

Newsletter of the Association CORE for Core Texts and Courses

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ACTC's Gateway to the West: San Francisco

J. Scott Lee, ACTC

THIS YEAR our conference has been sponsored by five institutions. Initiating the sponsorship was Theo Carlile, Director of the Collegiate Seminar Program at Saint Mary's College of California at Moraga. Theo had proposed taking the conference to the west a couple of years ago and, last year, the ACTC Board approved her proposal for sponsorship with the conference to be held in San Francisco. Later, during last year's conference, through Jane Kelley Rodeheffer, ACTC Board member, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, a sister institution of Saint Mary's at Moraga, offered an extraordinarily generous sponsorship for the California meeting. These offers were quickly followed by Don Thompson, Associate Dean of Seaver College, Pepperdine University, Keith Francis, Associate Professor of History at Pacific Union College, and Dale Donathan, Professor at Truckee Meadows Community College. It is just this kind of support which insures a successful conference and ACTC's expanding activity on behalf of intellectually coherent undergraduate education.

Sponsorship entails a financial, time, and personnel commitment over and above the generosity we experience so often with our insti-

tutional and individual members. For example, Theo's program helped in the efforts to locate a hotel. She has edited this newsletter and, in addition to her program's contribution to the conference, she has provided financial support for the newsletter's publication. Theo and Keith have supplied student staff, footing the costs of the students' lodging, while ACTC picked up their food and wages. Keith's dean provided funding for the agenda and directory. Each of our sponsors has brought a number of new participants to the conference, a vital effort to help ACTC become known to the wider academic community. Don thought of the idea of the student panels that we see on this year's agenda as a "dry run" to a larger, ACTC student conference. He helped to formulate the panels and to find participants for them. And, indeed, most of our sponsors have contributed by bringing their students to the student panel effort.

To these wonderful members and their supporting institutions, ACTC expresses its gratitude and appreciation for all they have done and given.

For ACTC's entire existence, we have been fortunate in having major institutional leaders in undergraduate, liberal education eager to sponsor our conferences and activities. Temple University has provided the overhead and staff support for the six year's of ACTC's life. In particular, we wish to thank Tim Peters, Intellectual Heritage Visiting

Assistant Professor, for his time and effort in helping to recruit for the conference, form panels, and write copy for this newsletter. Tim's work was invaluable. Through Peg Downes' efforts, a sponsorship at The University of North Carolina at Asheville began ACTC's move out of Philadelphia to other conference sites. Thanks to Jim Walter at Southeastern Louisiana University and Bainard Cowan at Louisiana State University, the conference moved to New Orleans, last year. Next year, Nicholas Ayo and Michael Crowe, at the University Notre Dame, have formed a sponsorship of the conference as part of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Program of Liberal Studies. A one day Anniversary Conference on the 4th and 5th of April will precede the ACTC conference, April 5-8th, 2001. Such support in the past, present, and future bodes well for North American undergraduate education.

Sponsor's Programs Featured

St. Mary's College of Moraga in California

The *Collegiate Seminar Program* is the "core of the core" curriculum at Saint Mary's College. It is a four-semester sequence of "great books" seminars, spanning a range of texts from the ancient Greeks through contemporary thought. The emphasis and objectives of the program place equal value

upon the method of learning (small group discussions) and upon the specific texts read. All undergraduate students at the college are required to participate in seminar.

Similarly Collegiate Seminar faculty members are drawn from all schools and departments on campus. To train and mentor teachers for the program, seminar has a number of faculty development and mentoring programs in place. A series of four workshops on various themes and with varied emphases are offered yearly to which all seminar faculty are invited. The March 2000 workshop sessions focused on such themes as non-Western texts as part of the core, the relationship of student writing to seminar discussion, strategies for leading discussions of Plato's *Symposium*, and a seminar discussion of *Arabian Nights* (selections). In addition to supporting faculty with such workshops the program has also instituted a co-teacher/mentor program for all new-to-seminar faculty members. By sharing teaching responsibilities with an experienced seminar leader the new teacher can learn most naturally and most effectively. Working alongside a practiced teacher gives the new leader a strong model against which to develop his/her own style, as well as an opportunity to develop within a context of a thriving discussion group.



Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

Colloquium is the general education program of Saint Mary's University. Its primary goal is to awaken and challenge the intellectual, spiritual and vocational gifts of each person through participation in a community of learning rooted in the Christian tradition. The heart of the *Colloquium* is a set of seven common experience courses in interdisciplinary studies, which are integrated around the theme of Freedom and Responsibility, A Christian Approach to Understanding of the Human Condition.

