

CHALK

TEACHING & FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

SPECIAL ISSUE: ENGAGING MID-CAREER FACULTY

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This issue features work that began at a conference at Wittenberg University in September, 2010: "Wanting Something More: A Midwest Regional Workshop Reflecting on the Professional Lives of Mid-Career Faculty." See the Lilly Fellows Program article on p 15 for details.

[Clearing the Bar or Suspended Animation?]

Challenges Faculty Face at Mid-Career

By Jeffrey Kurtz (Denison University) and Tammy M. Proctor (Wittenberg University)

When academics conceive of their career trajectories as graduate students and even as new instructors, they sometimes use the metaphor of the track and field meet to describe higher education and their place in it. Graduate school itself is the first series of events, and it includes marathon training for comprehensive exams, as well as several short sprints to keep up with peers in training. The search for the first job becomes for some a high jump or a pole vault event, with the bar rising just beyond reach, tantalizingly close, until the day when the newly-minted PhD manages to clear the bar and gain a position. However the meet is not over, and instructors and assistant professors find themselves facing a long stretch of hurdles on the way to tenure and acceptance at the institution. Is it any wonder, with such a framework for envisioning the world of work, that mid-career academics often seem caught between looking for another event in which to compete and gazing longingly at those at other institutions with the coveted medals and podium positions? For mid-career professors, the absence of the competition and the re-formulation of goals can be a daunting and redefining moment, full of insecurity, but also ripe with possibility.

As individuals and institutions begin to examine the life cycle of academia in more concrete terms, they will find a number of

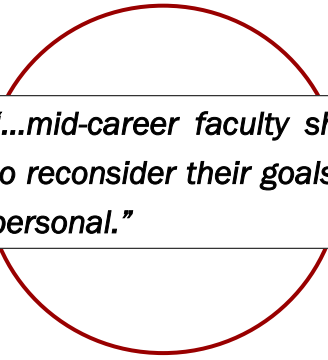
recent works ready to offer assistance. This short essay aims to highlight some of the works and themes that have addressed the professorial life and its vicissitudes, with emphasis on those works that provide a broad range of approaches. In particular, we will look at authors who ask big questions about vocation, meaning, and ambition in the professoriate. Many of these publications appeared as required reading in the Lilly workshop we offered. Throughout this brief bibliographic introduction, we will also highlight other essays in this special issue that reflect these same themes.

A good starting point for the question of how to embrace the changes that come with mid-career status is the work of Jeffrey L. Buller, who has demystified both the work of professors and of department chairs with his recent publications. *The Essential College Professor* (2010) asks readers to return to the anticipation at the starting line and reflect on the qualities and skills that lead someone to pursue an academic life. The particularly illuminating third chapter walks the reader through a series of questions to determine, "What Kind of Professor are You?" Using an inventory of common skills utilized in classrooms, laboratories, archives, and univer-

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[Clearing the Bar, continued]

sity committees, Buller helps faculty members assess their strengths and weaknesses, and then provides advice for ways to maximize strengths.



“...mid-career faculty should consider pausing to reconsider their goals, both professional and personal.”

In addition to self-reflexive exercises, Buller treats issues related to the potential trajectories of an academic career. In the seventh chapter “Special Challenges for Midcareer Faculty,” Buller identifies two sets of hurdles that cause professors to stumble at mid-career: 1) competing demands on time, especially in the personal realm (children, aging parents, health issues); and 2) changing priorities and the desire for realignment of goals. One of Buller’s best pieces of advice is that mid-career faculty should pause to reconsider their goals, both professional and personal. Of course, such a pause is easiest when institutional structures exist to allow such time for reflection, and the book offers suggestions to institutions for creating these structures. However, what can be most challenging for mid-career faculty in such realignment is how to marshal professional and institutional resources in ways that enable them to sustain their commitment to excellence. If that word has suffered abuse from overuse in corporate circles, it still provides a platform to reflect on our crafts as teacher-scholars. One form such reflection might take is provocatively modeled in Atul Gawande’s meditations on doctors’ performance in *Better* (2007).

At first glance, the work of doctors and the work of college teachers may seem wholly unrelated. What makes Gawande’s book such a wonderful gem is its concern with performance, in that word’s richest sense. In other words, how might we be better at our craft, when opportunities for potential disappointment and failure (a class’s poor quiz scores; a rejected article; a committee meeting that seems to gain no traction) are omnipresent? To Gawande’s credit, he recognizes that the effort to deepen one’s level of proficiency, to model excellence, is not an undertaking

that happens in isolation. All of us, as he candidly notes, “must grapple with systems, resources, circumstances, people—and our own shortcomings, as well. We face obstacles of a seemingly unending variety. Yet somehow we must advance, we must refine, we must improve” (8).

Gawande’s examination of betterment—that perpetual labor—is less of a “how to” than a colorfully and insightfully told “why do.” Across several intriguing case studies, Gawande extrapolates three critical values: diligence, doing right, and ingenuity. The applicability of these values to our work in the classroom will be readily apparent upon taking up the book. At the core of Gawande’s meditation is the identification of those intellectual and moral resources by which we might embrace the challenges of our craft in ways that help us realize excellence. His short-hand for this is to become a “positive deviant,” and this identity may be donned, in part, by committing to five habits: 1) ask an unscripted question; 2) don’t complain; 3) count something; 4) write something; and 5) change. Teacher-scholars reflecting on their trajectories, particularly those at mid-career, should find these habits worth thinking upon and adopting in their professional lives. And it is also true that new habits are not enough. Questions of purpose, of vocation, are integral to what we do, a point not lost on Mark Schwehn.

