Reaching New Heights

Former President Carter greets Rick Gardiner and students (see back cover)
Tom Hackett, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

I graduated from Columbus College with a degree in English in 1977 with only a vague plan in place for the next phase of my life, so all-consuming had been my quest to graduate. Perhaps law school, I thought, or a try at a novel, or maybe advertising. For a year, everything was couched in maybe, or perhaps, with no actual plan or series of steps to make any of it become reality. The great irony of my next move, to consider teaching high school, was that I had not been a particularly motivated student during my years at St. Thomas High School in Houston or Hardaway High in Columbus, having been satisfied to slip silently with the current rather than paddle particularly hard in any direction.

However, I had loved college and studying literature, and long coffee-fueled debates with classmates, and my first experiences with good literary criticism and my initial forays into writing fiction. After graduation, and after a year spent drifting in Atlanta, I found my way home to the College and Jordan Hall, then to methods of teaching English, behavioral objectives, and activities aligned with those objectives. And then there was my first clinical experience, a practicum at Kendrick High School, my first time in a high school since my last high school days in 1972.

To my complete astonishment, I found teaching compelling and challenging in a way that I had never experienced before. The fact that my reaction to teaching was, for me, so unexpected, made the experience all the more intense and thus one of those peak transformational events that move us unexpectedly in new directions. And what was it, one might ask, that made that practicum experience so exciting, so compelling that I built my entire life around teaching and learning and have never, in truth, really gravitated very far from the classroom? Over the years, I have given that question a great deal of thought, returning to memories of that initial experience on the other side—the teacher’s side—of the classroom, memories of moving from the role of student to the role of teacher, albeit the role of teacher at a very basic, beginner level.

When I return to those admittedly vague memories, I find that there is no one single event that stands out, but rather a residue of the feeling associated with the time, like the feeling associated with a childhood summer, or the emotions linked to a vacation trip that compels one to new travels, or the emotions tied to a friendship long past. My memory of that feeling is, no doubt, born of a flood of neurotransmitters into synapses as a reaction to my perception of being needed, or to thoughts that I was making a difference, or to my reaction to my first time in the arena as a teacher, to the thrill of the first successful application of skills learned in methods class. Or maybe it is just the memory of that hum of student activity, that buzz of interconnected neural activity, the electric flow that all teachers know when teaching and learning, inexplicably, and magically, happens in a classroom. That is truly what I live for.

About the Stack

This issue’s Stack (on left) captures a bit of the action at the annual Sci-Fi Show at the Coca Cola Space Science Center on Front Avenue. This year’s Show is set for October 6, 2012, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Come in costume and be ready for intergalactic action. Ray guns permitted!
New Heights in Leadership . . . . page 5

New Heights as University Students and P-12 Educators . . . . . page 7

New Heights in Serving Those with Unique Abilities … pages 8-9

New Heights in Programs That Build Expertise of Registered Nurses . . . . . . . . . . . page 13

Reaching New Heights

Our Summer/Fall 2012 issue did not start out with a theme. Yet, from cover to cover, readers will see in this issue that—in many, many ways—excellent people in the COEHP community have been reaching for something way beyond the ordinary. We applaud both their striving and their striking achievements. Read on to see what we mean.
Hall of Fame inductees, left to right, front row, are R. Spencer Garrard, Teresa S. Irvin, and Tommy R. Lee. Behind them are those who nominated them, Tina Jones, Beverly Davis, and Dan Trotter.

Three education alumni—R. Spencer Garrard, Teresa S. Irvin, and Tommy R. Lee—were inducted into the Education Hall of Fame on May 6. The Hall of Fame, established in 2004, has honored 23 teacher education graduates in the intervening years.

R. SPENCER GARRARD, known as Spencer, graduated in 1970 among Columbus College’s (now Columbus State University) first class to earn bachelor’s degrees. He earned teaching licensure soon thereafter and both master’s and specialist’s degrees in the intervening years. In 2007, Garrard was awarded a doctoral degree from Nova Southeastern.

He taught 5th and 6th grade language arts at Brookstone School for twelve years beginning in 1979 and continued his teaching career at CSU soon thereafter. Garrard teaches introductory courses in the undergraduate professional sequence and coordinates the middle-grades education program.

Nominated by Hall-of-Famer Tina Jones, Garrard believes that “no student lacks motivation... I believe that every individual has some intrinsic or outside condition in which he or she will find the drive to be a success.”

