The Undergraduate Studies Newsletter

Fall 2008

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Introduction

The Office of Undergraduate Studies is a unit of Academic Affairs that offers administrative support for programs, policies, and initiatives designed to enhance and enrich the undergraduate experience at the University of North Florida. In addition to overseeing several units (Office of Faculty Enhancement, Center for Instruction and Research Technology, Honors Program, and Undergraduate Academic Enrichment Program) serving the undergraduate student population, the Office of Undergraduate Studies supports the Transformational Learning Opportunity (TLO) program, the American Democracy Project, and UNF Reads!

This newsletter provides insight into some of the programs and activities that the Office of Undergraduate Studies has been involved with in order to fulfill its mission.

Happenings

"Freakonomics" Author Steven Levitt to Speak at UNF

He is known for using economic principles to debunk the conventional wisdom. He has posed thought-provoking questions such as "which is more dangerous: a gun or a swimming pool", "why do drug dealers still live with their moms", and "do parents really matter?" He is the author of the first book selected for the UNF Reads Program, "Freakonomics: A Rouge Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything." His name is Dr. Steven Levitt, and he has been chosen to give the Presidential Lecture this Fall at UNF.
Steven Levitt is a prominent American economist and the best-selling author of “Freakonomics” which spent more than two years on The New York Times bestseller list. He is the winner of the 2003 John Bates Clark Medal, and is currently the Alvin H. Baum Professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Chicago, director of the Initiative on Chicago Price Theory at the University of Chicago, and editor of the Journal of Political Economy.

As the first UNF Reads selection, members of the Freshman class received "Freaknomics" at Freshman Orientation, and were encouraged to read it over the summer. The book has been incorporated into many classes at UNF including freshman writing classes, and other classes in the General Education program. Levitt's appearance on campus is an exciting addition to the other events that have been implemented for the UNF Reads Program.

This lecture is part of the Presidential Lecture Series and is supported by the UNF Foundation. It is free and open to faculty, staff, students, and community members. For more information about tickets visit the Events and Media Relations website.

Fall Transformational Learning Opportunities Symposium

On Monday, November 17, 2008 the Office of Undergraduate Studies will hold its Fall TLO Symposium in Building 14, Room 1601-1603 4pm-6pm. At the symposium faculty, staff, and students will have the opportunity to learn about how selected TLO projects have been developed and implemented at UNF.

Students along with the faculty leaders will make presentations about their projects. Additionally, there will be a TLO Showcase that will include poster presentations highlighting several TLOs. For more information about the TLO Symposium please visit the TLO website.

Task Force Takes a Close Look at Undergraduate Advising

In Spring 2008, the Task Force for Undergraduate Advising was formed by Provost Mark Workman, and charged with the task of reassessing the current advising system at UNF in order to better address the needs of UNF students. The Task Force is made up of students, faculty, and staff representing all 5 colleges and a range of departments on campus.

The Task Force has reviewed data on advising models and best practices in advising from the National Academic Advising Association, reviewed the results related to advising on recent student satisfaction surveys, and considered models at peer institutions. The Deans and Department Chairs were given an opportunity to meet the Task Force to give their perspectives on the current effectiveness of the advising structure at UNF. The Task Force also held focus groups during the Fall semester to learn from students their
perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of undergraduate advising. The Task Force will submit its recommendations to Dr. Workman by the end of the Fall 2008 semester.

Introducing Ms. Rachel Broderick, Director of the Academic Roadmaps Program

In September 2008, Ms. Rachel Broderick stepped into a new role here at UNF. She is the new Director of the Academic Roadmaps Program. The Academic Roadmaps Program is designed to support the University’s commitment to supporting student academic progress, retention, and time-to-degree. As Director, Ms. Broderick will be responsible for assisting in the implementation and maintenance of the Academic Roadmaps system at UNF. She will consult and work with faculty members, academic chairs, professional advising staff, undergraduate coordinators, and ITS personnel to make sure that the system’s functionality is maintained. She will also train faculty and advisors on system functions.

Ms. Broderick is the former Director of Advising in the Brooks College of Health. She has extensive experience working with Banner and the CAPP system, and her skills in these areas will be beneficial as she works closely with ITS personnel on the technical aspects of the Roadmaps system. Additionally, Ms. Broderick is a student advocate whose 19 years of service to students in an academic advising environment provided her with the opportunity to see first-hand student needs/expectations and to develop tools to assist them through the admission, progression and graduation process.