In *Exiles from Eden* (2005), Schwehn wonders why so many academics are unhappy with their positions, their universities, and sometimes, themselves. Familiar with the common complaint heard in college hallways that “I don’t have enough time to *do my own work*,” which he takes to mean research and writing, he wonders: What, then, are academics doing all day long when they are teaching, advising, meeting with colleagues, serving on committees, answering e-mails, and holding office hours? Why is this not “my own” work? Schwehn’s conclusion illuminates well the mid-career dilemma. As Schwehn sees it, graduate students are trained to think of themselves as scholars who gain knowledge and transmit it through publication and professional presentation. However, most faculty are paid to transmit knowledge to students in the classroom, often relying on the scholarship of others to provide the depth and breadth of material for those classes. Schwehn sees a profound disconnect here that deepens over time as faculty members move further from their graduate school roots. Faculty have trouble keeping up with the current work in the field if they are also expected to

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[Clearing the Bar, continued]

serve on committees, meet with advisees, teach multiple classes (sometimes not in their fields of training), and grade papers. Most faculty feel guilty for not working hard enough to do it all, then resent that they do not have time to do it all. Such a cycle of guilt and anger serves neither the faculty member nor the students. The question becomes, then, what are we producing at our colleges and universities? Why are we there?

For Ken Robinson, the answer to that question lies with how our professional roles provide vehicles through which we might express our deepest passions and talents. His *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (co-authored with Lou Aronica) presents an inspiring examination of individual creativity and the ways in which such creativity may be marshaled to enhance aspects of our lives, both professional and personal. The “Element” is Robinson’s short-hand to describe the “things we love to do and the things we are good at [and how these] come together” (xiii). Readers will see reflected in this notion allusions to the concept of vocation, what other writers have described as something akin to when our greatest desires stand up to meet

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ALL

the world’s greatest needs.

But if Robinson is not exactly treading new ground, his book is a rich resource of inspiration, anecdotes, and reflections on the value and necessity of nurturing individuals’ creativity. Perhaps the most worthwhile nugget from Robinson’s book is embodied in the compassion and enthusiasm folded into his urgent desire to help individuals and organizations develop what he describes as a “new appreciation for the importance of nurturing human talent, along with an understanding of how talent expresses itself differently in every individual” (xiii). These are generous, worthwhile sentiments. And it also is true that they are sentiments which may not be particularly visible across the landscape of academe. Certainly Miguel Martínez-Saenz’s essay (p 7) suggests that academics often understand their roles very narrowly

and look upon others’ ambitions or positions with suspicion.

For Stanley Fish, a scholar who has lived in both the faculty and administrative worlds (as has Martínez-Saenz), the distinctiveness of the academy, what makes our work different from other kinds of work, is in fact what we should embrace. For Fish, in considering the question, “Why are we here?” the answer may be boiled down to two tasks: to teach and to research.

Fish takes up answers to questions of our professional purpose in his usual forceful manner in *Save the World On Your Own Time* (2010). These answers are best encapsulated by a three-pronged piece of prescriptive advice Professor Fish considers the mantra for his book: Do your job; don’t try to do someone else’s job; and don’t let anyone else do your job. And what is the job of college and universities teachers? Fish defines academic work narrowly and precisely. Specifically, a college or university teacher should introduce students to bodies of knowledge and traditions of inquiry with which they were not familiar prior to enrolling in a particular class, and equip those same students with the requisite analytical tools to move through these traditions.

Fish’s argument unfolds over seven chapters, so we recognize there is more to his position than presented here, but we would maintain we have identified a particularly relevant thread: the hyper-professionalization of the academy. While we suspect Professor Fish might stipulate he is merely demarcating appropriate professional boundaries, a close reading reveals his keen effort to corral teaching and learning within an ethos of compartmentalization. It is an ethos Fish does not resist. In fact, he believes such compartmentalization should be the coin of the realm where academic work is concerned, and achieving such compartmentalization is neither as difficult nor as burdensome as opponents think. Anticipating objections, he writes:

But is it so easy to compartmentalize one’s beliefs and commitments? Yes, it is. In fact, we do it all the time when we refrain, for example, from inserting our religious beliefs or private obsessions into every situation or private conversation no matter what its content. Those

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[Clearing the Bar, continued]

who cannot or will not so refrain are shunned by their neighbors and made the objects of satire by the likes of Swift and Dickens. (24)

This is strong medicine. So too is the notion that college and university teaching must be recognized as a discrete set of performances predicated on adherence to explicit professional norms and standards; these norms and standards exclusively concern scholarly inquiry as that inquiry finds its expression in teaching and research. Fish's term for this is "academicizing," and if the word is not one that rolls easily off the tongue, certainly its assumptions strike plainly between the eyes. We teach, we study and analyze, we research and write. These are the only kinds of work academics can do, given the nature and context of our setting. And Fish's answer, of course, is not the final word; another answer to questions of our professional purpose may be found in Anna Neumann's examination of the working-lives of mid-career faculty.

While Neumann's *Professing to Learn: Creating Tenured Lives and Careers in the American Research University* focuses exclusively on professors working in research universities, her findings and insights have wide applicability. That applicability is derived principally from her concentration on passion in the working lives of teacher-scholars, and especially the ways in which that passion informs professors' desires to deepen and broaden their learning after tenure. Importantly, the learning Neumann profiles is not only tied to a faculty member's scholarship. She highlights as well what she terms the "political dynamics of collegueship," and how we must learn to negotiate the "bureaucratic cultures" of the colleges and universities we serve (14). Of particular importance to Neumann is the place of meaning in the working lives of faculty, and in particular the sense of meaning we derive from scholarly learning and what "professors, university leaders, and researchers" may do to strengthen shared commitments to such learning (15). When considered alongside the other books discussed here, Neumann's makes a rich contribution to how we might ascribe greater importance to the role of learning in the lives of individual faculty members, and the organizational contexts of which we are a part. As she remarks, professors' scholarly learning should be rightly seen as "animating—and humanizing—higher education's mission of knowledge production for the social good" (15). To focus as Neumann does on scholarly learning may serve to remind

us that our work, "at its best, is a search for personal meaning." It is work that we cannot do alone, as the team members from Illinois College describe in their essay (p 6).