Jones comments that Garrard relates “exceptionally well to people of all ages. Spencer is frank, earnest, and outgoing.” Others, such as Lisa Shaw (Director, Academic Center for Excellence), compliment Garrard as a “wonderful teacher, terrific advisor, and dependable friend.”

TERRY S. IRVIN has served as CSU’s chair of the Department of Basic Studies for nine years. A UGA graduate, she holds both M.Ed. and Ed.S. degrees from Columbus State and a doctorate from Auburn. She completed student teaching at Kendrick HS and taught English at Baker and Hardaway high schools before taking a position at Columbus State in 1994.

Irvin’s mother instilled in her the notion that “there are a hundred ways to skin a cat.” This philosophy carried over into her work as a learning support instructor in the area of writing, a skill which is a stumbling block for many first-generation, low-income college students. “I’ve seen many of these students graduate and go on to earn post-graduate degrees,” she remarks.

English Department chair Barbara Hunt supported Irvin’s nomination. She writes, “If it’s true that actions speak louder than words, then Terry Irvin is the epitome of LOUD. She is successful because she is always contributing in a major way to something ....”

TOMMY R. LEE, the third inductee, graduated from Columbus College in 1971 and, in time, earned a doctoral degree from Auburn. He began his professional career at Daniel Middle School as a social studies teacher and coach. He was principal of two schools between 1978 and 1983, and served as superintendent of Harris County Schools between 1991 and 2000. Though nominally retired, Lee teaches occasional courses in the area of educational leadership and supervises student teachers.

Dan D. Trotter (Hall of Fame, 2008) nominated Lee. He observes, “In nine years... he personally influenced a transformation that moved the Harris County school system to one of the most respected in Georgia.” Trotter sees Lee as being laid back but committed to high performance standards.

Among the accomplishments Lee takes pride in is building public support for two vital referendums that led to the construction of Harris County HS and an array of other capital improvements. “In short,” Lee writes, “I was personally involved in over 30 million dollars of facility improvement in Harris County.”

VERONICA J. (RONNIE) COLLINS has been appointed Muscogee County Schools’ Chief Academic Officer, a position she assumed on June 1.

A 2010 inductee into the Education Hall of Fame and 1983 graduate (early childhood education), Collins served as principal of Brit David Magnet Academy from 2000 to 2012.
Cruzen Recognized for Leadership

Acquisition of Shuttle Artifacts, Transit of Venus Expedition among His Accomplishments

Astronomy professor Shawn Cruzen, Director of the Coca-Cola Space Science Center (CCSSC) since 2005, was named recipient of the 2012 Thomas E. Harrison Leadership Award in May.

Cruzen, who sees himself as a teacher first and foremost, has numerous other notable accomplishments. He is described as a “natural teacher” who teaches with enthusiasm, humor, energy, and (according to his nominator) “sheer playfulness.” These qualities define the way Cruzen “approaches life and are absolutely contagious.”

At the Space Science Center, he served first as director of its Mead Observatory. In recent years, he has been responsible for its programming, operations, and outreach.

For two years, Cruzen also chaired the Department of Earth and Space Sciences; in this capacity he spearheaded development of a new astrophysics major, fostered an associate degree in engineering, and established a robotics certification program. These innovations have sparked enrollment in these fields of study and in science education.

In the past 18 months, Cruzen led the Coca Cola Space Science Center as it took steps to enhance its reputation nationally and internationally as well as enhance local tourism and space-related education in the region. Cruzen has been the driving force behind the Center’s planned renovation and expansion. In the coming months, it will receive nearly $19 million in NASA Shuttle artifacts. These will be on permanent display.

Most recently, the Center led a multi-continental expedition to webcast the Transit of Venus, a once-in-a-lifetime astronomical event in June. The Transit was webcast from the United States, Australia, and Mongolia with CCSSC scientists on-site to make it happen.

As many as half million or more viewers were able to witness the Transit because of the Cruzen-led expedition.

Associate Dean Ellen Roberts—herself the Harrison Award recipient for 2011—presented the 2012 award to Cruzen. She noted that “great leaders often give others the credit, and this is something Shawn does readily. He reminds us what exceptional talent and dedication he has in the staff with whom he works.”

