

ACTC Core Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 1

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Special points of interest:

- Three Sponsoring Institutions for Conference
- Phillip Sloan Elected 2nd ACTC President
- New ACTC Liberal Arts Institute
- ACTC Wins Three-year NEH Grant
- Trends Project Planned for Canadian Institutions

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MERCER UNIVERSITY SPONSORS 9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Oglethorpe University and Oxford College of Emory University Co-Sponsor

Considerable Effort by Volunteers Bucks Trend in National Educational Meetings

The growth and success of ACTC depends every year on the voluntary spirit of women and men dedicated to making the conference come alive for the membership of ACTC. And each year, as institutions offer to sponsor the conference, they build on the successes of previous institutions' sponsorship.

No less is true this year. Mercer University put together a terrific team of volunteers to sponsor this year's conference. Led by Charlotte (Charlie) Thomas, Mercer's team of Mary Ann Drake, Randy Harshbarger, Greg Sapp, and Bobbie Shipley were a superb demonstration of dedication to planning and recruiting for the conference.

Similarly engaged were co-sponsoring institutions Oglethorpe University Core Curriculum and Oxford College of Emory University. Approaching ACTC at the conference last year, Core Curriculum Director Alan Woolfolk offered to co-sponsor and Gretchen Schulz was equally enthusiastic for her Oxford College at Emory to co-sponsor. Alan headed a team of Oglethorpe faculty who, including Joseph Knippenberg and Jason Wirth, have been long-time attendees and supporters. Gretchen did yeoman's work, with the support of her Dean Dana Greene and Associate Dean Kent Linville.

These dedicated efforts bore much fruit in a year that was less kind to other national educational meetings. ACTC's conference grew to over 210 attendees, our first time ever over 200 and an increase of 15% over last year.

The College of Liberal Arts at Mercer University and the Interdisciplinary Studies Department combined to help fund the sponsorship – a much appreciated gift to ACTC. Charlie helped to plan the recruitment and coordinate the campaign which involved contacting over 600 names of previous "old-timers" through email and telephone follow-ups.

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ACTC Pilots Liberal Arts Institute at the University of Dallas

ACTC and the University of Dallas partnered this year to pilot the new ACTC Liberal Arts Institute at the University of Dallas. Funded by generous underwriting by the University of Dallas, the ACTC Liberal Arts

Institute is dedicated to fostering core text, liberal arts curricula and institutional support for such programs by developing national and international projects that will build networks of core text institutions

across North America and around the world to pool resources and talents in order to advance meaningful, liberal education into the 21st Century. Central to bringing the Institute to Dallas

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ACTC WINS NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES GRANT

One of the Largest Awards This Year by NEH

On Tuesday, March 11th, the National Endowment for the Humanities announced this year's awards for project proposals to the Exemplary Education Program. ACTC was awarded \$ 229,000 for its three-year project, "Bridging the Gap Between Humanities and Sciences: An Exemplary Education Model of Core Text, Humanistic Education." The project begins this June on the campus of St. John's College.

"Bridging the Gap" is a national curricular project which unites humanist scholars and scientists in developing and demonstrating general, liberal education courses based in the humanities. The project will encourage and help instantiate the development of humanities core text courses and discussions about the value, meaning, and importance of science to human ideas, actions, and arts throughout the West and the World. After a national competition, faculties from nine institutions have been selected to participate in the three-year project. Suggested by NEH, funding from outside sources will increase the participation of the project beyond its original plans.

The yearly seminars will have two parts. Phillip Sloan, President of ACTC and Peter Kalkavage of St. John's College co-authored the syllabi of science and humanities readings and will lead the discussions of texts for all three years of the project. Toward the close of each two-week session, the participating institutions will move into workshops to plan for integration of the seminar texts into their particular curricula. Scott Lee, project director and principal author of the grant proposal, and George Lucas, project evaluator, will help develop the specific integration plans. As is its policy, the National Endowment for the Humanities, through program officer Barbara Ashbrook, provided invaluable guidance in helping to develop this project and superb critical reviews from the peer reviewers after the grant was awarded. These helped to improve and finalize the project's content and structure.

