Southwest Virginia Program Comes to a Successful End

When Center alumnus, and then UVa-Wise Chancellor, Jay Lemons (Ph.D. 1991) showed interest in bringing a master's degree in Higher Education/Social Foundations to his college, faculty members at Curry responded by traveling to the campus located in Southwest Virginia and delivering courses on weekends and during the summer. From 1996-98, students participated in the 30-hour master's degree program, which consisted of courses from the Higher Education and Social Foundations curriculum. This off-grounds master's degree program was the springboard for an Ed.D. in Higher Education that Curry began to offer students at the Southwest Center for Higher Education in Abingdon in 2000.

There were 26 students in the original Ed.D. cohort; Hal Burbach, Annette Gibbs, Bob Pate, and Brian Pusser played key roles in the advising and teaching of that group. Other Curry faculty, including Jennings Wagoner, Diane Hoffman, Don Ball, Eric Bredo, and Susan Barr taught courses in the program. Of the original group, 23 students completed their coursework and comprehensive exams, under the direction of Drs. Gibbs, Wagoner, and Pusser.

Eighteen students have successfully completed their dissertations and five continue to work toward completion. Those who have graduated have found professional success, including promotion to roles as vice presidents and deans. According to Dr. Burbach, being a part of the Southwest Virginia Program was “one of the most gratifying experiences” of his career because of the “life-altering” nature of the program. “Many would have never gotten the chance to do a doctorate otherwise,” said Burbach. He emphasized the fact that although some students in Abingdon may have been able to find other avenues to complete their degrees, the appreciation they expressed to faculty for bringing the program to Southwest Virginia is a strong measure of the program’s success. Dr. Pusser echoed Dr. Burbach’s remarks, noting that “it is rare to work with a group that is as dedicated, enthusiastic and supportive of one another as the Southwest Virginia cohort. It has been my good fortune to work with them.”

Spring Brown Bag Speakers Series

Provost Gene Block spoke to Center students on “The Evolving Role of the Provost” on March 30. Block, the chief academic officer of UVa, described the ways in which offices of the provost vary for different institutions and described the areas at UVa over which his office presides.

On April 19, Dr. Kenneth Garren presented “The Case for a Private, Church-Related College.” Dr. Garren has been the president of Lynchburg College since 2001, and he shared the many accomplishments of the students and faculty of his institution. He highlighted the commitment of small, private colleges to producing graduates dedicated to public service.
Congratulations to Spring 2005 Graduates

Fourteen Center students graduated in May after successfully defending dissertations:


**Natalie Chambers-Ramsey**, “Presidential Scholarship Recipients’ Perceptions of Their College Experiences at Southwest Virginia Community College,” (Annette Gibbs, advisor).

**Brenda Cooper**, “Barriers to Participation in RN-BSN Nursing Programs,” (Annette Gibbs, advisor).


**Alan Fortescue**, “Business Leaders and Environmental Challenges: An Examination of Masters of Business Administration Coursework,” (Brian Pusser, advisor).


**Cameron Howell**, “Each Generation in the Track: Admissions Preferences for Children of Alumni,” (Sarah Turner, advisor).


**Linda Linnartz**, “The Importance of Support Services for Off-Campus, Adult Graduate Students,” (Annette Gibbs, advisor).


**Charlynn Miller**, “A Study of Adult Undergraduates’ Perceptions of Student Services at an Urban Public University,” (Annette Gibbs, advisor).

**David Schein**, “Teaching Undergraduate Business Ethics: Comparing Course Structure and Faculty Goals,” (Brian Pusser, advisor).

**D. Cole Spencer**, “College and University Name Change: A Study of Perceived Strategy and Goal Achievement,” (Robert Pate, advisor).

Student Awards

Three Center students received Curry School of Education Foundation Awards at the Education Awards Day Ceremony held on April 21, 2005.