Alternatively, students may enter the *Lasallian Honors Program* which is a core text program that operates on the model of seminars and tutorials. In October of 1999, the *Lasallian Honors Program* received a \$20,000 showcase grant from the Lily Fellows Program to bring 12 faculty from other institutions to campus. During that time, the faculty will be introduced to various aspects of the program, including the enhancement of seminars in core texts with tutorials in service learning, classical Chinese language and calligraphy, and the fine and performing arts. Interested readers can learn about the program and its faculty at <http://www.smumn.edu/academics/humanities/honors.html>.

In addition, in December 1999, Jane Kelley Rodeheffer was named to the J. Robert Lane chair in the Humanities at Saint Mary's University, in honor of her outstanding contribution to humanities education at the University. She and Paul Contino, ACTC member from Valparaiso University, and Brennan O'Donnell, director of the honors program at Loyola College in

Baltimore, received an \$11,000 grant from the Humanities Center at Loyola to host a three-day conference on the life and works of the American fiction writer, Andre Dubus. This conference will take place March 30-April 1, 2001.

Pacific Union College

The *Honors Program* of Pacific Union College offers an alternative general education for academically motivated students. It is built around a series of "great books," or central texts, illustrating significant themes in the liberal arts. These works are supplemented by selected contemporary works, including films.

All of the Honors general-education courses are interdisciplinary, and some are team-taught. The themes and texts have been chosen by the Honors Director in consultation with other teachers in the Honors Program; they are subject to revision every two years. In the junior year, students select two from three offered courses. The themes and courses include: Heroes, Order and Liberty, Scripture I, Cosmos, America, Virtue, Christianity, Scripture II, Beauty, Self and Society, East, and Progress. The honors students also take 12 hours of New Testament Greek. The freshman year seminars are designed to have a particularly strong writing component. The Cosmos laboratory includes a lab, and there is a summer term abroad which involves two months of study based in Europe.

Pepperdine University

The core text, general education program in Seaver College is a four-course sequence. An elective course beyond the sequence explores the diversity of culture. Students attend plays, tour museums, eat at restaurants and take in

other cultural activities. The program has an ongoing discussion among faculty concerning the appropriate texts to teach. Recently, the faculty focussed upon the success of the use of Aristotle's *Ethics* and Augustine's *Confessions*, but was ambivalent about the effectiveness of using selections from Aquinas. In addition, the program sponsors a lecture series. This academic year, Pepperdine hosted David Whalen (Hillsdale College), who spoke about the contrast between deliberative reasoning and lyrical reasoning; Paul Contino (Christ College, Valparaiso), who lectured on Dostoevsky's *Brother's Karamazov*; and Gil Bailie (The Florilegia Institute), who gave a talk about Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Truckee Meadows Community College

Truckee Meadows Community College has a three semester course, *Western Traditions*. It covers philosophy, history, and literature from the ancients to the moderns. Instructors have considerable flexibility in designing syllabi, and instructors may choose a focus; for example, one instructor focussed on Rousseau, Jefferson, and Comte. All students at Truckee Meadows must take the sequence as part of their core curriculum. Under a unified system, this curriculum fits into the state mandated articulation agreements with the University of Nevada at Reno and Las Vegas.

ACTC Convenes in San Francisco

J. Scott Lee, ACTC

THIS YEAR, ACTC will be holding the second largest conference in its six-year history. We expect around 172 individuals

representing over 96 institutions to attend. While last year's conference was larger, this conference represents a strong showing since the majority of the faculty and administrators who attend come from east of the Rockies. Yet, going to San Francisco brought nine new Western institutions, out of the 26 new colleges and universities joining us. And California has supplied the largest number of institutions, nine. The institution sending the most representatives is La Grange College in Georgia. Of our attending institutions, 66, or 71%, have returned from last year. These come from five Canadian provinces and 29 states. We have drawn representatives from two educational projects located in countries across the seas: Czechoslovakia through the Phronesis Project and Tajikistan and Krygystan through the Aga Khan Humanities Project

As always, the institutions attending ACTC display the broad spectrum of North American education. We have universities, colleges, and community colleges, a number of colleges within universities, secular and religious, and private and public institutions. Our institutions range in size from 25,000 to 120. We have some of the most prestigious universities on the continent and some little-known gems of North American undergraduate education. Our public institutions are supported by states and provinces, counties, and cities, and some are state related. These constitute a little less than a third of our participating institutions and, of course, the public institutions hold the majority of our core text students. Our private institutions divide into the secular and religious, the former constituting 40%, the latter 60% of private affiliations.