One scholar who has sought to expand the discussion of faculty careers to embrace the larger community of learning is bell hooks, who has written at length about the need to "liberate" student minds rather than to "indoctrinate" them (*Teaching Community*, 2003). Part of what drove her to think about such issues was her own sense of burnout and anger, which came as her career progressed. As part of her attempt to redefine her own role as a professor, she took time off to think about what would make her own experience and that of students more positive. Her alienation led her to use words such as "dread" and "doom" to describe her growing distaste for the classroom and her need to find new meaning. The mid-career crisis she faced led her to take a two-year leave, where she continued teaching and learning, but without the stress of grading and other pressures. Her description of the invigoration of her professional life and the new "pedagogy of hope" that she developed provides a thoughtful and articulate way to re-imagine professorial roles. It also speaks to the continued importance of sabbatical leave programs at universities and colleges; good teachers need time to rejuvenate, and those at mid-career often feel this pressure the most. The question of "time to think" is one that universities need to address. Additionally, questions of

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advancement in rank, merit pay, leave policies, and family leave all affect the continued success of mid-career faculty. Cedarville University is showing through the creation of post-tenure processes for review and recognition (p 9) that it, like other institutions, recognizes the importance of keeping mid-career faculty engaged at various levels.

Like hooks, William M. McDonald and his colleagues also re-imagine professors' roles. *Creating Campus Community: In Search of Ernest*

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[Clearing the Bar, continued]

Boyer's Legacy offers a thoughtful, wide-ranging picture of the ways in which community may be realized on college campuses. This sense of community is derived principally from the legacy of Ernest Boyer, who wrestled across most of his professional life with what community should look like. Key to that vision, as McDonald highlights, should be the commitment for a college or university to be a place where learning is the focus, where civility is affirmed, where personhood is honored and diversity pursued, where group obligations guide individuals' behavior, and a place, finally, characterized by compassion and the celebrations of shared traditions.

Of particular interest in McDonald's edited volume is the commitment it places on practice. The contributors are primarily concerned with identifying habits of reflection and practice that might deepen opportunities for collaborative work across a college or university, collaboration understood in ways that promote community in that word's most authentic sense. The kinds of practices described in the book are worth thinking about; in many cases they are ones that would inject the promise of richer conversations across an institution. Of course, those conversations serve as the first step in community's realization. As McDonald and his contributors remark, "To create real community we must act with care. We need to act with passion, with clear vision, and with thoughtfulness toward others" (176). Wittenberg University, through its peer-review lottery, has taken up Boyer's call and has created an experience that celebrates the communal aspects of pedagogy (p 9). Practices informed by such principles will result in deeper, more authentic relationships founded on the common ground of learning, humility, and celebration for the array of gifts and talents that give our institutions their distinctive character.

Taken together, the articles and books discussed here remind us that our careers are far from static or predictable. We have ample opportunities to reflect upon an array of habits by which we might affirm and sustain the sense of vitality, engagement, and discovery that characterized this track meet when we first began it. If it is true that, by mid-career, we carry an array of obligations—professional and personal—that might affect how we undertake the different events which comprise our professional portfolio, the opportunities to compete with creativity, compassion, and integrity remain as central as ever.

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[More Than Just Good Intentions]

By Kelly Dagan, Elizabeth Rellinger-Zettler, and Deborah Beal (Illinois College)

How many of you have had great intentions to continue work begun at a conference or workshop, only for it to get lost in the shuffle of your daily routine on campus? Unfortunately, we have experienced this more than we would like to admit, with one exception: our attendance at the Lilly Mid-Career Faculty Issues Workshop in September 2010.

None of us had any knowledge of a budding national interest in mid-career faculty issues when we read the e-mail requesting proposals to attend the workshop. Each of us had thought these issues to be individual ones, against which we had to struggle alone. Quite frankly, we were skeptical of the usefulness of such a workshop—Was this just an opportunity to get together and complain for a few days? Yet one of us felt she was drowning in responsibilities, another was questioning the choices she had made in her career up to this point, and the third was dealing with changes in direction in her personal and professional life. Despite our reservations regarding the usefulness of the workshop, we knew the issues we were facing could not be ignored.

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The workshop exceeded all of our expectations. For us, this workshop was different from others we had attended, and it motivated us to continue the work on mid-career issues. The conference organizers did many things right. First, teams had to submit a proposal to attend. There had to be significant interest and motivation to construct a proposal. Second, readings were required in advance of the workshop. The readings were generally useful, interesting, and focused. Based on the assigned readings, each team had responsibilities in the workshop to present some of the information we had all read. Finally, the actual workshop involved *real* discussions and debates, as well as open and honest sharing of information (personal, professional, and institutional). The agenda was action-oriented. We began to see the issues as not just individual, but institutional and group-oriented. We became aware that others were experiencing similar situations and that there was a growing national interest in these issues. The workshop gave us focused time to re-

acknowledge our privileged positions and what we loved about our careers. We were able to refocus our attention on what we saw as our calling in our work. Finally, six months later, there was a follow-up workshop. This was genius! Knowing that we would be reporting about what we had engaged in since the first workshop was a great motivator. In addition, great feedback from other teams maintained our energy to pursue this work.

