ACTC Core Newsletter

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ACTC CONFERENCE RETURNS TO ATLANTA
Oglethorpe University Core Program Sponsors 22nd Annual Event
Mercer University Great Books Program and McDonald Center for America’s Founding Principles & Samford University Core Texts Program Are Co-Sponsors

After more than a decade, the Association for Core Texts and Courses’ Annual Conference has returned to Atlanta, Georgia, with over 270 attendees. This year, Oglethorpe University is sponsoring, while Mercer University’s Great Books Program and the McDonald Center for America’s Founding Principles and Samford University’s Core Text Program are co-sponsoring.

Support for this year’s conference began to build in March 2014, when Charles Baube and Joseph Knippenberg inquired whether ACTC would be interested in an Oglethorpe sponsorship in the near future. After a discussion between Executive Director, J. Scott Lee, and Oglethorpe Core Director Baube at the 2014 Conference, Baube returned to campus to ask the Core Program faculty governing body for their support which they accorded.

Samford University’s Director of the Core Text Program, Jason Wallace, had indicated a willingness to co-sponsor the 2015 conference if located near Samford, but last year’s Plymouth venue deferred Samford’s participation until this year, with many faculty attending.

Mercer University’s support has come from two coordinating sources. Knowing of Oglethorpe’s sponsorship, Achim Kopp, then director of Mercer University’s Great Books Program, and Charlotte Thomas, Director of the McDonald Center contacted Lee in mid-summer 2015, indicating that jointly the two Mercer programs would like to co-sponsor in 2016. In the fall, after receiving a note on benefits and obligations of co-sponsorship, Mercer participation was

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New Home for ACTC at Concordia University, Irvine
Projects in Planning for the Future
New Administrative Assistant Joins ACTC

The ACTC Liberal Arts Institute is the special project division of the Association. Originally piloted at the University of Dallas, and residing at Saint Mary’s College of California for over a decade, the Institute recently moved to Concordia University—Irvine (CUI).

In May of 2015, Scott Ashmon, the Concordia representative to the Institute, about a possible relocation of the Institute. After discussions among the faculty and with Provost Mary Scott, President Kurt Krueger authorized the housing of the Insti-

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President’s Corner
President, Richard Kamber, Philosophy Department
College of New Jersey

When I accepted the presidency of ACTC seven years ago, I promised Scott Lee that I would spend as much time and energy as the job required. “In for a penny, in for a pound,” I told him. Now that I am approaching the end of my seventh and final year in office, I can say unequivocally that, although it has taken more pounds than pennies, it has been an immensely enjoyable and eminently worthwhile experience.

I am proud to have had a hand in ACTC’s maverick defense of the best traditions of liberal arts education, albeit in unfriendly times. In an era when most colleges and universities reward faculty for being specialists in increasingly narrow fields and promote programs that are singled-mindedly vocational, ACTC has had the audacity to insist that students graduate from their alma maters as broadly educated men and women. More galling still, we defend the substance of liberal arts education—its texts and ideas—as well as the skills it enables student to develop. Indulgent critics might concede that the education we champion can work for a small cohort of exceptional students, but we spurn their indulgence by claiming that core texts and core programs exemplify values to which all undergraduate education should aspire. We are so persnickety that we think that some texts are better than others and that faculty from diverse disciplines should talk to one another about these texts with an eye to bringing back fresh insights to their classrooms. We even lack the humility to confine our advocacy to the shores of North America. We have made common cause with likeminded educators in China, Europe, and Central America. So bold is our dissidence that we practice what we preach at our professional meetings. Instead of presenting esoteric research or constructing administrative checklists, we talk about books and how to teach them. We have no compunction about bringing scientists, philosophers, historians (including art historians), and professors of literature together to talk about Dante or Darwin.

So, yes, I am proud to have devoted my time and talent to an association that has courageously defended the best traditions of liberal arts education. I am also thankful for the privilege of working closely with members of ACTC whose generous contributions of their time and talent have enabled our association to flourish. Our governing board, volunteers, and loyal members are the soul of ACTC. And then there is our Executive Director, Scott Lee. I have known Scott for nearly twenty-five years, but the past seven years have made it possible for me to appreciate the full measure of his intelligence, energy, and dedication. It has been an honor to share a portion of his day-to-day exertions on behalf of ACTC.

