

The Faculty Development Program

The Faculty Development Program supports faculty at Santa Clara University as teaching scholars. Programs and services promote two general goals:

- To enhance the professional development of Santa Clara University faculty.
- To explore how students learn and to support faculty in cultivating student learning.

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In This Issue

- Making the Most of Research Assistants
- Classroom Consultations
- Spring Faculty Development Events
- Award Nominations & FSRAP Call for Proposals

Making the Most of Undergraduate Research Assistants

Increasing numbers of SCU faculty are integrating the assistance and collaboration of undergraduate students into their scholarship. Undergraduate RAs present special opportunities as well as challenges to the faculty scholar. On the one hand, ideally, the relationship between teaching scholar and student researcher is symbiotic: the faculty member gains valuable assistance on her projects and, in some cases, a genuine collaborator, while the student is exposed to the production and creation sides of knowledge or art at a far deeper level than the conventional curriculum or pedagogy can provide. On the other hand, undergraduate RAs are typically less prepared academically to take on independent research responsibilities, and require more clearly defined tasks and mentoring, than a graduate student (or colleague).

How then can faculty design their scholarly activities and interactions with undergraduate RAs to make the most of the relationship for both parties? At a Faculty Development workshop in February, a panel of five SCU faculty members from a variety of disciplines described how they utilize undergraduate RAs and offered suggestions based on their experience: Rich Barber (Physics), Aldo Billingslea (Theatre and Dance), Alma Garcia (Sociology), Silvia Figueira (Computer Engineering), and Leilani Miller (Biology). Some of their suggestions and insights are summarized here.

Our hope is to inspire you to think creatively about how you might incorporate undergraduates into your own scholarly activities. If you move quickly, you have time to work up those ideas into a proposal for a Faculty-Student Research Assistant Program (FSRAP) grant (deadline April 11): information is provided below.

What do undergrad RAs do? Naturally, the duties of undergrad RAs vary substantially by field; here are a few examples. In the laboratory sciences, where there is a strong tradition of undergraduate research at SCU, students learn lab techniques, help conduct and monitor experiments, record data, and troubleshoot problems. In the social sciences and humanities, RAs conduct literature searches and write literature reviews, gather and ana-

lyze qualitative and quantitative data, and conduct and edit oral histories or interviews. In the arts, RAs assist with writing, rehearsals, packing, installing, and de-installing artwork for exhibitions, and web site design and maintenance.

Ultimately, RAs may become true collaborators and co-authors. Students should be given opportunities to present their work, both to their peers and, when possible, at conference presentations or poster sessions. At the workshop, Alma Garcia argued eloquently for viewing and treating undergrad RAs as “emerging scholars,” not “gofers.” Such a model offers the most promise of a fruitful RA relationship for both student and faculty member.

Recruiting: The key to recruiting a good RA is to identify and cultivate promising students early—ideally as sophomores or juniors. Students need to be both capable and motivated. Rich Barber suggested a simple way he tests the motivation of students who express an interest in a research assistantship: give them a difficult scholarly paper to read, and see if they come back for more!

Orientation and training: Several faculty members mentioned the advantages of starting student RAs in the summer, when both they and the faculty have more concentrated time and fewer distractions. In a lab setting, more senior RAs can often become trainers for new RAs.

Organizing the work and assigning tasks: Faculty stressed the importance of establishing clear expectations, firm deadlines, regular meetings, and advance planning for absences. Faculty supervisors need to be sensitive to the fact that student academic work comes first, and should plan around anticipated crunch time for their undergrad assistants.

Breaking the assigned work into discrete chunks not only makes it more manageable for inexperienced researchers, but also creates a sense of accomplishment and ownership as tasks are completed: the “I did that!” as Leilani Miller put it. Because undergrads turn over with some regularity, keeping very

Continued on Page 4, See Research Asst

Checking in with Your Class: Classroom Visits with Small Group Instructional Diagnosis

By Diane Dreher, Tim Healy, and Fred Parrella

Have you ever taught a new course and wondered how it was going? Or felt a nagging sense that something was going wrong in your class but you didn't know what it was? You don't have to wait until the end of the quarter to find out. For years, many Santa Clara faculty members have benefited from a helpful Faculty Development service: the Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID).