You too may have had a few conferences, like the one we describe, that you remember as inspirational or motivational. The real key is to keep that motivation when you return to your home campus. While the dynamics and relationships of every campus are different, the steps we followed when we returned to our campus were successful and we believe that they may make a good process for others to follow as well. First, we got our administration involved. We set up a meeting with our Academic Dean, Dr. Elizabeth Tobin, to update her on the workshop, express our enthusiasm to continue this work, and highlight our interest in working *with* her to move forward with these discussions for our own mid-career faculty. Getting administration on board is crucial. Second, we got other faculty involved. We booked ourselves in a slot for our already existing Faculty Symposium Series on Friday afternoons. We found a huge amount of interest and excitement about the issues facing mid-career faculty. Our colleagues seemed to have the moment we had at the workshop: They wanted to keep talking long after our symposium had ended. Finally, we applied for an in-house faculty collaboration grant focused on bringing information and discussion about mid-career issues to our faculty. Because of the discussions we had had with the Academic Dean and fellow colleagues, we believe we have generated wider interest in mid-career issues than before plausible at our institution. As a result of this interest, we received a \$6,650 grant from Illinois College to pursue mid-career issues on our campus through academic year 2011-2012.

The award we received came from the Richard T. Fry Faculty Collaboration Fund. The purpose of this fund is to bring faculty together from across campus to engage in work that is beneficial for the larger campus community. As we indicated in our proposal, we put a call out in Summer 2011 for interested faculty to participate in discussions regarding mid-career issues, and we will develop a workshop for 10-15 interested faculty in Fall 2011. In order to discover the needs of mid-career fac-

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[More Than Just Good Intentions, continued]

ulty and how they may differ from those of other faculty groups, we will conduct a survey to help us choose common readings and discussion topics. Additionally, we will publish information about existing opportunities for mid-career faculty. Finally, we will assist mid-career faculty in their career goals to enhance creativity, productivity, and continued success. We hope to achieve these goals in part by inviting a speaker to our campus who will address mid-career issues specifically or balancing academic life more generally. This speaker is scheduled for Spring 2012. The entire faculty will be invited to hear this speaker, and members of the workshop will have separate, more concentrated time with the speaker.

As you can see from the goals of our proposal, we would like to accomplish much. However, one issue that we insisted upon is that our workshop, readings, and speakers must be of interest to and useful for faculty at Illinois College. Thus, much rests upon the survey we will develop and administer to our colleagues. However, we expect that our faculty will need and want many of the same aspects that we took away from the Lilly workshop. We are now certain that our faculty need to be involved in systematic and focused discussion of mid-career issues. This will allow them to realize, as we did, that their issues are not unique—they are not alone.

This knowledge is more likely to lead to *action*, which is another issue we feel cannot be abandoned. We are now committed to act on behalf of mid-career faculty, and we know that we will be able to develop in our colleagues that same commitment to act. Ultimately, we expect that the entire faculty will gain a better understanding of the role of mid-career faculty, learn what resources are available to mid-career faculty at our institution, create a plan for individuals' future work, and offer ideas for institutional changes to address the needs of mid-career faculty. As a requirement of the grant, we will submit a report to the administration of Illinois College regarding our group's progress and recommendations.

We could not be more excited about this project, and we all feel that we have sustained more energy and motivation for this topic than we have for many others in the past. A visionary, motivational workshop structure with follow-up and making administrative and colleague-focused connections on our own campus were the keys to maintaining this motivation. At the personal level, this has helped each of us see how we might move past some of our mid-career hurdles. We know that we are engaging in a new area of scholarship while improving faculty life at our college. We also know that this work is appreciated by our campus colleagues and by our Lilly comrades throughout the Midwest.

[Notes from the Dark Side]

Some Modest Reflections on the Faculty-Administration Divide

By Miguel Martínez-Saenz (St. Cloud State University)

Some years ago, after I made the decision to engage in administrative work, the litany from my colleagues began: "So, I see you have decided to go to the dark side." Recalling Darth Vader's hope that Luke will see the "darkness," I began to wonder what had drawn me away from the light.

Did my colleagues think, as a matter of course, that referring to the administration as the "dark side" was a way of distancing themselves from the "evil empire" that had come to govern colleges, to willfully undermine the noble pursuit they had chosen? Weren't academics supposed to be in the business of understanding complexity? Why was simplistic and superficial language being used? Why was it so commonplace?

After all, when George W. Bush used the expression "axis of evil," many, including myself, chas-

tised him for oversimplifying and for attempting to justify actions that required more nuanced explanations and more robust analysis. Furthermore, many were outraged that Bush would, betraying his ignorance of history, resurrect language and images that were quite prevalent during previous military encounters—language that simplified irresponsibly, yet strategically, the circumstances of September 11, 2001. Demonizing "the other," let us recall, has been a repeated strategy of many régimes, understood in an ideologically promiscuous sense.

One could also recall the reception of the infamous analysis presented by Samuel Huntington in his essay "The Clash of Civilizations," which was labeled vitriolic and irresponsible by various scholars. Many critics characterized Huntington

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[Notes from the Dark Side, continued]

as engaging in analysis, if one were willing to call it analysis, that was meant to incite and to aggrandize the already overinflated ego of the United States. Ideological and misguided critics claimed that

Huntington was a mere apologist for the Global World Order that was perpetuating an imperialistic and colonizing mindset. But I digress.

