

Teaching and Learning Together

by Laura Behling and Michelle Rusinko

A field-based ecologist learned how to incorporate new laboratory-based molecular techniques into her courses in order to complement the field-based research skills she expected from students.

Two Spanish professors realized that even though many of their students were studying abroad, they had no way to incorporate their experiences into classes on campus, or serve as resources for current events.

Seven faculty, each faced with a particular pedagogical challenge, and all with a keen interest in enhancing student learning in their classes, have been exploring the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Twenty-four faculty were recently awarded Research, Scholarship, and Creativity grants aimed at supporting them in their own professional scholarly work during the summer months.

And over the past three summers, more than 50 faculty have participated in one of three teaching and learning workshops, each focused on a different topic, in order to

enhance their courses in areas such as incorporating active learning, enhancing critical thinking skills of students, and teaching with a specific focus on multiculturalism and diversity

The commitment by the faculty at Gustavus to carefully consider how their best teaching practices will improve student learning, and how their own research and creative interests are best expressed, is apparent in all of the examples listed here. The Faculty Development Program, currently funded through a generous grant from the Bush Foundation, responds to the needs and interests of faculty, and includes support for faculty scholarship, teaching initiatives, travel to professional meetings and conferences, and on-cam-

pus opportunities for focused conversation and collaboration with colleagues. Through this support, the program fosters the pursuit of teaching and scholarly excellence, and in turn, enhances the vitality and growth of students, faculty, and the College.

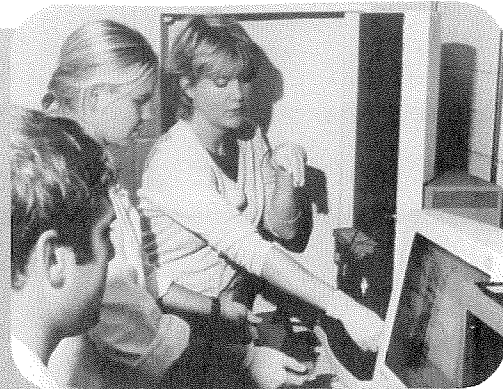
The Faculty Development Program administers funding programs such as the Research, Scholarship, and Creativity grants that support faculty professional work. We also administer the funds that faculty use to support their travel to academic conferences in their field. We maintain databases of successful proposals for these grants, offer ideas for sabbatical leaves, and, when possible, try to connect faculty who are working on similar projects for possible collaboration.

In addition to supporting the individual faculty member in her or his own scholarship, we also offer grants to departments and individuals to enhance their teaching. Departments can apply for mini-grants to establish a series of workshops or seminars and purchase materials to assist them in enhancing student learning in a particular part of their curriculum. Individual faculty members can do the same, and use funding to re-train, learn new pedagogical strategies, and enhance their libraries with texts devoted to teaching and student learning. In short, the money that funds faculty conference travel, research and creative activities, pedagogy enhancement, and conversations about teaching, is a vital and visible way that we can enable faculty to meet their professional needs and interests.

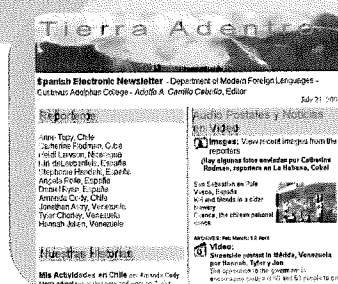
We have designed programs to allow important conversations among faculty to exist, often in an informal setting. Even at Gustavus, faculty often comment on how they simply do not have time to talk with colleagues in a substantive way about teaching issues. We've tried to build those times in. We sponsor a series called "Teachers Talking" that allows faculty to come together over lunch and talk about particular issues related to student learning, such as creating effective writing assignments or engaging students in research. Before the start of the fall semester, we host a Faculty Development Day in which faculty present their best teaching strategies to

Pam Kittelson, assistant professor of biology, attended a course on amplified fragment length polymorphisms (AFLP) at the University of Florida in order to learn the latest molecular sequencing techniques. AFLP is used by scientists to determine the variability present in

an individual's genetic code; they are molecular fingerprints. The technique is an important approach to exploring research questions related to conservation and wildlife ecology. With this specialized training, Kittelson has created a research project for students to examine the effect of habitat fragmentation on the genetic diversity of three populations of bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) separated 5–10 km from one another in southern Minnesota.



Steve Waldhauser '70

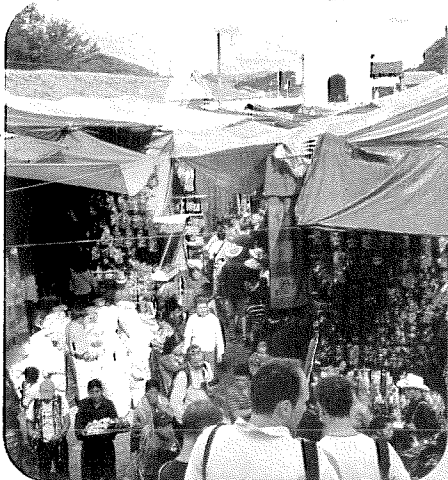


Kurt Irvin, associate professor of Spanish, and Adolfo Carrillo Cabello, visiting instructor of Spanish, have linked the virtual with reality. Realizing that online course materials often were difficult to integrate into classes, Irvin and Cabello created an electronic newsletter and then

asked some of their own students who were about to study abroad for a semester to be reporters. Equipped with digital cameras and devices that allowed them to record and store digital audio files, the students were charged with sending back postcards to the newsletter, participating in online forums with Spanish students on the campus, and keeping the campus informed of current events in Venezuela, Spain, and Mexico. The newsletter, called *Tierra Adentro*, can be viewed at www.gustavus.edu/oncampus/academics/mfl/spanish/tierraadentro/.