Established in 2005, the Thomas E. Harrison Leadership Award serves two primary purposes: first, to honor the man for whom it was named, who as Dean of the College created a culture of excellence; and, second, to recognize on a continuing basis those who demonstrate excellence in leadership. Typically, the Harrison Award recognizes a history of leadership over several years.

Become an EHQ Contributor

We seek news items, reviews, personality profiles (of alumni, students, or faculty members), personal accounts, and other articles that will interest our readers, those connected to the health or education communities of the Columbus, Georgia region. Suggested length: fewer than 750 words. Send contributions to brewbaker_james@columbusstate.edu
Interim No More for Two COEHP Leaders

Michael Baltimore (Counseling, Foundations, & Leadership) and Tara Underwood (Health, Physical Education & Exercise Science) have been advanced to the position of Chair of their respective departments. Previously, each served as Interim Chair.

Complimenting the strong performance of each new chair, Dean Barbara Buckner of the College of Education & Health Professions (COEHP) announced the change in their status this past spring.

CSU graduate (B.S.) Baltimore, Professor of Counseling has been a member of the community counseling faculty since 1994. The recipient of a Ph.D. degree in counseling from Auburn University, he has drawn national attention for his work in establishing COEHP TV.

A faculty member since 2002, Underwood holds degrees from Morris Brown, Old Dominion, and Central Michigan University (Doctor of Health Sciences). Holding the rank of Associate Professor, she is active in public health organizations in Georgia and the Southeast.

Barbara Buckner

Providing international experiences is important for our students and faculty. It provides students opportunities to learn about other cultures, to develop self-reliance, to acquire or practice foreign-language skills, and—most importantly—to appreciate global diversity. For faculty, it motivates professors to meet colleagues doing research in the same area of interest, and it equips them with a fresh lens through which to examine the world.

Yes, all in all, the international experience is a win-win event for students, faculty, and CSU at large.

This year I have encouraged faculty to develop global experiences both for themselves and their students. As a result, we have entered into dialogue with two international schools to develop student teaching placements for our undergraduate education majors and possible internships for educational leadership and counseling graduate students. These schools are The British School Quito in Quito, Ecuador, and the Rajagiri Chrisu Jayanthi Public School, in Kochi, India.

Intercultural experiences enhance skills in cross-cultural learning, and, according to Larissa Chuprina, strengthen one’s willingness to engage in self-directed learning. Individuals who take advantage of international study return home as more self-confident, open-minded, and diversity-sensitive men and women.

As I look over my first year as Dean, I am amazed at the international experiences we have accomplished or will accomplish soon. Take a look:

- In November 2011, Bonita Williams and Paulina Kuforiji (Teacher Education Department faculty) presented “Preparing Teachers for the Shifting Dynamics of Global Education” at the 29th Annual Conference of the Association of Third World Studies in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil.

- In March, early childhood professor Burhanettin Keskin presented “Ethical Uses of Neuroimaging in Education” at the Oxford Round Table at Oxford’s Conference on Ethics.

- In April, four professors—Deirdre Greer and Burhanettin Keskin (early childhood), Evelyn Blalock (special education), and Camille Lawrence (research)—presented papers at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Greer, Blalock, and Lawrence presented “Read To Me! Early Literacy Intervention in an Early Head Start.”

- In June, health science professor Paula Walker and eight of her students traveled to Oxford, England, for study abroad. Their academic work involved an interdisciplinary collaboration with Monica Frazier (Department of Biology), through which they completed two different courses: Comparative Health Care Systems and Contemporary Issues in Biology. Using diabetes as a model, Drs. Walker and Frazier helped students explore the role of nutrition together with the genesis of chronic disease in both the UK and the United States.

- Also in June, exercise science professor Alicia Bryan presented “Physical Independence: Examining Older Adults’ Perceptions of Physical Limitations” at the 8th Annual International Conference on Kinesiology and Exercise in Athens, Greece.

- In July, ed leadership professor Thomas J. McCormack presented “Shaping...

There Is More ... Much More! The most recent issue of Education and Health Quarterly reported on a number of global endeavors under development in the COEHP. In what follows, Dean Barbara Buckner indicates that there is more to come.

Barbara Buckner completed her first year as COEHP Dean as of the end of June.