This has been a good year for ACTC. In September ACTC’s Liberal Arts Institute contributed support, speakers, and attendance at a conference at Amsterdam University College in September on “Liberal Arts and Sciences Education and Core Texts in the European Context,” that drew over 100 attendees. Kathleen Burk and David DiMattio presented at AGLS on the second cohort of our Qualitative Narrative Assessment Project. Scott and I participated in the annual conference of the Association on Interdisciplinary Studies, and Scott introduced ACTC in a plenary session. In November, Scott spoke at the first conference of the Alliance for Liberal Learning, a group bringing together adult education and great books academic institutions. Concordia University-Irvine, through Scott Ashmon’s efforts, became the new home of our Liberal Arts Institute.

Twelve institutions have been accepted for the "Traditions and Innovation" 2016 summer seminar, sponsored by ACTC’s Liberal Arts Institute, Columbia, and funded by ACTC, the Teagle Foundation, and the Bradley Foundation. Roosevelt Montás and Scott Lee are co-directors; Kathy Eden (Columbia) and Richard Strier (University of Chicago) are seminar leaders. The seminar will begin on the University of Chicago campus and, after a week, move to Columbia’s campus for the second week. This is the second iteration of the project; the first was in 2014.

The highlight of every year is the annual conference. It affords us the opportunity to enjoy the company of people who love the liberal arts and who share with one another what we have learned in our classroom about the study and teaching of core texts. We anticipate that over 270 members will attend this year’s annual conference in Atlanta. Initial preparations are underway for next year’s Conference in Dallas, Texas. Austin College will sponsor the 2017 conference and the University of Dallas will co-sponsor. Institutions that also wish to co-sponsor are urged to contact ACTC’s Executive Director as soon as possible.

Rick Kamber
Our Sponsor’s and Co-Sponsors’ Programs

Oglethorpe University’s Core Curriculum
Mercer University’s Great Books Program & McDonald Center
Samford University’s Core Text Program

Oglethorpe University’s Core Curriculum

For over fifty years, the Oglethorpe core curriculum has been the heart of a student’s intellectual experience at the University. In 1944, Oglethorpe president, Dr. Philip Weltner, brought forward his “Oglethorpe Plan” as a common course of study for all students at the college.

Dr. Weltner’s bold new concept was based on his simple idea of what an education ought to be. It is a statement which captures the essence of what we hope the core program conveys to every student: “Oglethorpe insists that the object is not to pass a subject; the object is to keep it.” In response, The New York Times wrote: “The barriers that separate liberal arts and vocational courses have been broken down at Oglethorpe”.

Because Oglethorpe’s award-winning, innovative core curriculum is our unifying academic experience, faculty all over the university can presume student familiarity with authors, texts, questions, and themes, building upon them in upper level disciplinary courses and making connections across the curriculum.

Students take core courses all four years, beginning in the first year sequence, where they investigate a variety of topics.

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Actc Liberal Arts Institute Offers Second Tradition and Innovation Seminar

Columbia University, University of Chicago Lead Seminars

Eleven Institutions from Around the World Send Teams of Two for Core Text Readings and Pedagogy

The ACTC Liberal Arts Institute in conjunction with Columbia University and the University of Chicago will hold a two-week international curriculum development and pedagogy project in June, 2017: “Tradition and Innovation: An inquiry into fundamental questions of politics, morality, and the human condition in texts from antiquity to modernity.”

Eleven institutions are participating, after an international competition, by sending two teams of faculty to Chicago and New York City for study of the pedagogy and core texts drawn from Columbia’s Contemporary Civilization and Humanities sequence and Chicago’s Core.

The seminar will be led by Kathy Eden of Columbia and Richard Sterling of Chicago. Through the work of Roosevelt Montás of Columbia, Eden, and J. Scott Lee, Executive Director of ACTC, support was secured from the Teagle and Bradley Foundations.

Participating institutions include: East London School of Science, Hotos Community College/CUNY, Lewis & Clark College, Midwestern State University, and others.