ACTC invited three core text institutions that it knew to be eager to develop humanities-and-science courses -- Mercer University, St. Olaf College, and the University of Dallas -- as partners in the original grant. Subsequent to the competition, five more institutions were invited to participate in the project: Norfolk State University, Seton Hall University, Samford University, St. Bonaventure University, and Truckee Meadows Community College. St. John's College, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of Dallas agreed to host the three seminars and generously held costs in check so that ACTC could turn in a viable proposal. Cost-sharing by institutions in support of administrators and post-seminar development plans was an important ingredient of success. Ninety-two percent of the direct costs of this grant will be support the participating institution's faculty and seminar leaders. The remainder is management costs.

Both the seminar syllabi and the institutional applications express the commitment to solid humanistic, interdisciplinary education in core text, liberal education. The first year participants will discuss "Motion and Natural Law in a Philosophical and Political World." The second year participants will read about and discuss "The Problem of Life: Life Sciences and Humanistic Perspectives." In the third year, discussion will turn to "Nature, Art, and Science: the Problem of Technoscience and Values." Simple experiments, field trips, and films supplement the effort as do the evening discussions by faculty over dinners on the hosting campuses. The syllabus will be published on ACTC's website this spring, shortly after the conference.

The institutions were extraordinarily broad-ranging in their integration plans. All met the two-course integration minimum and went well beyond. Honors colleges modeling for general education courses, cluster courses supplementing extensive required course offerings, degree programs linked to the general education courses, pre-collegiate education linked to the general education courses, learning communities, supplemental technology workshops for participating faculty, and the use of the grant to unite separate humanities and science honors programs were just some of the innovations incorporated in the applications. Developments of the project on each campus and as a whole will be made available through campus and ACTC websites.

New President's Greeting

Phillip R. Sloan, Program of Liberal Studies, University of Notre Dame

Assuming the presidency of ACTC is easier, I suspect, than is the case in most such organizations, due to the leadership of my predecessor, Steve Zelnick, and the continuity and institutional energy provided by our full-time Director Scott Lee. Through their joint efforts, ACTC has grown since 1995 into a continental, and more recently, into an international organization.

I assume this office with a very different background than English-literature specialist Steve Zelnick. I was originally trained as a marine biologist, and then as a historian and philosopher of science. My specialized scholarship and publications are in the area of the history and philosophy of the life sciences. I have, for this reason, a particular interest in the inclusion of the sciences within liberal humanistic education, addressing the historical replacement of a classic "liberal arts" conception of education with our contemporary split of the "humanities" and "sciences."

As a faculty member in one of the traditional "great books" programs, Notre Dame's Program of Liberal Studies, my primary responsibility has been teaching the natural sciences through classic texts. But my own liberal education has come from the demands of teaching in the Great Books seminars in our Program, where I must continually deal with difficult works in which I have not been trained as a specialist. This semester, for example, I have conducted seminar discussions on writings of Dostoyevsky, Marx, Flaubert, James, and Freud. Last semester I was reading the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Analects* of Confucius.

Another part of my life is engaged in graduate teaching and specialized scholarship. Balancing these two forms of teaching and two ideals of education is not easy, but I feel it is important to keep these dimensions of education in dialogue. Specialized graduate teaching and general liberal education have different ends, one to educate the citizen, the other to train the specialist. The split that has occurred between these two goals has, unfortunately, often been to the detriment of general liberal education, and I see ACTC playing an important role in balancing these two tasks of education.

I am fully aware that great books program environment in which I teach is only one possible model of a core text program. Steve and Scott were wise to ensure from the beginning of ACTC that no one model would dominate the association. We live as educators in many different environments. Some of us in ACTC are from religiously affiliated schools that serve particular religious constituencies. Others of us represent

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Phillip Sloan Elected Second President of ACTC

Phillip Sloan was overwhelmingly elected as the new President of ACTC by the membership of ACTC in September and has assumed his office with both the dignity and energy members expected of him.

Phil is the professor and chair of the Program for Liberal Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Over the last seven years, Phil has been an absolutely tireless advocate and supporter of ACTC. He was one of our first plenary speakers, one who brought substance and respect to ACTC with his address. An ACTC Board member, he sought institutional support from Notre Dame very early in ACTC's existence when the organization was struggling for recognition from universities and colleges. He successfully sought to bring the sixth annual conference to the University of Notre Dame. He has found prominent speakers for our conference and encouraged a dialogue between the sciences and humanities through many conference papers. He recently co-authored the three-year syllabus in ACTC's successful grant proposal, "Bridging the Gap Between the Humanities and Sciences," to the National Endowment for the Humanities. A true gentleman and scholar, he in every way exemplifies what is good about ACTC.