Recently, the following questions were posed to Ms. Broderick and her responses are included below:

**Why do you believe the Academic Roadmaps are important to UNF?**

The Academic Roadmap is more than a term-by-term sample schedule. It is a self-service computer application program designed to notify students when degree progression is off-track. The key to the success of an Academic Roadmap are Mile Marker courses. These courses are the “marker” alerting students, academic advisors and department representatives about student progress so intervention can occur if needed. The Roadmap will offer the individual an opportunity to visualize their academic goals and see they can earn their bachelor’s degree in four years.

**How do Academic Roadmaps differ from the other tools already in place?**

The current advising tool “Curriculum Advising and Program Planning” (CAPP) is an effective tool for providing students and advisors with a list of degree and university requirements. However, CAPP does not provide a recommended sequence guide for mapping-out this course work for graduation. Some colleges provide students with a printed recommended sequence guide. However, there is no tracking to ensure students follow the recommendations of their academic advisor. The Academic Roadmap is a dynamic-tool. Each semester, a student will know if they are on-track based upon course selections.

**What are your short term goals for the Academic Roadmaps Program?**

The Academic Roadmap Initiative is a multi-stage process. My short-term goals include building and testing the 10 pilot programs identified by the five colleges at the university and analysis of the data. Follow-up discussions with the department chairpersons are essential, and promoting the Academic Roadmap Initiative to the university community is also crucial to its success.

**What is your overall goal for the Academic Roadmaps Program?**

I think there are many possibilities for the Academic Roadmap Program. I look forward to submitting requests for technical enhancements to the Roadmap computer application. The goal of the Roadmap is to improve university-wide graduation and retention rates.

**What is Community-Based Transformational Learning?**

The University of North Florida is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of
Colleges and Schools (SACS) to award baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees. Currently the University is in the reaffirmation process, which will be completed by December 2009. An important part of this process is the preparation of the university’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which is a targeted plan for improving the education of UNF students.

UNF has adopted “Community-Based Transformational Learning” as its QEP. Community-Based Transformational Learning (CBTL) promotes engaged learning in authentic community-based settings through faculty/student research projects, internships, fieldwork, co-ops, and service learning. Transformational learning at UNF has been defined as a learning opportunity that potentially enriches or augments student learning and personal development. CBTL focuses on such experiences that take place in the community, and involves the application of abstract knowledge learned in the classroom to the concrete problems and needs of communities.

This QEP is closely tied to the university’s mission, which speaks of engendering in our students a sense of civic responsibility and community engagement, and its commitment to transformational learning, as evidenced through the continued financial support for Transformational Learning Opportunity grants.

Currently, the QEP Development Team is in the process of completing the final draft of the QEP proposal. For more information about the QEP or the SACS re-affirmation process please visit http://www.unf.edu/acadaffairs/IE/SACS.html.

ADP Steering Committee Plans a Plethora of Fall Events

The American Democracy Project Steering Committee has provided many opportunities for students to become civically engaged and educated on political issues throughout the Fall semester. Starting with a Voter Registration drive during the first week of classes, the ADP steering committee has organized and sponsored a range of activities designed to raise student political awareness.

Upcoming Fall ADP events:

**Film Screening: Flight From Death** Wednesday, October 15th, 7pm in the Robinson Theatre. This film uncovers death anxiety as a possible root cause of many of our behaviors on a psychological, spiritual, cultural, and political level. After the film, a presentation will be given by producer Greg Bennick, as well as a presentation by Sheldon Solomon, the social psychologist featured in the film.

**Post-Election Panel Discussion** Wednesday, November 12th, 5pm Location: TBA. The goal of this forum is to discuss the results of the election and some of the policy initiatives that we can expect to see coming from the new administration. Panelists will include Dr. Matthew Corrigan and Dr. Paul Harwood, both in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration. Check back at the ADP website for more information.

Past Fall ADP events:

**Voter Registration Drive** August 25- 29 Faculty were encouraged to distribute voter registration forms to their students during the first week of classes.

**Constitution Week 2008** September 15- 19 Several events were planned to celebrate Constitution Day (September 17th) including a Student Government-sponsored kick-off breakfast, a debate titled "Government-Funded Religion or Choice in Education: Florida's Constitutional Amendment Initiatives", a brown-bag discussion sponsored by the Women's Center called "Cracks in the Ceiling: Women in American Politics", and a UNF Voices Forum was held that was titled "Freedom on Campus." Students were given the opportunity to register to vote at all of the events and Constitution-related resources were put on display in the library.

