Gansneder Retires from the Curry School of Education

Source: Brian Pusser, associate professor

Few people have had a more positive influence on Curry’s Higher Education program than Dr. Bruce Gansneder. Many of you who are reading this will know Bruce as a teacher, a mentor, or as a member of a doctoral committee. As one of Curry’s Educational Research faculty for nearly four decades, Bruce has worked with many dozens of higher education students, always with insight, kindness and compassion. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors at Curry, from the University and in his discipline. In 1999, he was named Curry’s Professor of the Year and in 2006 he was elected to the Raven Society and awarded the Curry Memorial Chair.

It is with very mixed feelings that I contemplate Bruce’s decision to retire this year. I am delighted that Bruce and his wife Nancy will have more time to travel and enjoy one another’s company. I am envious that they will winter in Hawaii and Florida. I am confident that Bruce will continue to delight others with his sense of humor and that he will improve his golf game. Yet at the same time, I am very sorry that the program will be losing such a brilliant ally and that I will have less time to spend with Bruce, a wonderful mentor and friend to me.

Todd Parks recently conducted a short interview with Bruce and gathered comments from a few of the students in our program who worked closely with him. Taken together, they effectively convey Bruce’s history with Curry and the Higher Education program and illuminate how much he has meant to us.

As a continuing tribute to Bruce, a scholarship has been created in his name, the Bruce Gansneder Outstanding Dissertation Award. If you would like to contribute, or to learn more about the fund, please contact: Jay Jackson, director of development for the Curry Foundation, e-mail: jaj5zh@virginia.edu.

An Interview with Bruce Gansneder

Source: Todd Parks, doctoral student

I recently talked with Bruce Gansneder about his life as a faculty member at the University of Virginia and his plans for retirement. As a current student in the higher education program, I have long appreciated Bruce’s commitment to teaching, scholarship, and research—a sentiment echoed by many in the Curry School of Education. Nevertheless, I was struck by his humility and his genuine respect for others, particularly his students and colleagues.

Many of our alumni share my admiration and appreciation for Bruce. Upon hearing of Bruce’s retirement, Chris Foley wrote, “I had the great pleasure, as I know so many others did, to have Dr. Gansneder serve on my dissertation committee. I dare say I echo the sentiments of many who, like me, were emboldened to do more and better work under his tutelage. I can still hear him distinctly and gently asking about my study population, ‘well…, now that’s an interesting idea… and what do you want to know about these people?’ He probably had asked that question thousands of times, but it sounded like it was just for me. He no doubt knew his craft of statistics and evaluation, but I will always remember his gift for teaching. I hope that he will enjoy his retirement, and perhaps if he finds himself in my neck of the woods, we’ll find a way to get on [the golf course] at Aronimink [Golf Club].

Similarly, Andrea Spreter Backman wrote, “Somehow Dr. Gansneder made quantitative analysis seem manageable, even for those of us who tended to use the other side of our brain. I am grateful for his patience, good humor, encouragement, and countless hours of advisement.”
How did you end up at Virginia?
That’s a short answer, but how I got into educational research is more interesting. I graduated from Ohio State University in 1970. At that time, there were no jobs available. I received two offers, one from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and one from the University of Virginia. I didn’t want to work for ETS, so I chose the university.

After high school, I went to seminary to become a priest, but I eventually transferred to Seattle University, intent on graduating as quickly as possible. I took 21 hours per semester and worked two jobs, in the cafeteria and as a janitor. While I was an undergraduate student, I assisted a faculty member with a birth order study. She encouraged me to go to graduate school, so I applied to and was admitted to Berkeley, Stanford, and Iowa State University. I went to Iowa State where I earned my master’s degree and then to Ohio State University where I earned my doctorate. When I went to OSU, very few people were doing quantitative work; quantitative work had only been in the United States since the mid-1950s. Going to OSU allowed me to work with some neat people and apply my skills to some really interesting projects. The only thing I ever planned to do was to become a priest; the rest just happened. I don’t consider this [teaching and research] work. I come in here every day, and I just do me; this is what I do, this is who I am. It has been a great ride.

You have received numerous awards, does one honor stand out above the rest?
Being named professor of the year and being inducted into the Raven Society, those were special. They are both rare accomplishments; they are both premiere “attaboys.” I am really proud of the new dissertation award being created in my name. Two awards will be given annually, one for a qualitative dissertation and one for a quantitative dissertation. That’s [working on the dissertation] what it’s all about; that’s where it all starts. I’ve never put much emphasis on the curriculum vita. That’s not what’s important to me. It’s always been about the quality of the research and the people I am working with. I enjoyed working with faculty and students on research.