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(continued on page 15)
Each May, colleges and universities mark the culmination of hard work, sweat, and, as often as not, tears with honors, awards, and graduation. Here (clockwise from top left) are CSU senior nursing students mingling a bit before the all-important pinning ceremony on the morning of May 7; Muscogee County Teacher of the Year Vincent Sneed as he is recognized by Kimberly Scott of the CSU Alumni Association; early childhood outstanding undergraduate student Amanda Foley (on right) receiving her award from Teacher Education chair Dee Greer; and (below) three graduates—Shera Cash, Marcie Mitchell, Alicia Montijo—recognized as outstanding alumni.

Sneed teaches music at Hardaway HS. He is the fourth CSU graduate in the past five years to be recognized as Teacher of the Year.

Pergl Altrusa Scholarship
Fully Endowed

Altrusa International of Columbus closed its books in June, then wrote a check to the CSU Foundation that, combined with prior donations, fully funded the Anne Dougherty Pergl Altrusa Award, made annually to an outstanding early childhood graduate.

Anne D. Pergl, a former president of Altrusa, was a long-time elementary teacher in Columbus.

The 2012 recipient is Amanda Foley (above).

See page 15 for the status of the Altrusa Labor Day Weekend Book Sale.
Can’t see? Maybe ... Lack vision? No way!

Columbus State is getting into the world of visual impairment in big and important ways. Sparked by the contagious energy and expertise of health/PE professor Jeanine Fittipaldi-Wert, CSU initiated two firsts this past spring which, in time, may greatly enhance services to adults and youth who are blind or visually impaired in the greater Columbus community.

Freedom Climb

In April, the 40-foot vertical climbing wall in the world-class Student Recreation Center was the setting for a Freedom Climb, an event CSU cosponsored with the Fountain City chapter of the Georgia Federation of the Blind. Visually-impaired participants displayed both “guts and vision,” one observer commented.

CSU students, reported President Timothy (Tim) Mescon, assisted in various capacities, as both spotters and belayers. A belayer handles ropes in order to ensure the safety of rock climbers, who—if they fall—have a soft landing.

Mescon applauded the volunteer spirit these students displayed.

Camp Abilities

In May, CSU sponsored Camp Abilities, Georgia’s first such event. Fittipaldi-Wert, who serves as an assistant director at the well-established Tucson (AZ) Camp Abilities, believed that it was time to make the program, a sports camp for middle- and high schoolers, available locally. These young people have what Fittipaldi-Wert terms “unique abilities.”

Camp Abilities was cosponsored by the Georgia Blind Sports Association, represented by Judy Byrd, a volunteer who commuted from Norcross for the event. “We’re trying to get every kid, teenager, young adult, and senior in Georgia exposed to sports so they too can share the benefits,” she said.

For 2012, the Columbus Camp Abilities—part of an international movement founded in Brockport, NY in 1998—charged no tuition or fees. It depended instead on volunteers, including CSU students and alumni who had accompanied Fittipaldi-Wert to the Tucson camp in recent years.

The 2012 program focused on sports experiences and recreational activities such as beep baseball, beep kickball, and goalball. Volunteers conducted activities in a decidedly upbeat and motivational manner. Many times, visually impaired children and teens have had little or no exposure to sports participation.

These games derive their name from the beeping noisemaker embedded in balls and, as seen on right (page 9), in bases. Players, masked in order to “even the playing field” between those who are totally blind and partially sighted, bat and run bases following what they hear, not what they see.

I see what you mean ...

A slogan that means a great deal to those involved in expanding opportunities for the blind is “A loss of sight—never a loss of vision.”

At April’s Freedom Climb, Jeanine Fittipaldi-Wert (in white tee shirt) guided this courageous participant in taking on the 40-foot climbing wall. Following the strenuous activity, the twosome chatted.
Student-friendly Space in Jordan Hall

The second floor of Jordan Hall has undergone major changes. The result: expanded study, lounge, and meeting space for students along with a concessions area and technology connections.

This past summer, grad students Valerie Cunningham-Black (early childhood, on left) and Rae Jarrell (special education) made the most of the well-appointed lobby.

Counseling Is about Empathy, Authenticity, and Congruence

Columbus State’s graduate programs in counseling—school counseling and community counseling—are based on the proposition that counseling skills are for everyone. The counseling skills everyone needs, according to professor Michael Baltimore, are empathy, authenticity, and congruence.