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Liberal Arts Institute Project on Qualitative Narrative Assessment II

Workshop at Conference for Institutions Participating in Second Cohort

The second cohort of institutions participating in the Qualitative Narrative Assessment Project, supported by the Liberal Arts Institute of ACTC, continues to build on the success of the first cohort. Qualitative Narrative Assessment: Core Text Programs in Review, vol.1 represents the culmination of more than four years of planning and development: http://www.coretexts.org/liberal-arts-institute-at-concordia-university-irvine/assessment-project/. The initiative took shape as member schools, whose administrators and faculty felt that standardized assessment instruments that produce quantitative data alone inadequately capture and communicate both the unique character and mission of their respective institutions as well as the transformational impact on learning that students of core curricula, courses, and texts experience, volunteered to develop alternative ways to demonstrate outcomes that represent authentic evaluations of their programs and that meet the standards and practices of institutional research.

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Sponsor’s and Co-Sponsor’s Core Programs

-fictional and philosophical constructions of the self. Among the topics that students consider are the relationships of memory to personal identity, the impact of traditional and fictional models of the growth of the individual, and the disjunction or harmony between public and private selves. They move on to focus on the relationship between individuals and communities. Issues such as the character of justice, the origins and sources of social order, and the status and legitimacy of political power are explored. A historical and empirical examination of human experience, attempting to reconstruct the social context and particular historical perspectives for understanding significant periods in human history forms the core of the third-year experience. Students examine the ways in which significant moments have become an essential part of our historical consciousness, enshrined in myth, religion, tradition, culture and institutions. The senior-year experience addresses the ways in which the practice of science has informed our
Sponsor’s and Co-Sponsor’s Programs

understanding of human nature and the natural world. This is seen through either of two approaches, the study of scientific revolutions as a defining characteristic of the scientific process or the study of the ways in which genetics, evolutionary theory, and biological processes underlie human emotional experience and behavior.

These sequenced courses are complimented by courses in the arts (music and fine arts) and mathematics (the history of great ideas in mathematics) to fulfill a number of foundational goals inherent to the structure of the curriculum.

Mercer University’s Great Books Program and the McDonald Center for America’s Founding Principles

In the late 1970’s, a small group of faculty who had been teaching a two-quarter interdisciplinary seminar to First Year students for about a decade decided that they wanted to spend the third quarter that year reading ancient Greek texts. By 1983, the joy that those teachers and students found in those ancient texts, and the great pedagogical power they had found in engaging them together in seminar engendered Mercer’s Great Books program, an eight course chronological sequence of seminars that students pursue as an alternative general education track. After several general education reforms and dozens of “adjustments,” our Great Books program is stronger than ever, with faculty and students drawn from the College of Liberal Arts, Tift College of Education, or Stetson School of Business and Economics.

In 2006, William D. Underwood became the eighteenth President of Mercer University, and he began his administration with a serious program of belt-tightening. He had big plans for the University, and he needed a sound financial foundation on which to build. But, at the same time, he announced an internal grant competition focused on new projects that would cross boundaries between Mercer’s colleges and schools, thus taking advantage of our disciplinary breadth and manageable institutional size. One of the projects funded in the first year of that grant competition was what is now the McDonald Center for America’s Founding Principles. Dr. Matt Oberrieder (Philosophy) and Dr. Will Jordan (Political Science) had a plan to build on the foundation of the Great Books program and to develop a project that would focus on the classical education of the founders and the principles of the American Founding. It would supplement our robust seminars with lectures and conferences by scholars who could model the power of re-reading these great books, of inhabiting them as serious scholars. Today, the McDonald Center...

QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE ASSESSMENT II

Workshop at Conference for Institutions Participating in Second Cohort

The second cohort is international in scope and includes several schools that joined the project after taking part in the Tradition and Innovation Seminars in the summer of 2014. They include: American University of Iraq—Sulemani, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Concordia University—Irvine, Mercer University, Saint Mary’s College of California, Shimer College, Universidad de Navarra, and Villanova University. The work of two of these schools, CUHK and SMC, were recognized with exemplary program improvement awards by the Association of General and Liberal Studies (AGLS) at their 2015 annual conference in Milwaukee. ACTC Board members Kathleen Burk and David DiMattio, who co-directed the first cohort and co-edited the report, have both agreed to serve in the same capacity for the second cohort.