Developed in the 1970s through a FIPSE Grant by Professor D. Joseph Clark of the University of Washington, SGID is used at a number of fine colleges and universities. SGID was introduced to Santa Clara by our first Faculty Development Director, Elizabeth Moran, and the three of us have been serving as faculty development consultants ever since. We've enjoyed the opportunity to visit classes outside our own discipline, learning about other teaching approaches in the process.

The SGID is a simple but powerful procedure that gives faculty members valuable information on how our classes are going—in the middle of the quarter, when we can still address problems and make any necessary adjustments.

What does an SGID involve? A faculty member contacts the Associate Provost for Faculty Development, preferably in the first half of the quarter, to ask for an SGID and is scheduled with a faculty development consultant. As consultants, we meet with the faculty member, explain the process, and request a syllabus to give us an overview of the course. Then we arrange to attend a class.

Generally, for the first half of the class, we sit in the back and observe course dynamics. Then for the last half hour, the professor introduces us to the class, explains that he or she wants to see how the class is going at the middle of the term, and leaves the room. For the remainder of the class, we ask the students to work in small

groups and answer these questions: "What is one thing you like about this course?" "What is one thing you'd like to change?" We then list concrete strategies for change: e.g., talk more slowly, take a break, etc. As the students report back, we write the answers on the board, reviewing them to get a sense of class consensus. If there is disagreement on some point (more homework, less homework) we attempt to determine and report approximate percentages of voters on each side of the question. We record the answers, thank the students, erase the board, and leave.

We then meet with the faculty member before the next class, often over lunch or coffee, to discuss the results. We usually provide a typed summary of our findings, maintaining the anonymity of individual students. At the beginning of the next class, the faculty member thanks the students and responds to their comments, explaining what can be changed (for example, explaining assignments more clearly) and what cannot (the textbook that quarter).

We've found that SGIDs not only provide valuable insights and improve class morale, but that after an SGID a faculty member's numerical evaluations usually improve. Students invariably are grateful to the professor for taking the time to solicit their opinions in such a candid and confidential manner. The professor in the course is usually very pleased to learn just how much s/he is doing right, as well as what can improve the particular course and the broader pedagogical style of the teacher.

To arrange an SGID in your own class, contact Bill Sundstrom, Associate Provost for Faculty Development, at wsundstrom@scu.edu or (408) 551-7045.

Diane Dreher, Tim Healy, and Fred Parrella are Professors in the Departments of English, Electrical Engineering, and Religious Stud-

Consultations and confidentiality

The Faculty Development program assures strict confidentiality of consultations with individual faculty regarding teaching, scholarship, and professional development. Our services, including the classroom visit/ SGID program described above, are strictly voluntary, developmental, and confidential; results are shared only with the faculty member and never to be used in a faculty performance evaluation. SGID consultants may not discuss their findings with anyone but the faculty member, although the faculty member is free to share the written summary of the classroom visit with others, at her or his own discretion. We also strive to provide students complete anonymity when we solicit their feedback on a course during the SGID process.

If you have questions or concerns about the confidentiality of Faculty Development consultations, please feel free to contact Bill Sundstrom at wsundstrom@scu.edu or (408) 551-7045.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Teaching Support

- Confidential Classroom Visits
- Open Classrooms

Research Support: Grants

- Internal University Grants
- Faculty Student Research Assistant Program

Groups

- Mentoring groups or partnerships

- Faculty Study Group Grants

Resources

- Website: www.scu.edu/facultydevelopment
- Small resource library of books, videotapes, and articles

Programs

- Lunchtime workshops on pedagogy, scholarship, and professional development
- New Faculty Orientation, Workshops, and Retreat

Faculty Development Schedule of Events for Spring 2008

Please note times and locations!