As President, Phil brings an impressive scholarly voice and a commitment to core text teaching that is hard to match, even among the many outstanding members of ACTC. Originally trained in biology and chemistry, with a specialization in evolutionary biology, he received his doctorate in philosophy from the University of California, San Diego (1970), with a specialization in

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ACTC will Research Canadian Trends in Liberal Education

What are the trends in general, liberal education at Canadian universities and colleges? The ACTC Liberal Arts Institute expects to find out through a study to be conducted by Anne Leavitt of Malaspina University-College's Liberal Studies Program. Impressed by the results she has seen from the AALE/ACTC project, *Assessing Trends in the Liberal Arts Core: A Vision for the 21st Century*, Leavitt has been spending her recent sabbatical looking into the history of higher education in Canada and at recent initiatives at several institutions to redesign core curriculum requirements for BA and BSc students. J. Scott Lee, the principle investigator in the AALE/ACTC project, and Leavitt will use her work to seek a major grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to extend the *Trends* study into Canada.

"What's clear is that reforms in Canadian general education requirements, offerings and delivery have been speeding up in recent years," says Leavitt. Examples include Simon Fraser University's recent overhaul of its first-year program and McMaster University's introduction of "Inquiries" at every level of its BA and BSc. A number of other institutions have instituted significant changes to distribution requirements in order to ensure that the depth provided by majors programs is complemented by the breadth of skills and knowledge expected of liberally educated citizens. To what extent these reforms and their causes parallel trends in American core, post-secondary education is something that Leavitt and Lee are intensely interested in. Trends Canada is also expected to make available a wealth of data on "home grown" core curricular models and institutional experiences that will be of great use to institutions joining the trend of general education reform.

"TRENDS IN THE LIBERAL ARTS CORE" NATIONAL PROJECT ADDS NEW PARTICIPANTS

"Trends in the Liberal Arts Core: A Vision for the 21st Century" is a national, three-year project of curriculum review and re-visioning that ACTC is currently undertaking as an extension of a former FIPSE/Mellon/AALE project. "Trends" includes over 80 institutions in a longitudinal study of innovations and structures in curriculum and courses, administration and faculty support, strategic planning and assessment of liberal, general education programs. Research/Doctoral, Comprehensive, and Baccalaureate Institutions have all contributed to the study, with secular and religious, private and public institutions joining each year to build the database. ACTC projects, ultimately, 102 institutions will join and is planning a new effort along similar lines in Canada (see article above).

"Trends" is a research project on the development of general liberal education over the last 25 years and a resource for faculty and administrators who are seeking to renew their general education programs and their institutional identity, as well. Some of the findings of "Trends" have been surprising – the growth and diversity of general education programs, the centrality of well-structured general, liberal education to institutional traditions and identity, the fast-developing relationship between student success and retention and curricular support in general, liberal education, the hearty new administrative structures and faculty support in general education, and, finally, the innovations in assessment of general, liberal education.

In the ACTC phase of the project, each institution has received an Institutional Profile of its own general education program's history and structure set against statistical trends and national models of general education found in the Trends database. Each institution has had a site visit by the project director. The site visit gathers the narrative explanations from faculty of the historical developments found in the Profile. And the site visit includes much discussion among faculty and administrators on future improvements. In particular, of course, there is discussion of core text courses, but this is only one aspect of the range of topics.

At the conclusion of the project in two years, there will be a fall conference of participating members to summarize project and institutional results, followed by national publication highlighting each institution's contribution to the national development of general education and core text courses.

New participating institutions include: Avertt University, Drury University, Indiana University at Kokomo,

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SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS MAKE CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

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Always cooperative, cheerful, hardworking, and inventive, Charlie led a team which worked very hard to produce this conference. Many of you will have spoken with Mary Ann, Randy, Greg or Bobbie as they urged you to attend. Mary Ann helped to recruit and make arrangements for the book publishers and she suggested and helped develop student panels this year. Charlie and Bobbie planned the folders, the publication of this newsletter and the agenda/directory, and all the thousands of details which make a conference go right. Bobbie and Greg have headed up the army of Mercer students who have ably and courteously served at the registration desk. The credit for finding the restaurant for the Board dinner belongs, as well, to Mercer. We are, of course, grateful that Professor Verene and President Godsey also agreed to speak before us through the good offices of Charlie.

