

**NOTES
FROM THE
KENDALL
CENTER**

Faculty research, scholarship, creativity prepare students for success

by Margaret Bloch-Qazi

Members of the Gustavus faculty are teachers, advisers, and mentors who are committed to their students' academic excellence. During the academic year, they demonstrate this commitment daily in offices, classrooms, laboratories, and studios across the campus. So what are they doing when they aren't teaching and mentoring students?

During the summer, on weekends, early in the morning and late at night, Gustavus faculty members are active scholars—creating art, composing, directing performances, conducting research, and writing. While these activities are not always so obvious as the work they do teaching, their scholarship is a vital aspect of Gustavus's learning community.

Gustavus recognizes the value of faculty scholarship for a vibrant and current learning community by providing partial support for faculty scholarship in the forms of Research, Scholarship and Creativity grants, Presidential Faculty-Student Collaborative Grants, funds to attend conferences, and sabbatical leaves (see faculty research projects at gustavus.edu/kendallcenter/grant-opportunities/). Gustavus also recognizes exceptional scholarship by faculty with its annual Faculty Achievement Award. Recent recipients include **Peg O'Connor**, professor of gender, women, and sexuality studies and philosophy (2010); **Eric Dugdale**, associate professor of classics (2011); and **Elizabeth Baer**, professor of English (2012).

Faculty scholarship is critical for maintaining an innovative and rigorous curriculum. By being current in their fields, the College's teachers bring energy, new ideas, and cutting-edge technologies to their students. This prepares students to excel in their chosen vocations. Professor of Biology **John Lammert** has taught at Gustavus for 30 years. During this time, he has shared critical discoveries in the fields of immunology and microbiology with his students—from the sequencing of microbial genomes to characterization of healthy microbes in our intestines to the elucidation of signaling pathways causing healthy cells in our bodies to become cancerous. Lammert's students, many of whom go on to become research scientists, physicians, and nurses, report

back that Gustavus teachers have prepared them very well for postgraduate study.

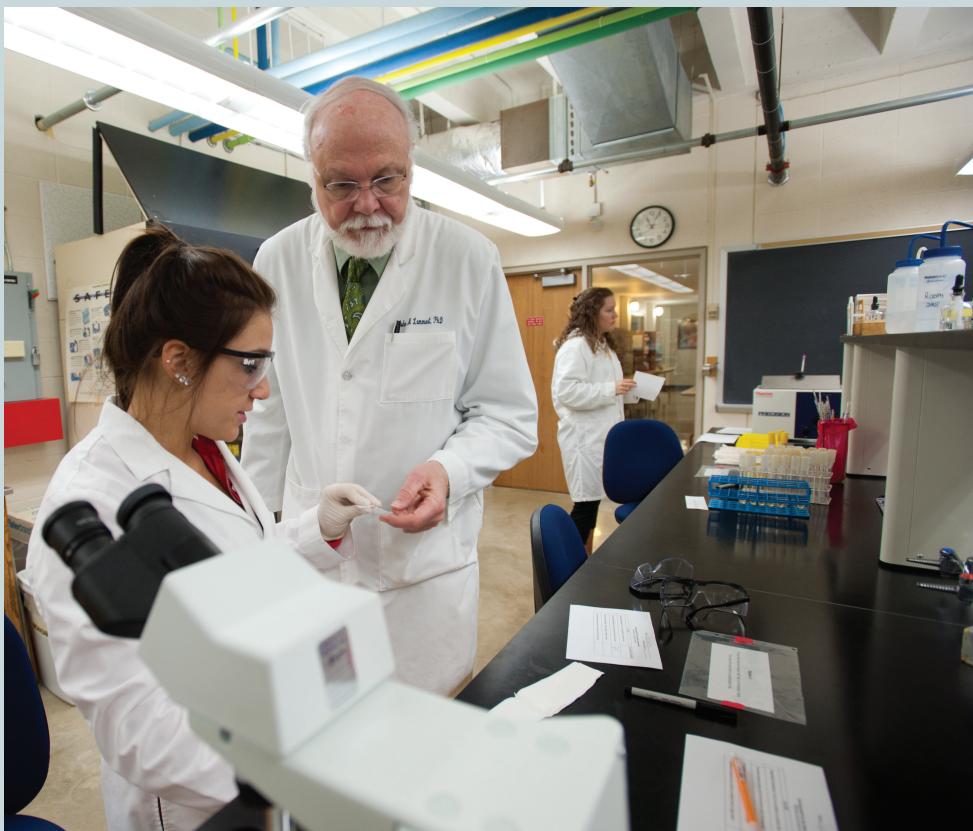
Student intellectual growth benefits from faculty scholarship in additional ways. Many faculty members publish work with an intended audience that includes undergraduate students at Gustavus and other institutions. **Eric Dugdale**, associate professor of classics, published a translation and commentary on Sophocles' *Electra* for those who don't have a background in the ancient world. Another of his books, *Greek Theatre in Context*, helps students understand how drama was performed in Athens by making relevant primary sources available to students. Dugdale explains, "It informs the performances of students in my theatre class as they put on scenes from ancient drama at the [Gustavus] Festival