Monday, April 14

"Taking your scholarship public: Media and marketing at SCU"

12:00-1:00 p.m., Benson Parlor B

Deepa Arora, SCU's Media Relations Director, will lead a practical workshop on how to bring your scholarship to a wider public via the media. Learn how to connect and deal with the news media and how to write op-eds that bring your expertise to bear on important public issues: become a pundit.

Tuesday, April 22

"NSSE and student engagement"

12:00-1:00 p.m., Wiegand Room

Co-sponsored by the Office of Assessment

Have you ever wondered what SCU students say about our university and the opportunities for faculty-student interaction? Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which is given every year to freshmen and seniors, will kick off a panel discussion on how to involve students in research and in experiential learning. Come hear from SCU faculty on how to include students as research collaborators as well as how to actively engage students in a variety of community-based learning activities. Whether you are new to these ideas or have been working closely with students either in or out of the classroom, this is an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and best practices.

Wednesday, May 14

"Letters of recommendation"

12:00-1:00 p.m., Wiegand Room

Are you serving your best students' best interests with the recommendation letters you write for fellowships, internships, graduate programs, and jobs? Simone Billings, Interim Director of the Office of Fellowships and University Honors Program, leads a workshop on how to do it right, taking both practical and ethical considerations into account.

Thursday, May 22

"Teaching roundtable: How to write a good exam"

3:30-4:30 p.m., Location to be announced

As finals week looms, join your SCU colleagues for a roundtable conversation on exam-writing. Share tips on how to write a good one, and pitfalls to avoid. How can an exam be tailored to assess whether students have really achieved your learning objectives for the course? Faculty from all disciplines are encouraged to participate and bring along a few tips based on their own experience and observation. Tea and crumpets will be served, if crumpets can be had...

Announcements, Deadlines, and Reminders

- **FSRAP Grants:** Grants to pay for undergraduate research assistants in any field. See the related article in this issue for more information. *Deadline for proposals: Friday, April 11, 2008.* For application guidelines, look for the link under FSRAP at <http://www.scu.edu/provost/facultydevelopment/universitygrants.cfm>
- **Core Curriculum Honoraria:** Applications are invited for Core Honoraria in support of Curriculum Transformation and Development projects and for faculty facilitators of Pathways. *Deadline: May 14, 2008.* For more information, go to: <http://www.scu.edu/core2009/>
- **Faculty Study Group grants:** Grants of up to \$500 provide funding for food, materials, and other expenses for interdisciplinary groups of faculty who wish to gather regularly for discussions of scholarship or teaching. Proposals accepted at any time. For more information <http://www.scu.edu/provost/facultydevelopment/universitygrants.cfm>
- **Statistics and survey design consultations:** Suzanne Dancer, Assistant Vice Provost for Planning and Administration, is available for consultations with faculty seeking assistance with data analysis, statistics, and survey design. Suzanne earned her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology at UT-Austin, where she majored in statistics and experimental design. She is an experienced applied statistician and offered similar consulting services to faculty in her previous position at UT. Suzanne is available for consultations by appointment. To learn more about how she might help you or to schedule a consultation, please contact her at ldancer@scu.edu.
- **Ethics Across the Curriculum consultations:** Larry Nelson, Senior Lecturer in the Philosophy Department, continues to serve as the Curricular Ethics Consultant, providing assistance in incorporating ethics into SCU courses in any department. Applications for Ethics Consultations are invited at any point during the academic year. For more information, please contact Larry Nelson, or Anne Riconosciuto in the Faculty Development office, ariconosciuto@scu.edu.

Nominate a Colleague for a Faculty Award!