These capacities come more naturally to some than others. Most adults, however, can build on the foundation of these qualities they bring with them as they embark on study in the field. The program’s web site puts it this way: “Helping others ... we make it possible.”

Counselors take a special posture when examining human problems. All human beings face problems in living. Some of these problems—among them physical or emotional abuse, marital and family conflicts, old age, grief—can turn into devastating life issues. The counseling field exists in order to respond to these human needs and problems.

CSU’s counseling programs—housed in the Counseling, Foundations & Leadership Department (CFL)—prepare their students to become “professional helpers,” Baltimore says. He serves as department chair.

During the 2011-2012, academic year, 21 students completed the community counseling program, and 18 completed the school counseling program. The latter group includes six who earned an Education Specialist degree.

Both counseling programs require about two years of intensive study and clinical practice. Each is accredited by the American Counseling Association’s accrediting body, CACREP. This assures students that they will, upon degree completion, have met demanding national standards for counseling in mental health and school counseling. Counseling faculty recently attended a workshop that focused on how to transition from a 48-hour to a 60-hour program. Due to changes in national standards, many programs, including CSU’s, are likely to move toward longer, more demanding programs. Because Georgia has not yet adopted the newest standards, however, CSU graduates in the field will continue to be eligible for licensure.

Those interested in learning more about Columbus State’s counseling programs should visit http://cfl.columbusstate.edu or call 706 568-2301.

Beep! Beep!

Beep baseball has been known to the blind community since the 1960s. It has a national organization, many teams, and its own World Series. Columbus, in fact, will host the Beep Baseball World Series in 2013.

Goalball, a game developed initially for the rehabilitation of wounded soldiers, is a team sport in which, on offense, three team members try to score by throwing or rolling a ball with bells in it past defenders to the other end of the court. Successful defenders block balls and prevent a score. Teams alternate between offense and defense.

The balls may beep, but a baseball base like the one above emits more of a shrieking sound that guides runners on the base path.

Richard Sexton (below) is ready to take his licks while practicing beep baseball batting off a tee.

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This past summer, grad students Valerie Cunningham-Black (early childhood, on left) and Rae Jarrell (special education) made the most of the well-appointed lobby.
Visiting schools, sitting in on classes here at CSU, checking out what’s going on at the Human Performance Laboratory, dropping by the School of Nursing, or hanging out at our early childhood program’s Summer Spectacular, I see a lot of good teaching. Whether the learners are pre-schoolers, senior-year nurses preparing for their NCLEX boards, or teacher candidates developing learner-centered instructional activities to use in student teaching, I like what I see.

On the surface, the teaching and learning in these settings have little in common. But not really. What they have in common is what Christopher Thaiss and other scholars call language-rich teaching.

Thaiss (1986) offers this generalization: “Children will learn, and thus remember, only what they have the opportunity to talk about (and, perhaps, write about, sing about, draw, make plays about, etc.).”

If this is true for children—and I believe strongly that it is—to what extent does the concept apply to teenagers, college students, or adult learners? I put it this way: People learn best, and thus remember, when they have multiple opportunities to talk about (and, perhaps, write about, sing about, draw, make plays about, etc.).

So what is absolutely essential for young learners is at least important for teens and adults. At our best, we college faculty build in ways for our students—all of them—to talk their way through what we are teaching.

Depicted here is language-rich teaching in several guises in the College of Education & Health Professions:

- First (top right), we see a 4 or 5 year old girl writing about (or possibly drawing about) what she did earlier on a Thursday morning at the Summer Spectacular in June. This year’s focus for the Spectacular was the Olympics.

- Second, we visit the Human Performance Laboratory to capture several exercise science majors as they “talk their way through” the assembly of paraphernalia used in cardiopulmonary stress testing. Professor Brian Tyo taught this hands-on, language-rich class.

- Next, we take a fly-on-the-wall view of nursing students at the Student Nursing Association’s inaugural Quiz Bowl this past February. Their goal: to maintain or improve the School of Nursing’s enviable 93 percent pass rate on the vital Nursing Council Licensure Examination.

- Finally (bottom right), the two young women in EDSE 3117: Literature for Adolescents are performing a tableaux based on a novel they have been read; no one, in fact, has dialed 9-1-1. Rather, small groups of students have discussed, then selected key scenes to “pose and photograph.”