What did you enjoy most about teaching and working with students?
I enjoyed seeing the “ah-ha” moments…helping people understand their own thing [research topic]. Sometimes, familiarity limits understanding. By asking questions, I think I helped people better understand their research; they [students] frequently understood it better than they thought.

How has the life of a professor changed over the years?
For me, it has not. I never worried about someone’s expectations of me; I just did what I thought I ought to do—research, teach, get grants, and participate in the life of the school.
What advice would you offer to a budding faculty member or university administrator in the higher education program?
Improve your ability to process information and data. Good information and quality data are essential to making good decisions. Research skills, and that way of thinking, are important for practitioners. They make important decisions. Their ability to collect and process good data will help them make better decisions and make them better administrators.

How has the Curry School changed since 1970?
We have grown from approximately 30 to over 100 faculty members. The school is made up of some wonderful colleagues, talented people whose skills surpass mine. I have enjoyed partnering with students and faculty on interesting projects.

I understand you’re an avid golfer, what is your most memorable moment on the course?
I am not really a golfer, but I do enjoy the game. Golfers play at least two times per week; I am lucky if I get play twice per month. I have played some interesting courses, perhaps 20 or 30 of the top 100 courses in the United States. I also collect golf books; I have over 700 in my collection. I do hope to play more golf once I am retired; I will serve a three-year term on the golf committee at Glenmore Country Club.

What are you plans for retirement?
My wife and I purchased a new travel trailer. We will travel a lot, spending the summers up north and the winters down south. I will play a lot more golf, but I will also work on some projects. I am not sure what the projects will be, but I have some in mind. We are going to the Big Island [Hawaii].

Alumni News
Lorri Cooper (Ed.D., 1998) was promoted to associate professor of Human Resource Management at Marymount University where she teaches graduate courses in leadership and managing innovation. She also serves as director of the Master of Science in Management Program.

Dudley Doane (Ph.D., 2003) was appointed interim director of the International Studies Office at the University of Virginia. He will continue to direct the Office of Summer and Special Academic Programs.

Karen Dowd (Ph.D., 1993), senior director of career development for the Mendoza College of Business MBA and EMBA Programs at the University of Notre Dame, is serving as an elected member of the Board of the MBA Career Services Council, an international organization that provides employment standards and benchmarking for graduate management education programs. In addition, she was interviewed by Business Week and National Public Radio about how the current economic crisis is affecting career development strategies for and employment of MBA students and alumni.

Jeff Doyle (Ph.D., 2001) was chosen to participate in the 2009 NASPA Institute for Aspiring Senior Student Affairs Officers. He was also selected to serve as the NASPA Region III Knowledge Community representative for Religion and Spirituality in Higher Education.

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Alumni, From Page 3

**Dennis Gregory** (Ed.D., 1987) delivered the keynote address at the State University of New York Judicial Officers conference where he also presented three papers on the Clery Campus Safety Act, FERPA, and ways in which faculty and student affairs professionals may limit cheating and plagiarism. He also presented “Plagiarism 101: Keys to Preventing Academic Misconduct,” a national audio conference sponsored by Progressive Business Audio Conferences. Dennis was selected to serve as a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Student Conduct Administration*; he continues to serve as editor of the *College Student Affairs Journal* and as an associate editor for the *NASPA Journal*. He invites those interested in writing for publication in one of these journals to contact him at dgregory@odu.edu.

**Cheryl A. Lindeman** (Ed.D., 1984) is a faculty member at the Central Virginia Governor's School for Science and Technology in Lynchburg, Virginia. In her new role as laboratory manager for the school's K-12 Center for Electron Microscopy, Cheryl has developed the lab and designed activities using a new variable pressure scanning electron microscope to enable students to answer basic questions about living and nonliving specimens. The project, currently limited to Central Virginia, will be expanded to include teachers and students throughout Virginia and the United States.

**Marilyn Lockhart** (Ed.D., 1998) published "Assessment of Teaching Grants in Higher Education" in the *Academic Exchange Quarterly*. She also presented "Transformative Learning and Authentic Teaching: A Winning Combination for Changing Today's Adult Higher Education" at the Adult Higher Education Association’s conference. Marilyn is an associate professor and program leader of the Adult and Higher Education Program at Montana State University.

**Jay Martin** (Ph.D. 1993) was named the 2008 Women's Golf Coach of the Year by the College Conference of Illinois & Wisconsin, an eight-member Division III athletic conference. Jay is in his third season as head coach of Wheaton's women’s golf program and also serves as the school’s men’s golf coach and the athletics department’s marketing manager.

