deliver education to students, and frankly the delights of exploring the greatest books and the weightiest issues. While an occasional presentation has leaned towards the dark side, ACTC does tend to the sunlight, not only the high satisfaction of knowing we are teaching significant matter and what the students need for their personal and intellectual development, but also the joy of teaching works that, even when we have taught them over and over again, never fail to delight and instruct.

Those who have attended past ACTC conferences often volunteer the comment that ACTC is a very friendly organization. There is, of course, the sense of shared purpose and respect for one another as scholars and teachers. However, something more seems to have sprung up at ACTC and that is genuine fellowship and good feeling—something one could never plan for and perhaps puts at risk even by mentioning.

Analysis might suggest that because we tend to be embattled on our home campuses we come together to find support in our more or less lonely struggles to bend the curriculum in the

proper direction. My guess, however, is that people who teach what we teach to students in, for the most part, general education settings have something kindly and sharing about them to begin with. And might it go too far to recommend that reading and teaching what we do, our own humanity is enriched?

At any rate, I believe there are good reasons beyond the venue for our growing success. If we were true social scientists, we would test this hypothesis by holding our next conference in Gary, Indiana. Fortunately, that sort of science is not what we do, so there is scant need to be bound by such exacting measures of truth.

Oh, and try some of that famous chicory coffee at the Café du Monde; you won't be disappointed.

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fessors, and graduate students from cutting-edge programs.

Finally, contributions from individuals and institutions have remained steady. For the past two years ACTC has received just over \$15,000 in institutional dues; this year about the same percentage of conferees (60 %) have paid individual membership dues as last year.

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Contributing Institutions

Scott Lee

Every year institutional giving accounts for a sizeable portion of ACTC support. This year projections of pledged and received institutional contributions amount to \$18,850, about 27% of ACTC receipts over the fiscal year. The number of pledging and contributing colleges and universities rose to 26 this year. The amount of pledged and contributed monies rose \$3550 over last year's total contributions. ACTC institutions are, also, pledging more per institution.

Why are institutions willing to contribute? The basic answer is that our membership has reported back to the administrations of these institutions that ACTC does two things very well: 1) it provides real help in discussing, shap-

ing, and defending core text programs, and 2) it promises and delivers on such tangible aids to these efforts as proceedings, a web site with program descriptions, a directory of members, a listserv, not to mention an annual conference which brings together leading thinkers in core education—both those who favor and those who question such curricula—and the best teachers and scholars on the continent who are devoted to a sound undergraduate education. In other words, look at the list below and one will see institutions of every kind—private and public, religious and secular, university and collegiate, Canadian and American—which are among the institutions professionally and publicly well known for their efforts in undergraduate education.

Each year ACTC, during the business meeting, requests that the members who attend the con-

ference return to their institutions and, if they find that ACTC has merited support, go to their administrations in an effort to seek further institutional support for coming activities. In the past, the membership of ACTC, upon the recommendation of the Board, has suggested that contributions of \$1000 for universities, \$500 for colleges, and \$250 for community colleges be the requested support. If the membership approves a motion in the business meeting, ACTC will send out in late fall a letter seeking your help in gaining this support. If you would, then, take a moment to reflect on the institutions that you see below and on the way this support has made the conference and other activities possible, ACTC asks you to speak to your colleagues and carry our request to your administration.

PLEDGING AND CONTRIBUTING INSTITUTIONS FOR 1998-1999

*Boston University
 College of New Jersey
 Concordia College
 Florida A & M University
 Louisiana State University
 Lynchburg College
 Malaspina College
 Notre Dame University
 Pepperdine University
 Rhodes College
 St. Anselm College
 St. John's College*

*St. Mary's College of Morega
 St. Mary's University of Minnesota
 Shimer College
 Southeastern Louisiana University
 Temple University
 University of Chicago
 University of Dallas
 University of Kansas
 University of Kings' College
 University of North Carolina, Asheville
 Valparaiso University
 Villanova University*

Individual Memberships Grow

We are extremely proud of the support we receive from individuals each year. This year, based on historical records and current trends which are running in line with those records, we will have about 110 individuals joining as members,

compared to 78 last year, a little better than 60% of attendance. This support is as vital to our activities as the conference fees and the institutional memberships. Without all three sources, ACTC simply could not function to provide the services or quality which members expect.

It is a measure of faculty and administration faith in ACTC that a number of individuals have maintained their memberships even though they are not attending. Many, many thanks to everyone. (The order below is by date of receipt.)