of Dionysus; their performances in turn inform my understanding of ancient drama in modern performance." So while many faculty share their scholarship with their students, observing how students interact with the material also helps some examine their scholarship from novel perspectives.

In addition to fostering intellectual growth, faculty scholarship supports students' moral development and encourages respect for others—core elements of the College's mission. This is exemplified by Professor **Peg O'Connor's** work. In articles published in the *New York Times* and the *Huffington Post* as well as an appearance on Canadian Public Television, O'Connor has used philosophy to help people make sense of addiction. Her work complements a growing body of information on the science of addiction by providing perspectives on its meaning.



Professor of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies and Philosophy Peg O'Connor with Socrates.



Professor of Biology John Lammert (center) has collaborated with student researchers for nearly 30 years.

In spring 2013, O'Connor will bring this topic into the classroom in her seminar on philosophy and addiction. Like Dugdale's work, O'Connor's scholarship extends to other aspects of the student experience. She and Janet DeMars, the case manager for high-risk drinking at the College, have developed a Gustavus program for students who engage in high-risk drinking, called onGUARD. Its curriculum has four areas of focus—relation to self, relation to others, skill acquisition, and building for a future, each of which is aligned with the mission and core values of the College.

Perhaps most inspiring, faculty members can share their own lifelong love of learning to encourage it in their students, helping them translate their own passions into vocation. For example, Gustavus students can explore their own literary voices by discussing Keats's poetry with Professor of English **Joyce Sutphen**, Minnesota's 2011 Poet Laureate—and perhaps be fortunate enough to hear her read her own poetry! Inspired by her participation in Dugdale's translation of *Electra*, Gustavus alumna Maggie Sotos '09 presented her original play, *TROY! The Musical*, at this year's

Minneapolis Fringe festival in early August 2012. Faculty regularly model intellectual engagement and inquiry for Gustavus students, helping them develop into thoughtful, lifelong learners. As Professor of English **Elizabeth Baer** explains, "For me, there are no boundaries between research and teaching, between the life of the mind 'at work' and 'at play.' Indeed, it is the pleasure of the life of the mind, the passion for learning, that are the most important things I can convey to Gusties in my classroom. . . . I owe it to my students to stay current, to be interested in everything, to be alert to new trends, to be aware of world events, and to demand that they begin to have these expectations of themselves."

Faculty publications, presentations, and performances, the culmination of faculty scholarship, promote Gustavus's reputation as a learning institution committed to excellence. Every other year, the Kendall Center for Engaged Learning highlights faculty scholarly achievements by producing a "Research, Scholarship, & Creativity" publication. From Visiting Professor of Biology **Mohammad Abu Baker**'s research into the behavior and

ecology of woodland mice, to Nursing Professor **Barbara Zust**'s research on perinatal stress, the publication showcases the faculty as creative, hard-working, dedicated, insightful, and productive scholars. Learn more about the scholarly activities of the Gustavus faculty, and see what your favorite professors are up to when not in the class, lab, and studio, by accessing the 2010-11 "Research, Scholarship, and Creativity" publication at gustavus.edu/kendallcenter/documents/2010-2011ResearchScholarshipandCreativitypublication.pdf.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can support faculty development and research, please contact the Office of Institutional Advancement, advancement@gustavus.edu, or 1-800-726-6192. ■

Margaret Bloch-Qazi, Ph.D., is an associate professor of biology and director of the College's faculty development program, the John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning.