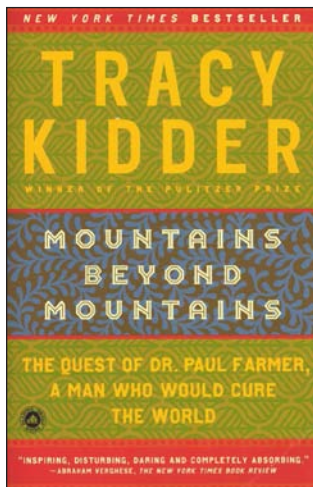


## ***Mountains Beyond Mountains:* Campus and Community Apply Summer Reading to Katrina Aftermath**

**Sarah Liggett**

Director, LSU Writing Center, Department of English, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA



“Is the book required? What if I don’t read it? Why read it if it’s not going to be on a test?” Reluctant readers pose questions such as these about summer reading programs on college campuses across the country. At Louisiana State University, what we now know is that students who failed to read this summer’s selection, *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World* by Tracy Kidder, missed a chance to prepare themselves for the challenging aftermath of hurricane Katrina. This book focuses on Farmer’s efforts to deliver lifesaving medicine to some of the world’s poorest patients, demonstrating how seemingly insurmountable obstacles can be overcome through creative problem-solving and hard work.

The book’s title recalls a Haitian proverb, “Dèyè mòn gen mòn,” (beyond mountains, there are mountains). Although Louisiana’s highest point is only 535 feet above sea level and much of the greater New Orleans area lies below, we have lately been scaling one mountain only to discover another and another beyond.

Perhaps the most striking transformations on LSU’s campus the past few weeks took place in the Maddox Field House where on August 19, Mr. Kidder and Dr. Farmer addressed first-year students at the Academic Convocation. Chairs filled the floor of the indoor track: two columns with 50 rows, 50 seats per row. Months of logistical meetings paid off as more than 4,000 first-year students, faculty, and community members filed in to sounds of Haitian music and listened to Kidder and Farmer describe the doctor’s work with the poor, fighting drug-resistant tuberculosis and AIDS in Haiti, Russia, Peru, and now Rwanda.

Following the Academic Convocation, students met in small groups with a faculty member to discuss the book and the speakers’ remarks. Passions galvanized by these conversations would motivate students in the days ahead.

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Less than two weeks after the Convocation, the Maddox Field House would house a special-needs hospital with nearly 400 mattresses and army cots, separated into color-code zones by makeshift partitions. In only four days and with little advance planning, the Field House and the Pete Maravich Assembly Center (PMAC) would become the largest Acute-Care Field Hospital in the history of the United States. At the nearby Bernie Moore track stadium, helicopters, sometimes landing four at a time, delivered Katrina’s victims. Student government leaders organized shifts of non-medical volunteers to aid the operations. Many students and faculty who had attended the Academic Convocation found themselves feeding the sick, sorting donations, delivering supplies, and helping victims locate lost

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family members. Sooner than anyone could have imagined, they confirmed the prediction Farmer made at the Convocation: “I am really excited when I think about where you guys are going and what you could do in the world. If one of your goals is to find a way to improve the world, then I don’t think you have to worry too much about improving yourself. That will come automatically. The contribution does not have to be dramatic . . . to be important. It could be something as simple as volunteering at a soup kitchen.”

On the day of the Academic Convocation, 16 students had been selected to have lunch with Kidder and Farmer, based on essays explaining why they wanted to meet the author or his subject. For at least one of these students, the book now carries deeper meaning. Ashley Meyn explains:

I thought about *Mountains Beyond Mountains* a lot during the last two weeks. I am from New Orleans. . . . I went back on the Tuesday after the hurricane hit to volunteer as an EMT, and spent two full days on Interstate 10 at the Causeway overpass. Conditions were rough: little to no food, only minimal bottled water (which we gave to those in need), and dust flying everywhere from the helicopters and Chinooks taking off and landing, bringing people and supplies. . . . There is a large population of diabetic and hypertensive people in New Orleans; no one

had eaten right, had enough fluids, or taken their medicine in at least three days. Some had been rescued by helicopter off their roofs, and some had been wading in *E. coli*-infested water for days. Most of the people we were helping were African American. This was one of the first times that I thought about the parallels between current New Orleans and Haiti. These people had lost *all* of their material possessions, much like the Haitians affected by the flooding caused by the dam. People were starving, sick, dehydrated, and emotional.