MEMBERSHIPS AS OF MARCH 27, 1999

- Philip Freeman, Washington University
- David Barry, Essex County College
- Mark Bauerlein, Emory University
- Nicholas Ayo, Notre Dame University
- H. Irvin Penfield, Birmingham Southern College
- James Walter, Southeastern Louisiana University
- Henry Ahner, Adelphi University
- Lloyd Chapin, Eckerd College
- Robert Frail, Centenary College
- Karl Walling, Liberty Fund
- Teresa Ast, Reinhardt College
- Stuart Green, Indiana State University @ Kokomo
- Theodora Carlile, St. Mary's College, Morega
- Christopher Blackwell, Furman University
- Darrell Colson, Pepperdine University
- David Crowe, Augustana College
- Christopher Constas, Boston College
- Darcy Wudel, Averett College
- Jim Kow, Kings College
- Barry Craig, St. Thomas College
- Paul Daves, Truckee Meadows College
- Donald Wagner, State University of North Carolina
- Drue Ferguson, St. Mary's University of Minnesota
- Joyce Erickson, Seattle Pacific University
- Jadwiga Krupski, Concordia University
- Ben Varner, University of Northern Colorado
- Anne Marie Flanagan, University of the Sciences
- James Otteson, University of Alabama
- Ronald Weber, University of Texas @ El Paso
- Joan Faust, Southeastern Louisiana University
- Daniel Lang, Lynchburg College
- Robert McMahon, Louisiana State University
- William Engel, Harvard University
- Harvey Flaumenhaft, St. John's College
- Antha Cotten-Sprecklemeyer, University of Kansas

- Morton Winston, College of New Jersey
- Woody West, Bellevue Community College
- Keith Francis, Pacific Union College
- William Clarkson, University of the South
- Steven Shrader, University of the South
- Stephen Fredman, Notre Dame University
- Donald Thompson, Pepperdine University
- Francis B. Titchener, Utah State University
- Miriam Davis, Delta State University
- Carl Donathan, Truckee Meadows Community College
- Kathleen Kelly, Babson College
- Blake Pattridge, Babson College
- Janet Ray Edwards, National Endowment for the Humanities
- Jonathan Steinwand, Concordia College
- Dorothy Guyot
- David Fisher, North Central College
- Gregory Marks, Providence College
- Dennis Dworkin, University of Nevada
- Phillip Boardman, University of Nevada
- Linda Curcio, University of Nevada
- Harvey Shulman, Concordia University
- James Woelfel, University of Kansas
- F. Allan Hanson, University of Kansas
- Michael Graham, University of Akron
- Andrew Traver, Southeastern Louisiana University
- Lucy Melbourne, St. Augustine's College
- Diane Fourney, University of Kansas
- Hansford Epes, Davidson College
- Stephen Varvis, Fresno Pacific University
- Seth Bovey, Louisiana State University @ Alexandria
- Stephen Zelnick, Temple University
- Timothy Peters, Temple University
- George Gross, Temple University
- Robert Wright, Temple University
- Scott Lee, American Academy for Liberal Education

**SEND PLEDGES AND MEMBERSHIP DUES TO JOIN ACTC TO LINDA TRIBUNE, ACTC,
1114 BERKS MALL, ANDERSON HALL, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19122**

CORE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR CORE TEXTS AND COURSES

TO READ OR NOT, TO BE OR NOT TO . . . (BOOKS BY ACTC MEMBERS)

Louise Cowan and Os Guinness, eds. *Invitation to the Classics: A Guide to Books You've Always Wanted to Read*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998. 384 pgs.

Mark Bauerlein, *Literary Criticism: An Autopsy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. 156 pgs.

William Franke, *Dante's Interpretive Journey*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. 250 pages.

Athanasios Moulakis, *Beyond Utility: Liberal Education in a Technological Age*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994. 171 pgs.

STEPHEN ZELNICK	Executive Director
SCOTT LEE	Associate Director
JAMES WALTER	Editor

Core welcomes your suggestions, articles, and ideas. You can keep in touch with us at the following address.

ACTC Newsletter
c/o Honors Program, SLU Box 489
Southeastern Louisiana University
Hammond, LA 70402

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This growth, however, has not been painless. The size and complexity of the conference has tested ACTC's current information-handling capabilities. Plans are afoot to build a new database in order to handle anticipated growth as the contributions of resources, time, and people continue to increase. Those who have already aided the association deserve a hearty thanks, and ACTC reminds all that continued support is essential to ACTC's health and vigor.

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CORE

Newsletter of the Association for Core Texts and Courses