**Charllynn Miller** (Ph.D., 2005) was elected to the Board of Directors of Ballarat ICT, a partnership of industry, government and educational institutions dedicated to sustaining and growing a globally competitive information, communication and technology industry in Ballarat, Victoria, Australia.

**Alyson (Kienle) Munn** (Ph.D. 2005), and her husband Mike, are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Camryn Elizabeth Munn, born on Wednesday, August 27, 2008. Camryn was 8 pounds, 9 ounces and 20.5 inches long.

**Faculty News**

**Margaret (Peg) Miller**, professor, is a member of the Association of Governing Board's national advisory group and facilitated a workshop for the West Virginia boards of trustees’ annual retreat about the board’s role in accountability and the assessment of student learning.

**Brian Pusser**, associate professor and director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education, presented the keynote address at a conference on “The Public University Today” at the Universidad Nacional Autononoma de Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico; his presentation was entitled "Revisiting Authority Relations in Contemporary Higher Education.” At the Association for the Study of Higher Education conference, he was a presenter on a panel entitled "Regulation, De-regulation and the Future of Higher Education," and he delivered a keynote address entitled "The Political Economy of Continuing Education in the 21st Century" to the annual meeting of the Association for Continuing Higher Education.

**Heather Rowan-Kenyon**, assistant professor and coordinator of the Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education (SAPHE) program, published “How Parents Shape College Opportunity for their Children: Variations by Socioeconomic Status” and “Typology of Federal, State, and Local Public Policies Designed to Promote College Access” in the *Journal of Higher Education*. She also co-presented “Predictors of Academic Success for Working Non-Traditional Students” and “The Role of Living-Learning Programs in Predicting Students' Decisions about Leaving STEM Majors” at the Association for the Study of Higher Education conference.

**Heather Wathington**, assistant professor, received a $50,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for her study "Post-Graduate Outcomes of Black Graduates in North Carolina." She was also the principal investigator for a $64,000 contract from the Spencer Foundation to the University of North Carolina's Odum Research Institute to conduct a portion of the study in North Carolina.
Student News

Grant Azdell, doctoral candidate, was named dean of students at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia. He previously served as the associate vice president for student affairs at Lynchburg College.

Jason Cottrell, doctoral student, was promoted to director of New Student Orientation and coordinator of New Student Programs at Virginia Commonwealth University. He also presented “Creating a Culture of SI: Virginia Commonwealth University as a Case Study for SI Success” at the 2008 International Conference on Supplemental Instruction. In his paper, Jason examined the overwhelming success of Supplemental Instruction at VCU since the university increased access to academic support programs. For more information, contact Jason Cottrell, rjcottre@vcu.edu.

Brian Cullaty, doctoral candidate, was awarded a research and assessment grant from NASPA Region III for his dissertation work.

Janelle Perron Jennings, doctoral candidate, was appointed director of New Student Programs at Fairfield University. Her areas of responsibility include oversight of the yearlong first year experience program and new student, transfer, and parent orientations. Janelle is also in the analysis stage of her dissertation, “The Relationship Between a Women's Leadership Development Program and Participant Self-Confidence,” and recently served on the editorial board for a manuscript, “Women in Higher Education and Student Affairs: Research and Practice from Feminist Perspectives.”

Mari K. Normyle, doctoral student, presented at the Noel-Levitz national conference on “Student Marketing, Recruitment and Retention.” Her presentation focused on effective uses of the Retention Management System (RMS) for identifying at-risk students and developing appropriate interventions to improve their likelihood of success. She has also been named an associate consultant, specializing in retention services and solutions, with Noel-Levitz, Inc., the largest enrollment management Source: Todd Parks
2008 Ph.D. Cohort

Natalie Perry earned a bachelor’s degree in African American and African Studies at The Ohio State University and a master’s degree in Urban Education from Harvard University. Prior to her doctoral studies, Natalie taught high school social studies for five years. Her research interests include issues revolving around African American undergraduate success. She currently interns at the Federal Executive Institute.

Jack Thorman earned a bachelor’s degree in history at the University of Virginia. After graduation, he served as a docent at the Harrison Institute for American History and worked for Jumpstart, a national non-profit organization. Prior to entering the higher education program, he received a master's degree in education, also from the University of Virginia. Jack's research interests include higher education policy, diversity, equity, and access. He is currently an intern at the School of Nursing.