There were thousands across the street from our small, meager triage/treatment facility on I-10. People would pass out from the heat and other conditions. Then National Guardsmen would scream, “Medic!” I was usually the one to respond to these calls, as I was one of only three EMTs working triage at that time. Things were moving relatively smoothly until the helicopters started bringing the evacuees from the area hospitals. How do you triage people who have been too sick to leave the hospital? They *all* needed *immediate* care!. . . . Our triage was inundated all of Wednesday. The reason I left that night was not because I had had enough. I could have stayed forever despite the conditions. . . . I left because the last news we had heard said LSU was starting classes on Thursday.”

When Ashley learned that classes would not resume until the following Tuesday, she volunteered at PMAC and at “a makeshift hospital in an abandoned K-Mart. Compared to New Orleans, the PMAC was a palace . . . air conditioning, Heater-Meals, plenty of medical supplies, water, and, most importantly, volunteers!”

Ashley concludes, “I feel like I have been to war and back, and I also feel a lot older and more mature. Not everyone could have witnessed the kind of death and disease that I did. I proved to myself that I can survive in ‘third-world country conditions,’ and this has inspired me even more to volunteer in a country like Haiti or Peru or Rwanda. . . . We all just got a quick glimpse into the life of the Haitians and Dr. Farmer.”

The pressing needs of displaced students from New Orleans’ colleges and universities spurred LSU into unprecedented actions. In a week, staff admitted and enrolled nearly 3000 new students and created spaces in courses already “full.” Almost miraculously, rooms were found for many seeking campus housing. Neil Mathews, Vice Chancellor for Student Life and Academic Services, thanked his overworked staff with these words: “We began this semester by discussing *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, which emphasizes the importance of selfless giving to those most in need. One week later, you exemplified the lessons in that intellectual activity through your commitment to LSU students, their families, and campus visitors before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina blew into our lives.”

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It is not only LSU students who have applied Farmer's lesson. This summer, posters around town encouraged Baton Rouge residents to read *Mountains Beyond Mountains* along with the LSU community. At University Presbyterian Church, a short walk from campus, members adopted the book as their summer reading too and discussed it at two potluck dinners. Then after hearing Dr. Farmer speak, they met on the evening of August 19 to plan how they might meet local needs—such as low-income housing or more efficient public transportation or improved public schools. One member expressed a desire for “something big,” a project on which the whole church could focus its efforts. Three weeks later, they were housing pregnant women, newly delivered babies and their mothers, and sometimes extended families. “Mountains” for the church took the shape of big round bellies. Sunday school rooms were converted to nurseries, and shelves that once held church records were stocked with diapers and formula. Members took turns preparing meals for their visitors and helped arrange long-term housing and medical care.

As we in Louisiana work together to tackle our mountain range of problems, we are grateful for the outpouring of aid from other states and countries worldwide. We are experiencing firsthand the wisdom of another Haitian proverb: “Bondye konn bay, men li pa konn separe” (God gives but doesn't share). Farmer interprets its meaning this way: “God gives us humans everything we need to flourish, but he's not

the one who's supposed to divvy up the loot. That charge was laid upon us.” Volunteers across campus are divvying up truckloads of food, medical supplies, toothpaste, bedding, batteries, and clothing. We better understand the meaning of a sign Farmer called to Kidder's attention while traveling in Cuba, “Patria Es Humanidad” (the only real nation is humanity). Yet horrific scenes from the Superdome, where victims waited for days without food or water, and hospital evacuations of critically ill patients that came nearly a week after the storm left hospitals without electricity reminded many readers of *Mountains Beyond Mountains* that we have yet to follow fully Farmer's main imperative: a preferential option for the poor. Those with no means to evacuate before the storm were left behind. Those without postal addresses or bank accounts are now told to check the mail for instructions on how to file for automatic deposits of federal assistance. Mountains beyond mountains. We will need to act on some further instructions Farmer gave us at the Academic Convocation: Vote “for what you believe is right instead of voting for your own self interests.”