To return to the subject of THE administration, why shouldn't faculty use demonizing language when speaking of college administrators? Many faculty do consider administrators to be the enemy. Perhaps developing such categories with higher education may allow some faculty to feel less responsible for their possible complicities and, as a consequence, Morpheus's grasp remains joyful even though delusional. Put differently, creating conditions that allow one to escape blame, even though illusory, might be a useful antidote to the disenchantment that rages

MANY FACULTY DO
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BE THE ENEMY

on in our post-Enlightenment world

Another digression may be in order. In the *Confessions* Augustine seems to have been prompted to reflect on the importance of taking responsibility for his actions and resisting the idea that God, not Augustine himself, was responsible for his sins. As he writes in the *Confessions*:

I still thought that it is not we who sin but some other nature that sins within us. It flattered my pride to think that I incurred no guilt and, when I did wrong, not to confess it... I preferred to excuse myself and blame this unknown thing which was in me but was not part of me. The truth, of course, was that it was all my own self, and my own impiety had divided me against myself. My sin was all the more incurable because I did not think myself a sinner. (*Confessions, Book V, Section 10*)

Is this not unlike the disavowal experienced by faculty members and administrators alike? Keep in mind, there is more than a fair share of finger-

pointing, and I think there is sufficient evidence to maintain that the categorizing cuts both ways. As Larry Shin notes in a recent essay, there appears to be "no greater obstacle to shared governance than the 'us versus them' world view of faculty and administrators...." So, as the faculty blames administrators for adopting corporate strategies that overlook the importance of education and administrators lambast faculty for failing to focus enough of their time on working with students, the public continues to lose faith in the importance of higher education.

My hope is to challenge readers to ponder the impact our language has on the mental models we use in higher education. Mid-career faculty must be especially mindful, since many of them are called upon to engage in much more in-depth and meaningful interaction with administrators at this stage in their careers. If we are to be responsible members of our institutional communities, we cannot simply stand back and criticize without engaging in behavior that fundamentally betrays our commitments and our stated values. We must be willing to take risks and "dirty our hands," or we can continue to choose to pretend that the washing of our hands can be done by simply blaming "the other."

All said, to believe I can explain why I entered the administration would be akin to attempting to articulate coherently my reason for studying philosophy. In some sense, one might say, "it" called me. Not unlike Augustine, who sensed God's command to open the scriptures and read them, I felt drawn to administration. I believed, not incidentally, that there was potential to influence some administrative matters especially as they related to the direction of the academic enterprise generally. Put differently, grounding, in a philosophical sense, our understanding of liberal education at a time when it was under assault seemed a noble pursuit. Time will only tell if I was at least half-right.

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[Report: Engagement in Lilly Workshop]

Cedarville University engagement in Lilly workshop launches new faculty evaluation process
By Bob Chasnov (Cedarville University)

Having had the opportunity to interact with faculty from a number of religious-based private colleges in the Midwest, I was encouraged to initiate a process on the campus of Cedarville University with the eventual goal of enhancing the scholarship among post-tenured faculty. My first activity was to report the findings from the Lilly workshop to the Faculty Academic Advisory Committee (FAAC), upon which I was serving at the time of invitation to the workshop. This occurred about one month after the workshop. At the invitation of the Academic Vice President (AVP), I constructed a presentation which included the goals of the Lilly workshop and the results gleaned from the attendees. Charts were developed which provided contrasts between the institutions represented in areas such as standard faculty load, equivalent load for laboratory or clinical or research or administration, and sabbatical leave policy. The one rather startling statistic which was conveyed in that presentation was the near-unanimous reporting from the attendees that their institutions did not have an established system to provide merit pay to faculty who were high scholastic achievers. Naturally, this led to a discussion of the need for an effective evaluation process upon which merit pay would be based. I was soon asked to participate on a sub-committee of the FAAC which was formed to develop a definition of "scholarship" that it would use in the evaluation process of the faculty.

The sub-committee met over a six-week period soon after the start of the 2011 Spring semester. We began by first trying to define just exactly what "scholarship" means and how it could be viewed from the perspective of a diverse faculty. Cedarville's definition of "scholarship" was adapted from the work of Ernest Boyer (1990), including an update by the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of Canada (2009). It would consist of five components: *Discovery*, *Teaching & Learning*, *Application*, *Integration*, and *Creative Artistry*.

With this definition of "scholarship" in hand, each academic department would be responsible for determining whether an activity or work by its faculty falls within one of the five categories of scholarship. Departments were encouraged to develop rubrics to assign value to the various levels within any category. For example, within the area of *Discovery*, faculty should be evaluated differently for having a book published compared with having an article published in a refereed journal compared with having a presentation published in a conference proceedings. Each departmental standard for evaluating

their faculty will undergo a review by the FAAC to ensure consistency. The final approval of departmental standards will be at the discretion of the AVP.

Accompanying these new definitions and standards is a new biennial Faculty Evaluation process for post-tenured faculty. As with most standard tenure processes, the categories of *Teaching Effectiveness*, *Scholarship*, and *Service* are evaluated. It will be the responsibility of each faculty member to substantiate the significance and quality of his or her classroom performance, any activity or work deemed scholarly, and any service to either his or her academic department, school, or college or to the university.

As of the end of the 2011 Spring semester, the status of the evaluation process for our faculty stands as stated above. Will there be a concerted effort on the part of the administration of Cedarville University to apply the new data about faculty scholarship to the initiation of merit pay for faculty? The faculty are, not surprisingly, split on this issue. Some see this new process as aiding in the promotion to full professor. This concern is all well and good, but it does not speak to the foundational reason which spurred the workshop—how to keep mid-career faculty actively pursuing scholarly activity. An incentive such as merit pay would be a clear benefit to the faculty, the institution, and the academic community at large.

In a local newspaper article about the Cincinnati public schools, the writer observed that "Leaders of the state's third-largest school district say they are the first in the state to launch a system that ties teacher pay to student achievement" (2011). I'm hoping that Cedarville University, as well as the other fine religious-based private colleges in the Midwest, might consider linking faculty pay to faculty achievement!