**Evoking Rights Film Screening** Every Wednesday and Thursday October 1-November 15, 12:00pm-4:00pm, in the University Gallery. This documentary film, produced by Dr. Jillian Smith and her students, features President John Delaney and other members of the UNF campus community answering the question, "What do rights mean to you." Students were given the opportunity to stop in at their leisure to view this film.

**Project Vote Smart** Thursday, October 2nd, 8am-12pm on the UNF Green. PVS is a non-partisan,
non-profit, voter education organization. They provide information on presidential candidates such as campaign finance records, State and Federal Key Votes, and Speeches. This national bus tour is stopping at UNF to provide students with voter education.

**Face-To-Face Event with Former Senator Bob Graham** Friday, October 3rd, 11:00AM Building 14, 1314 Robinson Theatre. Students will have the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with Senator Bob Graham about the American presidency and the upcoming election.

"**Creating the Ideal President: Unlocking the Meaning in Candidate Framing**" Monday, October 6, 12pm-2pm in Building 51/ Room 3201. In this presentation Dr. John Parmelee, Associate Professor of Communication, will examine candidate framing in the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections and how viewers interpret that framing.

Additional events that the ADP Steering Committee have encouraged students, faculty, and staff to attend:

"**The Arab-Israeli Conflict**" Tuesday, Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. in the UNF University Center. Martin Indyk, Director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, will give a lecture on the Arab-Israeli conflict. This event is sponsored by the World Affairs Council.

**Capitol Steps Performance** Thursday, Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m. in the Fine Arts Center, Lazzara Performance Hall. Pre-show Patriotic Jamboree on the front porch of the Fine Arts Center. Food vendors will be available, along with music and much more.

"**The Way We Will Be**" Lecture by John Zogby Tuesday, October 14th, 7:30pm in the UNF University Center. Zogby is the president and CEO of Zogby International. He has conducted polls and focus groups around the world, though he has gained the most publicity for his polls of U.S. presidential elections. This event is sponsored by the UNF Foundation and the World Affairs Council.

"**The Political Outlook**" Tuesday, November 18th, 7:30 p.m. in the UNF University Center. David Brooks, author and New York Times Columnist, will give a lecture on the political outlook after the November elections. This event is sponsored by the World Affairs Council.

For more information about the American Democracy Project at UNF please visit our website at http://www.unf.edu/acadaffairs/undergrad/adp/ADP_home.html.

**Constitution Week 2008 Recap**

Constitution Week was held September 15th-19th and featured many events planned in celebration of Constitution Day, which is September 17th. Educational institutions that receive federal funding are required to hold an educational program about the United States Constitution on September 17 of each year, commemorating the September 17, 1787 signing of the Constitution.

On Monday, October 15th Student Government sponsored a kick-off breakfast. As the students enjoyed Krispy Kreme donuts they were given the opportunity to register to vote and obtain a pocket-sized Constitution. Also, several students in SG dressed up like the founding fathers. In addition to the kick-off breakfast on that Monday, a debate was held that evening titled "Government-Funded Religion or Choice in Education: Florida's Constitutional Amendment Ballot Initiatives." The debate featured Adam Guillette, State Director of the Americans for Prosperity Florida and Ken Hurley, American Civil Liberties Union, Jacksonville.

On Wednesday, October 17th a brown-bag discussion called "Cracks in the Ceiling: Women in American Politics" was held. This event was sponsored by the UNF Women's Center. Additionally, that evening the UNF Voices forum was held. The topic of the forum was “Freedom on Campus” and the impact of the Constitution on higher
education was discussed. Guests were Marc Snow from UNF's General Counsel's office and Dr. Herbert Koegler, chair of the department of Philosophy.

Throughout Constitution week students were able to peruse a display of constitution-related resources in the library and register to vote at each event. The American Democracy Project Steering Committee would like to thank everyone who helped to make Constitution Week a success.

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**TLO Spotlights**

**2009-2010 Call for TLO Applications**

The Office of Undergraduate Studies is currently accepting applications for the fourth round of the Transformational Learning Opportunities (TLO) Program. By submitting a TLO application, full-time, non-visiting UNF faculty and staff can request support for projects that will serve to impact students' intellectual and professional development, and that while giving them a potentially transformative academic experience. The projects that will be funded for Round 4 will take place during the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

To access the application please visit the [TLO website](http://www.unf.edu/acadaffairs/undergrad/UG%20Studies%20website/Newsletter/Fall%2008/Fall08newsletter.html).