Why do the summer reading if it's not going to be on a test? It may prove invaluable when the tests come in life.

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## Capstone Courses Provide Community Involvement

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Several years ago, I was offered the opportunity to leave the practice of law to teach Capstones – senior level, interdisciplinary, community-based learning courses at Portland State University (PSU). I jumped at the chance. After 10 years of work as a public defender, I was beginning to experience some symptoms of “burn-out.” The chance to step off the front line and to address some issues in the criminal justice system by working alongside young, eager college students was more than appealing. My hope was to encourage students to become actively involved in examining the underlying complexities of people in prison, and to support their critical thinking about issues such as the prison industrial complex, reformation, and guilt. Over the years, my hopes and expectations have been met and exceeded. Capstone courses provide an innovative and exciting opportunity for teaching and learning “outside the box.”

Capstones are Portland State University's senior-level general education requirement. Small seminars of typically 15 students, Capstones pair academic work with community-based work, with, or on behalf of, a community partner such as Portland Public Schools, the

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Oregon Food Bank, Friends of Tryon Creek State Park, Multnomah County, Ethos community music program, and the Oregon Historical Society. Students from a variety of majors collaborate to make a meaningful contribution and to place their own education in a real-world context. Some of the topics for Capstone courses have been *Enhancing Youth Literacy* (works with Portland Public Schools); *Music for Social Change* (works with Ethos Community Music Center, among others); *Measuring the Effectiveness of Criminal Justice Interventions* (works with Multnomah County Department of Community Justice); *Global Portland: Politics of Immigration; Neighborhoods and Watersheds; and Women, Poverty, and Power*.

For instance, in my *Juvenile Justice* Capstone, our community partner is the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, Juvenile Services Division. For the community-based element of this Capstone, students collaborate to develop and present skill-building, interactive workshops to youth in detention. Then, in the classroom, we discuss (and challenge) assumptions about delinquent youth, theories of delinquency, trends in laws affecting youth, and theories of treatment or rehabilitation. These classroom discussions are based on the community experiences students are having and supported by selected readings. Students are also asked to write reflection papers throughout the term to encourage them to undertake a deep-

er processing of their experience. In the end, students have learned about, and experienced, a variety of issues related to the field of juvenile justice in a way that they will not soon forget.

The pedagogical goals of all Capstones are the same: to increase students' skills and awareness in the areas of (a) the variety of human experience, (b) critical thinking, (c) communication, and (d) social and ethical responsibility. Capstones address these goals in a variety of ways, depending upon the particulars of the course project. However, it is clear that when students collaborate with a community partner, they are often exposed to people and places that are new to them, offering students a greater appreciation for diversity. Additionally, through group work with each other, as well as with the community partner, communication skills often improve. By grappling with real problems in the community, students must use and improve their critical thinking skills as well. And often, the gratification of serving in the community leads students to a greater appreciation for their own social and ethical responsibility.

In my own Capstones, we talk at length about these four goals at the start of each term. Some students find them worthy; others, inevitably, are less than enthusiastic. A common sentiment is, "I am paying tuition for this course; why should I be forced to do community service?" The controversy provides fertile ground for engaging students in discussion regarding the meaning and purpose of education, as

well as what it means to be a "citizen." Almost across the board, by the end of the term, even the naysayers have come to value their Capstone experience for the "real life" learning they experienced, and have found that they have very positive feelings about being of service in their community.

On end of term evaluations of Capstone courses, students have commented that they "...have a sense of pride and commitment to [their] community that [they] have never felt before...", that the course "...opened [their] eyes to the richness of the community," that the course "...showed [them] a part of life that [they] had not experienced," and that "this will be an experience that [they] will remember for the rest of [their] lives." This sampling of comments supports the findings of other more extensive assessment of Capstone courses: that, through Capstones, students are, in fact, advancing in the four goal areas mentioned above.

I am thrilled to have a role in this type of innovative education. Just before sending them to make their way in the world, PSU, through the Capstone, offers students the opportunity to contribute to, learn from, and embrace their community.