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Director's Message

Steve Zelnick, Temple University

IN the past year I traveled to several campuses and explored the differences in ACTC affiliated schools. A mixed picture emerges of solid successes, programs under challenge, and some under duress.

Many traditional core programs are doing well. Many of these are located at smaller, liberal arts colleges whose mission fits the ACTC outlook. In such institutions the curriculum has deep roots, the students are comfortable with liberal learning and fairly well prepared for it, and the faculty is devoted to teaching and developing strong students through liberal studies.

Other ACTC schools face challenges from open choice advocates, presentism (the doctrine that only modern or contemporary texts and issues merit study), various demands for inclusiveness and diversity, and politics hostile to liberal learning.

Surprisingly, some of these programs are doing well and seem to be invigorated by the challenge. So long as the program has a committed faculty and an administration willing to invest resources in core courses and programs, the competition from fashionable ideas can sharpen one's wits and remind us why traditional learning is worthy.

Problems loom, however, in the research focused multiversities where agendas are friendly neither to core programs specifically nor to humanities and theoretical learning generally. As the drive for funded research and corporate opportunities intensifies, fewer openings appear for professors adept at liberal learning and for students open to it. The faculty is divided between research specialists too narrowly focussed to teach core courses, and armies of full-time adjuncts not eligible for tenure and bitter about diminished career prospects.

Computer-based instruction and the utopian nightmare of distance learning (courses without campuses) poses a new threat. Distance learning may work well for certain kinds of study (the MBA has neither content nor form nor serious intent), but is a disaster for liberal learning. Yet, the attractiveness for administrators and for students is all too real. Imagine, for administrators, a university without workers or physical plant; except for electricity bills, electricians, and sports stadiums, costs can be cut to nothing. For students, too, the idea of going to school without going to school holds great charm; and what a pleasant cave with such vivid sights and sounds streaming into the desktop in one's own bedroom!

The confusion of information with knowledge, of data with learning, of technical training with education runs rampant among educationists and those prepared to pay big dollars for their consultations. They argue with passion the inevitability of change and the need to adjust to it. Teachers, they say, need to take a lesson from the medical industry, though they routinely mistake the cause for the disaster as the reluctance of doctors to change rather than what the change itself has brought. It is amazing to hear Boards of Trustees depict themselves as powerless to resist these innovations, to listen to these good capitalists go on about historical inevitability.

Hucksters of change usually fail to distinguish the victims from the beneficiaries. The most energetic boosters of machine education still manage to sacrifice to send their own children to the ivies and prestigious liberal arts colleges. New universities, without campus or faculty, are for other people's children.

There is much for ACTC to do. We help preserve what is done well, battle against bad ideas and practices, and form part of the larger mosaic of organizations and writers and thinkers who do their best to resist the witless plunge into dystopic futures — a menu of goals worth our hearts and minds.

Membership List

(Individual Members)

- Kathleen Hall
NYU
- Karl Walling
Liberty Fund
- Gayle E. McKeen
University of the South, Sewanee
- Anne Marie Flanagan
University of the Sciences
- Noel Harold Kaylor
University of Northern Iowa
- Michael Crowe
Notre Dame
- Robert Frail
Centenary College of New Jersey
- Harry Brod
University of Northern Iowa
- Henry Abner
- Peggy Pittas
Lynchburg College
- Eric McGuckin
Sonoma State University
- J. Lenore Wright
Baylor University
- Kristen Escobar
Baylor University
- Joan Faust
Southeastern Louisiana University
- Bill Cook
University of LaVerne
- David Berry
Essex County College
- Blake Patridge
Babson College
- Alcyone M. Scott
Midland Lutheran College
- Jeffrey D. Wallin
American Academy for Liberal Education
- William Johnson
Bethel College
- Jadwiga Krupski
Concordia University
- Michael Neth
Middle Tennessee State University
- Lyall Bush
Washington Comm. for the Humanities
- Diane Fourny
University of Kansas
- Jane Rose
Georgia College; State University
- Anthony Flosek
St. Edward's University