Both Oglethorpe University's Core Curriculum and Oxford College of Emory contributed substantially to the funding of the conference. Further, Alan and his team called about 250 names on an exchange list that our fruitful cooperation with the Association of General and Liberal Studies produced, and Gretchen followed-up with calls for another 250. Gretchen, Alan, and Randy put together the cultural package found in the conference folders and Alan and Charlie were instrumental in locating the Atlanta Renaissance Hotel. All three of these leaders, of course, have encouraged their faculty colleagues to attend.

Important, also, to the success of the recruitment effort were several volunteers outside of these institutions. In particular, Don Whitfield and Daniel Born of the Great Books Foundation contributed time and advertising to recruitment. Those attending

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TRENDS PARTICIPANTS

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Loyola College, St. Olaf College. Attendees at this year's conference whose institutions have also been part of the project include: Ball State University, Baylor University, Brigham Young University, Brooklyn College, Eckerd College, Fresno Pacific University, James Madison University, St. Bonaventure University, St. Mary's College of Moraga, Rhodes College, University of Dallas, University of North Carolina at Asheville, and Wabash College.

2004 Conference Co-Sponsors Sought

The University of Dallas will sponsor next year's conference. As with all other conferences, ACTC seeks co-sponsors who help share both the work and glory of the conference.

Programs and institutions interested in co-sponsoring should contact Scott Lee at jscottlee@prodigy.net

Sloan Elected as Second President of ACTC

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the history and philosophy of science. His research area is the history and philosophy of the life sciences in the modern period with publications on the history of evolutionary theory, Enlightenment natural history, and intellectual history. He has also worked in the history and philosophy of recent genetics and molecular biology. He is a Fellow of Section L of the AAAS. A tireless advocate of core programs at Notre Dame, he is as at ease in a freshman seminar of great works of the

West and world as he is as in a senior seminar of great works on genetics.

This year, as ACTC expanded its plans and operations, Phil has been invaluable in his insight, counsel, support and vision for ACTC's growth. We in ACTC are fortunate to have him elected as our second President.

Financial Support for ACTC Increases Despite Difficult Economy. ACTC Thanks Supporters.

Reports of difficulty in sustaining attendance and support for academic, particularly general education, meetings have been mixed. AACU, which offered a conference devoted to liberal education this year, claims its largest attendance ever, but other associations have been off in attendance as much as a third. Certainly, ACTC heard from many former attendees that economic conditions were keeping them from attending.

These problems in attendance can presage downturns in economic support, but ACTC attendance has increased 15% over last year's figures and support from individuals and institutions is running strong.

Individual contributions to ACTC are running at a rate of 65% of attendees, equaling our highest rate of the past and surpassing last year's total contribution. Forty-five institutions have contributed, this year, to ACTC, one more than last year. Had the University of Dallas not contributed the enormous support it did to the ACTC Liberal Arts Institute, we would still have exceeded last year's institutional support by a few hundred dollars. Scott Lee Executive Director commented, "As ever, without that institutional support the conference and published proceedings that emerge from it would not be possible. In sum, ACTC is thankful and gratified by this strong show of support in a time of economic duress and uncertainty. Our deepest thanks to all."

Partial list of Individual Contributors as of 3/17/03:

Violet Allain, Teresa Ast, Gary Bailey, Ellen Belton, Barbara Berfanger, Jeffrey Brautigam, Grace Campbell, Kathleen Carroll, Donna Coffey, Darrel Colson, Michael DiWilde, Laurel Eason, Prescott Evarts, Rick Fairbanks, Joan Faust, Guiliana Fazzion, Tom Festa, Rosemary Fisk, Anne Marie Flanagan, Elizabeth Garrah-Aidoo, Odina Gonzalez, Scott Hammond, Mary Catherine Harper, Terese Hartman, Elizabeth Snyder Hook, Shirley Kagan, Elizabeth Kaufer, William Kelly, James Kiersky, Joseph Knippenberg, Peter Koper, Sherry Korthase, Henry Kru-siewicz, Susan Lester, J. Scott Lee, Richard Liddy,

Kurt Lindquist, Douglas MacFarland, Claudia MacMillan, Frederich Marcus, John Mayfield, John McClain, Michael Messina-Yauchzy Christopher Metress, Robert T. Miller, Anne Janine Morey, Merritt Moseley, Lisa Nicoletti, Wendy Ostroff, Ralph Patton, H. Irvin Penfield, Peggy Pittas, Chad Redwing, Christine Renaud, Daniel Ritchie, S. Beth Russell, Cynthia Rutz, Daniel Schlapbach, Michael Seth, Tim Spiekerman, Helen Storey, Vicki Tromanhauser, James Walter, Frank Williams, Charles H. Wilson, Pam Wilson, Jason Wirth, James Woelfel, Alan Woolfolk, John Yeatts

In the fall, after each spring's conference, ACTC asks attending members, through a mailing, to go to their institution's administrators to seek institutional support for ACTC. We do this each year because no one can speak better than the attendees and participants in our projects about the efforts ACTC puts into supporting faculty and administrators who are building their own core text programs.

