Happenings

Students Can Put Their Right Brains to Work with Two Creativity Contests!

The UNF Reads! book selection for this year is Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the Future*. In this book Daniel Pink argues that the era of "left brain" dominance, characterized by linear and logical thinking, is giving way to a new world in which "right brain" qualities like inventiveness and creativity are dominant. In order to highlight the book's theme, the UNF Reads! program would like to encourage students to exercise their right-brained creativity by participating in two great contests!

The first is the Anti-Litter Campaign Poster Contest, which is being
sponsored by UNF Physical Facilities and the UNF Environmental Center. Students are invited to create a poster to discourage littering using a creative slogan and original artwork. Posters will be displayed around campus. The rules for this contest are: Submissions must be 2-dimensional on a poster board or canvas that is 18 x 24 inches; within the artwork include the artist name, major, and the title of the piece; only entries by individuals are allowed for this contest.

The second contest is the Osprey Spirit 3-D Art Contest. Students are encouraged to express their Osprey spirit by creating a 3-D piece of artwork made completely out of recyclable materials! The rules for this contest are: Submissions must be 3-dimensional and must be able to stand on their own; the dimensions of the artwork must not exceed 3 feet x 3 feet x 3 feet; group entries are welcome for this contest.

CASH PRIZES will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in both contests. Entries are due on January 15, 2010 at 12 Noon. Students are to submit entries at the Office of Undergraduate Studies (Building 1, Room 1220). For more information and to obtain an entry form visit www.unf.edu/dept/ecenter/. Winners will be announced February 1, 2010. The cash prizes will be sponsored by the UNF Environmental Center. All submissions will become property of the UNF Environmental Center for future use in environmental and sustainability campaigns.

**CLAS Update from the Academic Testing Office**

Effective July 1, 2009, the College-Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) was eliminated by the State Senate due to lack of funding. However, all students must still meet the College-Level Academic Skills (CLAS) requirement outlined in the amended bill (s. 1007.25, F.S.) in order to confer an associate of arts or baccalaureate degree. To meet the CLAS requirement students may either achieve a score that meets or exceeds the minimum score established by the State Board of Education on a nationally standardized examination or by achieving a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above (on a 4.0 scale) in post-secondary coursework identified by the State Board of Education in conjunction with the Board of Governors. Currently the only nationally standardized examinations approved for use in the State University System are the ACT and SAT. The Board of Governors is working with the Articulation Coordinating Committee to identify other options students may use to meet the requirement.

The Office of Academic Testing website is updated as new information becomes available. Students who have not met the requirement are also sent updates via email. The former Computer Adaptive Test CLAST lab has been repurposed for internet-based testing and is being used to administer Accuplacer college placement tests, the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS), National League for Nursing examinations, and independent study examinations.

Retention Director Search Underway
The Office of Undergraduate Studies is currently conducting a search for a Director of Student Retention and Transition Programs. This position is in response to a request from President Delaney and the executive staff for a plan to address and improve UNF's retention and graduation rates. Additionally, in Fall 2008 the Retention Subcommittee of the Undergraduate Studies Council made recommendations for a position dedicated to addressing retention rates.

This director would be responsible for: developing strategies for improving retention and graduation rates in collaboration with appropriate units and committees on campus; planning, implementation and coordination of first-year experience and learning community programs; and addressing transition into second-year studies for freshmen and transfer students. These programs are intended to meet the residential, transitional, and developmental needs of first-year, transfer, and continuing students, while supporting effective retention consistent with the strategic goals of the university.

Additional responsibilities of the Director will include:

- Identify research-based best practices as the basis for recommendations for improvements and changes to programs in an effort to increase student retention.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of a university-wide task force to develop a First Year Experience strategic plan.
- Collaborate with a range and variety of units and staff including the Academic Center for Excellence, the General Education Council, Week of Welcome committee, and Freshmen Orientation coordinator.
- Monitor success of first year students and develop intervention plans for at-risk and academically struggling first year students.
- Collaborate with Institutional Research to gather and analyze data regarding the contributing factors to retention and graduation, to inform programming decisions.
- Employ gathered data and analysis in assessing and reporting the success of implemented programs.
- Attend conferences and workshops related to retention and the first-year experience and participate in associated professional development activities.
- Serve as ex-officio member of the Undergraduate Studies Council.