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## Strengthening Father-Daughter Relationships to Retain College Women

Linda Nielsen

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Since 1990, I have been teaching a college course entitled "Fathers and Daughters," which, to my knowledge, is still the only course in the country that focuses exclusively on father-daughter relationships. One of my goals is to teach college women specific skills for creating a more communicative, relaxed, mature, and meaningful relationship with their fathers. Daughters who have a relaxed relationship with their fathers generally have an advantage over other daughters in terms of academic success, mental health (e.g., depression, eating disorders, anxiety disorders), drug and alcohol abuse, unplanned pregnancies, risky sexual behavior, self-confidence, self-reliance, and satisfying relationships with men (Nielsen, 2001, 2005, in press).

During the last 16 years, these young women have been remarkably consistent in terms of what they say they need from their fathers and which issues create the most tension during their college years. There are four areas that residence hall advisors, faculty, and counselors need to emphasize in existing programs for students and their parents: (a) communication, (b) financial matters, (c) career issues, and (d) personal relationships.

First, more than 90% of these juniors and seniors say they want to learn how to communicate more hon-

estly and more comfortably with their fathers, especially about personal matters such as boyfriends, eating problems, or family situations that interfere with their school work. Unfortunately, when it comes to these more personal issues, most daughters turn to their mothers, denying their fathers "equal opportunity" to help.

Second, more than 75% of college women say that issues related to money create tension and conflict with their fathers throughout the college years. Clearly, many fathers and daughters would benefit if they clarified the following questions: Who is going to pay for what? What is going to happen when she spends more than her allowance? What are her financial obligations during the summer? What is a necessary or reasonable expense, and what is a frill or an extravagance? And if her father is paying for almost everything, how much say should he have in what she is doing with the money?

Third, more than half of these college women feel their fathers were disappointed at some time during their college years with their grades or future career plans (or lack thereof). Most were reluctant to go to their father for advice because they felt he would be critical or disapproving. Whether this is, in fact, what their fathers feel, the

daughter's *expectation* of disapproval is what college advisors should help her address.

Fourth, more than half of college women want their fathers to assume more initiative in calling, e-mailing, and/or meeting. In contrast to the way many pushed their fathers away as teenagers, these young women want more conversation and more time *alone* with their fathers. This is a message that fathers need to hear – and to hear it repeatedly through campus channels.

The Fathers and Daughters course uses more than 60 self-assessment quizzes and assignments with their fathers to strengthen father-daughter relationships (Nielsen, 2001, in press). On quiz is: "Are you an equal opportunity daughter?", which has daughters look at the various ways in which they make it more difficult for their fathers to create a personal, relaxed relationship with them. Another, "Myths about men as parents," gives them the opportunity to compare their negative, sexist assumptions about fathers with recent research and statistics. The assignments include three extensive interviews with their fathers exploring questions such as, "What are three lessons you had to learn the hard way in your life? What were your greatest concerns when you were my age? What do you wish we had more of in our relationship now?"

College faculty, counselors, women students, and their families may not be aware how much impact fathers have on their daughters' success and well-being in college and in the years

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beyond. Given the ongoing influence of fathers, colleges need to reach out more to fathers as important allies in their daughters' academic success and emotional well-being. For example, first-year orientation sessions might be directing most of the discussion about eating disorders, sorority life, or alcohol abuse to the mothers and most of the discussions about financial or athletic matters to the fathers, thus inadvertently marginalizing the father. Or college counselors might involve mothers more than fathers in matters regarding their daughter's mental or emotional problems. The daughter who turns only to her mother with her personal problems and only to her father with her academic problems is disenfranchising her father—denying him the chance to help her through difficult times in her non-academic life.

Opportunities such as parents' weekend, alumni events and magazines, the student newspaper, campus counseling center, and the array of programs aimed at retaining students can be used to strengthen the father-daughter relationship. In our efforts to retain college women and help them through academic and personal problems, more effort should be made to involve their fathers and to strengthen father-daughter relationships through our existing programs.

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**Paul P. Fidler  
 Research Grant**

The Center recently announced the winner of its inaugural Paul P. Fidler Research Grant. **Christine and Michael Kirk-Kuwaye** will conduct a qualitative study to examine lateral transfer students – those students who transfer from one four-year institution to another. Patterns of engagement in the campus community will be examined and compared to those of community college transfer students. The study results will inform current orientation practice and may test current student development theory. The Kirk-Kuwayes have already begun collecting their data and will present their findings at the 13th National Conference on Students in Transition in St. Louis.