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[Playing the Lottery]

By Margaret Goodman and Ty Buckman (Wittenberg University)

Contrary to what our peers at larger institutions might imagine, it is no easy thing to create a culture of collaborative teaching on a small campus and to overcome the deep professional resistance almost all of us harbor toward sharing our classrooms with our peers.

This is no doubt a function of the settings in which most academics have non-student observers in their classes: when they are graduate students having their teaching evaluated for recommendation letters for the academic market, when they are junior faculty gathering support letters for a tenure file, when they are 'up for promotion' and need evidence of good teaching to round out a dossier or soften the impact of a batch of substandard student evaluations. In all of these contexts, asking a (typically more experienced) fellow teacher to come visit one's class is infused with vulnerability and supplication, and as a result we learn to seek out whenever possible only those observers whose generous disposition is unimpeachable. And it would be foolish not to, because the stakes are too high to take a chance on a colleague who might somehow assume that direct and constructive advice is more valuable to the aspiring teacher than the creation of a corona of glowing praise.

How many of us are willing to demonstrate that there is room for improvement in our teaching?

Another reason many of us avoid having colleagues observe our teaching is the simple fact that the success of a class taught well depends to an uncomfortable degree upon

the students in the room—a variable that can be notoriously difficult to control. The fear of the awkward silence following the unanswered question, or the mistake on the chalk or white-board that sends ripples of giggles through a class, or the sudden and inexplicable inability to answer a student question so obvious and reasonable that it could serve as a basic test of professional competence are anxieties just rational enough to be difficult to dismiss. When combined with the high stakes nature of most formal evaluations, the unpredictability of the student contribution to a class can deter even those colleagues who would otherwise be open to receiving feedback from their peers.

On small university and college campuses, where the rhetoric of good teaching and the comparative benefits of small classes permeate public and private discussion of the institution, and where many of one's colleagues have received awards and have been otherwise recognized for their teaching prowess, inviting a colleague to observe one's teaching is akin to inviting comparison to intimidating peers, real or imagined. In the midst of so much excellence, how many of us are willing to demonstrate that there is room for improvement in our own teaching?

Finally, college-level classroom teaching remains a highly personalized, highly variable endeavor. Two faculty members from the same discipline given the same material to cover for the same cohort of students will almost certainly employ different means of reaching their pedagogical goals—and be able to provide independent justification for doing so. When you invite a colleague to sit in on your class, you can be sure from the outset that there will be anywhere from a dozen to fifty moments when that colleague would employ a different pedagogical strategy,

(Continued on page 11)

[Playing the Lottery, continued]

would handle a question differently, would turn left when you turned right.

tinue the conversations and get feedback on the experience.

WE FINALLY
DECIDED TO KEEP
IT SIMPLE.

In the face of all of this resistance, this past spring, thirty-six Wittenberg University faculty members signed up to visit each other's classes and engage in follow-up conversations on teaching. Because of ongoing discussion (and complaints) on campus about peer evaluation of teaching—for many of the reasons enumerated above—we finally decided to keep it simple. What were the main goals? To promote conversations across disciplines about teaching and to increase collegiality on our campus.

To reduce the attendant anxiety involved in peer review, as well as the real and perceived burden of the work involved, and to overcome the scheduling challenges faced by busy faculty, we arrived at the idea of a "Peer Review Lottery."

Prior to our annual day-long faculty retreat in January, faculty members interested in visiting a class and having someone visit their classes submitted their names and the time their classes met. Then, at the retreat, each participant drew a class from a time slot when he or she was available. The instructions were simply to attend the class sometime within the next six weeks, then meet to discuss the session. (By mutual agreement, the observed were asked not to solicit letters from the observers.) As a small incentive for a follow-up conversation, we provided coupons to Post 95, our campus café, hoping that that, too, would promote community and collegiality. Then in March, all participants were invited to a wine and cheese reception to con-

The level of participation surprised a number of faculty who had tried without success over the years to increase participation in peer review, and the feedback was predominantly positive. Participants noted a shared excitement and energy around conversations about teaching with faculty from other disciplines, and they appreciated the informal set-up and ease of scheduling. Advantages participants identified included: "It gets us out of our silos, allows us to see commonalities"; "This was not so 'evaluating'"; "We get to see what our students experience"; "We mix it up across disciplines, which builds social capital and promotes broader institutional *esprit de corps*"; and they appreciated "having it scheduled *for me*." Suggested improvements to the lottery included setting up pairs that make reciprocal visits to each other's classes, providing a possible rubric for teacher evaluation, and identifying ways to build from the informal first class visit to a more formal review. And, under "Other Comments," the most common suggestion (nine of ten who responded to this question) was some variation on, "Thanks—I loved it!"

*In its inaugural year, the Peer Review Lottery...
broke down some of the barriers to sharing our
classrooms...*

In its inaugural year, the Peer Review Lottery had the effect on our campus of breaking down some of the barriers to sharing our classrooms and labs with our peers. It also has given us hope that, if the high level of participation continues in subsequent years, our campus culture can shift away from one that regards teaching as a professional activity performed in isolation from our peers, toward a community of teachers committed to collaboration and mutual improvement.

[Crisis? Process? Profession?]

By **Mónica Ayala-Martínez** (Denison University)

It is Friday afternoon and I am getting ready for a trip to Springfield, Ohio. This will be my first time in Springfield and my first time at Wittenberg University. Since I will attend a workshop for mid-career faculty, my husband jokingly hands me a box of Kleenex and a bar of dark chocolate and makes some comments about people in mid-life crisis. I leave home wondering if I've been drawn to join this group because I am in crisis...