ACTC continues its work in cooperation with AGLS, whose booklet, Improving Learning in General Education: the AGLS Guide to Assessment and Program Review (2006), provides the basic framework for organizing information into four areas: Informed Choices, Action Steps, Informed Judgments, and Further Improvements, for both ACTC’s Qualitative Narrative Assessment: Core Texts Programs in Review, vol. 1 and AGLS’ Judgments of Quality: Connecting Faculty Best Assessment with Student Best Work. (John P. Nichols, ed. 2013). AGLS is also currently sponsoring its second cohort of institutions, continuing to build the available research on a subject of crucial importance to both organizations in addressing current developments in American Higher Education.
ACTC Business Meeting on Sunday

Solicitation for co-sponsors and volunteers to help with 2017 or 2018 conference.

Solicitation to help with social media presence of ACTC.

Report to membership on publications and editing of *Proceedings*; call for volunteer editors and readers of manuscripts.

Solicitations of members for suggestions to improve the functioning of ACTC and its website.

Ratification by members of the election to the Board of ACTC of Scott Ashmon, Emma Cohen de Lara, Molly Flynn, Joseph Knippenberg, Mei Yee Leung, Joshua Parens, and Charlotte Thomas.

Please join us this Sunday morning, post-breakfast, for the 9:30 AM meeting.

### Association for General and Liberal Studies Annual Conference

**September 29 – October 1, 2016**

**Little America Conference Center**

The Beehive State and Salt Lake City promises to be a buzz when AGLS arrives in September!

As the importance of a balanced and broad knowledge of the world grows for a successful career and life, the importance of general education also grows. Our conference offers an exciting and hands-on opportunity for those who are doing the innovative work of improving general education on their campuses.

The 56th Annual Conference of the Association of General and Liberal Studies takes place in Salt Lake City, “The Crossroads of the West.” Founded in 1847 by Brigham Young as a Mormon Settlement, Salt Lake City has over time established itself as a city of diverse identities. Salt Lake City was the site of the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad, physically and symbolically uniting eastern and western American culture and commerce. Utah is the Beehive State, and today the community-focused metaphor extends in Salt Lake City to a diverse range of cultures, including thriving Hispanic and LGBTQ communities.

This year’s conference draws inspiration from the many ways Salt Lake City has imagined and reimagined itself as community as we look to discussions of inclusion and integration in higher education. How do faculty, administrators, and institutions succeed (or fail) in inspiring achievement and a sense of belonging in all learners?

AGLS invites your organization to submit a proposal for this year’s conference. Share your GenEd struggles and achievements with our attendees who come from all over the U.S. and abroad.

For information: [http://www.agls.org](http://www.agls.org)

### Lynchburg College’s Agora Provides Core Text National Student Journal

The *Agora*, an on-line publication of Lynchburg College, specializes in responses to the great books of the world. In a joint effort with the Association of Core Texts and Courses (ACTC), the *Agora* became a national journal of undergraduate academic writing in 2007. Aiming to integrate classical ideas and issues with contemporary ones, the *Agora* takes its title from the marketplace at the heart of classical Athens, where much of Athenian public life was carried on: mercantile exchange, performance, political debate, athletic contests, and the public worship of deities, all took place within the hustle and bustle of the Athenian agora. Similarly, the journal seeks to be a marketplace for important ideas and issues.

The *Agora* editor invites students from colleges and universities who are members of ACTC to submit their work for consideration. Since 2007 the *Agora* has included papers written by students at Henry Ford Community College, Columbia University, Norfolk State University, Thomas More College, Assumption College, Pepperdine University, the University of Dallas, Vancouver Island University, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Yale University, Orange Coast Community College, University of Notre Dame, Luther College, St. Thomas University, and Lynchburg College. The three best papers presented at the ACTC Student Conference held at St. Mary’s College of California in Moraga, California, in February, 2009, were included in the 2009 *Agora*, as was the case with the 2011 conference at Pepperdine and the Shimer Conference of 2013. Similarly, the three best papers from the ACTC Student Conference held at Concordia University—Irvine in March 2017 will be included in the journal. Students from the host institutions who present papers at the ACTC Conference will also be encouraged to submit. The journal is competitive, with no more than fifteen articles published annually, including, occasionally, an issue featuring a piece of faculty writing that focuses on some aspect of teaching in a “great books”-type program. More details are available on the *Agora* website at: [www.agorajournal.org](http://www.agorajournal.org)
Benefits of ACTC Individual, Institutional, and Liberal Arts Institute Membership