Mariangela Maguire, associate professor of communication studies, has been working with six other faculty to explore the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), a program that serves faculty who want to incorporate investigations of discipline-specific pedagogy into their scholarly agenda. Such a project includes documenting teaching practices and subjecting an account of those practices to peer review in order that findings may be built upon. Most Gustavus faculty already pursue Scholarship of Teaching and Learning projects in the sense that they identify a particular question regarding a course, explore various means of addressing the question, implement new teaching strategies, and observe the consequences. An SoTL project takes this process further by requiring a well-documented process that is shared with others. The SoTL program at Gustavus makes a significant contribution to our teaching community by making teaching practices accessible to a wider audience on campus and beyond campus.

Faculty members who participated in the Bush Grant summer workshops on Critical Thinking, Active Learning, Teaching Multiculturally, and Social Justice/Service-Learning were invited to participate in an on-going SOTL group. Projects faculty are working on include strategies for incorporating "real language" texts into Russian language classes, developing service-learning projects in upper-level communication studies courses, introducing a problem-solving process in a Roman history course, working with practical reasoning exercises in interpersonal communication, moving beyond the "Great Books" approach to world literature, and organizing dance history around issues of race, class, and gender.



The public market in Chichicastenengo, Guatemala


Following the Service-Learning for Social Justice trip to Guatemala during the summer of 2003, a number of faculty and administrators who traveled both to Guatemala and Northern Ireland (in 2002) have founded a Faculty Focus Group on Social Justice. The group met several times during the 2003-04 academic year, and two specific goals emerged. The first

was to discuss theoretical and pedagogical issues from the multiple perspectives that the group represents (peace studies, languages, economics, biology, etc.), with the hope of enhancing classroom experiences. To support this goal, the group is using the book *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, which addresses pedagogical issues, in addition to topical readings, as the backbone of their discussions.

The second goal is to be actively involved in a social justice project. To address this goal of activism, the group is exploring the possibility of developing a community store in St. Peter that promotes fair trade products, as well as socially and ecologically responsible consumerism. The group hopes that the store would provide service-learning opportunities not only for Gustavus students but also for community members, while also working to support global communities in need of a fair market.

other Gustavus faculty. Programs that have a more specific focus include our Service-Learning for Social Justice international faculty travel program, and our Global Faculty Program.

Our program also plans and administers the new faculty orientation each fall, and on-going throughout-the-year orientation sessions. As part of our commitment to helping new faculty begin their careers at Gustavus in as positive a manner as possible, we connect them with more experienced faculty to serve as mentors, a program that also meets regularly throughout the academic year. In the next few years, we will expand our focus on key faculty groups to work on programming for mid-level and senior faculty. This year, we've also just initiated our Scholarship of Teaching and Learning program liaison with the Carnegie Foundation.

Although this is only an overview of the Faculty Development Program, it illustrates how we value and support the richness in faculty's diverse experiences and interests. We invite you to learn more about the comprehensive Faculty Development Program by visiting our website at www.gustavus.edu/oncampus/facdev/index.cfm. 

Laura L. Behling, assistant professor of English, and Michele Rusinko, associate professor of theatre and dance, are co-coordinators of the Faculty Development Program.

Faculty research grants support professional development

In order to support research, scholarly, and creative work during summer 2004, the Faculty Development Committee awarded 25 grants, ranging from \$650 to \$7,500, to 24 members of the College's faculty.

Four grants involving faculty-student collaborations were funded by the President's office at a maximum of \$7,500 each. Presidential Faculty-Student Collaboration and Publication Grant Award recipients were:

Scott Bur (chemistry) and Adam Langenfeld '06, for "New Ways of Making Drug-Like Molecules";

Thomas Huber (physics) and John Purdham '07, for "Faculty/Student Research in Acoustics";

Scott Newstok (English) and Marissa Wold '05, for "Othello Unmoored: Racialized Readings of Shakespeare in America and Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil*"; and

Bruce Wells (religion) and Drew Hougard '05, for "Ancient Near Eastern Legal Tradition as a Source for the Covenant Code in the Book of Exodus"

Listed below are the 21 members of the faculty who were awarded Research, Scholarship, and Creativity (RSC) grants for summer 2004 to conduct work in their respective academic disciplines. The RSC grant awards ranged from \$650 to \$2,200 (the maximum allotted for an RSC grant) and were determined by the applicants' requests.

Deane Curtin (philosophy)
 Bob Douglas (geography)
 David Fienen (music)
 Barbara Fister (library)
 Rob Gardner (theatre and dance)
 Mark Granquist (religion)
 Jon Grinnell (biology)
 Tom Huber (physics)
 Bruce Johnson (economics and management)
 Michelle Koomen (education)
 Bruce McClain (art and art history)
 Peg O'Connor (women's studies)
 Sujay Rao (history)
 Ellen Riordan (communication studies)
 Amy Seham (theatre and dance)
 Russell Shapiro (geology)
 Jonathan Smith (chemistry)
 Joyce Sutphen (English)
 Paula Swiggum (nursing)
 Marie Walker (psychology)
 Barbara Zust (nursing)