This commitment to each institution working out its own core programs is part of the ACTC heritage and is advanced through ACTC's annual meeting.

Thanks for your understanding and help in our efforts to enlist institutional support.

List of contributing institutions:

Averett University
 Baylor University
 Boston University
 Brooklyn College
 Centenary College of Louisiana
 The College of the Humanities and Sciences
 Colorado College
 Concordia University, Liberal Arts College
 College of New Jersey
 Columbia University
 Eckerd College
 Fresno Pacific University
 The Great Books Foundation
 Hampden-Sydney College
 Loyola College of Maryland
 Lynchburg College
 Magdalen College
 Malaspina University-College
 Mercer University
 National University
 Oglethorpe University
 Oxford College of Emory University
 Pepperdine University
 Rhodes College
 Saint Anselm College
 St. Bonaventure University
 St. John's College
 Saint Mary's College of California
 Saint Mary's College of Kansas
 St. Olaf College
 Samford University

Shimer College
 Southeastern Louisiana University
 Temple University
 Thomas More College
 University of Chicago
 University of Dallas
 University of Kansas
 University of King's College
 University of North Carolina at Asheville
 University of Notre Dame
 University of the Sciences of Philadelphia
 University of the South
 Villanova University
 Wabash College

Letters

To the editor:

ACTC is responsible for my new career-path—one which will, I hope, contribute to the strengthening of democratic citizenship in many parts of the world.

In late summer 2000, I was a member of the ACTC consulting team, assisted by a Mellon grant, to cross the globe in order to work with our colleagues in the Aga Khan Humanities Project in Central Asia. I was amazed to discover that I had *so* much to learn, from the AKHP. The AKHP presented academic and social angles and contours that really opened up my ways of thinking about how we construct, teach, and evaluate our lib-

eral arts core programs here in the U.S.

During a semester sabbatical, I'm dedicating myself to pulling a number of international liberal education projects under the umbrella of a new UNC Asheville, Center for Inquiry in International Liberal Education. These projects will promote outreach by American liberal arts faculty to share ideas with similar faculty overseas, particularly in Third-World nations, to plan curricula, and to learn from each other. I hope ACTC will work with us in this new venture.

Peg Downes

UNCA

Information on Joint AGLS HBCU Faculty Development Network Meeting Charlotte, North Carolina, October 23-26, 2003

The Association of General and Liberal Studies (AGLS) and the HBCU Faculty Development Network's will offer a "two for one" in Charlotte, North Carolina October 23-26, 2003, as they hold their annual conferences together. The theme uniting both organizations will be "Building Bridges: Education and Community in a Diverse World". The two associations,

united by an emphasis on general and liberal education, on teaching and learning, curriculum and pedagogy, will hold joint plenary sessions, with the concurrent sessions of both open to all.

The AGLS has a long history of work in general and liberal education. Their annual meeting draws faculty and administrators primar-

ily considered with general education and instruction. The Council of Administrators of General Education also holds a business meeting at the AGLS meeting.

The HBCU Network is composed primarily of faculty from historically Black colleges with a commitment to, and experience in, educat-

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Two Volumes of Conference Proceedings Published Editors for This Year's Proceedings Needed

Two volumes of conference were published this year. Don Thompson, Darrel Colson, and Scott Lee edited *Universality and History*, the selected proceedings from the sixth annual conference in 2000 (University Press of America). Last year, Thompson remarked, "I would volunteer to do it again, just so I

could read the whole slate of papers from another annual meeting." Bainard Cowan and Lee edited *Uniting the Liberal Arts: Core and Contesxt*, the selected proceedings from the 1999 conference (also UPA). In press, now, is *The Wider World of Core Texts and Courses (Green Lion)* edited by Tony

Brunello, Michael Chiariello, and Lee. Darcy Wudel, Averett University, has received, compiled and collated the papers from the 7th Annual Conference. Publication is expected late in the fall. Volunteer editors for this year's volume please contact Lee at jscottle@prodigy.net.