ACTC Individual Membership carries with it a number of important benefits:

- the opportunity to participate in ACTC’s Annual Conference;
- the opportunity for faculty and administrators to publish in ACTC’s selective proceedings. This peer-reviewed annual publication has been a fruitful source of core text thinking in the liberal arts, and has also been cited in numerous faculty advancement reviews.

Institutional and individual membership also contributes to ACTC’s website, which includes its Employment Board and (in development) new program description pages. Support also goes to this Newsletter.

College and Universities which become Institutional Members under the Board-recommended guidelines have made their faculty and students eligible for a number of benefits:

- The opportunity for students to publish in a faculty-reviewed, international online student journal, The Agora, of Lynchburg College, publishes every year and can be cited by students going to graduate school as a publication. (see, p. 6.)
- The opportunity to send students to ACTC’s Student Conference with all costs paid except transportation. Next year, Concordia University—Irvine, the home of and a member of ACTC’s Liberal Arts Institute, will host and support, in conjunction with ACTC, ACTC’s Seventh Student Conference. The support is generous— including subsidizing all conference fees, and room and board (save a Saturday night meal) during the conference (see p. 1 ‘New Home…’)
- Eligibility for the St. John’s College Science Institute Discount. New this year: St. John’s College offers three summer courses, using great books, on topic of interest in mathematics and science—a great way to learn the foundations of the sciences or the precise concepts science is treating, e.g., ‘relativity.’ For faculty from ACTC Member institutions, St. John’s will discount the cost of each course by a 25% tuition discount. See Science Institute website or email ScienceInstitute@sjc.edu for details.

Liberal Arts Institute Membership offers institutions an opportunity for liberal arts/core text national and international leadership at a further level of contribution with a particular emphasis on cooperative curricular, pedagogical, and institutional concerns. Friday at 9:20 AM, the ACTC Liberal Arts Institute Board will hold an open meeting. Consult the Conference Agenda for breakout room. Several projects will be discussed:

- A Conference on “General Education and Asian Texts.” Institutions which are involved and/or supporting this future conference include ACTC’s Institute, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, New York University, and Pepperdine University. Other institutions and members of ACTC are invited to contribute suggestions or support to this effort.
- A seminar on “Reviving and Re-inventing the Liberal Arts in Core Text Curricula.” Surveys of ACTC conferences indicate that only rarely are the actual core texts of liberal arts—from the trivium, quadrivium or other arts of inquiry—taught widely across core texts. A seminar on the use of these artistic works and the impact this might have both on curriculum and public perception of the worth of liberal arts education will be discussed and initial steps in planning taken.
- Women in the Core Conference. There has been considerable discussion on a possible conference on this topic. ACTC would welcome discussion on support, planning, and content for such a conference.
- The Liberal Arts Institute will support a September 2017 European Core Text conference at Winchester University. Discussions of last fall’s first conference and 2017’s second conference will take place on Saturday afternoon at 2:20. Consult the Conference Agenda. This fall, when ACTC appeals to your institution for support, please remember that we exist to create opportunities for faculty and institutions to showcase and exercise the wide variety of achievements and possibilities in core text, liberal arts education.

ACTC Liberal Arts Institute Moves to Concordia University—Irvine

(Student Conferences.

Plans are afoot for similar efforts at CUI. The seventh ACTC Student Conference will be held at Concordia in March 2017. Dates to be announced. Other possible conferences are being considered, including an Asian Texts and General Education Conference.

CUI, Ashmon, and Wanda Burch, registrar, were very helpful in finding, hiring, and arranging the hours of ACTC’s new Administrative Assistant, Sarah Whitehair.