Richard Prust
St. Andrew's College

James Walter
Southeaster Louisiana University

Art Davis
Atkinson College-York University

David Neidorf
Saint Mary's of California, Moraga

James Woelfel
University of Kansas

John Barber
Ball State University

Fritz Efav
*University of Tennessee,
Chattanooga*

Jeannine Uzzi
Whitman College

Michael Riley
Saint Mary's of California, Moraga

Rick Fairbanks
Saint Olaf

John Naahr
Yeshiva College

John Donahue
Magdalen College

James Vest
Rhodes College

William French
Pheonesis Center

Stephen Van Luchener
Saint John's College

John Callahan
Lewis and Clark University

Peter Koper
Central Michigan University

George Lewis
California Polytechnical

Thomas Sorger
Roger-Williams University

Jane Rodeheffer
Saint Mary's of Minnesota

Jack Wikse
Shimer College

Marsha Newman
Saint Mary's of California, Moraga

Peter Busch
Liberty Fund

Don Thompson
Pepperdine University

Joyce Erickson
Seattle Pacific

Hallie White
Boston University

Daniel Lang
Lynchburg

Peter Maccarato
Marymount Manhattan College

Erica Welter

D. Garcia
New York University

Susan Yunis
College of Saint Scholastica

Joanne Jacobson
Yeshiva College

Frederick Shepherd
Samford University

Christine Cornell
Saint Thomas University

Kent Linville
Oxford College of Emory University

Darcy Wudel
Averett College

Frank Maddox
Emory University

Gretchen Schulz
Emory University

Charles Glausier
Emory University

Elizabeth Smith
Emory University

Martha Davis
Temple University

William Cook
University of LaVerne

Keith Francis
Pacific University

Ellen Belton
Brooklyn College

Geoffrey Fidler
Concordia University

Roger Gould
University of Chicago

Darrel Colson
Pepperdine University

Jon Mark Mikkelsen
Missouri Western

John Bernard
University of Houston

Dale Donathan
*Truckee Meadows Community
College*

Maria Teirumniks
*Truckee Meadows Community
College*

Sharon Lowe
*Truckee Meadows Community
College*

Jeffrey Brautigam
Hanover College

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We see, then, that there is no single type of "core text" school. The variation in our programs will assure attendees of that as well, ranging as they do from four-year programs to one semester optional courses. We invite you to examine the agenda and the titles of papers to appreciate the variety ACTC offers.

On Individual and Institutional Giving to ACTC

Tim Peters and Scott Lee

EACH YEAR ACTC relies very heavily on individual and institutional giving to support its conference, activities and growth. Conference fees simply do not provide sufficient funds. Thus, we rely upon and are grateful for both our individual and institutional contributors. This year, as of March 28th, our individual contributors were contributing at a rate of 75% of conference participants. This exceeds the four-year average, annual rate of a little over 60%. So, it appears that individuals have made the decision that ACTC is worthy of support and is, in fact, accomplishing good work. A list of individual contributors as of March 28th is included in the newsletter. A supplemental list of those contributions received after that date appears in your folder.

**ACTC 2001 Conference
at University of Notre Dame
will celebrate the
Program for Liberal Studies
50th Anniversary
April 4-8**

Pledging and Contributing Institutions for 1999-2000

This year marks the largest number of institutional pledges and contributions that ACTC has received to date, 29. That rise represents an 18% increase in institutional giving. Twenty of the institutions on the list below gave last year and eight of those institutions have been giving since the second year of ACTC's existence. This record of giving by prestigious, leading universities and colleges is very important to ACTC's future. We are often asked what institutions support us, and in our efforts to expand our activities through seeking grant support it, the importance of consistent giving by core text education leaders cannot be overstated.

Each year ACTC, during the business meeting, requests that the members who attend the conference 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.

List of the 1999-2000 Pledging and Contributing Institutions

American Academy for Liberal Education
 Brooklyn College—CUNY
 Boston University
 College of New Jersey
 Concordia University—Moorhead
 Eckerd College
 Lynchburg College
 Mercer University
 Pacific Union College
 Pepperdine University
 Rhodes College
 St. John's College
 Sainy Mary's in California—Moraga
 Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
 Seattle Pacific University
 Shimer College
 Southeastern Louisiana University
 Temple University
 Truckee Meadows Community College
 Valparaiso University
 Villanova University
 University of Chicago
 University of Colorado—Boulder
 University of Dallas
 University of Kansas
 University of King's College
 University of Notre Dame
 University of North Carolina—Asheville
 University of the Sciences in Philadelphia

ACTC Activities Grow in 1999-2000

J. Scott Lee ACTC

ACTC's activities are rapidly increasing and they demonstrate a growing influence on undergraduate education.

Within the last year, ACTC has applied for grants in order to plan a series of workshops in CIS countries in cooperation with Rafiquee Keshavjee and the Aga Khan Humanities Project in Central Asia. The Project has spearheaded curricular reform in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and several other Central Asian

republics. If ACTC can secure the grant, a small team of ACTC experts would travel late this summer as a planning group for a larger conference, one year later. The larger conference would focus on measures and practices of institutional effectiveness in the liberal arts and general education, teacher training and effectiveness with a particular focus on interdisciplinary training, the pedagogy of teaching humanistic texts of original sources, and faculty recruitment and administration of interdisciplinary, general education, and liberal arts programs. The larger conference would seek to establish permanent relationships

between CIS faculty and North American faculty.