*E-Source for College Transitions* (ISSN 1545-5742) is published bi-monthly by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. Telephone (803) 777-6029. A one-year subscription is \$40.

The Center, a nonprofit organization, will use proceeds from the newsletter to defray publication costs, support research, and disseminate information.

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## American Democracy Project Focuses on Civic Engagement in the First College Year

Tracy L. Skipper

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A decade ago, Robert Putnam (1996) lamented the demise of civil society in America, suggesting that the social ties that once bound us together—extended family, civic organizations, church, neighborhood associations, and social groups—were disintegrating. In other words, Americans were much more likely to be found “bowling alone” than voting, getting involved in grass-roots political organizations, or simply getting to know their neighbors. The question facing college educators is what role should we play in attempting to stem the tide of this social disintegration.

*The New York Times* and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) recently joined forces to help higher education institutions find answers to this question. The result is the American Democracy Project (<http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/about/default.htm>), a multi-campus effort designed to increase students’ understanding of and participation in civic life. The project is also designed to underscore the civic value of the college experience.

More than 200 campuses across the US are now involved with the American Democracy Project, designing new initiatives, trying innovative teaching strategies, and engaging students in extracurricular activities focused on

enhancing their level of civic engagement. At the second annual meeting of the American Democracy Project, George Mehaffy, vice president for academic leadership and change at AASCU, announced seven special focus topics for the American Democracy Project in 2005-2006. One of those special topics is civic engagement and the first college year.

To support AASCU’s efforts in this area, the National Resource Center has begun work on a new monograph project with *The New York Times*. Currently, in the early planning stages, the monograph will explore the role of national, regional, and campus newspapers along with other curricular and co-curricular initiatives in creating informed and engaged students. However, the larger goal is to engage educators across the country in a conversation about how to design comprehensive first-year experience programs and to explore the role that civic education can play in such initiatives. This conversation began at the second annual American Democracy Project in Portland this June and will continue at a regional meeting hosted by Sam Houston State University in November 2005 and at the third annual American Democracy Project meeting in June 2006.

We also invite those interested in the topic of civic engagement in the

first college year to join a new listserv, FYENGAGMNT. To subscribe, send a message to [LISTSERV@LISTSERV.sc.edu](mailto:LISTSERV@LISTSERV.sc.edu). In the body of the e-mail message, type SUBSCRIBE FYENGAGMNT firstname lastname.

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## Supporting Low-Income Students Through the Dell Scholars Program

Kevin Byrne

Scholarship Director, Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, Austin, TX

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) created the Dell Scholars Program ([www.dellscholars.org](http://www.dellscholars.org)) to make a college education possible for underserved youth. Dell Scholars is a national program that is currently active in 23 states because these states have AVID—Advancement via Individual Determination—a 5th-12th grade program to prepare students (with B, C, and even D averages, also known as academic middle—a minimum GPA of 2.4) for four-year college eligibility. More states will be added in 2006. Candidates apply online and they must state their goals and demonstrate their ability to overcome obstacles and challenges. Students are chosen because of their determination to succeed and their ability to communicate. In 2004, 90 students were selected and 160 in 2005. Each Scholar receives \$20,000.

Several studies have shown that completing rigorous academic curriculums in high school may help students overcome socioeconomic disadvantages and enter college. Once they are at college, they need support in order to overcome obstacles such as continual academic challenges, varying financial aid packages, and working more hours to provide critically needed financial support for their families.

Because the scholarship program reaches students in the academic middle who have financial need and are often

first-generation college students, retention efforts are key to ensuring that each Scholar has the best chance to complete a bachelor's degree. The scholarship terms and conditions were developed to be complementary to retention goals. For example, Scholars have six years to complete a bachelor's degree. Funds can be used at community colleges to earn credits toward a bachelor's degree. Scholarship funds may also be deferred to later years to avoid scholarship displacement. In addition to paying for tuition, fees, on-campus room and board, and books, funds may be used for summer school and study-abroad programs. Upon earning a bachelor's degree, if funds are remaining, the Scholar may request payment of educational loans or use the funds for graduate school. Furthermore, stop out and probationary policies allow students to regain access to their scholarship funds once they comply with scholarship terms.