Sarah has been assembling the agenda, processing invoices, and making special arrangements for attendees. Please welcome her to ACTC as she welcomes you.)
ACTC is supported by institutions and individuals who believe the Association brings to higher education a fruitful resource for course, program and faculty development using core texts and the liberal arts. At the base of ACTC’s success have been professors and administrators who, having attended ACTC, have returned to their home institutions and argued that ACTC is worthy of support, and who have supported ACTC with individual memberships attached to the conference fee.

Without support, what would we lose? There would be no conference and, hence, no venue for exchange of ideas about texts, pedagogy, program development, or the role of liberal arts in higher education that uses core texts. There would be no publication of the proceedings, and the support that ACTC offers, particularly to young professionals seeking tenure, would be diminished immeasurably. Without the network of support, conference, and publication, it would be extremely difficult to develop projects of the ACTC Liberal Arts Institute or to convince participating institutions, donors, and granting agencies to support ACTC projects.

ACTC also receives support from eleven institutions to underwrite the ACTC Liberal Arts Institute, which builds the special projects in multi-institutional cooperation.

The following individuals contributed to ACTC before March 18:


Institutional Contributors and Pledges To ACTC

ACTC’s growth over the years has always depended very heavily upon the generosity of institutional giving. Behind this generosity are individual attendees of our conferences. Each fall, ACTC calls upon conference attendees, who have seen the work that ACTC is doing, to go to administrators for institutional support for ACTC. Each institution that you see below made a decision to give because an attendee of the conference either directly committed funds to ACTC or, more often, because an attendee went to an administrator controlling institutional support. Particularly in these economic times, as administrators have made decisions to support ACTC, we are deeply, deeply appreciative of this effort by our membership.

(For an article on benefits to faculty of Supporting Institutions, see p. 7)

In this our 22nd year, 69 institutions have given or pledged to give to ACTC.

Assumption College
Amsterdam University College
Austin College
Austin Community College
Benedictine University
Boston College
Boston University
Boya College, Sun Yat-sen University
Carleton University
Carthage College
Chinese University of Hong Kong
The College of New York
College of the Holy Cross
Columbia University
Concordia University, Irvine
Concordia University, Liberal Arts College
Emory University Oxford College
Fresno Pacific University
Great Heart Academies
The following colleges and universities are institutional members of the ACTC Liberal Arts Institute at Concordia University—Irvine:

Assumption College
Carthage College
Columbia University--Columbia College

Concordia University — Irvine
New York University
Pepperdine University
St. Bonaventure University
St. John’s College – Annapolis and Santa Fe
Saint Mary’s College of California
Shimer College
SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS MAKE CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

Co-sponsors for Next Year’s Conference Needed

Business Meeting on Sunday Morning is Opportunity to Join

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confirmed.

Sponsorship and co-sponsorship involve more than fiscal support. ACTC works with the team leaders from each institution to form a conference committee. The committee is responsible for the theme statement that shapes the conference and appears in ACTC’s conference announcements, as well as plenary speaker invitations. Members of the committee visit venues and work with the Executive Director in choosing an appropriate hotel. This year, ACTC and its members owe a debt to Joe Knippenberg who visited six hotels and was very involved in the selection of the Atlanta Perimeter Center Hotel.

ACTC sends out its announcement and, then, follows up with volunteer calling by sponsor and co-sponsor faculty. This calling not only acts as a timely reminder to potential attendees but it frequently stimulates intellectual conversations between the caller and recipient about what authors, texts and ideas might be included in a paper or panel proposal.

Institutions that sponsor or co-sponsor are offered several exclusive benefits by ACTC: an all-one-institution panel (used to highlight core text programs or topics of special interest to that institution’s faculty); descriptions of programs in this Newsletter; student panels (with a chance for the students to publish in Lynchburg College’s peer-reviewed paper) and student volunteers at the registration table that represent their institution’s achievements with students through core programs.

ACTC is pleased to thank Iona Wynter Parks who organized the Oglethorpe student volunteers and panels and made calls. Thanks to Anne Salter who orchestrated Oglethorpe’s calling. Jay Lutz helped as well and with finding restaurants for ACTC dinners. To Chris Strickland who helped with announcements and logistics, thank you. Our thanks to Kathryn Kloepper who took the helm of Mercer’s Great Books Program during the year and helped with calling — along with Kopp and Thomas — and Mercer panel organizing, student presenters and volunteers, and to Bobbi Shipley who handles so much of the accounting for faculty participation. Carol Ann Vaughn Cross organized Samford’s panel and Steven Epley, Kathy Flowers, and Jason Wallace helped with calls.