Several months have passed since my first encounter with this group. I think about that experience and about what that open dialogue with mid-career faculty from various colleges put in motion for me: a reflection about the profession as a process, an understanding of the crisis as a moment in the process.

WHAT DOES A TEACHING CAREER BRING AFTER TENURE?

In our careers as academics in small institutions, we tend to focus intensely on achieving goals that could lead us to tenure. Since teaching is the main focus of our academic lives, once we have been granted tenure, we are also able to refine both the content of our courses and the teaching methodologies and materials we use in the classroom, and we have defined a path in our research agendas. It is not a surprise that after ten years in the profession we find ourselves wondering, What now? How do we keep the passion alive inside of us? How do we keep the excitement? Where do we find the strength to continue the journey as creative wanderers?

When we look back at our careers after going through the ordeal of the tenure process, we have many stories to tell about encounters with students, successful and unsuccessful experiences in the classroom, and new routes discovered in our research agendas.

I particularly remember the day I decided to become a teacher instead of submitting the application for medical school back in my native country. I also remember the day I decided to apply for jobs in the United States with the conflicted understanding that I was going to

build a life and a career away from home. I also distinctly remember the day I was granted tenure after a painful appeal process, and the many e-mails and cards from thankful students.

What is hard to see in the excitement and rush of the daily work in a semester is the fact that we practice a profession that is comprised of moments, of cycles, of points in time. In other words, it is hard for us to think about our careers as a process. Doing that offers us a framework to understand that, despite the fact that there are standards that we all have to reach when being evaluated, there are also many ways to answer the question: What does a teaching career bring after tenure?

The answers to the question are also shaped by several tensions that are always present in our academic lives. Some of these tensions are the need to be creative and innovative while at the same time responding to the standards and norms used to measure our work; others include the need to balance the demands of a job that could require us to work at night and during weekends with those who share our research interests and personal lives; we also feel the importance of taking advantage of the skills we have refined with experience, while making sure we explore ways to renew methodologies, teaching strategies, and class materials.

After fourteen years in the profession I also find myself wondering: What is ahead of me in the next fifteen years? Where do I see myself? What do I see myself doing? Are these shared concerns or just the reflection of my "middle age crisis"? Are there possible cultural changes in our institutions that would help negotiate possible solutions to at least some of these tensions? What decisions can an academic community make to help us live more balanced lives?

At this point in my career, those questions and the work that has begun, thanks to the conversations with colleagues at Wittenberg, give a creative twist to the word "crisis." These questions open up opportunities to explore, precisely at a moment in which I feel the urge to do things, to make things happen for a community of scholars brought together by the understanding that there are still things to be done, that change is still possible.

[Inspiring and Assisting] Strategies to Empower Faculty

By Michele Beery and Laura Struve (Wilmington College)

As a result of our participation in the Lilly conference, "Wanting Something More," at Wittenberg University in September 2010, our faculty team proposed two concrete actions to pursue at Wilmington College: holding a Writers' Workshop to encourage faculty scholarship and incorporating faculty into the annual student research symposium. We wanted to inspire, assist, and showcase faculty scholarship.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs, Jim Reynolds, agreed to include faculty in the symposium, and the annual symposium was held on April 29, 2011. Eleven faculty members presented their current research, students presented their capstone projects, and faculty also presented research they had done in conjunction with students. All presentations took the form of poster sessions, and all presentations were voluntary for faculty and students alike. Overall, 87 students and 11 faculty presented their work in an open forum for two hours.



There was an almost universal desire to focus future attention on fostering community...

The symposium, which highlighted the deep connection between research at all levels of the institution, was so successful that a proposal to move the symposium next year to a date when the Board of Trustees was on campus met with great approval. Because the symposium showcased the nature and amount of research that faculty conduct and supervise, it is important for the Board to see the kind of research that faculty enable students to achieve as well as the scholarship that forms such an important part of faculty life.

In addition to the research symposium, thirteen Wilmington College faculty and staff met for a

Writer's Workshop for four days in May 2011 immediately following graduation. The event began with a presentation on the purposes and structural options for writing groups by guest speaker Professor Katie Kinnucan-Walsh, who has published on the topic of writing support groups. The presentation gave the group a place to start, and the articles she shared contained specific helpful suggestions. Participants said that they came for camaraderie, inspiration, and accountability, but most of all, to devote time to writing.

The event was supported by a small award from the Instructional Development and Resources Committee to pay for the speaker and for lunch each day. The food, especially, was appreciated and was considered a plus for future get-togethers. The conversations that occurred around a shared meal were considered an added benefit for some, especially because there is not a shared time or place for faculty to socialize during the school year.

The majority of the time was devoted to individual writing. Some sample ground rules, like not taking phone calls or e-mails, were provided, but participants were free to set their own boundaries. Almost everyone agreed that they wanted to continue the group format in some way; however, this ranged from "meeting twice a week this summer with my new-found writing partner," to "semi-annual writing work weeks just like this one." Feedback suggested a desire by some for more focused writing activities, but others wanted only brief check-in meetings each day with work-partners or small group writing and editing teams. Hopefully, these working relationships will continue to evolve.

When asked to indicate "mid-career faculty" issues for further attention, there was an almost universal desire to focus future attention on fostering community, followed by promoting excellence at Wilmington, initiating voluntary cross-disciplinary class visits, and supporting post-tenure accountability and inspiration. The success of the workshop has inspired us to organize another writing retreat over winter break, regardless of increased institutional funding.