Language-rich teaching is one dimension of constructivist theory, the powerful notion that learners create their own knowledge, piece by piece, chunk by chunk, and that we—teachers and professors—are at our best when we build in opportunities for our students to discover, through talk broadly conceived, what they know.

Retirees Luncheon 2012

Close to 100 Columbus State retirees met at the Cunningham Center for lunch in late April, among them Polly Adams, Mike Taylor, and Rochelle Ripple. Adams served as Professor of Early Childhood Education and chaired the Teacher Education Department at the time she retired. Professor Taylor served CSU as chair of Physical Education & Leisure Management; he developed and coordinated the undergraduate BS program in recreation. Professor Ripple taught foundations courses and directed the online graduate program in Accomplished Teaching.

As the meal began, Provost Tom Hackett recognized those retiring as of the end of the 2011-2012 academic year. These included Patricia Duttera and Donna Pascoe from the College of Education & Health Professions, each from the Department of Counseling, Educational Leadership, & Foundations. Before retiring, Duttera was program coordinator for Educational Leadership, while Pascoe taught research courses and served as COEHP Graduate Director.

President Mescon updated attendees on CSU developments following dessert. He noted in particular the expansion of the RiverPark campus and the addition of new dormitory rooms. Among other COEHP retirees at the luncheon were James Brewbaker (English education), Sonny Clements (physical education), Diane Fredrick (secretary, Foundations Department), Rhonda Hollis (nursing), Arthur Land (educational psychology), Charles Ragsdale (physical education), Anita Whitman (language arts), and Harold Whitman (reading).

What’s Happening at the Math Collaborative

Kenneth Jones

CRMC: Here, There, and (It Seems) Almost Everywhere Spring and summer 2012 were busy times for the Columbus Regional Mathematics Collaborative (CRMC). Staff members presented workshops at Math/Science Days at Lakewood Elementary (Phenix City) and Dimon Magnet Elementary (Muscogee County). As well, CRMC offered Family Math Nights at several different schools.

CRMC also hosted its second annual Teacher-to-Teacher Conference where area teachers shared engaging lessons. James Pratt (Georgia Department of Education) was keynote; he updated participants on the new Common Core Georgia Performance Standards Curriculum.

New Grants, New Teacher Workshops The Collaborative garnered three Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education grants to provide professional development for teachers in the region. These grants made possible the hosting of three workshops in June: Using Mathematical Tasks to Make Knowledge Visible (for elementary teachers); Using Real-World Data for Decision Making (middle-level teachers); and Statistics: The Common Thread for a Curriculum in Transition (high school teachers). The workshops will broaden teachers’ content knowledge and strengthen their pedagogical practices.

Summer Camps As in the past, CRMC conducted an array of camps for elementary and middle grades students this summer. They were Problem Solving Investigators, a half-day camp for students entering grades 3-5; PRIME, for middle grades girls; and POWER, a camp for middle grades boys. Each camp engaged participants in hands-on activities as they expanded and deepened mathematical understandings. Students of all ability levels participated.

Kenneth Jones and Gail Sinkule Join UTeach Program Kenneth Jones, Director of the CRMC since 2005, will join Gail Sinkule as a Master Teacher in the grant-funded UTeach program. UTeach recruits undergraduates to consider majors in teaching science, mathematics, and technology. Before becoming CRMC Director, Jones taught mathematics at Troup County HS (Georgia) and Notasulga HS (Macon County, Alabama).

In Case You Didn’t Know

The Columbus Regional Mathematics Collaborative (CRMC), founded in 1979, is affiliated with 17 member school systems in West Central Georgia and East Alabama. Funded at the outset by the Ford Foundation and area businesses, the CRMC is the only one among eleven math collaboratives established in the late 1970s that is still in operation.
Author: Larry Beaty

**A Professor of Educational Leadership and the School of Nursing’s Associate Director Reflect on Their Career Paths**

New to the high school math classroom, Larry Beaty sensed, “I Was Not the Best Teacher at My House”

Larry Beaty
Associate Professor of Educational Leadership

The episode I am writing about is small but important to me. To set the context, I was a young high-school math teacher. I loved math, but was having difficulty relating to some students in my classes. The problem seemed to be with students that did not enjoy math.

My wife and I were both educators. She was excellent and I was less than excellent. I was happy for her, but wanted some of that happiness for myself. I had to accept that not only was I not the best teacher at school, I was not the best teacher at my house.