Currently, these students are at more than 100 institutions in dozens of states, so Scholars use what is available on an individual campus. Some of the Foundation initiatives to meet Scholars' needs include providing all Scholars with a laptop computer and printer, which helps with them time-management conflicts caused by limited computer lab hours, demanding work hours, and lack of transportation. Scholars are encouraged to attend summer orienta-

tion to ease difficulties with class schedules and enrollment. When they receive their scholarship checks, Scholars are also provided with detailed information on financial aid and a worksheet to help them understand how their scholarship can affect other sources of aid. For the first fall term, Scholars are encouraged to enroll in first-year seminars/University 101 courses, learning communities, and honors programs; visit their advisor or campus mentor; and participate in student organizations. Throughout the year, the Foundation sends e-mails and makes phone calls to Scholars to show support. Oftentimes, the Foundation may be the only source of moral support for these students.

The 2004 cohort has just completed their first year. Yet, despite a retention rate of 97%, there are many challenges ahead for these Scholars such as balancing part- or full-time jobs with no financial, emotional, and educational encouragement from their families. To help the Scholars face these challenges, each year will focus on a different theme. The first-year focus is on first-year seminars, learning communities, honors programs, understanding financial aid, and connecting to campus. The second-year focus is on meeting general course requirements, deciding on a major, and developing a course plan. For students at community colleges, they must ensure that a transfer plan is in place. The junior-year focus is on study-abroad programs, internship opportunities, and preparing for a career appropriate to the chosen major. The senior-year focus is on completing required coursework for

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their majors, practicing interviewing skills, deciding on graduate schools, securing financial aid after graduation, and serving the community.

As the Scholars continue their journey to a college degree, “wrap around” programs (i.e., laptops, academic enrichment opportunities not covered by other sources of aid, and most importantly, one-on-one advising that they may not receive at their institutions) will be provided through cooperation with individual campuses as well as Foundation initiatives. Working with fellow professionals in financial aid, student retention, advising, student activities, and the many departments who help students persist is key to these Scholars’ future successes.

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## Puerta al Futuro Enables Adult Latinos to Earn a Degree While Learning English

**Deborah Gonzalez**

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Fairleigh Dickinson University’s Puerta al Futuro (Gateway to the Future) program, developed in cooperation with the Bergen Hispanic Business Association and the Institute for Latino Studies, Research, and Development, is now entering its third year. Puerta al Futuro offers Spanish-speaking immigrants (from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and Latin America) in northern New Jersey and New York a unique opportunity to earn a college degree while learning English.

Traditionally, non-English speakers must learn English before enrolling in a degree program; however, Puerta al Futuro seeks to make higher education available to Latino students by offering an innovative curriculum that transitions from all-Spanish to all-English coursework, with intensive ESL instruction embedded within and complementing the for-credit curriculum. As with all Fairleigh Dickinson students, the adult Latino students in this program must take two three-credit online courses to build their Internet skills. These courses are team-taught by Fairleigh Dickinson faculty as well as scholars and professionals from Spanish-speaking countries.

After only three years of part-time study (Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturdays), students earn an associates degree with a concentration in business administration and have achieved a high level of competency in English lan-

guage skills. Tuition is discounted 50% by Fairleigh Dickinson University, thus reducing the financial barrier to higher education. Graduates of Puerta al Futuro are equipped for meaningful employment and, for those who wish to transfer into a bachelors degree program, further higher education opportunities.

When Puerta al Futuro started in 2003, 48 students enrolled. This year, the class has 140 students. The program’s retention rate is 90%. In May 2005, 21 students graduated; another 65 are scheduled to graduate in May 2006. In the meantime, five have opened their own businesses; four have received promotions; one student had two promotions since he started the program; six have new jobs; and three are pursuing graduate degrees. These three students had credits from their native countries. After an evaluation process, those credits were transferred, and they graduated with a BA.

Since the Latino population is growing rapidly in some states, the Puerta al Futuro model is a unique opportunity for a wide range of campuses to serve this population of students.