Transfer Student Advisory Council Works to Improve Transfer Student Experience

In Fall 2009, the Transfer Student Advisory Council held its first meeting to begin its work on improving the undergraduate experience of students who transfer in to UNF. The council is made up of representatives from all five colleges, as well as representatives from various units and departments on campus. Some of the issues that this group plans to focus attention on are communication with prospective transfer students who express an interest in UNF, collaboration with feeder institutions on articulation agreements, and improved advising for transfer students. The Council will meet monthly and will work closely with the Coordinator of Articulation and Marketing as well as the new Director of Retention and Transition Programs. As our transfer student population increases, the need for substantial programming and structures in place to aid transfer students in the process of integrating into the university's academic and student culture will be very important.

The ADP Steering Committee Needs You!

The American Democracy Project Steering Committee, which has been in operation for over 2 years, is seeking any faculty, staff, and students who are interested in serving on the committee. The mission of the ADP is to raise student awareness about public and international affairs, promote and facilitate student political participation, and encourage civic engagement. The ADP Steering Committee plans, promotes, and implements events, programs, and initiatives that are designed to fulfill its mission. If you are interested in becoming a part of the ADP Steering Committee please contact the Office of Undergraduate Studies at 620-2261. For more information about the
Constitution Week 2009

Constitution Week was held September 14th-18th in celebration of Constitution Day, which is September 17th. This year, students had many opportunities to participate in programs and events that centered on constitutional themes. On Monday, October 14th Student Government once again sponsored the Constitution Week Kick-off Breakfast, where students were able to enjoy Krispy Kreme donuts, register to vote, and obtain a pocket-sized Constitution. On Tuesday, September 15th a film screening of the film "Freedom to Dream: The Rights of Immigrants" was held. Ms. Benétta Standly, of the American Civil Liberties Union Jacksonville, led the discussion following the film.

On Wednesday, September 16th a panel discussion titled "Knock-Knock--It's the Police: The Constitution and Police Misconduct" was held. The panelists included faculty from the Florida Coastal School of Law: Lynn McDowell, Professor of Professional Skills & Director of Clinical Programs; Christopher Roederer, Associate Professor of Law; Marc McAllister, Assistant Professor of Law. The discussion was moderated by UNF’s Kareem Jordan, Assistant Professor in the department of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

On Thursday, September 17th the Constitution Quiz Game, hosted by Janet Owen, Vice President for Governmental Affairs, was held. Teams representing the Honors Program, Student Government and Greek Life competed against each other in a Jeopardy-style quiz game on the U.S. Constitution. After a close game between the Honors Program and Student Government, the Greek Life team was crowned the winners in the "Final Jeopardy" round.

In addition to these great events, students were given the opportunity to participate in the Constitution Day Essay Contest. Students were invited to write a 600-word essay in response to the following question: In the Bill of Rights, which amendment is the most relevant today and why?" Mr. M. Owais Saulat was chosen as the winner of this contest with his essay on the First Amendment, and was awarded a $100 scholarship.

TLO Spotlights

International Studies Students Get Valuable International Experience

In 2008-2009 Dr. Pamela Zeiser was awarded TLO funds to support study abroad opportunities for students in the International Studies Program. International Studies majors undertake an international educational experience as a degree requirement. The TLO scholarships were specifically for students undertaking long-term study abroad programs, to encourage semester- or year-long programs as well as short-term faculty-led programs. The types, locations, and durations of program varied from student to student.

The students who received support travelled to locations that included China, Egypt, Chile, France, Spain, Cyprus and Middle East, Argentina, and Mexico. In the
summer of 2009, Krystal Gomez, a senior International Studies major, participated in a 6 week UNF faculty-led research abroad program in Seville, Spain with Dr. Michael Francis. Below are her comments in response to questions concerning her TLO experience.

1. **Please describe your study abroad experience.**
   I gained the opportunity to live in Seville, Spain for two months where I did historical research at the General Archive of the Indies. At the archive I transcribed 16th century documents where I learned more about 16th century colonial Florida. Seville proved to be an international hub with students and people from all over the world. This city was also completely different from what I am used to, with historical buildings situated everywhere and the Spanish idea of siesta where most stores are closed from 3-6 pm. Through this experience I was able to immerse myself in a different culture other than my own and learn new things from my studies there, the Spanish culture, and the people I met.

2. **How was the funding helpful in your ability to participate in this experience?**
   If it weren't for the funding provided by the TLO scholarship my experience in Seville may not have been possible. I had my apartment paid for thanks to grants given to all of the students who went for their renting expenses. However the plane ticket, food and basic necessities were not covered. Fortunately through the TLO scholarship I was able to live in Seville without having to worry about how I was going to obtain these necessary things.