This year's conference offers a workshop on Sunday morning, to which all conference participants are invited, designed to explore collaborative relations and possible joint activities with several North American liberal arts organizations. We welcome David Berry, Community College Humanities Association, Essex County College; Richard Guzman, Vice President Association of Graduate Liberal Studies, North Central College; Thomas Lowe, Executive Director Association for General and Liberal Studies, Ball State University; and Francine Nevakas, Coordinator of Association for Integrative Studies.

This fall, the ACTC Board approved a request by Bainard Cowan for publicly supporting a grant application from Louisiana State University's Honors Program to the Louisiana Board of Regents for a summer institute aimed at college teachers focusing on improving teaching of American prose authors of the 19th Century. The institute, entitled "The American Myth 1830-1890," would include works of authors such as Melville, Thoreau, Twain, and Douglass. The institute would bring together approximately 30 teachers, half drawn from Louisiana, with expert commentators. ACTC will supply one of those commentators.

Last year, the National Endowment for the Humanities sent a representative to ACTC. As a result, the University of Southern Maine's Honors Program Director, Jan Thompson, applied for and won a grant for their program.

Don Thompson of Pepperdine University has proposed an ACTC sponsored student conference in the near future. As a trial run, we have, for the second time, included a student panel and papers in our annual conference. The aims behind the proposed student conference would be to encourage students to consider seriously a future involved in core text programs and to inform our schools of the successes of our programs. Peg Downes, of the University of North Carolina at Asheville, has agreed to help in producing the student conference. She brings UNCA's considerable experience, which stretches back more than a decade, in organizing student conferences and publishing the papers of student research.

ACTC and University Press of America have signed a contract to publish this year's selected papers. Don Thompson and Scott Lee will co-edit. This will mark the fourth volume which ACTC has published. These volumes of selected papers have been a sign of both the growth and special nature of ACTC. The volumes, drawn from the proceedings, typically demonstrate the wide concerns of ACTC. Papers on the history and theory of liberal and core text education, on the uses of core texts in the sciences, social sciences as well as the arts and humanities, on the pedagogical practices of teaching core texts, and on the administration and defense of core text programs will be found in each volume. Authors and texts discussed at conferences demonstrate the wide range of ACTC's intellectual interests: for example, the Bagavad-Gita, Boethius, Calvin,

Confucius, Dante, Douglass, Euclid, John Ford (the director), the Gilgamesh, Harriet Jacobs, King, Barbara McClintock, Manet, Morrison, Nietzsche, Nussbaum, Plato, Schroedinger, Mary Shelley, Adam Smith, Shakespeare, Thucydides, and de Tocqueville, to name a few.

One of the interesting features of this volume is that space is reserved for both the shorter papers given at the conference and expanded papers submitted with the shorter version. We hope, in this way, to keep the exploratory, interpretative nature of the conference alive in the published volumes while also indicating the scholarly expertise available in ACTC.

Jane Kelley Rodeheffer and David Sokolowski, along with Scott Lee, recently brought to fruition "Core Texts in

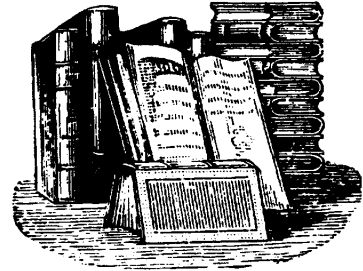
Conversation," the selected papers from our Asheville Conference. Jane and David have done a wonderful job in advancing the interests of core text programs and liberal, general education. A year ago, "Tradition and Innovation," edited by Allen Speight at Boston University and Scott Lee initiated ACTC's publication efforts. Bainard Cowan, at Louisiana State University's Honors Program, has just finished the initial pass on papers from the New Orleans conference. This effort has expanded the number of peer reviewers and, in some cases, involved sending the papers outside the campus to ACTC members. Final decisions on papers for this volume are yet to be made.

Finally, recruiting on the listserv of ACTC has produced finalists for several jobs at ACTC schools. If you wish to join the listserv, write zelnick@nimbus.temple.edu and ask to be added. Our website has a new address: www.mnsmc.edu/ACTC/actc.html. There you will find program descriptions from a host of ACTC universities and colleges. In the near future, we will be adding several that we have received from new members.

Copies of "Core Texts in Conversation" and "Tradition and Innovation" are on sale at the conference reception tables.

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Editors: Theodora Carlile
 J. Scott Lee
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