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## Creating Honor Codes to Support Academic Integrity

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Findings released in June 2005 show that nearly 70% of college students surveyed cheated at least once in their academic career, with 25-50% admitting they committed a serious offense (i.e. cheating on a test or paper) (Center for Academic Integrity, 2005a). To address issues of ethical expectations and academic integrity, campuses continue to re-emphasize honor codes. A common definition of academic integrity is “a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action” (Center for Academic Integrity, 1999, pg 4). This definition serves as a guide for institutions to follow as they determine how to tailor “academic integrity” to best meet their needs.

Honor codes are as unique as the institutions from which they come. Some honor codes focus solely on academics, while others emphasize the impact academic integrity has on the campus community. Another type of honor code delineates individual conduct expectations.

The University of Maryland in College Park’s *Honor Pledge* emphasizes the importance of academic honesty at all times and in all forms. As part of the *Code of Academic Integrity*, the *Honor Pledge* is included on all student papers, assignments, and tests. The *Honor Pledge*

### Honor Pledge

On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, the student shall write by hand and sign the following pledge:

*I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination.*

reinforces the importance of completing all work using honest methods, such as not using assistance from other students unless specifically allowed to do so, not using texts and other reference materials without permission, and accurately citing all resources used in assignments or papers. By signing the *Honor Pledge* with every assignment, the students are reminded of the importance of honesty and integrity in all they accomplish. The *Honor Pledge* is taught to students in their first year at the university, however, its importance and meaning are taught throughout the college experience.

The University of South Carolina introduces the *Carolinian Creed*, the student code of conduct, to its students continuously throughout their college career (University of South Carolina, 2005). The first exposure occurs in the University 101 class or first-year seminar. An entire class period is dedicated to explaining aspects of the *Carolinian Creed*, as well as

the implications for students who violate it. At the end of this session, each student is asked to sign and live by the *Carolinian Creed*. Additionally, students are reminded of the *Carolinian Creed* during the events of Creed Week. During this week, students are asked to participate in a series of programs that analyze the *Creed*, its role in their daily lives, and current issues which relate to the *Creed*. Students also have continual exposure through advertisements and programs sponsored by the Carolinian Community year round.

While a number of institutions of higher education have already begun to develop and implement honor codes, there are still many that have not. The following steps serve as guidelines for the process, and can be modified in order to better meet the needs of each particular institution. These steps are a variation of those listed on The Center for Academic Integrity’s web site (Center for Academic Integrity, 2005b).

*Creating or establishing a public need.* An institution of higher education will have a hard time buying into a new program without evidence that this program is truly needed. One way many institutions accomplish this task is to assess students’ and faculty’s beliefs regarding academic dishonesty.

*Creating a concerned committee.* After the assessment is administered and the results are reported, a Task Force or concerned committee is the next step. The committee should be comprised of faculty, students, and administrators. The task brought before the committee is to develop missions and goals for the honor codes and formulate the code.

(Continued on page 11)



(Continued from page 10)

### The Carolinian Creed

The community of scholars at the University of South Carolina is dedicated to personal and academic excellence.

Choosing to join the community obligates each member to a code of civilized behavior.

As a Carolinian...

I will practice personal and academic integrity;

I will respect the dignity of all persons;

I will respect the rights and property of others;

I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions;

I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for conditions which support their work and development.

Allegiance to these ideals requires each Carolinian to refrain from and discourage behaviors which threaten the freedom and respect every individual deserves.

#### *Public interest or awareness day.*

When the committee has a clear idea of the outcomes and guidelines they would like to see as a result of the honor codes, it is important to listen to what the public has to say. Creating an opportunity for the public to participate in the creation of procedures and goals for the honor codes is an important step. This involvement allows members of the institution to speak their mind and make their opinions heard. The public interest or awareness day is also an excellent opportunity for the institution to evaluate the amount of support for this project.

*Creation and discussion of values and goals for honor codes.* Based on goals given both by the committee and the public, an evaluation of those most pertinent to the institution should be conducted. The committee should look at all goals and procedures and make an effort

to incorporate those that contribute most to the moral development of both the student and the institution as a whole.

*Creation of constitution based on values and goals.* The development of the constitution encompasses the outcome of all steps previously listed. The constitution acts as both the guide to the development and implementation process, as well as the handbook for how to handle possible situations. The constitution should clearly define the mission, procedures, implementation process, and goals or outcomes desired for the code. Additionally, the constitution must have the approval of all participating members of both the committee and administration of the institution.