Nominations are invited for the following three faculty awards: The Brutocao Family Foundation Award for Curriculum Innovation, the University Award for Sustained Excellence in Scholarship, and the University Award for Recent Achievement in Scholarship. Recipients will be named and awards presented at the annual Faculty Recognition Dinner in September. Any Santa Clara University faculty member may nominate a colleague at SCU for these three awards. For guidelines on nomination letters and eligibility criteria, go to the link for the specific award at the following web site: <http://cms.scu.edu/provost/facultydevelopment/awards/>.

The Brutocao Family Foundation Award for Curriculum Innovation recognizes faculty who have improved the quality of education at Santa Clara University through significant innovations in pedagogy or curriculum development—particularly when those innovations affect a significant number of students—and who have exhibited general excellence in teaching. (Nominations for SCU's other teaching award, the Louis and Dorina Brutocao Award for Teaching Excellence, are made by students and alumni.)

The University Award for Sustained Excellence in Scholarship recognizes the outstanding achievements and dedication of a faculty member who has demonstrated sustained excellence in scholarly or creative work and who has been a faculty member of Santa Clara University for a minimum of ten years.

The University Award for Recent Achievement in Scholarship recognizes a tenured faculty member or senior lecturer whose scholarly or creative work over the previous five years at Santa Clara University represents a major contribution to a field of knowledge or to the arts.

Applying for tenure, promotion, or a sabbatical?

Faculty are invited to meet for one-on-one consultations at any time with Bill Sundstrom, Associate Provost for Faculty Development, for advice and assistance regarding applications and proposals for tenure, promotion, sabbatical leaves, internal grants, and the like. Are you uncertain whether or when to apply for promotion to professor, based on your record? Do you have questions about what should go in a tenure petition, how it should be presented, or how to select outside reviewers? Are you wondering what makes for a strong sabbatical or internal grant proposal? Bill is here to help with these and other issues relating to career planning and transitions. Given sufficient turnaround time, he will be happy to read a draft of your CV, personal statement, or proposal, and offer constructive feedback. Of course, it is important that faculty consult multiple colleagues about career planning and promotions, including their departmental colleagues, their chair, and their dean. But if you would like an informed and confidential additional opinion, please get in touch!

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Research Asst, Continued from Page 1

Careful and complete records of their work is essential to maintaining continuity and helping new RAs take over tasks.

Realistic expectations: Students vary in their skills, motivations, and capacity for independent work, and faculty stressed the importance of adapting the work to the individual.

Group interactions: Regular meetings and presentations with peers who are engaged in related research create a more realistic and rewarding research environment. Faculty who employ a single RA in their work might explore ways to form departmental or interdisciplinary venues for RAs to share their experiences, findings, and challenges. The Bio-Chem Research Group at SCU, for example, brings together faculty and RAs from both Biology and Chemistry who work on related projects for weekly meetings during the summer to present and discuss ongoing work in their labs, modeling on a "Research I"-type experience.

Call for proposals:

Faculty-Student Research Assistant Program (FSRAP)

Deadline: Friday, April 11, 2008

Full-time faculty are invited to submit proposals for the Faculty-Student Research Assistant Program (FSRAP), which provides funding to pay students serving as research assistants.

The principal objectives of the FSRAP program are twofold: to provide faculty with assistance in their scholarship, and to provide student research assistants with a meaningful learning experience through the faculty mentoring process. A successful FSRAP proposal must include a careful statement of student learning objectives and a mentoring plan. In this regard, faculty are encouraged to think in terms of writing a "syllabus" as part of the proposal. For detailed application guidelines, look for the link under FSRAP at: <http://www.scu.edu/provost/facultydevelopment/universitygrants.cfm>.

Because internal funding is limited, employment of students eligible for the federally funded Work-Study Program is especially encouraged. Work-study pays for 75% of student wages, thus allowing your FSRAP grant to pay for four times as many hours.

Proposals, accompanied by a current C.V., should be submitted by April 11, 2008, to your department chair, dean, and Anne Riconosciuto in the Faculty Development office, ariconosciuto@scu.edu.