ACTC PROPOSES ASSESSMENT PROJECT TO FIPSE

In accord with discussions at the University of Dallas Liberal Arts Institute Planning Meeting in November, ACTC has proposed to the Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) a new national project: "The Practices of a Nation: Uniting Assessment of Student Liberal Learning to Program Review in General Education and Core Text Programs."

"Practices of a Nation" will invite 50 institutions that are engaged in core text programs and interested in or active in assessment of student learning in general, liberal education to participate in the project. The purpose of the project is threefold: (1) to demonstrate, disseminate, and innovate diverse liberal arts assessment based in evidence of student learning that is linked to general education review and construction; (2) to assess the impact on student learning of the use of core text programs; and (3) to broaden the network of institutions attempting to teach core texts and courses through consultation and assistance from other existing members of the consortium. The project has enlisted four ACTC institutions as partners in the grant proposal: Eckerd College, Fresno Pacific University, Samford University, and St. Bonaventure University. These institutions will help demonstrate, initially, models of both assessment and general education curricular review.

In view of both the character of ACTC and in keeping with ACTC principles, the grant proposal seeks to help institutions develop ways and means of assessment that are uniquely adapted to each institution's core text programs. ACTC recognizes that liberal education is very much an institutional phenomenon and it wishes to help its members and interested institutions to develop those means which will help it best reflect upon the nature of liberal education as it is practiced at each college or university.

Just as importantly, the focus of this grant will be on the products of student learning in liberal education and on those products relation to core texts and to general education review. ACTC is interested in the ways that papers, experiments, co-curricular activities, projects, capstones, as well as in-class activities can be used to illuminate the education achieved and the possibilities for the future of liberal education through core texts. It is also interested in how institutions have managed to bring effective discussion of liberal education and student products to bear on decisions in general, liberal education review.

Attendees who would like to learn more or help to call the attention of their institution's administration to this project may contact J. Scott Lee at jscottle@prodigy.net.

ACTC Pilots Liberal Arts Institute at the University of Dallas

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was Provost Thomas Lindsay's vision of one of ACTC's longest standing institutions, the University of Dallas, contributing to and joining in the advancement of core liberal education around the world. Other UD faculty mem-

bers, including Louise Cowan and Scott Dupree, worked to bring the Institute to the University. Msgr. President Milam Joseph signed on the project, and Dallas Board Member Nancy Marcus provided generous encouragement for the pilot.

Plans to bring the Institute

to Dallas were laid after last year's conference in late spring. Scott Lee, Institute Director, advised the University of Dallas over the course of the summer on establishing learning communities within Dallas' Core Curriculum, while Dallas located wonderful office

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SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS MAKE CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

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the conference this year who made efforts to bring new individuals to ACTC include: Anne Marie Flanagan, James Johnson, Rick Fairbanks, and Ron Weber.

The results of their truly amazing and dedicated efforts are to be seen this weekend. The Officers, Board, and, particularly, the Executive Director extend a heart-felt thanks to these institutions. We know how often this put a squeeze on an already busy professional and family life. It is this kind of dedication that keeps liberal education active and alive in North America and

around the world. Our deepest appreciation is extended to them.

This year's business meeting is the time for people to volunteer for work into the coming year. Aside from sponsoring institutions, ACTC will need 15 volunteers to send out invitation letters to 50 new people, the names and addresses of which ACTC will supply. We will ask volunteers to follow-up with phone calls and to advance proposals to our office. The entire commitment should amount to three days of work spread over three months, about an hour and 35 minutes or less, a week.

Help ACTC grow by volunteering for this absolutely vital work. Join us at the Business Meeting, after breakfast, on Sunday morning at 9:30 AM.

Those who cannot join us are encouraged to write Scott Lee, Executive Director, jscottlee@prodigy.net

Do you have a colleague who would be interested in ACTC? Let us know and we will contact that person, using you as a reference. Write to the Executive Director.

Information on Joint AGLS HBCU Faculty Development Network Meeting

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ing minority students. Between the two organizations, sessions will be welcome on general and liberal education, articulation between different institutions, service learning and experiential education, instructional strategies, educational technology, internationalization, assessment and accreditation, and diver-

sity.