*Implementation of constitution.* Once the constitution is created, the committee should present it to the appropriate department within the institution, such as the Student Life Office. Together, the institution and the committee can work to implement the organization that supports the honor code. Many institutions refer to these organizations as Student Honor Council, or Honor Committees.

*Publicity and recruitment of honor codes in upcoming academic year.* After the development and implementation of the honor codes, the focus changes to community awareness and commitment. Students, both current and entering students, should be made aware of the honor codes and its importance. Residential Life Programs, Student Life programs, faculty involvement, and Student Association involvement are all great venues to publicize the honor code. Examples of institutional program examples are

available at [www.academicintegrity.org/resources\\_inst.asp](http://www.academicintegrity.org/resources_inst.asp).

As a result of honor codes, more students are becoming aware of the definition and circumstances in which academic dishonesty can occur and visibly taking a stand against it. Students are teaming with administrators to promote honor pledges, create academic integrity weeks, and facilitate pride throughout their campus. Implementing honor codes motivates all members to work towards the common goal of a better institution where honesty, trust, and values are still important.

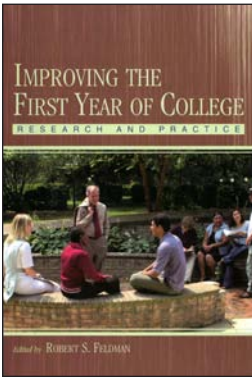
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## Resource Review

*Improving the First Year of College: Research and Practice* is a valuable resource for educators and administrators involved in creating a successful first-year experience. This resource presents the newest perspectives on the first year

of college, including research and educational theories pertinent to an understanding of this critical year. In addition, this volume showcases best practices of several colleges and universities, such as the development of learning communities and the integration of technology into the learning experience.

*Improving the First Year of College* is divided into four parts:

Part 1 considers the important role student decision-making plays in first-year success. In Part 2, diversity issues are discussed. Assessment of the factors that influence first-year success are explored in Part 3, while specific practices at various institutions are analyzed

in Part 4. This resource emphasizes the value of approaching first-year success from a variety of perspectives. It presents an integrative framework for addressing the academic, economic, and social challenges that first-year students face and strategies for increasing first-year success.

Faculty and education administrators, in particular, will benefit greatly from using *Improving the First Year of College* when developing and implementing policies and practices for promoting first-year student success.

This volume is available at <http://www.sc.edu/fye/publications/lea/index.html>

## What's Happening

### Conferences

Fall Institute for Academic Deans and Department Chairs, October 23-25, 2005, Savannah, Georgia

12<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Students in Transition, November 6-8, 2005, Costa Mesa, California

25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience, February 24-28, 2006, Atlanta, Georgia

### Call for Submissions

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, and editors Wendy Troxel and Marc Cutright, invite you to share your campus-based initiatives for the first college year. *Exploring the Evidence: Campus-Wide Initiatives in the First College Year* will be part of The First-Year Experience Monograph Series and will explore the design and assessment of a wide range

of "proven" curricular and co-curricular initiatives. We encourage you to submit a manuscript for consideration.

The deadline for submissions is May 1, 2006. Only complete submissions, adhering to the guidelines (<http://www.sc.edu/fye/centerinitiative/development/index.html>), will be considered for inclusion in the monograph. We look forward to receiving your submission in the coming months.

### Research and Resources

*2005 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives* – On October 4, the Center launched the 2005 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives. This first-of-its-kind study explores how institutions are addressing the unique needs of second-year college students. Data collection and sorting will continue through the fall semester, with initial analysis and dissemination of results to occur in spring 2006.

*National Resource Center's Task Force for the Improvement of Transfer Student Experiences* – In a collaborative effort with several offices at the University of South Carolina, the Center has recently begun a study of transfer student experiences. Recognizing that the challenges facing transfer students are many and varied, this comprehensive study is designed to gain a holistic understanding of transfer student experiences. This study will consider the experiences of students transferring into the University of South Carolina from two-year, four-year, and branch campus institutions by exploring the extent to which students are challenged by their transfer experiences and the extent to which they are receiving sufficient institutional support. This study includes both qualitative and quantitative components and will continue through spring 2006.