One day I was sitting with my principal in a casual setting. He was a non-threatening type of person, so I decided to ask him about my problem. I told him about my situation and he listened intently. He thought for a short while and gave me a response that has aided me ever since. He said maybe I was teaching math instead of teaching students. At first, I did not get the gist of his meaning and told him so. Without belittling me he said that it is easy to fall in love with your subject matter and forget that, unless the student learns, nothing has happened. He indicated that he did not mean that subject matter was unimportant, but that the student should be the center of the teacher’s focus.

Eventually, I came to recognize that it was a matter of focus. I did not need to give up my love of math to reach them. Instead, I needed to understand my subject matter even more thoroughly so that I could relate it to ideas that adolescents understood. As a practical matter, I needed to be prepared to give many different explanations of concepts. I further needed to get to know my students in order to best gauge what would work with each of them. Over time, as daunting as this was, it proved to be doable.

Well, what was the outcome of this turning point? Did I become the best teacher at the school or even the best teacher at my home? Unfortunately, the answer was still no. However, I did get better at my craft. Student response improved and I enjoyed myself more. In time, I came to love teaching as much as I loved math. And, when you get to do two things you love at work, life is sublime.

Cheryl M. Smith: “I found my passion in nursing education”

Cheryl Smith
Associate Professor of Nursing, Associate Director of the School of Nursing

A few weeks ago I was about to board a plane at Washington-Reagan Airport when I spotted Titisha Masten, a 2010 Columbus State nursing graduate, also waiting to board. After a few minutes of catching up on the latest events in her life, I asked her about joining our alumni group. Her response was a confirmation that the decision I made 19 years ago was the right one—the decision to return to school to become a nurse educator.

Titisha excitedly exclaimed that she had already joined the alumni group because she wants to give back to the school. She stated that because of the support and guidance she received as a student in the nursing program from faculty, administrators, and staff, she is well-equipped to be successful in her role as a US Army nurse. She has been promoted and is the charge nurse of a busy medical-surgical unit at the military
Fourteen Finish RN-to-BSN in 2011

The RN-to-BSN program produced its first 14 graduates in December, 2011. Among them was Angela (Angie) Hunt, who completed her Columbus College associate degree in nursing in 1991. Shown here with daughter and CSU alumnus Lisa Newman (on right), Hunt returned to school because the program is online. "I'm working full-time and have a child at home," she says. Her eventual goal is to become a nurse practitioner.

Lisa Newman completed her B.S. in nursing in May, her second CSU degree.

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Angel Chuaychoo

Christy Grigsby (B.S.Ed. English, 2007) loves her job as one of two English teachers at the Early College Academy of Columbus (EC). At Early College, most students are (or soon will be) first-generation college goers and come from ethnic and racial minority groups. Many of their families are poor; more than three quarters, in fact, qualify for a reduced or free lunch.

Though EC is small by design—about 150 students—it accepts applicants on a first come, first served basis. Classes are capped at 21 students.

Early College is a new member of the COEHP’s Partner School Network, an array of area schools which accommodate placements for student teaching and pre-student teaching field experiences.

Network director Roger Hatcher favored the addition of EC because it fosters unique experiences for teacher candidates, experiences that differ from those in other, larger secondary schools.

Susan Willard, herself a three-time CSU graduate (B.A., 1986; M.Ed., 1992; Ed.S. 2002), is principal of Early College. Her faculty—ten academic teachers recruited to work in the school’s unique environment—include seven who acquired the knowledge and skills of their profession at Columbus State.

It is the nature of the student body that attracted Grigsby to the school and continues to motivate her. Having finished four years there, she explains that its students come to see that a college degree is a real possibility. “They can get a degree and, as adults, be in a better situation than they are now,” she says.

The result of smallness, it seems clear, is a personalized or family environment. “Students don’t disrespect teachers here, because you’re not going to get away from that teacher,” Grigsby says. “You see them all the time; they know you. Your teachers are probably going to have your mom’s number on speed dial in their phone.”

Team-building events such as the Earth Day 2012 Relays depicted here motivate Early College students to reach higher for academic success.

As freshmen and sophomores, EC students complete the prescribed Georgia curriculum under the guidance of well-qualified faculty. Then, as juniors and seniors, they may earn up to 60 hours of college credits from Columbus State while preparing for high school graduation.