[Lilly Fellows Program]

A Vibrant Vehicle for Cross-Institutional Conversations

By Joseph Creech, Director



Wittenberg University belongs to a national network of church-related schools which make up the Lilly Fellows Program in Humanities and the Arts (LFP), based at Valparaiso University in northwest Indiana. The LFP exists to strengthen the quality and shape the character of church-related institutions of higher learning, by fostering conversation and developing leadership among church-related colleges and universities. The LFP sustains three distinct yet integrated initiatives to meet these goals:

- The first is a residential, two-year **Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship Program** at Valparaiso University for young scholars who wish to renew their sense of vocation within a Christian community of learning in order to prepare themselves for positions of teaching and leadership within church-related institutions.
- The second initiative is the **Lilly Graduate Fellows Program**, which supports, during their first three years of graduate school, young men and women of exceptional academic talent who are exploring vocations in church-related higher education. For example, 2006 Wittenberg graduate Alison Davis, now in pursuit of her Ph. in Religion at the University of Chicago, was just named a 2011-2014 Lilly Graduate Fellow.
- The third is the collaborative **National Network of Church-Related Colleges and Universities** that sponsors a variety of activities and publications designed to explore the Christian character of the academic vocation and to strengthen the religious nature of church related institutions.

To foster such conversation, this National Network sponsors a number of activities and grants: At a national level, the LFP sponsors an annual national conference, an annual workshop for senior administrators, and numerous electronic and print publications, all of which are available to network schools. In addition, the LFP makes

available grants of varying sizes to promote: campus Mentoring Programs (Wittenberg and Xavier have both been recipients); Summer Seminars for College Teachers; Network Exchanges, where faculty and administrators from network schools can share the best practices and effective programs; and small Regional Conferences—a flexible category of programs that encourages examination of topics of special significance to faculty, administrators, and students at a particular institution or group of institutions or that engages matters of special concern to church-related higher education. Administrators and faculty can participate in most of these activities, often without fees.

In the fall of 2009, Professor Tammy Proctor of Wittenberg University and Professor Jeffrey Kurtz of Denison University won a Regional Conference grant for *Wanting Something More: A Midwest Regional Workshop Reflecting on the Professional Lives of Mid-Career Faculty*. Held on September 24 to 26, 2010, at Wittenberg University, with a follow-up meeting on March 26, 2011, at Denison University, the conference brought together eighteen participants and two observers from a total of eight different schools to examine the working lives of faculty in mid-career (those who have taught for at least nine years, but fewer than twenty years). The conference organizers designed the program to facilitate directed discussions about passion for teaching, intellectual development, fostering collegiality, and sustaining intellectual engagement after tenure. Participants attended five sessions, each with its own reading tailored to a specific theme that addressed both the personal and institutional challenges to maintaining careers that flourish after tenure. Special care was given to insuring that participants took concrete ideas back to their respective schools. The LFP was pleased to support this program, as it no doubt strengthened those present and will promote change among the institutions. For more on the ideas generated by this conference, please contact Tammy Proctor at tproctor@wittenberg.edu.

For more information about involvement in LFP initiatives, please see the accompanying sidebar, visit the LFP website at www.lillyfellows.org, or talk with your LFP representatives.

[Lilly Fellows Program]

Specific Opportunities for Funding

The Lilly Fellows Program in Humanities and the Arts sponsors a number of programs and grant opportunities for our member schools that forward our aim to strengthen the quality and shape the character of church-related institutions of higher learning.

Administrators or faculty members at one of our network institutions have the opportunity to attend or apply for the following opportunities sponsored by the Lilly Fellows Program in Humanities and the Arts:

Workshop for Senior Administrators, *Leadership, Mission, and Meaning: Engaging the Curriculum*, October 20-21, 2011, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama. For more information, go to: <http://www.lillyfellows.org/NationalNetwork/AdministratorsWorkshop.aspx>

Network Exchange Program, *The Human Journey Core: Integrating A Faith-based Education for the 21st Century: Challenges and Responses*, April 15-18, 2012, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut. For more information, go to: <http://www.lillyfellows.org/GrantsPrizes/NetworkExchangePrograms.aspx>

LFP Summer Seminar for College Teachers, "Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland: Theory and Practice," July 7-28, 2012. For more information, go to: <http://www.lillyfellows.org/GrantsPrizes/SummerSeminars.aspx>

The deadline for applications for Lilly Fellows Program **Regional Conference Grants** and **Mentoring Program Grants** is September 15, 2011. For more information, go to: <http://www.lillyfellows.org/GrantsPrizes.aspx>

Deadline to nominate undergraduates for the **Lilly Graduate Fellows Program** is November 15, 2011. For more information, go to: <http://www.lillyfellows.org/GraduateFellowsProgram.aspx>

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Open Call for Submissions

Chalk, Spring 2012: "Teaching Stories and Case Studies"

The next issue of *Chalk* will center on the community building potential of teaching stories, and their social scientific cousins, case studies. Send proposals or articles (1,000-2,000 words) as electronic attachments, with "Chalk submission" in the subject line, to: tbuckman@wittenberg.edu. Submissions must be received by February 1, 2012 for consideration. (*Chalk's* primary audience is liberal arts university and college faculty.)

Guest Editors' Acknowledgments

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**The Lilly Fellows Program in Humanities and Arts ■ The Great Lakes Colleges Association
Denison University ■ Wittenberg University ■ Ty Buckman ■ Gabriel Valley**

Chalk Online

With this issue, *Chalk* takes up its new online home at www.chalkjournal.org. Ben McCombs, Wittenberg University Webmaster, secured the domain, designed the site, and also adapted the impressive online browsing feature for the convenience of our readers.

Chalk: Teaching and Faculty Development is published biannually by the Wittenberg University Faculty Development Board for the faculty of Wittenberg University and the broader community of teacher scholars.

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