ACTC recognizes these volunteers and others helping in our projects through a Volunteer Dinner. This year Baube and Knippenberg organized and sponsored the Volunteer Dinner at Oglethorpe University’s Museum of Art. Many thanks to all for such whole-hearted support.

Sponsor’s and Co-sponsor’s Programs

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ter, does just that, as well as sponsoring faculty/student reading groups, summer workshops for High School teachers and students, and supporting undergraduate research.

Samford University’s Core Text Program

The Samford University Core Texts Program is a two-semester course sequence taken by all Samford University students. These courses serve to not only introduce students to great works of literature, philosophy, history, and theology, but to also explain why these works matter for the 21st century. Samford’s Core Texts curriculum promotes an intellectual conversation that distinguishes a Samford education and Samford graduates. Regardless of a student’s major or career goals, the Core Texts curriculum benefits them by teaching them to read, think, discuss, and write about important ideas that have shaped our world.

Every culture seeks to explain human nature, the natural world, religion, and political community. Samford’s Core Texts curriculum ensures that students understand this quest. Even more, it prepares them to enter their chosen profession confident they are capable of meaningful critical thought. Fall semester, students are introduced to great thinkers from the Greeks, the Romans, Early Christianity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. Spring semester takes them through the Protestant Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the ideological foment of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Our program explores words from the past because we think they matter for the present. Four words in particular summarize our purpose: Quaestio (inquiry), Disputatio (discussion), Fides (faith), and Ratio (reason). At Samford, Inquiry, Discussion, Faith, and Reason produce graduates trained to reflect about core values before they

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ACTC’s Liberal Arts Institute Plans Active Year Over Next 12 Months
Institutional Members of Institute Develop Projects with ACTC
Institute Seeks Institutions to Join, Lead, and Participate in its International Activities

ACTC’s Liberal Arts Institute has offered and is planning a number of superb events for development and use of core text curricula in liberal arts education. All of these indicate the synergy that the Institute brings to Institute members, ACTC and the world of liberal arts, core text education. Similarly, all of these indicate the faith that Institutions place in ACTC’s efforts on behalf of such education.

European Liberal Arts and Sciences and Core Text Conferences

Last 11 and 12 September 2015 Amsterdam University College (AUC, http://www.auc.nl/news-events/content/2015/09/liberal-arts-sciences-core-texts-conference-success.html) hosted the first European Liberal Arts and Sciences and Core Texts conference. Conceived at the Ottawa conference in 2013, the idea was to ‘return’ to the birthplace of many of the core texts used in core programs in the U.S. and Canada. This first European core text conference was made possible with the generous support of Amsterdam University College, the University of Navarra, the University of Winchester, Leuphana College Lüneburg, and the ACTC Liberal Arts Institute. Four European and American plenary speakers addressed the audience: Thomas Stapleford, professor of the Program for Liberal Studies at the University of Notre Dame, Thomas Rommel, former rector of Bard College Berlin, Nige Tubbs, program leader for modern liberal arts at Winchester University, Roosevelt Montás, ACTC Board Member and Director of the Core Curriculum at Columbia University. Christopher Nelson, President of St. John’s College in Maryland, Alkeline van Lenning from Tilburg and Miguel Tamen from the University of Lisbon conducted a plenary discussion about the Transatlantic exchange of ideas for integrating core texts. Many panel sessions also highlighted the vibrancy of a nascent core text movement in Europe. An edited volume based on the conference is expected to be available through Vernon Press is expected to be available in October 2016. The next European conference on Core Texts in Europe is scheduled to take place at the University of Winchester in September of 2017. A workshop on that future conference will be held this year at the ACTC annual conference. Check your Agenda. — Hanke Drop, member of the organizing committee.