Funded initially by a 2006 grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, EC has graduated its first four-year class and will soon begin its fifth year. Today,

A year ago, EC moved toward center city into a space formerly occupied by the Teen Parenting Center.

In its first year, Grigsby recalls that Early College had a less than stellar reputation among Columbus State faculty. Soon thereafter, however, EC and liaison personnel at CSU took steps to make sure students could succeed in CSU classes.

Since then, students complete a practice COMPASS examination in the tenth grade,
After my master’s degree and settling into the faculty role at Auburn, I still had the desire to contribute more to the field of nursing. However, I was unsure if I had any brain left to complete the daunting requirements for a doctoral degree.

With encouragement from my family and faculty peers, I, along with two other faculty friends, began the arduous path to the doctorate of education degree. It helped to have these supportive friends to make the journey with me, and we become cheerleaders for each other. With what was left of my brain cells, I finally achieved a long-sought-after dream of becoming Dr. Cheryl Mixon Smith.

I taught at Auburn for eleven years, but the commute was tough. I was a grandmother and wanted to be closer to home for the grandkids. CSU’s School of Nursing posted an open position, but it was not in pediatric nursing. I was not sure if I had any brain left to complete the requirements for a doctoral degree. However, I was sure of my passion for teaching and wanted to continue my education in order to teach in the classroom environment as well as the clinical setting.

Principal Willard recognizes Grigsby as a very strong teacher because she equates her students’ success with her own. “Being an English teacher,” Willard points out, “she feels responsible for their general scholastic success, and she takes that responsibility very seriously.”

Willard is proud of the progress EC has made in its first four years, progress made possible in part through the efforts of involved, supportive CSU personnel. These include Associate Provost Tina Butcher and Lisa Shaw of the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE). Willard applauds the partnership with CSU and comments that it would be impossible without considerable support from President Timothy (Tim) Mescon and others.

**Cheryl M. Smith**

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love of teaching, combined with my love of pediatric nursing, played a huge part in my decision to work toward a BS in nursing. So at the advanced age of 43, I became an adult learner and a college student.

Being in classes with much younger students was intimidating. I had so much to learn.

One incident stands out in my mind. I was taking a class at the local junior college to complete core requirements for my bachelor’s degree. My daughter was in the same class with many of her friends. After one robust class discussion in which I contributed some good points, my daughter whispered, “Hush, Mom, everyone knows you are smart and you did your homework.” It was energizing to succeed in this environment, and I enjoyed being in classes with my daughter and her peers. We laugh about her comments frequently.

With my Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing degree in hand, I left the staff nurse position and began teaching pediatric clinical courses at Auburn University.

It was in this position that I found my passion. I loved the faculty role and looked to continue my education in order to teach in the classroom environment as well as the clinical setting.

**Going Global**

(continued from page 6)

Educational Reform: Learning from Going Global Research and Practice” in Manchester, England at the British Educational Leadership, Management, & Administration Society. McCormack then journeyed to Glasgow, Scotland and met with Dr. Beth Dickson, Deputy Head of the School of Education, University of Glasgow to explore a possible study-abroad opportunity for students in his program.

Later this year, nursing professor Stacey Meyers-Prosyniuk will travel to Ireland to build a partnership agreement with the Waterford Institution of Technology, Cork’s South Infirmary, and St. Patrick’s Hospital to develop clinical opportunities for nursing students next year.

**Book Sale September 1-3**

The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer has taken over the Labor Day Weekend Book Sale popularized by Altrusa of Columbus. The sale takes place September 1-3 at the L-E Building (12th and Broadway), with proceeds benefiting the newspaper-in-education program.
Not every university has an hospitable former US President in its neighborhood. History education professor Rick Gardiner and his class of future middle school teachers decided to make the most of this fortuitous circumstance to attend Sunday school at the Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga., one Sunday in April.

Former President Jimmy Carter teaches Sunday school there on a regular basis.

Afterwards, following a brief photo session, Gardiner and Gov. Carter talked briefly about Columbus State, its current enrollment, and other matters.

Later in the day, the class visited Andersonville and its National Prisoner of War Museum.

Pictured here are (far left) Gov. Carter and Rick Gardiner. On the far right are former First Lady Rosalynn Carter and, to her right, Piper L. Hudmon, a CSU graduate and social studies teacher at Blackmon Road Middle School.