Viewing the theme broadly and creatively, we encourage proposals which address different ways of envisioning and connecting student learning, curriculum design, diverse educational and other groups and communities, the College and its neighbors, the faculty and the students, general education and the

professional schools, institutions and accreditors. Interested participants can contact: For AGLS Barbara Frankle, LeMoyne-Owen College, 807 Walker Ave., Memphis, TN 38126, e-mail tressa_jordan@loc.edu. For the HBCU Network: Steve Rozman, Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, MS 39174, e-mail, Srozman@aol.com

ACTC Pilots Liberal Arts Institute at the University of Dallas

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space and , administrative help. In the summer and fall, support from the University first provided the Director with the opportunity to work with Phil Sloan and Peter Kalkavage to develop a proposal for the National Endowment for

the Humanities: "Bridging the Gap Between the Humanities and the Sciences: An Exemplary Education Model of Core-Text, Humanistic Education." This effort bore fruit with NEH awarding one of its largest grants this year to ACTC. (See article, p. 2).

In November, the Institute held an International Planning Meet-

ing to advise the Director on a number of initiatives contemplated by the Institute. Invited participants included: Phillip Sloan, University of Notre Dame and President of ACTC, Louise Cowan and Tom Lindsay ACTC Board Member, Peg Downes, UNCA and Board member, Timothy Fuller Colorado College and Board member, Anne Leavitt,

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OUR SPONSOR'S AND CO-SPONSORS' PROGRAMS MODEL CORE TEXT POSSIBILITIES

Mercer University's Interdisciplinary Studies department is made up of six programs, three of which are degree granting programs in the College of Liberal Arts.

Experiential First Year Seminar, Great Books of the Western Tradition, and Senior Capstone are general education programs also housed in the department of Interdisciplinary Studies. Experiential First Year Seminar is a program within the First Year Seminar curriculum, a two-semester, writing-intensive, Humanities sequence required of all Mercer Freshmen. Students who elect to take an experiential section of First Year Seminar participate in service-learning and challenge-learning activities in addition to the reading and writing requirements of the First Year Seminar program. In Experiential sections the course instructors also serve as academic advisor for the students in their class.

The Great Books of the Western Tradition program is an alternative general education track for students in the College of Liberal Arts, Stetson School of Business and Economics, and Tift College of Education. Rather than taking courses in our buffet-style distributional program, students may choose this seven semester chronological course of study, plus a one-semester intensive seminar in the Junior or Senior year (for a total of eight semesters).

Senior Capstone is required of all Seniors in the College of Liberal Arts. Current seminar topics include: Male and Female, Art and Expression, Holocaust, and American Destinies since World War II.

African American Studies and Environmental Science are Interdisciplinary majors. Women and Gender Studies is an Interdisciplinary minor.

In addition to the First Year Seminar, Mercer's College of Liberal Arts staffs and administers Scientific Inquiry. Scientific Inquiry is a required one-semester, non-laboratory course that introduces students to the Natural, Social, and Behavioral Sciences. It is taught by faculty from across the College of Liberal Arts, primarily from disciplinary departments of natural science. It is a pre- or co-requisite to all science courses at Mercer.

Oglethorpe University has attempted to strengthen its long established Core Curriculum in recent years by instituting a variety of faculty and staff development programs. These programs include but are not limited to core "lecturettes" on faculty research, core luncheons devoted to educating non-core faculty and staff, "box" lunch discussions devoted to teaching methods and texts, and core summer seminars.

Our greatest innovation has been the development of summer seminars, which have grown in popularity with the faculty since they were instituted in their present form during the summer of 2001. Each of the four seminars runs for one week. Seminars are most often taught by Oglethorpe faculty, and are limited to ten to twelve faculty who are compensated for their time.

During the summer of 2002, seminars were offered on Music and Culture, Art and Culture, the thought of Hannah Arendt, and Women and Drama in Greek Culture (taught by Mary-Kay Gamel of the University of California at Santa Cruz). During the summer of 2003, we will offer seminars on Cosmology, Imperialism, Film and Narrative, and Humanitarianism and Human Rights (taught by David Rieff, a widely published free-lance journalist).

Oxford College of Emory University: Emory is unique among major research universities in offering two academically equivalent options for entering students. Oxford College of Emory University, enrolling approximately six hundred students, is located thirty-eight miles east of Atlanta at the site of Emory's original campus,

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President's Greeting continued

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secular institutions. We represent small colleges of less than 1000 students, and large research universities of many thousands.

These differences make it difficult to generalize about goals and vision, other than to assert there is some agreement that we believe in "general liberal education" pursued through the ideal of education of common curricula with challenging readings from world classics or works of major cultural significance. But to agree at least on this is itself an important statement in the world of contemporary higher education.