Juliet Trail earned a bachelor's degree in Biology and Music at Guilford College and a master's degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy at New Mexico State University. Her professional experiences include high school and college teaching as well as university administration. She has worked full-time at the university since 2004, and is presently employed as a special assistant in the School of Medicine. She is also a local performer in the Charlottesville music community. Her research interests include leadership, organization studies, and teams.

The Curry School of Education also welcomed James Powell, a full-time student, and Karen Marsh King, a part-time student, to the higher education program doctoral program.

2008 SAPHE (M.Ed.) Students

Lilly Coye earned a bachelor’s degree from Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York. After graduation, she worked in democratic politics before moving to Charlottesville to work in the University Development Office. She is currently an intern in the School of Nursing.

Ray Dakolios attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio where he earned a bachelor's degree in Mathematics Education. Prior to entering the SAPHE program, he taught geometry, trigonometry, and calculus Cosby High School in Midlothian, Virginia, where he also coached girls’ soccer. He is currently employed as a graduate intern for the Athletic Department Academic Center and as an instructor for the Lifetime Physical Activity program.

Sharon Davies received a bachelor's degree in broadcast communications from Elon University. After graduation, she was employed by WSET, an ABC affiliate, before working for Amazement Square Children’s Museum and, more recently, the YMCA. Sharon lives in Lynchburg with her husband, Corey, their dog, Blue, and their cat, Zealand. She currently interns in the Office of the Dean of Students, assisting with fraternity and sorority life.

Holly Foster earned a bachelor's and master's degree in English at George Mason University. She then taught college composition at Northern Virginia Community College. She is currently a graduate assistant for the Center for Alcohol and Substance Education. Holly moved to Charlottesville with her husband and children to pursue her master’s degree.

Emily Goodson earned her undergraduate degree in English Education from Wake Forest University. Prior to attending UVA, Emily taught high school English in Greensboro, North Carolina. Emily is currently interning in University Career Services. Aside from the SAPHE program, Emily loves Wake Forest football, Broadway musicals, volunteering, and American literature.

Wes Hillyard earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Mary Washington. After graduation, he worked for Six Flags America in sales and marketing. Wes is currently interning in the Office of the Dean of Students, assisting with fraternity and sorority life.

Christy MacDowell Houston earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Virginia. She then worked for the National Council of University Research Administrators in Washington, D.C., before returning to Charlottesville to pursue a master's degree in higher education. She is currently a graduate advisor for university programming in the Office of the Dean of Students. Christy enjoys playing tennis and volunteering at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

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SAPHE Students, From Page 6

Mary Elizabeth Luzar earned a bachelor’s degree in Government and Spanish from the University of Virginia. In addition to being a part-time graduate student, Mary Elizabeth is the associate director of student and young alumni programs at the university’s Alumni Association. Prior to her job at the Alumni Association, she served as a development officer for the Miller Center of Public Affairs. She lives in Charlottesville with her husband, Kase.

Tara McKnight earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia where she played on the women's basketball team and served as a team captain. After completing her internship in University Career Services, she began working for the women’s basketball team. Tara plans to pursue a career in athletics.

Laura Sahar earned a bachelor's degree in Christian Education from Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania. While at Westminster, Laura worked in residence life at her undergraduate college and as a youth pastor at a local church. She is currently interning at the Institute for Shipboard Education, the non-profit organization that administers the Semester at Sea program.

Allison Sawicki is from Charlotte, North Carolina. She received her bachelor's degree in English and Secondary Education from Appalachian State University. She is an intern in the Office of the Dean of Students, where she also serves as the advisor for the Blueprint Leadership Program. Her research interests include leadership development and the first-year experience.

Adam Seid received a bachelor of arts in Journalism from the University of Georgia. He was a high school teacher and community swim coach in Atlanta and is now employed in the Office of Academic Affairs at the Institute for Shipboard Education (Semester at Sea). Passionate about travel, Adam has visited 40 countries and has sailed on seven different voyages with Semester at Sea.

Adam Timmons earned his bachelor's degree in History and Secondary Education from Appalachian State University. In his internship at University Career Services, he assists with pre-health advising. Born in Houston, Texas, Adam was raised in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Lindsey Triplett earned a bachelor's degree in political science from American University. After graduation, she worked as a paralegal for a law firm and as a public policy assistant for a nonprofit education association in Washington, DC. She is currently a graduate assistant at the Center for Alcohol and Substance Education.

Molly Wright earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Old Dominion University. Prior to beginning the SAPHE program, she was an assistant to the Associate Deans of Faculty in the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. She currently interns at University Career Services. Molly lives in Charlottesville with her husband, Hannon.
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