3. **How was this experience transformational for you?**
   Through this experience I was able to learn more about the world around me by meeting people of different cultures. I gained an understanding of differing perspectives on world politics, culture, education, etc. I also gained more discipline through working at the archive Monday-Friday from 8am-3pm. My research there improved my work ethic and gave me no excuse to be late because I had no car and relied on walking for the most part; making me more responsible for getting to places on time.

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**Students Conduct Coral Research in the Florida Keys**

In Summer 2009, Dr. Cliff Ross took a team of 3 students down to the Florida Keys to conduct research on the impact of environmental stressors on coral larvae. This 2-credit, direct independent study, course gave undergraduate students the opportunity to gain hands on experience working with coral reef biology and physiology. The field component of this project (sample collection and experimental set up) took place at Mote Marine Tropical Laboratory, a fully equipped marine science facility dedicated to marine research, education and conservation. After the field component of this project, the team conducted laboratory analysis of the specimens in Dr. Cliff's UNF laboratory. UNF students were involved in all aspects of this project including adult coral collection, larvae maintenance, experimental setup, and data
collection and biochemical analysis of stress enzyme levels. This experience provided a unique opportunity for undergraduate students interested in marine biology to be exposed to the entire process of experimental design (students were able to personally design experiments with the assistance of the instructor), data collection, and subsequent write up for scientific conference presentation, and publication in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, students were able to work with a unique life-phase of corals that very few people are studying and most people have never seen.

One of the students participating in this TLO, Rory Nicolades, was able to use the data collected during this TLO for her undergraduate honors thesis, which may result in publication in a scientific journal. According to Dr. Ross, "I'd say beforehand all students knew, in the most basic sense, what a coral was. Post-TLO the students now possess a working knowledge of coral life histories, the impacts of environmental stress on coral larvae metabolism, and how we as biologists can monitor coral larvae stress in a quantitative manner. This information can help the students relate to bigger picture scenarios such as coral reef preservation."

Undergraduate Studies Council Update

The mission of the Undergraduate Studies Council is to advance the goals of the university as they pertain to excellence in undergraduate education, undergraduate student learning, and undergraduate student development and academic services.

UNF Reads! Program

The UNF Reads! program had begun its second year with Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the Future*. This year some of the programming surrounding the book that the UNF Reads program has implemented have been a session at the Student Summit led by Mr. David Hayes, a discussion session on how to facilitate creativity in student problem solving, class discussions, and assignments, a book discussion during Family Weekend, and two creativity art contests that are being sponsored by the UNF Environmental Center and Physical Facilities. An additional program that has been suggested is a creativity and innovations festival as a Spring UNF Reads! event.

One recommendation on future enhancements to the program would be for UNF Reads! to be incorporated into Week of Welcome and used more effectively at Orientation. Also, it was suggested that the book that is chosen always has an e-book option that students can access through the UNF library. Annabel Brooks reported that Student Affairs planned to include a session on the current UNF Reads! topic at an October Student Summit event.

Undergraduate Coordinators Program

Feedback on the Undergraduate Coordinators program, which was piloted in the 08-09 academic year, has been received from the first two program participants, Dr. Peter Magyari (Exercise Science) and Dr. Jennifer Kane (Sport Management). Some modifications may be made to the program based on their input. In her comments,
Dr. Jennifer Kane stated that while she had a positive experience with the program, students needs continue throughout the entire year, not just the Fall and Spring. Therefore she suggested that recognition and compensation for Undergraduate Coordinators be extended to include the summer. According to Dr. Jaffee, Academic Affairs would like to repeat the program in the 10-11 academic year.

**Undergraduate Advising**

For the past year, The Task Force for Undergraduate Advising, has been working on analyzing UNF’s current advising structure, researching best practices for advising, and considering a wide range of advising structures in order to develop recommendations for improving undergraduate advising at UNF. The Task Force completed its work in Fall 2009 and has forwarded its recommendations to Provost Mark Workman. Upon receiving those recommendations, Provost Workman requested that Deb Kaye, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Services and Dr. David Jaffee, Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Studies, provide him with a preliminary assessment of the TFUA recommendations. During its October meeting the Undergraduate Studies Council had an opportunity to review the TFUA recommendations and provide feedback. Dr. Workman is planning to engage Deans, Chairs, the AAC, and others who have involvement in advising before making any final determination on modification to the academic advising system.

For more information about the Undergraduate Studies Council please visit the Undergraduate Studies website.