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**Students Get an Up-close Look at Urban Education**

In July 2008, Dr. Carolyn Stone and a group of 21 School Counseling graduate students traveled to New York City to participate in an experiential, urban schooling immersion field experience. This TLO project gave students the opportunity to engage in collaborative, constructive learning activities that focus on struggling and resource-challenged public schools in New York City.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of each culture and the factors affecting the education of the children in these communities, the students engaged panels made up of representatives from each cultural group and visited museums. These activities helped the students learn more about the issues specific to the children of each cultural group and gained valuable experience and insight into what makes an effective school counseling program. Students were also able to get an understanding of the role racial, ethnic, cultural heritage, nationality, family structure, and many other socioeconomic factors play in the educational process and how these factors contribute to inequity in schools.

As a result of this TLO project, students are collaborating on the construction of a video ethnography leading to submissions for professional presentations at selected counseling and education conferences including, but not limited to, the Southern Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and the American School Counseling Association (ASCA). Currently, they plan to present their video ethnography at the Education Trust conference in February 2009.
UNF Students Gain Insight into the Culture and Psychology of Europe

UNF Psychology majors had an opportunity this past summer to gain new perspectives on multicultural interactions. This TLO project, part of the course "Culture and Psychology in Europe" taught by Dr. Dominik Güss and Dr. Tess Tuason, students travel to Austria and Germany to study the historical and cultural roots of psychology in Europe and the influence of culture on peoples’ thinking and behavior.

During the trip students were able to interact with professors and students at the University of Vienna, at the University of Bamberg, and at the Max-Planck Institute of Brain Sciences and Cognition in Leipzig. They visited many historical sites such as the Freud museum in Vienna and the lab of Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig, which is the first psychological laboratory worldwide.

As a result of this TLO project, students were able to gain an understanding of how historical and cultural background influences the way people think, act, and behave, and recognize similarities and become more tolerant of differences among various cultures. In a feedback survey, Dr. Güss asked his students about what transformation they experienced as a result of this trip. One of the students said, "I was very humbled after Dachau (the concentration camp). Seeing and experiencing the conditions of the prisoners made me appreciate my family and life so much more."

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. The Council has three working sub-committees: Faculty Advising, Retention, and the First-Year Experience.

Retention Sub-Committee Report Results of Retention Focus Groups

During the Spring 2008 semester students in Dr. Mary Borg's classes organized and conducted focus groups to discuss the issue of retention. They explored reasons why some students matriculate through to graduation, and why others do not persist at the university.

The focus group participants gave three main areas of concern they thought impacted student retention: academic advising, residence life, and opportunities for student engagement on campus. Student suggestions for improvement included advising administered by professors, and tutoring sessions with either graduate students or professors, streamlined rules and regulations in the Residence Hall, and greater support from resident assistants. Student participants also felt that UNF lacks sufficient school spirit and student involvement in campus activities. Students suggested that the university improve the promotion of and communication about activities and events.

The next step in this overall retention study will be the development of a survey based on issues and themes that emerged from the focus groups that will be administered to a larger number of UNF students.

First Year Experience Sub-Committee Implements UNF READS! Program

The First Year Experience Sub-Committee developed the proposal for the UNF Reads! Program which began this summer with incoming Freshmen receiving a free copy of the book *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores*
the Hidden Side of Everything at Orientation. This book, was chosen in consultation with the General Education Council.

Students have participated in various discussion opportunities concerning this book. A blog site was also established for students to post their thoughts on the book as they read it over the summer. Once arriving on campus for the Fall semester, students had the opportunity to participate in discussion groups that were held during the first two weeks of classes in the Robinson Student Life Center and in the Residence Halls.

Additionally, the book is being used as a primary text in all of the freshman writing classes and several other General Education courses. There are also two Residential FIGs that use this book as their central themes ("The Hidden Side of Everything: How American Society Really Works" and "The Hidden Side of Everything: How the American Economy Really Works").

The call for suggestions for the next UNF Reads book has gone out and efforts are currently underway to make a selection for the 2009-2010 program.

Faculty Advising Sub-Committee Pilot Undergraduate Coordinator Program Underway

Two departments have stepped forward to participate in the Undergraduate Coordinator Pilot Project. From the Department of Athletic Training/Physical Therapy, Dr. Peter Magyari has been named as the Undergraduate Coordinator. From the Department of Sports Management, Dr. Jennifer Kane has been named as the Program Coordinator.

Undergraduate coordinators serve as the department/program contact for undergraduate students in the major interested in discussing the academic program, course selection and careers, as well as graduate, research and mentoring opportunities. For their work as Undergraduate Coordinators, participating faculty receive one course release per semester. During the Fall semester, the Undergraduate Coordinators received training on tools used by Academic Advisors and the campus support services available to students.

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