Marc Shook, who is completing his first year in the Center, received the 2005 Annette Gibbs Research/Publication Award, established by graduates and students to honor Dr. Gibbs for excellence in teaching and advising. The award is presented to a student in the Center for the Study of Higher Education who shows early evidence of research/publishing.

Andrea Spreter was the 2005 recipient of the Johnnie E. Merritt (Ed.D. 1974) Graduate Fellowship, founded by friends in memory of the former president of Central Virginia Community College, which honors student leadership contributions. Andrea is completing her second year in the Center.

Alexis Andres was the recipient of the Jay L. Chronister Student Award, established by former students and advisees of Dr. Chronister. The award funds professional development opportunities for current students. Alexis is also completing her second year in the Center.

Leadership Society News

In April, Betsy Ackerson was inducted into Phi Delta Kappa, the honorary leadership fraternity in education. Phi Delta Kappa’s mission is to promote quality education, with particular emphasis on publicly supported education, as essential to the development and maintenance of a democratic way of life.

Congratulations to Center students Andrea Spreter and Danny Steeper on their induction into Omicron Delta Kappa. Omicron Delta Kappa is a national leadership honor society for college students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni that recognizes and encourages superior scholarship, leadership, and exemplary character. Andrea was named Curry Chair for the organization, and Carolyn Livingston was elected President for 2005-2006.
Center Students


Alexis Andres was named Program Coordinator in the Office of Orientation & New Student Programs, effective June 2005. She co-presented “Different Voices, Common Threads,” at the American College Personnel Association’s annual meeting in April 2005.

Danny Steeper accepted a full-time position as Assistant Director of Operations of Newcomb Hall at the University of Virginia.

Carolyn Livingston was selected to serve as a student representative on the Curry Foundation Board of Directors.

Grant Azdell was recently recognized by SEAHO (Southeastern Association of Housing Officers) for “Meritorious service to the students and Housing organization of Lynchburg College.”

Nicole Loyd accepted the position of Associate Dean of Campus Life at The University of the South (Sewanee).

Alyson Kienle and Nicole Loyd coauthored “Globalization and the Emergence of Supranational Organizations: Implications for Graduate Programs in Higher Education Administration,” which has been accepted for publication in the summer/fall edition of The College Student Journal.

Greg Nayor received the Civilian Commendation Award from the City of Lynchburg Police Department for his efforts in establishing a successful community policing partnership and working relationship with the department of student housing at Lynchburg College.

John Donnelly has been named Interim Dean of Instruction for the Locust Grove Campus of Germanna Community College, effective July 1.

David Schein was awarded a grant to present his dissertation research at the Teaching Business Ethics Conference sponsored by the AACSBI in July at the University of Colorado.
Center Alumni

Julie Hren Piercy (Ph.D. 1999) has been promoted to Assistant Professor at Central Virginia Community College.

Linda Little (Ph.D. 1986) has been named Director of the Center for Sponsored Research and Programs at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

Stephen Titus (Ph.D. 1998), president of Midland Lutheran College, has been named Distinguished Professor of Leadership and Change, with tenure, by the Board of Trustees. He, his wife, and daughter will travel to China later this summer to pick up their adopted infant daughter.

Jennifer Blair (Ed.D. 1997) received the Distinguished Service Award from the Virginia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (VACRAO) in recognition of her twenty years of active service, including serving as association president in 2003.

Linda Andrews (Ed.D. 1993) is the Dean of the School of Health Science and Human Performance at Lynchburg College.

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”
—William Butler Yeats

Center Faculty

Dr. Annette Gibbs’ most recent research, “Student Speech on Campus: When is a Forum ‘Public?” has been published in the Summer (2005) issue of Developments, Vol. 32, No. 2.

The Quarterly
The Newsletter of the Center for the Study of Higher Education
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Help us keep the Center's records up-to-date: contact us with any changes in address or position.

Center Electronic Resources

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http://www.curry.edschool.virginia.edu/highered
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“Education is what survives when what has been learnt has been forgotten.”

—B.F. Skinner