One generalization can be made across this spectrum of educational models. As educators in the humanities and liberal arts, whether we are in public or private institutions, religious or secular, we cannot presume our incoming students possess any common fund of humanistic literacy. There is no "one book" they likely would have all read, particularly no one book that might appear on any of our core lists. Ralph Ellison, Virginia Woolf or Toni Morrison may be as unfamiliar to them as Shakespeare, Thucydides, or the main books of the Bible.

Rather than lament this situation, I suggest that it requires from us renewed dedication to education for a complex democratic and technological society. Both we and our students live in a troubling and complex world. We all must think globally and cross-civilizationally. Economic uncertainties make post-baccalaureate employment uncertain for more than liberal arts graduates. As educators we are challenged to reach for new levels of awareness of what education means, and we are required to find the best means to achieve humanistic education in this context. What core general education in all its forms can provide is perspective, a basis for creative reflection on modern problems. Whatever texts we read in our core programs, these provide the opportunity for the opening of the minds of students to challenging ideas and wider experience beyond what their own autobiographies can provide. It forces them to reflect on many dimensions of the human condition, and the roles they can play in the world. A genuine "core" program also makes this reflection a communal experience that creates opportunities for further discussion outside the classroom, at meals, and in dormitories. Ideally such education can supply a cultural vocabulary and frame of reference within which developing adult minds, necessarily oriented to the problems of the present and future, but also informed by those of the past, can mature.

During this past year, we saw the beginnings of an important structural development within ACTC to assist us in this common enterprise. Through the great efforts of Scott Lee and the generous financial support of the administration of the University of Dallas, the ACTC Liberal Arts Institute was created with Scott Lee as its first Director. The creation of this institute has enabled ACTC to develop a structure to advance general liberal education. The first fruit of this Institute has been the award of a substantial three-year NEH grant that will sponsor summer workshops, open to ACTC members, that will be dedicated to developing methods of teaching sciences in conjunction with core curricula. Other proposals will develop additional goal-oriented projects aimed at improving general liberal education.

As I write this column, we are all aware of the uncertainty of the international situation. The development of the connections between ACTC and the Aga Kahn Humanities project in the Central Asian republics has made me, at least, much more aware of that part of the world, and the possible ways in which core humanities education can play a geopolitical role. Despite the current crisis, I remain confident that in the long run our search to teach others through the "best that has been thought and said" can have some positive impact on world events.

* * *

THE ASSOCIATION FOR CORE TEXTS AND COURSES

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*The Association for Core Texts
and Courses*

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CORE

Newsletter of the Association for Core Texts and Courses

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ACTC Pilots Liberal Arts Institute at UD

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Malaspina University-College, George Lucas, US Naval Academy, Austin Quigley and Kathryn Yatrakis Columbia University, Charlotte Thomas, Mercer University, Donald Whitfield, Great Books Foundation, and Stephen Zelnick, Temple University and ACTC Past President and Board member.

ACTC and the University of Dallas have demonstrated the value of the Institute on campus and to the wider core curriculum, liberal education community. In a time of economic difficulty for many institutions, the University of Dallas may share support of the ACTC Liberal Arts Institute with others beyond its pilot year. Other institutions have entered into serious discussion with ACTC about funding the Institute. Meanwhile, ACTC owes a debt of gratitude to Thomas Lindsay for his strenuous efforts to pilot the Institute at the University of Dallas.

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founded in 1836. It offers an opportunity for students to do their first years of study in a small liberal-arts environment before they complete their bachelor's degree at Emory College of Emory University in Atlanta.

Oxford offers the advantages of a large modern university along with small classes averaging seventeen students, a strong academic advising program, and a faculty dedicated to teaching students during the critical first two years of college, helping them explore the range of disciplines in a foundational curriculum before they commit to their majors. The quality of the teaching available at Oxford has prompted the American Association of Higher Education and the Carnegie Foundation to name the College one of eight centers for the scholarly study of teaching which they have established nationwide.

While graduation from Oxford does not require that students enroll in a set of "core courses," many do fulfill requirements by taking one or more of the courses in which faculty do teach "core texts." And some take one of our two interdisciplinary electives, Great Books courses inspired by extensive faculty experience with the St. John's College curriculum and pedagogy: The Great Conversation--Culture and The Great Conversation--Society. Most of the faculty and students presenting at the ACTC conference have been involved in one of these courses.