Tradition and Innovation Project

Roosevelt Montás of Columbia University and Scott Lee, ACTC Executive Director, are working with Kathy Eden, Columbia, and Richard Strier, University of Chicago, to co-lead a summer seminar in core texts: “Tradition and Innovation: An inquiry into fundamental questions of politics, morality, and the human condition in texts from antiquity to modernity” for two weeks in the last two weeks of June. This is an international curriculum and pedagogy development project which is supported by the Teagle and Bradley Foundations, as well as ACTC Institute. Eleven institutions of two teams won entry into the project. For a fuller description, see p. 3, “ACTC Liberal Arts Institute Offers Second Tradition and Innovation Seminar.”

ACTC STUDENT CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY—IRVINE, MARCH 2017

Through the work of Scott Ashmon, Concordia University—Irvine will host the Seventh ACTC Student Conference in March 2017. ACTC and CUI will announce the dates in the fall. Excepting transportation, CUI and ACTC’s Liberal Arts Institute will wholly support student attendance from institutions that support ACTC. (See p. 1 “New Home...”) The conferences have been increasing in size over the years, with 37 (a maximum) attending the University of Dallas—held conference in 2015. Generally, students are not only eager to deliver their own papers, but to hear those of conference attendees who are students in programs “just like mine.” Additionally, all papers are judged in a contest for publication in the Agoraonline, a peer-and-faculty-reviewed journal of articles dedicated to core texts (see p. 6 “Lynchburg...” for details).

2nd COHORT IN QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE ASSESSMENT UNDER DEVELOPMENT

At the core of ACTC’s Humanistic Assessment project lie five institutions that support the Institute, a project the results of which are nearing publication. ACTC is forming a second cohort of institutions, which will give priority to and involve other Institute supporters. (See p. 3, “... Qualitative Narrative Assessment.”)

FUTURE PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT

Institute representatives and faculty who are members of ACTC Institute will meet Friday at 9:20 (see conference agenda). Faculty interested in having their institution join the Institute or in developing projects with the Institute are invited to attend. Projects in integrating general education and Asian texts in core curricula, rejuvenating and re-inventing the liberal arts in core text curricula, women and the core, along with ideas brought to the table during the meeting.

(For related discussions of recent and future ACTC Institute Benefits, p. 7)
University, Oxford College—Emory University, Sacred Heart University, Samford University, Universidad de Navarra, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, University of Dallas, and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

The range of programs is broad and interesting. One application is about setting up a masters program for teachers, while another was from a School using core texts across its curriculum. Universidad de Navarra returned as a model of establishing core text programs through the earlier Tradition and Innovation seminar. One application was partly a result of ACTC’s support of the first European core text conference. The university has a campus which focuses on the health sciences and, accordingly, the humanities faculty is constructing a liberal arts core focusing on suffering.

Pedagogical interests were of primary concern in the applications. Team participants want to know how to teach undergraduates using core texts, and they want to know how to teach faculty (who have never or rarely taught such texts.) Another concern was how liberal arts, humanistic programs can compete in today’s heated, competitive educational environment. It should be a fascinating two weeks.

New Managing Editor and Proceedings Published

ACTC hired a new managing editor of production and permissions, Debra Soled. Consequently, in March we published our 2009 proceedings. The 2010 proceedings are in press, and the 2011 proceedings issue will be in press within weeks. Also, this activity has been made possible through the devotion of ACTC’s style editor, Jean-Marie Kauth (Benedictine), and through the hard volunteer work of our manuscript readers and chief editors. An accelerated schedule for 2012, 13, 14, and 15 is anticipated in 2016-2017.

Allison Hepola of Samford University will edit the 2016 proceedings. “Directions for Authors’ submission are enclosed in the conference folders.

Ours Sponsor’s and Co-Sponsor’s Programs

Samford’s curriculum emphasizes the development of Western thought, however, significant texts from non-Western sources are included as well. The curriculum is intentional; it is designed to provoke reflection and discussion about the human pursuit of meaning. We do not presume the selections covered in class exhaust what should be considered core texts, but neither do we assume a value neutral narrative that simply exposes students to a hodgepodge collection of disparate voices. By design and by necessity we have been selective with what is included, and, while we acknowledge the limits of canonization, we also recognize the profound influence of the Western intellectual tradition on our history, our culture, and our ideals.